**INTRODUCTION:**

The Tacit Urban Research Network works with a shared purpose to study urban informality and the tacit knowledge integral in it from multiple vantage points in the relational geographies of settlement, housing, and economies and at multiple sites, with the eventual goal of incorporating that understanding into knowledge systems that support policymaking. The project is a collaborative effort between 4 leading institutions: CPR, TISS, Hyderabad Urban Lab, and IIHS.

TURN hopes to achieve (a) increased visibility and understanding of hitherto ‘tacit’ knowledge about urban informality in India, (b) incorporation of such knowledge to increase the inclusivity of policy frameworks (c) evolution of the tacit knowledge urban research network (TURN) into a platform for future urban research in India. It aims to retheorise informality through a knowledge perspective.

THE TACIT AND THE INFORMAL:

TURN seeks to facilitate deep immersions in Indian cities to amplify the findings of ongoing research initiatives, challenge our conceptual approaches and generate new knowledge. It squarely addresses the issue of informality qua tacit, place-based knowledge in urban areas – focusing on making it visible and engaging with its intersection with policy.

Informality is acknowledged by most scholars to be the key feature of Indian urbanization - indeed a feature it has in common with many other countries. Informality indeed pervades all domains of urban life - economy, governance and policy.

THE NETWORK:

The idea of this network emanates from the four institutions themselves, building on the history of the co-PIs, who have been individually collaborating on multiple projects of research, teaching and publications over the years. Individually, each of these researchers and the institutions that they are embedded in have a long history of working within policy making and programme implementation in the urban context as well as extensive community/civil society engagements. The proposed network leverages the experience of this shared work.

RESEARCH:

As part of the project, we at TISS work across areas of cities and their histories, as well as policy and governance.

Transforming M-Ward: M-Ward is an administrative ward on the Eastern periphery of Mumbai. Longitudinal studies of different neighborhoods within M Ward focusing on land assembly techniques by people and the state; tracing the incremental nature by which people on the ground secure lives, livelihoods and housing claims in an insecure and marginalised neighborhood; and exploring ways to measure the informal economy. The research involves studying the project of the metro car shed initiated by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation, explores the widespread practice of constructing individual toilets in a settlement where these are denied by the municipal corporation and a political economy of promoting public toilets is entrenched,the exploitative networks of water procurement prevalent in the ward as a result of the BMC’s inability to secure them their right to water, and the systemic and continued displacement of the population in the Transit Camp in Mankhurd.

In Vasai Virar, part of the Palghar district of Maharashtra, exists a swathe of sprawling informal settlements (galas to multi-storey chawls) across the larger area of Santosh Bhuvan developed by mostly small-time builders, that has arisen partly in response to industrial estates established adjacent. It is described as a ‘hell’ by outsiders but for insiders it is a generative space that has allowed some possibility for upward mobility. The area has recently been targeted for demolition but have also strongly resisted this process through both informal/formal connections with the local political party, the BVA. The research also looks at the local government, VVCMC, particularly the planning and building constructions department.The focus has been to examine the phenomenon of ‘unauthorized construction’, how it gets socially constructed, circulated and contested.

Analyzing the marginalisation and threats to informal livelihoods in Kamathipura posed by state-sanctioned redevelopment processes. This builds on past research on the neighbourhood which examined its socio-spatial dimensions, particularly the aspect of redevelopment and coalitions around redevelopment. In this project, the focus will be to deepen knowledge and understanding about groups of vulnerable residents who practice informal and often precarious forms of livelihood in the core of the city.

In Chembur Market Road, the aim is to develop a spatial history of the street (and its relevant extensions) adjacent to the suburban railway station, that has developed into a major commercial street in the M (E) and M (W) Wards of Mumbai. The spaces and activities of the commercial street have developed through an intricate dialectic between formal and informal practices over the last five decades.

Informality in policy making: Comparative analysis of existing case study material to understand “actually existing” governance before and after JNNURM in 4 states. The focus is on uncovering the making and interpreting of policy, with all its informalities, across different cities, towns and states. Attention will also be paid to the transition in policy regime at the cityscape, comprehending the continuities/discontinuities of the transition from the JNNURM into a new policy eco-system (possibly including Smart City, Amrut, PMAY).

PhD scholar and Research Associate at TURN Gopal Dubey is studying the site of the ‘urban village’ Trombay Koliwada located at the eastern coast of Mumbai. It’s the settlement of indigenous fishing community, the Koli community, The objective of this study is to explore the movement of tacit knowledge underpinning the traditional livelihood of fishing in Trombay Koliwada. Confronted with the state’s increasing encroachment of their spaces of livelihood, the research attempts to study the Koli communities efforts at integration with the urban livelihood ecosystem.

Dr. Malini Krishnalutty, Planner and Consultant at TURN, attempts to consolidate the somewhat scattered, checkered history of urban planning in the country through an oral history project. Considering that there is very little writing on the history of modern town planning in India and the approaches taken by the planners while preparing master plans for major cities in the country since Independence, the research proposes to interview various senior planners in the country across the various states. They include a few ‘pioneer planners’ who are still around, (BG. Fernandes, R.L. Bawa), senior planners who have served as as Chief TCPO (Edgar Ribeiro) or as Chief Planners of various States (Mr. Johri, ex-Chief Planner of UP; Mr. Jagjit Singh Ghuman, ex- Chief Planner of Punjab; Mr.G.Venkataramana Reddy, ex- Chief Planner of Andhra Pradesh and Mr. J.G. Keskar, ex- Chief Planner of Maharashtra) and others who have made significant contributions to planning practice or planning education. The outcome is envisaged as audio and video recordings (subject to the interviewees consent) along with detailed written transcriptions of interviews based on recordings.

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

## Between 2013 and 2015, case studies were conducted to study the impact of infrastructure and governance transformations of JNNURM in small, medium and large cities. This study builds on the Centre’s accumulated knowledge on urban development programmes in order to build a critical response to urban policy intervention for the country. Conducted over two years, this four-state research project reviewed the extent and nature of the impact of JNNURM and its Sub-Missions in Maharashtra, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. It resulted in [eight city case studies](http://urk.tiss.edu/research/india/19-impact-of-infrastructure-and-governance-transformations-of-jnnurm-in-small-medium-large-cities.html) that aimed at understanding the effects of these transformations on urban local bodies as well as actual service outcomes for citizen groups, particularly urban poor groups. Case studies were developed in partnership with different local research and activist organizations. Four regional workshops were organized to share findings locally. Through these and other public forums at the local level, initial advocacy on issue areas have been set into motion in an effort to contribute to improved design of future urban policy models, approaches and programmes.

Site meetings as a means of co-production of knowledge from tacit information not only help theorise the informal, but also recognises research subjects as co-producers of knowledge. Six-monthly network meetings ensure that strategies and outcomes are collaboratively determined, knowledges produced across sites is shared, so as to formulate newer ideas to understand the urban.

A workshop was held in 2018, where all collaborating institutions came together to ideate, debate, and share experiences about the informal. Researchers spoke about their experiences of informality in their respective fields, and attempted to theorise it through a framework of tacitness.

A workshop was held in 2019, whose theme was the everyday state. The workshop witnessed researchers from collaborating institutions present ideas about theorising the state and its everyday manifestations in ways tacit and explicit.

The project engages students as well as research scholars engaged in studying the urban to produce collaborative knowledge networks within the space of the university and in the field.

As part of the project’s aim to understand the urban through a knowledge perspective, a collaborative efforts between HUL and TISS is organised annually, through the Winter Institute. WI is a two The Winter Institute is a two-week, field-based course that provides students of Urban Policy and Governance at TISS an intense experience in understanding urban transformations while working in inter-disciplinary teams. The pedagogical approach emphasises learning from practice by using participatory research approaches. The programme is anchored by HUL, who organise field visits to designated sites in Hyderabad, hold lectures and discussions with experts in the fields of urban studies and planning, and provide an immersive experience for young students who seek to produce knowledge about the urban that is informed by practice.

The TURN exhibition is a display of the research done across various sites of the project. The theme of the exhibition is *Dhakka*: jolt. push. shock. As a premier economic centre, Mumbai has thus experienced an aggressive push for 'development' since the late 1990s. This is visible in its dramatic and continuing spatial transformation with real estate developments rising higher as a bewildering variety of infrastructure projects restructures the urban landscape. State policy and planning have driven this transformation by banking on the promise of a market economy driven by the profit motive to make Mumbai a world class city. Spatial transformation involves social transformation. The many visible and invisible violences involved in the Developmental *Dhakka* are the particular subject of this exhibition.

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