

Boundary Spanning and Intermediation for Urban Regeneration:

Comparative Case Studies from Three Indian Cities

[Interim Report]

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Executive Summary

This research project aims to study how boundaries of various kinds work in structuring, enabling or contesting ground level processes of place-making and regeneration in urban India. It examines how these boundaries are asserted, crossed, dissolved or spanned in local efforts to claim urban resources (land, water, jobs, and services), identities and futures. The study draws on but substantially adapts and expands the concept of ‘boundary spanning’ from ongoing work by Meerkerk and other researchers in Netherlands and other European countries.

Taking seven cases in three Indian metros, the project seeks to examine diverse dynamics of boundary-assertion and boundary-spanning as lenses to understand urban politics on the ground. The seven case studies chosen as a theoretical sample to illustrate a range of boundaries that may be involved can be grouped as a) 3 resettlement or relocation sites in the three cities ie Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai b) 2 case studies linked to fishers and their experience of physical boundaries amidst the advent of the growing city c) a case of lake restoration in Chennai and d) boundary spanning efforts of housing finance companies in Delhi. The cases represent varied groups of citizens, distinct nature of borders that constrain or enable their access to critical resources and a variety of instruments used for the same. The case studies employ qualitative methods toward a comparative understanding of various relations that structure the citizen-state interface, the meanings of co-production or collaboration in different contexts, the role of intermediaries, and the emergent technologies and practices through which non-state and community actors produce and deploy knowledge to counter dominant engines of urban transformation. Cross-city workshops have been held at various stages of the research to provide space for reflection, analysis and to develop concepts and questions for comparison and further exploration.

While a detailed and final analysis is in process, the following are some of the key findings of this research which largely pertain to the nature of boundaries encountered and the nature of boundary spanning activities:

- The cases offer an entire spectrum of citizenry in Indian cities from fishers to inhabitants of unauthorised neighbourhoods and resettlement colonies where the relationship between formal and informal are blurred. The ‘state’ in these cases ranges from the state government departments such as fisheries, industry, cooperative, forest to local governments, and parastatals such as planning authorities, housing and slum boards. One observation is that the nature and function of several of these departments is in flux and while cooperative or the fisheries departments are in a mode of withdrawal; others such as slum boards or planning authorities are gaining in importance. In many of these cases, there are tensions in the relations with the state but it is interesting to observe that in a departure from the past; the traditional politics of protest is giving way to

highly nuanced, and negotiated relationships. Some cases show the emergence of new intermediaries such as RWAs, and housing finance institutions. The roles of NGOs and activism are also changing.

- An analysis of boundaries offers a productive way of examining structures and the tensions that they invoke in this backdrop. Boundaries represent categories, which in turn reflect specific forms of order. In each of the case studies, we found old forms of order being changed and redrawing of newer boundaries. There were at least three groupings of boundaries that we could trace a) boundaries with the outside – physical, spatial and temporal b) institutional, political and social boundaries and c) internal boundaries. Boundaries are created, maintained, defended, blurred and reconstituted all the time. The ongoing nature of these processes illustrates the dynamism of urbanisation processes in the country and how varied state authorities as well as citizen groups attempt to mould these.
- Boundaries have legacies and one of the critical barriers to crossing boundaries is these legacies. An example in the case of fishers is the persistence of community- socio-ethnic –practices while the resource quality and control changes. Similarly, institutional boundaries also have legacy elements which are strongly resistant to change as was seen in all the resettlement cases where such colonies continue to be treated largely as a new form of slums by concerned institutions.
- The study has inventoried instruments and mechanisms used by the various groups to transcend boundaries and claim critical resources. These range from a) ways to document themselves and their lives to make the knowledge about remembered boundaries and their claims visible b) identifying parallel and alternate resources c) formation of multiple, purposive groups and institutions d) coalition building e) working in liaison with intermediaries f) use of RTI g) use of legal mechanisms and the courts h) publishing parallel reports, hearings, assemblies and events i) creating new means of involving larger citizenry in the issues. The deployment of these mechanisms seems to be contingent in most cases.
- The report has several implications for policy and practice. These are both case specific, city-specific but the comparative dimension also has learnings for specific aspects of urban policy such as resettlement policy, for issues linked to fishers, conservation of water bodies and housing finance.

In addition, the research at large also has suggestions for the overall relations between citizens and state in urban areas and how these can be enhanced. At present, it seems that the state does engage with various groups of citizens but only at the initiative of these groups. There is an absence of forums by which citizens can directly access the state. Resident Welfare Associations(RWAs) exist in Delhi and in some parts of Chennai but these interactions as revealed in the Bhalswa case are not accompanied by relevant information. The scope of

such interactions is also limited to specific spheres. The other end of such interactions is cases where they are contested. These include the fisher community cases in Chennai and Mumbai where there are contesting imaginations of borders and their significance. In the case of Korattur lake, the contestations have an additional actors in the form of lake conservation groups, adding to the complexity.

Next Steps

Completion and submission of final deliverables by January end. This includes a main report with seven case studies and a comparative paper on resettlement.

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Chapter-I

Introduction

While community participation has remained a central plank of policy and institutional reforms that were launched since the 1990s, this goal has been notoriously difficult to realize in the urban context. All urban reform missions, programs and policy statements drawn up at the national level since the turn of the century have officially recognised and emphasised the importance of participatory, consultative and/or community-based actions in bringing about successful urban regeneration. Policies have ranged from a scantily implemented proposal for a citizen participation law as a reform under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) to concepts of technology-enabled citizen participation under the Smart Cities Mission.

However, there is very little clarity or understanding of what this concept entails and how it can be operationalised in practice. A complex web of challenges hinders the achievement of effective citizen participation in urban governance. Widespread informality and illegality in land tenure, construction, settlement and access to basic services render the state-society relationship fraught with legal and institutional traps. An increasing divergence in visions and aspirations of urbanization among different sections of urban society and across institutional boundaries (such as states, market actors and citizens) obstructs the articulation of common goals and pathways to urban regeneration. Institutional factors such as biases in knowledge systems and expertise informing practices such as urban planning, and structural conditions within state bureaucracies create problems of capacity and motivation for state functionaries to engage seriously with marginalised sections of the urban population.

Despite all this, there exists a range of experiments and experiences of community action and intervention in governance, and of partnerships across institutional boundaries in various Indian cities, with varying outcomes. In some Indian cities, partnerships between organizations like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) were institutionalised into the urban governance framework in the early to mid-2000s. Informal settlements have also been seen to play active roles in accessing services, managing them, and upgrading settlements.

A certain amount of research exists on the topic of citizen participation in urban governance. However, most of this research focuses on levels and outcomes of participation rather than on the processes of participation, thus offering little insight into the 'how to' of participation. What is urgently needed both for the field of urban studies and for urban policy and practice in India is a set of concepts, precepts and principles that emerge from empirically grounded comparative studies across different

cities. While disciplines like sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics offer various perspectives for analysing participation, there is a dearth of analysis of participation as a practice that engages the state itself. An innovative and interdisciplinary approach is needed, which would study participation as a dynamic and often contradictory process, composed of several sub-processes, actors and contradictions. Such an approach would contribute valuable insight into the functioning of the state in varying contexts, its pliability and openness to diverse actors and the strategies used by entrepreneurs to navigate these contexts. Thus, dynamic context-actor-strategy frameworks can yield useful knowledge and concepts for theory building in ‘urban practice’ fields such as planning, urban studies, governance studies and community organization. A detailed comparative study of how citizens access the state in diverse urban contexts will yield concepts that enrich the other conventional disciplines that study ‘participation’, and will contribute crucially to informing the emergent trajectory of urban governance.

This study seeks to explore in detail the processes through which urban citizens engage with the state and other actors to meet their needs. It will analyze how effective partnerships between the state, the urban citizenry and the increasingly prominent market actors in urban governance can be leveraged to forge a more inclusive, sustainable and transformative process of urban regeneration. The concept of urban regeneration employed here refers to a “comprehensive integration of vision and action aimed at resolving the multi-faceted problems of deprived urban areas to improve their economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions” (Zheng et al 2014). The key idea in this research is to focus on certain dimensions of the process of urban regeneration and investigate these processes through deep field work in three Indian cities. The project also has an international comparative dimension. The key concepts of boundary spanning and urban regeneration will be discussed and tested in the context of Wales, England and Netherlands where similar research is also being carried out.

This research is linked to a considerable body of previous work done by an interdisciplinary team of researchers from the three institutions who are authoring this proposal. The Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Delhi, has done work on tracing urban transformations and citizenship in varied informal settlements in the city; Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai, has worked on long-term auto-constructed settlements as key to shaping the city; and the Centre for Urban Planning, Policy and Governance (CUPG) at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, has researched on ‘everyday life’ and agency in communities in the context of an emergent state- market alliance. These three institutions, thus, represent diverse research capacities and in-depth, localised understandings of urbanisation processes, which are now being scaled up through exploring new theoretical frameworks. The current research programme was envisaged as a collaborative effort between CUPG-TISS, CPR, and MIDS. The proposed engagement with the concept of ‘boundary spanning’ builds on on-going research around this concept in Mumbai (TISS) and in

Delhi (CPR), in collaboration with and supported by IHS. While the term 'boundary spanner' has not been heard of in the Indian context and does not lend to easy comparison, some parallels in terms of neighbourhood associations and the broader dynamics of citizen-state engagements, as discussed, could be drawn. This preliminary work has demonstrated the utility of using 'boundary spanning' as a working concept to deepen our understanding of processes of citizen-state engagement, the role played by varied actors and intermediaries, and the factors that enable or constrain such actions. It also raised several new questions about the structuring of the state- citizen interface, particular patterns of entrepreneurship generated by this, and the outcomes. It is questions such as these that are sought to be explored through the present proposal.

Chapter-II

Literature Review

This section reviews scholarly work that has been done on related themes in the Indian and international urban context, to provide a basis for the research questions of this study.

i. The importance of citizen engagement for urban regeneration

As India urbanises, management of the state- citizen interface is one of the key challenges that it faces (Sivaramakrishnan 1993, Baud et al. 2009, Coelho et al. 2013). Indian cities, reframed since the 1990s as engines of national economic growth and magnets for global investment, encompass multiple and radically divergent visions and aspirations, backed by divergent power, resources and opportunities. The advance of urbanization in India is a process marked by appropriations, contestations, struggles, all mediated by complex sets of actors in civil and political spheres of the public (Fernandes 2006, Bhide 2009, Coelho et al. 2009, Nair 2006). Urban renewal, the rubric under which national missions for rejuvenating Indian cities has been framed in past decades, has been shown worldwide to involve displacements, destruction and demolition (Bond et al 2016; Fullilove and Wallace 2011). However, visions of world class cities have perforce had to accommodate the struggles of the large underserved and neglected populations of working class and low-caste residents for basic needs and a decent quality of life (Chatterjee 2004, Harriss 2005, 2007).

A series of reform initiatives in urban governance since the turn of the century have sought to replace the old developmental state, which proved incapable of providing for these needs, with a new demand-driven state which puts the onus on “community”, “civil society” and private interests to articulate needs, aspirations and visions of the future (Baud et al 2009, Coelho et al. 2013). Urban reforms carry a thrust on citizen participation in various registers, from mandates, conditionalities, and laws (such as the Community Participation Law) to institutional shifts toward closer engagement with clients, through Citizens Charters, Open Houses and Citizen Committees. The meanings of a “good service” are determined by the frameworks of financial viability as well as responsiveness to consumer demand (Baindur and Kamath 2009). Urban reforms also place a conspicuous emphasis on “public relations”, with all state agencies now carrying a desk, department and/or office for this role. PROs play an important role in mediating and managing the consumer interface.

Yet, the institutional machinery and climate in which these reforms are implemented, in city after city, render these mandates of community participation unclear, even bewildering, to the public as well as to officials charged with acting on them. Apathy or resistance to these mandates on the part of local officials and politicians, and/or a profound lack of capacity in the state or its proxies to deliver on these demands contribute to distortions in the operationalisation of participatory models on the ground (Rajeevan 2013, Coelho et al. 2013).

Participation as state practice has also come under criticism from scholars of development in India and internationally, who have pointed to how discourses of participation often serve to disenfranchise already marginalised sections of the public through manufacturing consensus for policies already evolved elsewhere, papering over debates and differences, and closing off alternative pathways for transformation (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001, Mosse 2001, Cooke and Kothari 2001). These modes of participation have been shown to contribute to a culture of cooptation rather than one of informed deliberation, empowerment or democratisation (Cooke and Kothari 2001, Harriss 2007). According to Chatterjee (2004), the concept of democracy itself has been transformed in modern postcolonial states through the unfolding of a politics of *governance*, wherein the ‘governmentalisation of the state’ or the state’s involvement in the provision of welfare services to the public, elevated instrumental calculations of efficient government over values of openness, participation and politics, privileging administrative and technical expertise over political deliberation and debate.

More recent writings from urban scholars in the Indian context have shown how contemporary deployments of concepts such as citizen participation, consultation and even “community” in urban contexts are being shaped by fiscal crises of states and the imperatives of commercialisation and privatization. As Subramanian (2002) has argued, the production of “community” must be understood “within the framework of state power.” Participation here serves as a political technology applied to produce financialised citizen-subjects (Ranganathan 2013, Maringanti 2013, Baidur 2013). The scope of citizen participation has been rendered modular in contemporary grand schemes of transforming cities. The goals, road maps and mechanisms (predominantly financial and institutional) have been set, and citizens are invited to have a say in the details (Raman 2013). Indeed, in many cases these spaces of consultation are opened up for citizens only after the real consultations have occurred between state and corporate actors. While state actors evince fear, discomfort or impatience with processes of public participation, they appear comfortable consulting with private corporations, as evinced by the latter’s role in shaping many of the country’s recent policies (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Jayaraman 2013,).

Even formal statutory consultations with citizens in the form of public hearings (e.g. as mandated by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) law), have been seen to work as technologies of pacification, instruments to placate publics increasingly skeptical

and apprehensive about state infrastructure or development projects (Bawa 2013, Kumar et al.2014, Menon and Kohli 2015). The ‘stakeholder’ paradigm now established in governance discourses works on the premise of limited, identifiable constituencies that have demonstrable stakes in particular projects, as opposed to a notion of broad public accountability.¹

Importantly, however, an emerging body of literature shows that while frameworks of participation and consultation are thus delimited, their deployment in the social world often provoke a range of grassroots mobilisations that break their way into spheres of decision-making, opening up arenas that were previously closed off to the public. Institutionalized participatory mechanisms are inevitably refigured on the ground by political and social formations, and technocratic or invited spaces of participation make way for insurgent responses (Ranganathan 2013, Bawa 2013). As Subramanian (2002) puts it, “Only by acknowledging the mutual implication of state and community can we account for how bureaucratic categories and mechanisms of rule are incorporated into the self-representations and political strategies of subaltern groups.”

“Urban regeneration”

Terminologies of urban development have been almost invariably imported into Indian discourse from western contexts, where they carry specific histories and political associations. In India, it was not until the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1974 that the term ‘urban development’ entered the planning lexicon (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). Prior to this, the ‘urban’ question was framed within concerns of housing, balanced regional development and industrialisation (Sivaramakrishnan 2011, Batra, 2009). From the Emergency in 1975, concerns about slum clearance and city beautification surfaced, as evidenced by the slum demolitions in Turkman Gate in Delhi and Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai (ibid.). Leary and McCarthy (2013) also observe that before the concept of urban regeneration came about, various state intervention programmes relating to slum clearance, inner city development, beautification, etc. were in existence across varied national contexts.

Terms such as urban regeneration, often used synonymously with revitalization, renewal or renaissance across different national and historical contexts, reflect a more broad-based and comprehensive approach to urban problems, where physical improvements are conceived as part of a matrix of interventions into the spatial, social

¹ For example, the amended EIA Notification issued by the Central Government in 2006 permits only ‘local affected persons’ to attend EIA public hearings in person, while others having ‘a plausible stake’ in the project’s impacts can only submit comments in writing (MOEF 2006).

and economic dimensions of urban problems (Leary and McCarthy 2013). Urban regeneration is described as a “multi-disciplinary field of research, scholarship, public policy and practice” and what holds this seemingly disparate field together is a strong political motivation for the state to initiate area-based initiatives at the local level (Leary and McCarthy 2013, p. 6). Thus, in order to construct a robust understanding of the term, it is necessary to explore how it has been constructed in practice.

In the Indian context, the term renewal was broadly institutionalised by the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) launched in 2005, which was fundamentally about installing urban infrastructure. Under the current government, the urban agenda has been articulated in new terminologies through the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and the Smart Cities Mission which seeks to leverage technology to improve service delivery and infrastructure in cities. Much like the JNNURM, these missions remain focused on transforming cities into global investment destinations through infrastructure enhancement, amenity values, “quality of life” and greening/beautification initiatives with an expanded role for private sector players and corporate capital. Interestingly, the term ‘re-generation’ appears on the Make in India website, in connection with proposals for investments in the construction sector. Linking the Make in India imperative to the Smart Cities Mission, the website notes in the context of the construction industry: “There is need for re-generation of urban areas in existing cities and the creation of new, inclusive smart cities to meet the demands of increasing population and migration from rural to urban areas. Future cities of India will require smart real estate and urban infrastructure.”²

Clearly, then, official discourses in India have adopted a range of western concepts and terminologies to characterise state agendas of urban development. Against the backdrop of exclusionary, segregated and increasingly inegalitarian outcomes produced by these urban agendas and governance processes, we choose to use the term urban regeneration in this study to reinstate the notion of the urban as a space of opportunity, diversity and inclusion. We employ this term (with full awareness of the historical baggage associated with it in other contexts), among other reasons to align ourselves in a comparative framework with the abovementioned IHS (Netherlands) boundary-spanning project which forms a basis for this study. Our usage draws on the definition of urban regeneration by Zheng et al (2014: 272) as a “comprehensive integration of vision and action aimed at resolving the multi-faceted problems of deprived urban areas to improve their economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions.”

² <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/construction>

Recognising the complex issues involved in conceptualising urban regeneration, Leary and McCarthy (2013) also propose a definition of what they call ‘aspirational regeneration’:

urban regeneration is area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature (p. 9)

Recent approaches in urban regeneration, have emphasized ‘smaller government’ and greater community/ societal involvement (see van Meerkerk et. al. forthcoming). The role of the community in urban regeneration has been, as Leary and McCarthy (2013) observe, repeatedly invoked since the 1990s. Community-led urban regeneration is understood as “a form of urban regeneration in which self-organization of local communities plays a central role: regeneration processes that start within the community itself or in which the community takes a leading role, in contrast to central-led or more traditional policy and participatory urban regeneration processes” (van Meerkerk et. al. forthcoming).

ii. Challenges to inclusive practices of citizen participation in urban India

a. The exclusionary character of middle-class neighborhood associations and collective action

Since the 1990s, big-ticket infrastructure investments have exacerbated the basic needs deficit in Indian cities while creating opportunities for what Baidur (2013) calls “stakeholder lobbies”. These “infrastructure advocates” have acquired a privileged place in decision-making, particularly in the JNNURM, often sidelining elected political bodies and building their own constituencies of NGOs, civil society and grassroots bodies to further their agendas (ibid). The BATF partnership initiated by the Karnataka Chief Minister S.M.Krishna in 1999 represented one of India’s boldest and most ambitious government initiatives in formally partnering with the corporate sector for planning and priority setting. It encompassed reforms in multiple spheres and systems, ranging from land use to solid waste management, roads, property tax assessment, and accounting methods. The BATF’s stated goal of turning the city into a Singapore provided a powerful impetus for top-down supply-side reforms focused on ‘cleaning up’ public sector systems and processes . through collaborations with the resource-rich corporate sector, through employing business models, and under the auspices of the market (Kamath 2006; Ghosh 2005; Nair 2000). These collaborations provided business leaders in the BATF with access to a range of high level decision making bodies.

The BATF also systematically nurtured relations with a particular type of civil society that would constitute the demand side for its reforms; it contributed substantially to the growing visibility of middle class and elite RWAs in Bangalore. The emergence of Janaagraha – a ‘citizens’ movement for participatory governance – was linked with the BATF agenda. Janaagraha played an important early role in enabling the implementation of the Greater Bangalore Water Supply and Sanitation Project (GBWASP), a public-private partnership which employed a language of ‘citizen as stakeholder’ to equate participation with financial contributions toward the capital costs of a piped water supply system to the peripheral areas of Bangalore (Ranganathan 2013). Similar processes of public-private partnership were initiated by the World-Bank funded underground drainage project of the Tamil Nadu Urban Development Fund (TNUDF) in Alandur, Tamil Nadu in the late 1990s (Vijayabaskar and Wyatt 2005). The far-reaching influence of the TNUDF, BATF and Janaagraha was established by the replication and scaling-up of several elements of their programs into the JNNURM (Coelho et al 2013).

Transformations occurring in Indian metropolises since the 1990s have provoked unprecedented mobilizations of civil society, bringing new sets of actors into the public sphere, and generating new energy and activism around the agendas of protecting urban public space and improving the quality of services. Middle classes have begun to “take ownership” and participate in urban governance through a range of innovative modes and channels ranging from confederations and e-governance initiatives to self-provisioning (Nair 2006, Fernandes 2006, Baud et al 2008). The phenomenon of neighborhood-based civic activism, most notably in the form of Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs), has sprung into visibility in urban centers since the 1980s as a concomitant of the growth in middle class populations in cities as well as of reforms in urban services (Fernandes, Narayanan, Coelho and Venkat 2011, Kamath and Vijayabaskar 2011, Zerah, Tewa Lama-Rawal). In as far as public relations and consumer satisfaction have become important components of reforms in public sector urban service delivery agencies, RWAs have become key players in the service relationship. Studies of civil society in Bangalore and Chennai (e.g. Harriss 2005, Narayanan 2005, Coelho and Venkat 2009) have commented on the class character of this sphere of civic and social associations. Studies of urban transformations in neoliberal India broadly concur on the dominance of middle class associations in the invited spaces of citizen consultation, deepening the exclusion of the urban poor (Ranganathan, Bawa, Zerah, Tawa Lema Rawal, Harriss, etc). These studies also remark on the conscious distance that middle class associations maintain from the sphere of local politics. This mode of collective action has been characterized by Nair (2004) as social municipalism, which she defines as “citizen-initiated involvement in municipal affairs which aims to bypass or correct the electoral machine”. Harriss (2007) and others locate these new collective actors within the ambit of the “new politics”, an emerging project of partnership between the reforming (or “post-liberalization”) state, private capital and sections of civil society, aimed at reclaiming

urban governance from the messy and dirty dealings of electoral democracy organized around political parties and mass movements.

RWAs are encouraged and promoted by the state as instruments of what Joshi and Moore (2004) call “institutionalised co-production”, to maintain and manage facilities for the state. The Bhagidari scheme launched by the state government of Delhi in early 2000 is a prominent instance of this approach. However, scholars have pointed to the exclusive nature and the segmenting effects of the Bhagidari scheme (Mehra 2013). Batra (2013) for instance, pointed out that while the scheme only covered authorized colonies, which account for about a quarter of Delhi’s population, it gave significant clout to middle class agendas of remaking neighborhoods and restricting the entry of unwanted sections of the urban public. Lama Rewal (2013) analyzes Bhagidari as a “neopopulist” scheme, differing from traditional populism in that here the direct personalized overtures from the power center are targeted toward the middle classes rather than the poor, and made in the service of neoliberal policies rather than in a welfare provision mode. Both critics also show how it offered a model of decentralized participation designed to parallel and bypass, rather than integrate with and strengthen, systems of electoral democracy in Delhi. It weakened ties between councilors and the urban poor.

b. Diverse modes of citizen engagement with the state.

Indian cities display a range of diverse modes through which the state-civil society divide is straddled, traversed, challenged or erased on an everyday basis as citizens stake their claims on urban space and resources (Chatterjee 2004, Anand 2012, Menon-Sen and Bhan 2008)

Urban scholarship in India from the 2000s has analysed state-citizen relationships as strongly distinguished across the class divide. The concepts of “political society” and “civil society” outlined by Chatterjee (2004) have gained wide popular currency as useful ways to highlight two countervailing modes of relationship between the state and urban society in India (see, for e.g. Arabindoo, Coelho 2005, Harriss 2007). The first refers to the terrain in which masses of urban poor, largely squatters and slum-dweller who, perforce, exist outside legal and authorized systems of urban service delivery, stake their claims and assert their rights through political channels. The second refers to the orderly associational forms, modeled on western modernity and largely exclusive of the abovementioned masses, through which the legal citizenry, specifically the middle and affluent classes in India, organize themselves vis-à-vis the state.

Yet, scholars have also questioned the dualistic treatment of these two, largely heuristic categories as absolutely contrasting and mutually exclusive. Lama-Rewal (2007), Zerah (2007) and Coelho et al (2011) have complicated the narrative of RWAs maintaining a distance from the mainstream politics by spotlighting different forms of political engagement by neighborhood associations in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

And Coelho et al (2011) has shown how the masses of urban poor and lower middle classes are increasingly organizing themselves into the legal associational forms of civil society.

Kamath and Vijayabaskar (2011) also question the monolithic representation of the urban middle classes in this dualistic scheme by describing intra-neighbourhood battles between segments of the middle classes in Bangalore city from the late 1990s and showing how collective action by non-elite segments of the middle class are often aimed at countering the hegemony of elite segments. They also highlight how reformist calls for citizens' engagement, participation and responsibility in improving urban governance evoke varied responses from different segments of the middle classes. While the elite enter into relations of complementarity or co-production with the state, non-elite segments tend to tap into these invited participatory spaces to negotiate for recognition of informal claims on land or services. These divergent forms of engagement with the local state often produce tensions between different middle-class settlements in a given territory.

Mobilization around services and amenities in urban poor communities has been regarded as less systematic and organizationally anchored, more sporadic and direct action-oriented, than that in middle-class neighbourhoods. Harriss (2005) and Narayanan (2005) argue that protests and demands made through political mobilization under the aegis of party political agents are the dominant forms of collective action among the urban poor. Yet recent studies have found that not only are civil associational forms like the RWA increasingly adopted or coopted by the urban poor in their attempts to claim urban citizenship, they are also – and have been in the past – encouraged and promoted by the state as instruments of institutionalised co-production. Efforts to turn slum resettlement projects into proto-middle class localities are often designed around the establishment of RWAs.

In this study we propose a broad categorisation of state-citizen relations in the urban domain into the following modes: i) protest and demand (for amenities, services, regularisation and recognition); ii) challenge to the knowledge paradigms and practices of the state, and production of alternative paradigms and representations; iii) collaboration and co-production. These modes, however, are not conceived as discrete or absolute categories, rather they offer heuristic means of characterising relations that may often overlap or slide across categories, shift over time, or call for new categories or concepts. This is part of the conceptual work that this research proposes to carry out.

c. Informality in land tenure, settlement and access to services.

A third critical challenge to the effective functioning of citizen participation in the urban governance domain is the predominance of informality as a condition across all spheres of urban governance, including land tenure and settlement, labour and employment, and access to state services. This widespread “deregulation” of urban governance sets

various traps for the state-citizen relationship, and purveys a culture of flexibility, discretion and non-accountability in state practices that Anand (2012) has glossed under the concept of “municipal disconnect”.

Informality is a fundamental concept for understanding Indian urbanization. The concept of informality, which entered the development lexicon in the 1970s with Hart’s (1973) work on income opportunities in Ghana, has gained substantial traction and nuance in scholarship on the urban condition in India, and proved to be a very productive concept for theorizing the distinctiveness of Third World urbanisms. Drawing from empirical, ethnographic studies, urban scholars in India have developed a range of useful schematics to characterize the workings of the vast sphere of informality (Bhan 2013, Datta 2012, Anand 2012, Bhide 2009). The study of how de facto land tenure and urban development take shape, as opposed to the myth of the planned approach, has become a major theme in recent urban studies in India and in other parts of the developing world (Bhan 2013, Caldeira 2000, Robinson 2002).

One important insight of this field of studies is that the illegal, unplanned, non-conforming, and unauthorized are artifacts of law, planning and authority, produced by the highly selective and exclusionary lenses of planning authorities (Bhan 2013, Bhide, Anand, Coelho). Whether in land allocation, labour arrangements or provision of basic services, the “informal” has been shown to be not the margin, the outside or deviant from the norm. Rather, it is the formal that is the residual (Bhan, Roy 2005). In other words, the formal planned and regulated city has proved so inadequate to the realities of urbanization that it has created a shadow much bigger than itself. Shortfalls in planned housing stock especially for poorer sections, failures to notify adequate lands for population growth, exclusion of slums from the purview of plans, have all spawned settlements that are located outside the formal system; similarly formal employment is rapidly shrinking, creating vast armies of informal workers. Thus, the multiple manifestations of informality provide us with a strong critique of formal planning, governance and policy-making in cities.

Roy, a prominent theorist of informality, contends that informality is a pivotal feature of urbanization in India. Informality, she argues, is not about a lack of regulation, not a failure, not an outside to the legal and formal, but is, rather a calculated tactic of deregulation, an ongoing mode of “territorialized flexibility” where the law and the formal instruments of planning are “rendered open-ended and subject to multiple interpretations and interests” (p.80). This instability and idiosyncrasy, she posits, is the site of considerable state power.

Roy and others point to a common and mistaken tendency to conflate informality with the spaces and practices of the subaltern. The stigmas attached to informality, as a sphere of criminality, illegality, shadow and black economies, and despised vote-bank politics, are all due to informality being associated primarily with the poor. Yet, as

studies have pointed out, informality is as much a part of middle class and elite practice (Kamath and Vijayabaskar 2009, Baviskar and Sundar 2008). Surprisingly large proportions of “propertied” classes in Indian cities hold titles that can best be described as para-legal. Legal status is also often a dynamic attribute. As Baviskar and Sundar (2008) have recently pointed out, bids for regularization of illegalities by propertied middle and upper classes in Indian cities have been far greater in volume and value than all the encroachments of the urban poor. Thus, as Roy insists, the significant splinter in Indian urbanization is not between the formal and informal, the legal and extra-legal, but between different types and terrains of informality, typically the elite and the subaltern, which are subjected to very different treatments by the state.

This is an important distinction for the purpose of our study. If informal practices of poor urban communities have opened up access to urban space, livelihoods and basic services denied by the formal system, it has also rendered them vulnerable, located in zones of exception, dependent on clientilistic, contingent and constantly negotiated relations with shifting authorities. As urban reforms and renewal initiatives seek to formalize urban governance processes, scholars have noted a growing tendency for urban poor communities to seek legalization and formalization of their settlements through various means, including acceptance of resettlement (Datta 2012, Bhan 2013).

iii. Challenging state knowledge and practice and building alternative paradigms of knowledge and representation

Of the 3 modes of state-citizen engagement identified above, this study will focus on the latter two, namely ii) citizen challenges to state representations and knowledge frameworks, and iii) collaboration/co-production, as these can provide insights into how citizen engagement can create bottom-up, democratic and transformative solutions to urban problems.

Among the most important citizen initiatives in advancing democratic governance and accessing basic rights in recent years across the country are those that have sought to prise open the doors to information and challenge the processes of knowledge-production and expertise that underpin state actions. Many of these efforts are rooted in claims over embattled space, basic facilities, funds or knowledge. A strand of recent legislation has sought to empower individual citizens with information and voice in governance (e.g. the Right to Information Act, the NREGA, the Forest Rights Act). These laws have been enacted as a result of long struggles by people’s movements like the MKSS to force accountability from the state, particularly in issues fundamental to the lives and livelihoods of the poor, such as food, employment, land and forest rights, and government spending on public works and basic infrastructure. Control over acquisition and distribution of information, embodied in the RTI Act, has proved a particularly powerful weapon to arm a variety of people’s struggles. The RTI movement has spread rapidly into urban settings, where it is being used to access

information on issues ranging from leakages in the PDS to unauthorised occupancies of land deemed for public use.

These openings have in turn produced a growing body of work by urban activists and scholars in Indian cities that challenge representations and distributions of urban space, services and resources by the state. Using GIS mapping techniques and data gathered through RTI and community information, these initiatives assert alternative representations of space, and employ hard evidence to back their invocation of legal frameworks and protections in seeking redress for state injustices. These democratised modes of knowledge-production, dissemination and use are unsettling traditional boundaries that enclose categories of research, expertise and science (Maringanti, Raman, Kumar, Sekar,), and contributing to the deepening of democracy (Appadurai). In Chennai, for example, Kumar et al have documented fishers' challenges to the legality of representations and plans for coastal lands and communities in environmental impact assessments. Fishers have identified ambiguities in land use plans and maps to articulate an alternative mapping. These initiatives have arisen out of, and contributed to building, a coalition between residents of fishing villages and Chennai-based urban planners, legal experts, engineers and environmental activists (Kumar---). As Maringanti (2011: 64) has eloquently argued, "envisioning the right to the city as a fundamental human right, a demand for a just and sustainable social order where collective resources are respected and regenerated to support life, entails a democratic approach to the creation of knowledge about our cities."

iv. Co-production and collaboration in the Indian urban context

Co-production has been defined as "the provision of services through regular long-term relationships between professionalized service providers [...] and service users or other members of the community, where all parties make substantial resource contributions" (Bovaird, 2007: 847). This definition does not rule out differences in interests or conflicts between co-producers. Co-production between community members and governmental actors in the design and implementation of services is inherently a political process, as it redistributes power among stakeholders (Bovaird, 2007; Mitlin, 2008).

Given the complexity of urban realities and the diversity of state-society relations found in India as outlined above, collaboration or co-production inevitably comprise a range of modes and meanings. As pointed out above, public-private partnerships, participatory mechanisms, civil society mediations and even local political capital have been enlisted to embed financial disciplines at micro and meso levels of the urban polity by pioneering PPP innovations that were launched in the late 1990s in southern states of India (Vijayabaskar, Baidur). These cases illustrated how partnerships among various groupings of citizens, state agencies and business corporations could work as a

supplement to supply-side reforms, helping to convince users/consumers of the need to pay for capital schemes for basic infrastructure.

At the other end, however, co-production and collaboration have been studied in terms of the range of stealthy, informal transactions between lower-level bureaucrats and sections of the public (individuals or particular sections of communities) through which excluded urban residents secure access to basic amenities (Anand, Ranganathan, Coelho, Benjamin, Bayat 1997). Bayat's theory of the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary", like Benjamin's work on the "politics of stealth" and "occupancy urbanism", capture the domain of atomized, non-collective, but prolonged direct action of the urban poor, aimed at securing the basic necessities of life through illegal yet non-confrontational modes. These stealthy mobilizations may entail episodes of collective action, but usually lack a clear or consistent leadership, ideology or structured organization.

These matrices of informal relationships between excluded citizens, state functionaries and intermediaries of various kinds, yield a range of subterranean collaborations which constitute a form of *de facto* participation. (Bawa 2013). While aimed at surviving and improving the conditions of their lives, Bayat claims that these actions also advance the spaces and material gains of subaltern people in relation to the propertied and powerful. Scholars have come to recognize that the struggles of marginalised and excluded citizens for a foothold in the city have everywhere expanded the scope of democratic practice, and are continuing to produce new, varied notions of rights and new forms of participation and democracy, including collective notions of citizenship based on particular identities. Ranganathan (2013) describes a "co-constitution between managed techniques of participation, and more spontaneous, politicized acts of collective action that seek to co-opt the former, and to stake claim to the material bases of urban citizenship" (p.).

Benjamin's accounts of urban poor mobilizations to extend and defend their rights and claims is portrayed as not progressive in a strict sense, as it does not expand the claims of all but is essentially self-centered. Yet it tends to have progressive effects, in terms of expanding the sphere of democratic claims, holding back gentrification, widening the political base of participation, and politicizing issues of welfare, land, and services. Bayat, similarly, identifies several features of these movements that make them politically progressive: the struggles and gains are not at the expense of themselves or other poor, but of state and capital, they are creative and constructive, culminating in built-up settlements from nothing, they force authorities to extend services, and they cumulatively encroach upon several prerogatives of the state, including the established meanings of order, control, modernity and public space. All of this, he asserts, is not a politics of protest, but of redress. Thus, these analyses present the mobilizations of the urban poor as, in Neuwirth's (2004) words, an "unconscious, insurgent critique:

challenging the power structures while participating in it” (Neuwirth p.297, see also Appadurai’s discussion of “deep democracy”).

Against the backdrop of the growing discourse of “politics as the problem”, “vote bank politics”, etc, wherein accomodation of the poor is increasingly seen to be a political vote-bank strategy, the above analyses present the urban poor in more complex light than simply as victims or dupes of politicians. They are shown as strategic actors, caught within highly unfavorable and shifting structures of power.

James Holston deploys the concept of “insurgent citizenship” in Brazil to point to the emancipatory potential of the urban poor’s efforts to push at the barriers that keep them out of full citizenship. Holston shows how these communities, through long processes of land struggle and home construction on urban peripheries, have demanded new forms of egalitarian citizenship, which is ultimately transforming Brazilian politics.

These challenges to notions of rights and citizenship have created new mechanisms and instruments of democracy – new legal regimes and codes, new claims about the social function of property. All these struggles have resulted in new kinds of citizens being created, new sources of law, new forms of participation and new modes of politics. This study will examine whether and how co-production and collaboration activities contribute to democratizing the urban polity.

v. Boundary-spanning toward more inclusive, democratic and transformative urban practice

The concept of boundary spanning has its roots in organizational literature (see Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos, 2014; Van Meerkerk, forthcoming). Boundary spanners are specialized in negotiating the interactions between different systems (and their logic of operating) in order to realize a better ‘fit’. To effectively accomplish a better fit between different systems, boundary spanners are engaged in three main (and interrelated) activities: 1) connecting or linking different people and processes across system boundaries, 2) selecting relevant information on both sides of the boundary and 3) translating this information to the other side of the boundary.

Recent research in participatory governance processes has stressed the importance of boundary spanners in building trusting and sustainable relationships between community members and governmental actors (e.g. Frieling et al., 2014; Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos, 2014). Boundary spanners play an important role in aligning different activities, connecting relevant policies and processes, and translating practices across institutional boundaries. Boundary spanning activities across different boundaries are seen to be important in developing sustainable and effective co-production in urban governance.

In this research a boundary spanner is conceptualised as an individual or collective entity that interfaces between the community, the state, and civil society, or other bodies, in an attempt to bring about change (see van Meerkerk et. al. forthcoming). While boundary spanners may engage with responsibilities of ‘communication and coordination across intra-organizational bodies’, their aims and methods are rooted in context and vary on a case-by-case basis (ibid.).

While the concept of a boundary spanner is new in the Indian context, it calls attention to the role of intermediaries who leverage between the state and the community, particularly in the context of slums and low-income neighbourhoods. Inhabitants of urban informal settlements engage in brokered relations with the state through mediators such as politicians of varying scales, land developers, NGOs and so on. As pointed out above, these relationships are multidimensional and often contradictory, in line with the contradictions in the context within which they exist. As informal settlements become an increasingly accepted part of the urban fabric of India, and through the passage of time become home to second and third generation settlers; these processes of self generation and their interaction with the state become more and more complex and contradictory. CPR’s *Cities of Delhi* project, for instance, has documented how everyday life in varied typologies of informal settlements is ‘negotiated’ through a diverse array of actors, ranging from independent community members, elected representatives, and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). Very often, these actors are in conflict or avoid each other. In her cases, specific actors are approached for specific settlement level issues. The preliminary dynamics of this interaction (or lack thereof) of various on-ground actors has been explored through the lens of ‘boundary spanning’. The ongoing research suggests the need to further critically interrogate this concept in the context of Indian cities.

Chapter-III

Methodology

The major objective of this research is to arrive at a set of comparative insights and principles pertaining to processes of boundary spanning across varying contexts in cities in India. Theoretically, the research would seek to examine whether and how the concept of boundary spanning, originating from organizational literature and currently employed in international contexts, can provide a stronger grasp on the processes and determinants of everyday urban collective action and democratic practice in Indian cities. In terms of practice, the research would seek to provide insights and guidelines for more substantial participation and state-society engagement.

The major research questions are:

1. How is urban regeneration understood in different socio-physical contexts of Indian cities? What are the parameters of success and how do they differ across contexts?
 - The concept may range from very specific and short-term goals and objectives to longer term and more abstract aspirations and visions. The study would seek to capture the diversity of such conceptions, as articulated by different stakeholders, from communities of different types to corporate and private sector actors and state agencies at different levels. It would analyse whether and how these differences in concept may be related to specific conditions in which the urban is experienced, and how these concepts inform collective action and practice.
2. Which and what kind of boundaries are seen in the work by individual/collective entities/institutions engaged in urban regeneration? What is the significance and role of boundaries?
 - a. Boundaries encountered and seen as necessary to transcend/modify?
 - b. How are boundaries redefined or unmade?
 - c. How are new boundaries shaped?
3. How can the relationships between the state and urban communities in Indian cities be understood and characterized, and how do boundary-spanners (individual or collective entities) emerge out of and/or influence these relationships
 - a. The research would seek to develop a typology of state-community relationships across different types of urban settlements and various conditions of tenure. These may not be distinct or discrete modes of engagement, but may constitute multiple conditions and strategies along

- a continuum from protest and challenge to collaboration and co-production, which may also shift over time as movements get built, institutionalized, or change in different ways.
- b. To track changes over time in such relationships and practices, to identify trends, dynamics, ruptures, defining moments.
 - c. To identify the role of boundary spanning activities in determining these relations. This would entail mapping the range of boundary-spanners, the boundaries that they span, their activities, and the outcomes.
4. What are the determinants of effective boundary-spanning activities for urban regeneration?
- a. Once a range of boundary-spanning types have been identified and characterized, the research would seek to identify the factors that account for the outcomes in selected cases where significant co-production has been achieved or collective action processes built with boundary spanners.
 - b. The research would examine the goals, motivations and orientations and performance of boundary spanners (and whether and how these have changed over time).
 - c. How do members of communities and government assess the success of their peers in boundary spanning activities?
 - d. How do aspects of urban social structure and hierarchy, such as class, caste, religion/ethnicity, gender, legality of tenure, longevity of settlement, etc factor into the effectiveness of boundary-spanning activities?
 - e. What are the specific circumstances, capacities/skills, and knowledges that account for effective boundary-spanning?
 - f. What are the factors or dynamics that hinder or constrain boundary-spanning in different contexts? Where there have been conflicts, how have boundary spanners responded to surmount them?
 - g. How does the urban political domain and policy and institutional context interface with and influence the outcomes of boundary spanning?

The focus of this study is on a practice- understanding of citizen- state interfaces, from multiple perspectives – the boundary spanner’s, particular groups of citizens as well as from the outside. This demands a qualitative approach with several cycles of iteration built in. Previous research pertaining to boundary spanning in Netherlands and UK (Meerkerk et al 2014), asserts that boundary spanners “must be understood in reference both to their institutional and organizational context and to their individual attributes” (Baker, 2008: 207). According to Stake (1980) and Yin (1994) case studies are specifically suitable for studying the context surrounding the particular phenomena under investigation. A second advantage of case study research is that case studies are

fundamentally iterative, not static (Adelman et al., 1980; Baker, 2008). This facilitates the examination of events in which key variables are subject to change.

A workshop in the initial stage of the research led to a detailed methodology shared across researchers from the three cities. This was critical as the nature of inquiry is qualitative and comparative. The concept of boundary spanning itself was reworked to suit the Indian context where urbanisation and the role of state, its relationship with citizens were not fully settled. Parameters for identifying cases and sites were also finalised in this workshop. These included cases that would be based on emergent issues in each city. At this stage, the decision to include at least one resettlement site as a comparative case was also taken, given the rising importance of the issue in Indian cities. Given that the scales of each case site varied considerably, it was decided to follow a common approach rather than tools. The initial phase of field work in the sites yielded a mapping of issues, projects and boundary spanners. The next phase engaged with boundary spanners, the change oriented actions initiated by them, outcomes of these efforts and the methodology for the same. The effort was to situate the boundary spanner and the way the person/organization understood the circumstances, their motivations and analysis of context. The next layer was to understand the various perspectives on these actions and the dynamics of the same. The methods of study comprised identification of key informants, individual interviews and life histories, community profiles and focus group discussions.

Comparison, in the context of this study requires an insight into practice contexts which were dynamic. It was therefore approached as an ‘inside- outside’ strategy which attempted to glean from how practitioners /entrepreneurs operate in particular contexts and why. Each of these phases was accompanied by across city workshops and site visits which enabled the entire team across the three cities to ask new questions, compare, reflect and identify new thematics for further exploration. The approach has thus been inductive and contextual-comparative.

Chapter-IV

Findings

This report will summarise the broad scheme of our analyses and findings in the form of some common themes that have emerged from the case studies. The report is organised as follows. Section 1 recapitulates the profile of our seven cases with an explanation of why they were chosen for this study. Section 2 lays out the various kinds of boundaries – physical, spatial, social or other – that are encountered, asserted or mobilised in the process of pursuing the aspirations of people in these settings. Section 3 describes various dynamics of crossings, spanning and negotiating these boundaries, and ends with some insights on what these dynamics tell us about the politics of community-based urban regeneration. Section 4 comprises the detailed case studies.

Section 1: Profile of Cases and their Relevance to the Research Topic

1,2,3. Three resettlement sites

In the three state-built resettlement sites in our study, some consistent themes emerged. Prominent among them were initial inadequacies in services and amenities and resulting poor living conditions, but also changes and improvements over time brought about through residents' mobilisations and partnership with catalysts from outside – NGOs, activists, the press – to force the state to respond to needs, or to co-produce services with the state or other service providers. In all three settlements, problems of safety, stigma, and various degrees of social alienation from the sites persist, although current regeneration projects pursued by residents revolve around aspirations of “decent neighborhoods”, upward socio-economic mobility, and, in some cases, real estate value enhancement.

Kannagi Nagar, the largest state-built resettlement colony in Chennai, is beset with contradictions and complexities. Comprising more than 25,000 families evicted from around 90 different sites in the city, it has undergone dramatic transformations in the 17 years since its launch in 2000 and is currently projected by the state as a success story in bringing about development through partnerships between state agencies, NGOs and the community. Yet, the site remains a ghetto of poverty and crime and has continued to earn notoriety for its high incidence of murders, drug and gang activity, and the criminalisation of youth. Behind the transformed façade of this neighbourhood lies a complex of recidivist problems that are rooted in weak livelihoods, ghettoization of poor families, stigma, and internal tensions and divisions within the colony. Histories of change in Kannagi Nagar veer between accounts of dramatic improvements in living conditions over time, and accounts of ongoing and intractable problems that

trap residents into a vicious cycle of discrimination and disadvantage. These histories also diverge among different micro-neighbourhood in the resettlement colony, and by gender, generation (youth versus older people), caste, duration of residence in the settlement, and other factors. This uncertain urban transformation makes this a compelling case to study boundaries and their spanning.

Bhalswa resettlement colony is located in the northwestern edge of Delhi, along the National Highway-44 to Haryana, and in close proximity to the Bhalswa landfill site. Residents from *jhuggi-jhopri clusters* (JJs) across Delhi such as in Rohini (Sector-13), Lajpat Nagar, East of Kailash, ITO, and Nizamudin were relocated here on small plots of land in early 2000s. Families were relocated from between 8 to 30 km away. The colony is divided into two parts, JJ Colony Part 1 and JJ Colony Part 2, each housing five blocks. There is ongoing construction of EWS flats here; thus Bhalswa is a site of not only past but future relocations as well. Narratives of “we were thrown in a jungle” abound here as they do in other resettlement colonies in Delhi. So do histories of struggles over access to basic services like water and sanitation, and entitlements like ration. The case is important to understand boundaries spatially (specifics of a resettlement colony), temporally (incremental service provision), as well as discursively in terms of state-citizen relationships and forms of knowledge-production.

Vashi Naka is the largest rehabilitation site in M-East ward, the poorest ward of Mumbai located at the North East edge of the city, comprising both in-situ and ex-situ rehabilitation. Over 16,164 households of Project Affected Persons (PAPs) from various projects and schemes of multiple state institutions from all parts of Mumbai have been rehabilitated here over more than ten years. The rehabilitation policy restricts the sale, purchase and rent of tenements for ten years from the date of rehabilitation. The end of the moratorium period provides a unique opportunity to explore and understand the issues, challenges, aspirations and community efforts to achieve their aspirations. We undertake a comparative study of two neighborhoods within Vashi Naka – the in-situ Charisma Colony and the ex-situ MMRDA colony -- located on either side of the Harbour railway track. While in-situ rehabilitants engaged closely with the rehabilitation process at each step from construction to tenements allotment, ex-situ rehabilitants were living in a transit camp and were rehabilitated directly in newly constructed tenements. In both cases, resettled families have been pushing across all types of boundaries to co-create spaces, projects and knowledge systems.

4, 5. Two fishing villages: Kaatukuppam, Chennai, and Trombay Koliwada, Mumbai.

Urban fishing villages in India are caught in interlocked liminalities – spatial, economic and cultural. Poised at the edges of land, in contexts of rapidly transforming livelihoods and political-economic changes, they are often forced to redefine the boundaries of their identities and communities. Our study has chosen two fishing villages – Kaatukuppam

in Ennore, Chennai, and Trombay Koliwada, Mumbai, both caught in the cross-hairs of multiple urban infrastructure and/or industrial projects, which have destroyed natural resource ecologies of the area, undermined fishing as a livelihood, and given rise to multiple contestations over land, water and their boundaries.

The creek fishers of Kaatukuppam in Ennore in north Chennai have faced, since the 1960s, an accelerating onslaught of destruction from heavy industrial and infrastructure projects including numerous thermal power plants, a coal container terminal, a shipbuilding yard and a port. The steady destruction of the creek and the struggles of Kaatukuppam's fishers against these developments remained invisible to the rest of the city until they became part of a campaign called 'Save Ennore Creek', which brought the fishing village into partnership with environmental activists and other fisher communities from Chennai. Behind the campaign mobilisation, however, are other boundaries, reflecting sets of internal tensions. The customary fisher panchayat, which has gained voice and visibility through the environmental struggle is also critiqued internally for its disconnect with the aspirations of sections of the village, like women, youth, and non-fishers. This study of boundaries and crossings illuminates the aspirations and negotiations of a fishing village caught in processes of destructive yet dynamic urbanisation.

Trombay Koliwada is an aboriginal fishing community on Mumbai's eastern coast. Understanding Trombay Koliwada through the lens of boundary spanning requires grasping the clash between the remembered boundary of the community (that spans adjoining customary use lands and sea rights), and the much smaller boundary recognized by the state which comprises the settlement (gaothan) encircled by the road. The case follows a regeneration project -- the BEST land struggle -- to understand notions of boundaries and processes of spanning. Each of them can be understood as an effort by different collectives of the community to enlarge and reclaim the land/sea perceived as once part of their village. We propose that every act of remembering the earlier boundaries reveals political agency. With repeated performance, Trombay Koliwada socially constructs the idea of an 'imagined fishing community' despite the fact that few people still fish today. We argue that this regeneration effort can be seen as a project of reclaiming that enhance the claims of the community as a whole, even as it also reveals re-workings of the notion of 'community'. Such a re-fashioning of 'community' implies increasing individualization (which emphasises internal divisions, competing claims and exclusions) as well as new forms of community solidarity.

6. Conflicts over urban waterbody restoration: Korattur eri (irrigation tank) in Chennai

Urban water bodies are in the midst of a churning. They are no longer valued for their original use values (such as irrigation in the case of the eri), but for an altered set of urban ecological functions (drainage and groundwater recharge) and for their symbolic

capital as infrastructural markers of a world-class city. While waterbodies across several cities in India have been taken up for restoration and rejuvenation by state agencies, they also catalyse a range of citizen-led environmental actions for restoration, at various scales, from the very local (communities living along a particular lake), to city-wide platforms targeting multiple water bodies and reaching out to wider audiences. Perspectives, aspirations and actions of these groups are also diverse, ranging from valuing eris as vital local resources to be protected for water security and flood protection, to visions of aesthetic spaces, tourist hubs, biodiversity hotspots, or open spaces in a congested city. While some civil society actors engage in direct clean-ups, others carry out audits and demand action from state agencies to enforce pollution laws. In the process, these groups have also come up with new ways of engaging with the state and generating alternate knowledge regarding eris and their uses. Meanwhile, as the banks of waterbodies have typically been sites where property-less urban migrants have settled over time, their restoration poses threats of eviction for long-settled urban communities that lack formal claims to their land and housing.

The Korattur eri offers a good case to study the struggles over this emerging area of urban regeneration and the boundaries that get erected and challenged in the process. Korattur eri (comprising 594 acres) in northwestern Chennai is one of the largest water bodies within the city limits. The eri is currently witnessing the unfolding of two different processes. Firstly, over a 1000 working class families residing on the eri foreshore have been resisting eviction orders slapped on them by the PWD for over a decade. In 2009, despite their long history of occupation spanning 3 decades, the Madras High Court ruled to restore Korattur Eri to its original size and evict settlers inside the boundary. Their struggle has been compounded by the fact that the implementation of eri restoration activities have also actively begun since 2015 with funding from the MoEF. These processes could be viewed as representing two competing valuations of the eri – one centered on the eri as a purely natural body versus one that invokes histories of settlement and urban ecological transformation to claim rights to space in the city. One way to understand the confluence of these processes is via the concept of boundaries and boundary spanning. This case study traces the formation of new urban communities around the lake, the articulations of their goals and aspirations, their engagement with the state/other communities, boundaries generated thereof and the emergence of boundary spanners.

7. Incremental housing improvements in a mixed-tenure neighbourhood in East Delhi.

Our final case study examines the region east of the Yamuna river in Delhi, which is marked by a patchwork of settlements with varying legal status, including jhuggi jhopri colonies, planned colonies, unauthorised colonies (UACs), regularised unauthorised (RUACs) and resettlement colonies (RCs). In the first phase of our fieldwork, which focused on UACs and RUACs (where physical boundaries were themselves blurred),

we found that while residents continue to make demands on elected representatives and government departments for services and infrastructure improvements, their articulations of urban regeneration emphasized more aspirational aspects such as beautification of neighbourhoods, crime control and housing improvements. In this second phase, we have focused on exploring housing improvement and redevelopment as a key form of ‘aspirational regeneration’ (Leary and McCarthy 2013: 9). Within this, we explore the tension between urban regeneration projects fuelled, on the one hand, by collective demands from the state for urban service improvements (e.g. through protests, rights-based negotiations, through RWAs), and on the other hand, those driven by more individualistic articulations about citizenship in neighbourhoods with varying forms of tenure, as expressed through improvements to housing. While the state-citizen boundary is typically articulated through legality and tenure status of land and housing, we focus here on the housing finance ecosystem that facilitates housing transformations in East Delhi. We find that housing finance institutions, small finance banks as well as trusts, and actors within these institutions, respond both to regulatory pressures as well as aspirational demands in unique ways. Two kinds of questions drive this enquiry: how does informal income, and informal tenure get documented? What kinds of boundaries are crossed in the process?

Section 2: Boundary Makings, Markings and Assertions

An analysis of boundaries offers a productive way of examining structures and the tensions that they invoke. Boundaries represent categories, which in turn reflect specific forms of order. What are the orders, categories and boundaries set up by diverse local projects of urbanisation, which may contest, resist, or reshape dominant urbanisms proposed/pursued by the state-capital complex? What are the internal boundaries that define relations of power within a community? Who asserts and defends what kinds of boundaries against whom? Who seeks to dismantle boundaries, or to span them? What are the effects? A focus on how boundaries are drawn, entrenched, redefined by local actors faced with engines of urban transformation, and the challenges and outcomes of such action, may yield a better understanding of the potentials and pathways of urban citizenship for people on the margins.

Boundaries with the Outside – Physical, Spatial and Social

The three resettlement colonies in our study were clearly bounded in spatial and physical terms. Spatially, they were separated from the city and from the previous residences of resettled households by significant distances – about 8 to 10 km in the case of Bhalswa in Delhi and about 25 km in the case of Kannagi Nagar in Chennai. While Kannagi Nagar, Bhalswa and Mumbai’s Vashi Naka resettlement colony are formally inside the city boundaries, they are located in marginal wards on the edges of the city. In the case of Bhalswa, the distance is compounded by disconnection in terms of poor transport and last mile connectivity. These spatial boundaries are acutely

experienced by residents of these resettlement colonies, as several continue to rely on livelihoods in the city, forcing difficult and costly boundary crossings on a daily basis. The reliance on the city has been surprisingly tenacious over time, but is gradually fading in the face of urban development in nearby areas. Yet, various forms of mismatch between the labour force resettled in these colonies and that demanded by industrial and commercial establishments in the vicinity has required substantial renegotiation, compromise, and often a drop in wage levels for workers in these colonies.

Physically, the boundaries of resettlement colonies are not only clearly drawn but materially significant in shaping the opportunities of residents. In Bhalswa and Kannagi Nagar, the concentration of mass scale state-built EWS housing in these sites erects a stigmatized boundary with the outside world, which gets reinforced by media representations highlighting crimes and conditions of squalor. This stigma continues, even after a decade or two, to negatively impact residents' abilities to secure employment, even in low-paying jobs nearby. Several residents report being turned away from jobs after hearing their address, and sometimes have to resort to lying about it. The spatial and physical boundaries thus amount to a ceiling on upward mobility for residents of resettlement colonies. It is telling that in Kannagi Nagar, the ultimate aspiration of many families is for their children is to leave the place in order to move up in life.

Temporal boundaries have also arisen as resettlement colonies have emerged as a constituent feature of 'world class' metropolitan development across India. Inside these sites, issues and concerns have shifted over time, from inadequacies of basic services and infrastructure to social, image-related and long-term aspirational concerns. Accounts of early days in Kannagi Nagar and Bhalswa recall wastelands or jungles. In Bhalswa, the achievement of incremental construction of G+1/ G+2 houses, many with toilets within, and in Kannagi Nagar, incorporation into the Corporation boundaries and the exponential pace of improvements that followed, have rendered these places habitable, although many inadequacies remain. But the long periods of time in which these improvements unfolded -- and the breaks, ruptures and stigma that this temporal lag created -- have formed a boundary, constraining current and future opportunities of residents.

Physical boundaries in fishing villages are paradoxical. On the one hand they are clearly defined, although not always visible to the casual eye. Kaatukuppam has, from the outside, become part of an undifferentiated sprawl of urban development along a main road. However, its physical boundaries are established and policed by the village panchayat, which also work to assert and maintain the distinctive identity, culture and everyday economic functioning of fishing villages. Despite its clear boundaries, Kaatukuppam, in contrast to other, smaller, creek fishing villages nearby, has non-fishing households living within the village itself, although they are rarely

acknowledged. There is little intermingling the fishers and these “outsiders”, who distance themselves from the former and do not share their sense of belonging to the place. Instead, they looked outward, to the Kathivakkam Main Road and its urban facilities.

Yet the question of physical boundaries in fishing villages is much more contested and complicated. The Trombay Koliwada case throws up at least three types of tensions around boundaries:

- i. *Remembered community vs physical boundary of settlement:* The Kolis, being traditionally fisher people, draw a remembered boundary of their village far beyond the physical ring road boundary of the settlement, and spanning not only land but also sea. However, these are not formally demarcated and officially recognised. Over the years, through community efforts, some lands outside their settlement area have been declared 'reserved' for community use, but due to conflicting public regulation (eg the CRZ), the community has never been able to formalise/actualize this claim. They therefore engage in practices of reclaiming that unsettle their given physical boundary.
- ii. *Fluid claims and overlapping jurisdictions of state agencies:* The state's institutional boundaries for the Koliwada are fluid, contested and overlapping. Multiple institutions (BARC, Revenue, Department of Salt, Maharashtra Maritime Board, Department of Forest) regulate, control, and claim the land surrounding the Koliwada. Some claims are more territorially fixed, such as Department of Salt but contested (between Centre, state and lessees of salt pan lands); some claims are fluid like forest department (as the mangroves grow, the jurisdiction of forest department grows too). Many older development plan (DP) reservations that were demarcated through community effort (eg fish market) are now in conflict with newer environmental regulations regarding protection of mangrove as 'reserve forest' under the Forest Conservation Act. Additionally, the community was denied its claim over fishing commons by the state government on the grounds that these lands were protected under CRZ, yet the same land was then transferred to the BEST for a bus depot. This institutional fluidity has led to considerable uncertainty about the future of reserved lands.
- iii. *Shifting ecological boundaries:* The natural system's boundary are changeable, also due to anthropogenic factors. Engineered landscapes of existing and proposed sea infrastructure have led to changing tidal movements and fish patterns, shallower seas due to deposition, increasing mangroves and narrowing sub creeks. Fishers claim that BEST's reclamations of land, the Trombay fishing society's construction and extension of the Navy Jetty, and large infrastructure projects have caused siltation, making it the perfect environment for mangroves to grow. Mangroves have spread on lands that were formerly fishing commons, thus altering the interdependence that fishers once shared with the wetlands. While fishers earlier protected the mangroves, realising their importance for their livelihood and for uses

like fuel and equipment, now they cannot touch them due to inflexible new protective regulations that frame fishers as encroachers in a pristine wetlands environment. Additionally, increasing pollution, by leachates from the Deonar dumping ground entering their fishing grounds at high tide, has led to catches of plastic and garbage, polluted fish, and a changing embodied experience of what it means to fish as an artisanal fisherman. All these have reinforced the community's turn towards seeing land as their future, and motivated claim-making with respect to lands seen as commons.

Physical boundaries thus often turn out to be critical in shaping struggles over urban resources. This was seen graphically In the case of Korattur Eri. Eris are complex socio-natural hybrids whose boundaries are influenced by a multitude of factors – ecological, societal and political. However, the case study shows how state agencies and court judgments conceive of eris as possessing an original and “natural” boundary, deemed to be sacred. This is also echoed by activists working on eri restoration. Some even demand demarcation of this boundary with permanent structures. On the other hand, long term residents on the eri banks remember different, shifting, boundaries including the eri foreshore areas. Informal settlers on the banks attempt to redraw these boundaries as part of their struggles to retain their housing, and have articulated their demands through calling into question the physical land-water interface, highlighting the shifting nature of the boundary over time and seasons, and arguing that the eri no longer retained the characteristic of a waterbody.

Here too, we find the fluidity of government policies related to eris, regularization of informal settlements, and service provision to informal settlers. Eris were long viewed solely as real estate in state policy. The state was the largest convertor and constructor of large scale structures (bus stands, apartment complexes) on eri beds. At around the same time, official state policy towards informal settlements on water course poromboke(lands that could be used for food production for part of the year) lands was defined by vacillation and ambivalence. The state routinely sent conflicting policy signals with respect to occupation of government poromboke lands. From the 1970s till 2007, different state governments of Tamilnadu passed three Government orders (in 1974, 2003 and 2007) to evict encroachments on poromboke lands. However, such orders would soon be followed by others reversing them and allowing regularization of encroachments under certain stipulated conditions (In 1975, 2000 and 2006). It was the enactment of the 2007 Tank protection Act that brought an end to the ambivalence. Yet, even this was followed in 2008 by a Government order to regularize encroachments. The fluidity of policies permitted certain sections to bypass perceived legal boundaries. The state also actively provided recognition and services to informal settlers (identification cards, ration cards and even street lights) thus endowing their occupation with a sense of legitimacy.

Political, Institutional and Social Boundaries.

Local community action typically operates on the basis of boundaries that define who constitutes the community, and can produce exclusions and “others”. A good example in our study is the Korattur Eri Protection Group. The emergence of bottom-up citizen-led eri protection movements can be seen as offshoots of a growing urban environmental consciousness, and a response to the state’s apathy towards water bodies. These movements offer newer ways of community engagement not just with urban “nature” but also with state agencies. Using the actions of Korattur Lake Protection Trust, this report traces the formation of a “new urban community” around the lake, the articulations of their goals and aspirations, their engagement with the state/other communities and the pitfalls associated with these efforts. The membership of this association is diverse: while some trace their ancestry in the neighbourhood to more than four generations, others are newer residents. Members also hold varying perspectives on eri preservation, which are reflected in the varied activities that the group engages in. Some members have been active in citizen monitoring of pollution, documentation of the eri’s biodiversity and organizing weekly clean-ups and festivals/activities centered on eri protection. Others have been active in demanding accountability from state agencies such as the PWD or the Pollution control Board/Corporation. Conflicts emerge during weekly meetings, and provoke debates and discussions, which do not always lead to amicable resolution. While the group has been successful in forging new alliances among older/new residents, and even members of other eri protection groups (such as that of the nearby Ambattur eri), it has been unwilling/unable to include demands of the foreshore settlers. Similarly, the group has not offered any formal environmental critique of the state’s restoration plans, some of which (like plans to have boating facilities) could have adverse impacts on water quality and the ecology of the eri.

Firm social boundaries have been created among stakeholders on the eri’s edge, due to the perceived illegality of foreshore residents. The persistent criminalization of foreshore settlers, despite their long history of occupation, has rendered impossible any dialogue to constructively address their demands for housing. Members of eri protection groups and environmental activists consistently cite the Madras HC eviction order to term them “illegal encroachers” and insist on their collusion with corrupt officials/politicians. Such exclusions overlook the role of the state’s policy (or lack thereof) towards informal settlements.

In resettlement colonies, the state’s prominent role as project proponent, builder and (at least in Delhi and Chennai) key operations and maintenance manager has created an everyday structure of accountability with a hard and high boundary between the state and residents. Action for improvements thus requires crossing or spanning this boundary, which has in turn involved the intervention of NGOs, activists, and a range of intermediaries. Protests, agitations, press coverage, political interventions have been

assembled over the years to penetrate this boundary. This study examines how this boundary has been differentially negotiated across the three sites and across time in each case, and the role of various intermediaries. In Vashi Naka, access to and use of space in the resettlement sites constitutes one of the most contested boundaries among different stakeholders, namely the state, developers and residents. There are diverse spaces such as open plot, vacant flats and building, redeveloped common sitting place, corridor in the building, vacant place under the flyover, open space along the boundary wall, non-demarcated parking spaces along the either side of the road etc, and each space has different meanings. The state and developers refuse to relinquish control over these spaces and seek ways of expanding and utilising them, while residents struggles to pursue their interests.

In the case of housing improvements in East Delhi, *regulatory boundaries* (formal/informal incomes and regular/irregular settlements) figure in complex ways. First, despite Delhi's complex categorisation of settlements, there is a blurring of spatial boundaries and a lack of clarity about where one type of settlement ends and the other begins. Further, it is not clear how the notions of land tenure as defined by *spatial regulatory regimes* like the master plan map onto *financial regulatory regimes* followed by housing finance players. In order to explore the flow of finance for housing and home improvements, we trace the boundaries of formal/informal income as well as formal/informal tenure. We find different burdens of proof and processes of documentation for various types of financing mechanisms. An organisation's lending operations in specific areas is determined by its regulatory structure: while housing finance companies do not operate in unauthorised colonies due to National Housing Bank (NHB) regulations, micro-finance initiatives can be more flexibly adapted to various spatial categorisations. Everyday operations of these different organisations, are therefore, enmeshed in a differential regulatory and spatial landscape.

Here, then, three types of boundaries relevant to housing finance are studied: state-citizen (how regulation impacts housing), market-citizen (how finance companies service citizens' demands for housing finance), and state-market (how the regulatory climate impacts the other two boundaries). Since the settlements in this study face regulatory hurdles to formal housing finance, the finance ecosystem is found responding to these boundaries in innovative ways. A range of institutions are in the fray: (a) Micro-Finance companies (MFCs) and Small Finance Banks (SFBs) many of them originating as NGOs and crossing over from the NGO space to micro-finance, like Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT), and housing finance space, like Sewa Grih Rin Ltd.; (b) Gold Loan companies that do not monitor end use, thereby operating as home improvement finance in some cases; (c) Housing Finance Companies, which are regulated by NHB and geared towards formal sector lending exclusively for the housing market.

Finance players with origins in the not-for-profit sector are embedded within communities, have experience working closely with the state (e.g. through CBOs), and leverage this experience in their work. On the other hand, housing finance companies entering this new market of customers with informal tenure and finance, rely on ‘business correspondents’ in the microfinance sector who have an intimate understanding of these communities from their work on savings schemes, personal loans etc. The boundaries between state, market, and citizens are therefore, fluid, overlapping, or, as in the first case, embedded.

Microfinance initiatives of MHT leverage, on the one hand, the organisation’s role as an extension of the state (through its network of CBOs), and on the other, its intimacy with communities as a not-for-profit. SGRL draws on field areas with existing SEWA interventions, while branding and positioning itself somewhat differently. Both MHT and SGRL, however, represent their work as a response to community demands and in the community’s interest, and in doing so, distinguish themselves from formal banks and moneylenders. Lamont’s notion of “boundary work,” that is “constructing a sense of self-worth by interpreting differences between themselves and others” (Pande 2009:157) is relevant when we look at how HFC staff construct and articulate their work as different from formal banks, as “helping people” {“hum chahte hain ki beheno ke paas suvidhaaen honi chahiye” (we want that our members should get the services) at MHT and “humein duaaien milti hain (we get blessings from people) at SGRL”}.

Internal Boundaries

In resettlement colonies, internal boundary-making and marking become immediate and long-term projects because of the radical mix of households and communities settled there.

In Kannagi Nagar, which houses people from over 90 different slums and colonies in the city, there are clear lines drawn across clusters of blocks, defining distinct micro-neighborhoods. Each area has a distinct identity of its own. Different relocation packages, varying socio-economic backgrounds, and historic animosity have created an atmosphere of hostility between some areas. This social geography has its roots in the way that allotments were made (where people relocated from a particular area were clustered in one section) but is now shaped by a host of new criteria related to the idea of “decent neighborhoods”. A community mapping exercise we conducted looked more closely at the overlap of spatial and socio-economic boundaries within the community. We found that, for example, Pudupettai and Ezhil Nagar, areas notorious for violence and drugs, were also areas described as not well maintained, with residents characterized as less ‘decent’, less ‘clean’, of a lower class. All of this was reflected in market value (for sale and tenancy) of the houses.

In the Vashi Naka tenements in Mumbai, community rebuilding efforts are also built on a consolidation of identities, which underpin social relations and political negotiations. In the initial phase, ex-situ rehabilitants had to transcend their geographical affiliations and communal identities, but those patterns have begun to figure more strongly with reconciliation of fact that this is their new home where they must live. New alignments are emerging which are more class based, but also intermingled with ethnicity, caste, language, and religion. The alignment along identities reflects in the functioning of Community Housing Societies (CHS). Political affiliations and negotiations also take shape along these lines. The creation of the CHS under the rehabilitation process has profound long term implications for the social organization of rehabilitants. This body has become the formal institution with legal validity and local acceptability to mediate between the state and community members. It has also given rise to multiple power centres, with financial resources and a certain degree of power to enact and implement the law within the community, using links with political representatives and parties. It works as a shock absorber between the state and residents, with possible effects of defusing discontent towards state institutions. The CHS opens up new horizons in some respects, but also erects boundaries in other ways.

In fishing villages, struggles against destructive developments, or mobilisations to make collective claims, tend to hide or suppress internal boundaries and tensions. In Kaatukuppam, while village leaders focus their energies on the revival of the creek and fishing livelihoods, there is a section of people in the village, including men, women and youth, who are sceptical of the future of fishing, and focused on finding opportunities for alternative livelihoods. Two types of institutions have long governed, and continue to play an important role in, the everyday lives of fishing villages in Chennai: the “traditional” fisher panchayat and the modern state-linked institution of the Fisher Cooperative Society. Urbanisation has brought complex changes to the structures and roles of both these institutions, altering their forms and scope of authority, and sometimes dissolving the boundaries between them. These institutions figure as important boundary-spanners in the story of struggles and the pursuit of aspirations of villages like Kaatukuppam. Both play a pivotal role in struggles against the state and industries, but also in negotiations with them. Some functions of the panchayat have altered with the entry of state and party political institutions into the fishing village. Changes in the nature of the panchayat are broadly captured by the change in terminology from “oor panchayat” to “oor nirvagam”. The latter refers to an organisation that manages the village affairs, rather than an overarching decision-making and governing institution. Leadership is not hereditary anymore. The Chettiyar and Panchayathars, hereditary caste leaders, are now replaced by “Nirvagis”, 12 people who are annually “selected” to the office. The selection occurs in a formal meeting with all village members, and the Oor Nirvagam is formally reconstituted each year after the selected nirvagis are approved by the village members. Yet there are several overlaps and continuities. Sons of the Panchayathars under the Chettiyar regime continue to hold a special status, accepted as ‘permanent members’ of the nirvagam.

Membership of the Fisher Cooperative Society is technically based on occupation, although in practice, village members no longer engaged in fishing still hold membership. The cooperative society today works hand-in-hand with the Oor Nirvagam. The leader of the fishermen cooperative society now takes a frontal role in negotiations with the state and industries in the area. There is also a fisherwomen cooperative society, the only institution that has female members. Members of this society includes all the women who belong to the fishermen caste. However, this institution currently has no role other transferring funds to fisherwomen under various schemes. It has not been able to do anything about the declining livelihood of fisherwomen.

In Trombay Koliwada, increased uncertainty over livelihoods and enhanced stakes in land have also led to re-alignments of power among community institutions and boundary spanning/erasure processes internal to the community. Three community institutions are important: the Fishing Society, the Koli Kings, a newer youth organisation, and the Gaonkari Panchayat, the traditional governance structure of the Koliwada. The power struggles between these competing social institutions reveal internal efforts by splinter groups to control the community and its commons. This can be seen via the emergence of Koli Kings who claim and use such common lands for creating solidarity around sports and culture; the revival of the Gaonkari Panchayat in a new avatar of resolving disputes around claiming of common lands by different community members; and the claiming of 'reserved' lands by the Fishing Society through the construction of a fish drying yard that is not used for fish drying but serves as a means of controlling the commons.

Section 3: Boundary Crossings and Spannings

This section provides some illustrative instances of boundary crossings that have emerged across our cases – it is not exhaustive.

In Korattur, state efforts to evict untitled settlers on the western banks of the eri has encountered considerable on-ground resistance from affected communities. In an effort to assert their rights to housing, communities have confronted the state over the years in myriad ways, including direct action, street protests and judicial activism. They have formed new associations and strengthened older ties with political parties/leaders. In the process, they have generated or compiled a large body of new knowledge about eris and about housing rights, which challenge state assertions. They have presented these findings in various fora, both formal and informal, including courts, public consultations and meetings with political leaders. A range of instruments and processes of boundary spanning are evident in this case:

- i. *Mapping/Documentation of use-rights.* The residents consistently insisted during site visits by external researchers/agencies (and through photo documentation) that

the land that they occupied could no longer be termed as a water body, given the distance of the land-water interface from their dwelling area. The residents also argued that water in the Korattur eri was declared unfit for drinking by the Chennai Metro water and sewerage board in 2003, and hence the eri itself had fallen into disuse. In addition, the settlers also hoped to capitalize on ambiguities and discrepancies present in the state's policy stand on encroachments in government lands – specifically government orders that regularized encroachment. They also documented state-provided services (identification cards, ration cards, street lights) and tax receipts (property tax, water and drainage tax, electricity bills) to prove their long history of occupation in the neighbourhood. One group of residents had mapped the extent of patta and non-patta lands in their neighbourhood to showcase the fact that their neighbourhood was in fact sandwiched between two patta lands and hence could not be redeemed as a water body (Figure 1). Finally, they presented data on the extent of occupation in Korattur (~10%) vis-à-vis occupation in other eris in order to showcase Korattur as a special case.

- ii. *Demanding accountability from state agencies.* such as the PWD (using RTI to demand information on funding, or project reports), the Pollution Control Board or Corporation (through a case filed at the NGT to stop effluent inlet into Korattur).
- iii. *Leveraging political/bureaucratic connections.* The informal settlers use their connections with lower level officials at the revenue department to obtain maps/copies to bolster their case. They also approached political associations or local political leaders to present their case to more powerful leaders. They used their political connections to set up meetings with the then Chief Minister K. Karunanidhi who ordered the revenue department to review their appeal and report on the status of Korattur and Ambattur (Press clipping 2008). These strategies are also employed by Korattur Lake protection group to access Corporation services in garbage clearance.
- iv. *Strategically employing delaying tactics.* Informal settlers have refused to accept eviction notices, refused to provide biometric information to state agencies and thwarted public hearings, leading to their cancellation. This strategy, while buying time, is also utilized to garner support from political parties in times of impending elections. For example, the informal settler group awaited the announcement of local municipal elections in the state as that would delay the eviction orders.
- v. *Garnering support from Press and other civil society bodies.* Informal settlers have networked with NGOs/independent researchers who work on housing/resettlement issues in the city; they have approached a retired high court judge to seek advice on future legal options. These strategies are employed along with more traditional forms of support, such as petitioning various authorities, canvassing support from multiple political parties and state-level leaders, and street protests. However, in recent times, the local press coverage has been lukewarm to the cause of informal settlers, while they have given strong coverage to events organized by the eri

protection group, particularly because one of the core members of the group is associated with a local newspaper.

- vi. *Managing internal contestations/divisions.* While the informal settlers/residents show a united face to the state, deep divisions are ever present and occasionally surface, depending on differences in their real and perceived vulnerability to evictions.

Challenges to official boundaries inscribed on maps and plans are also seen in the cases of the fishing villages. In Kaatukuppam, the Save Ennore Creek campaign has shaped a redefinition and revalorisation of water and land forms – mangroves, salt pans and fishing grounds – that had been erased in the city's land-use maps. Mapping, local knowledge and action research tools were employed to contest official assertions about the creek. The instruments of struggle have been strategic, documentary, information-oriented, and constitutive of new knowledge claims. In Trombay Koliwada, for instance, the repertoire of boundary-spanning strategies include:

- i. *Actualizing DP Reservations.* During the 60s-80s, the Fishing Society managed to get land 'reserved' for their commons demarcated. In order to control this land for fishing use, the Society applied for a project to construct a fish drying yard. This projectised land is now controlled by the Society.
- ii. *Litigation, RTI applications and letter writing (media?).* The latter two strategies are increasingly relied on to collect information, create nuisance value and levy pressure.
- iii. *Exercising use rights.* While the BEST legally owns the land and has exercised its claim by levelling the land, it hasn't (been able to) build a boundary wall to restrict use by the community. Community members quietly and persistently continue to use the land for a variety of older (fishing-related) uses and newer (non-fishing or urban) uses. With time, newer uses are created and possibly newer communities build stakes in this land.
- iv. *Tapping into bureaucratic and political networks.* Manohar Koli is a civil engineer in MCGM and became an important boundary spanner by tapping into his networks of bureaucrats, contractors, developers, and knowledge of how to navigate the MCGM system; he also harnessed political support as the ex-Chairman, standing committee member, MCGM was his classmate.
- v. *Strategic collaboration and silence from community institutions.* Community institutions played key roles in spanning and unsettling boundaries: they are united in protecting community members from the state through collaboration and silence. They also engage in larger collaborations with federations of fishing villages to lobby the state government.

This case is important, then, not only for the fishers' intensity of resistance but the sophisticated adaptation of a repertoire of practices over 60 years. What is clearly witnessed across these the regeneration project spanning about 60 years is the change

in strategy from a formal, deliberate, confrontational engagement with the state through the courts to more quiet, everyday forms of "collective action of non-collective actors" (Bayat) that privileges use value in the present over legal rights that secure the future. Everyday, embodied practice therefore becomes important to understand how the fisher community works to unsettle boundaries in the contemporary context and thus imagine their remembered boundary anew.

The case also points to the re-working of the idea of 'community'. The process of reclaiming is a two- faced process. On one hand, it produces individualisation and fractures within the community. On the other hand, it apparently furthers the community's reclaiming efforts, with members of institutions acting to collectively protect and defend each other's claims to outsiders, although not all members benefit from claiming lands. Thus competing internal claims mean very real exclusion of the majority. The power struggles between competing social institutions and their leaders reveal internal efforts by splinter groups to control the community (and its commons) through its institutions.

The living histories of the fishing community reveal their knowledge of use rights on land/sea and the evolution of community sanctioned rules of the game. Harnessing both living histories and embodied, everyday practices, the fishers act to unsettle boundaries that are embedded in the dominant regime of property- based land development as the engine of urban growth.

In Kannagi Nagar, the transformation of the area over the years owes substantially to the spanning of multiple boundaries, internal and external, that have kept the settlement hemmed into a corner. The study traces a timeline of protests, mobilisations and campaigns through which the state was compelled to pay attention to the infrastructural needs and shortages of the settlement. An early example is the celebrated postcard campaign in 2009, which brought a wide range of activists, NGOs and local associations from across the settlement together into a single campaign. Following this campaign, activists from the city joined hands with local activists and NGOs to produce detailed plans of action for area intervention that were shared with the Corporation Commissioner and the range of officials responsible for service provision in the colony. This campaign mobilised and employed planning technologies that drew on local knowledge and rapid participatory assessments (spot surveys, community-based infrastructure mapping).

But the days of protests and campaigns appear to be over in this colony. As Kannagi Nagar has rapidly developed, opportunities for community participation and co-production have also reduced. Subsequent infrastructural improvements have been achieved through the leadership of a dynamic and entrepreneurial local politician, who drew on his powers within the city council to bring much-needed services and amenities to the settlement (such as a hospital), while building local partnerships and

constituencies within the settlement. And more recently, efforts emanating from Kannagi Nagar's police station appear to have launched a significant trajectory of change in terms of breaking the ghetto effect of youth crime and school dropout through interventions in the educational sphere. Shifting their approach from hardline policing to community policing, the police in Kannagi Nagar have attempted to break the cycle of crime in Kannagi Nagar through Boys and Girls Clubs that introduce extra-curricular sports activities and after-school activities for youth. They engage with school authorities, systematically reach out to parents, and mobilize support and resources from NGOs and corporations. Crime statistics in the last five years show a drop in petty crimes. The police's efforts also extend to training programs for women, medical check-ups, exam training, tuition and so on. Yet it has remained a more-or-less state-driven top-down approach.

In Mumbai's Vashi Naka rehabilitation colonies, initial struggles were around access to basic services such as water, transport, drainage, solid waste management, safety and security. These struggles were overt, collective, mass mobilisation-oriented, and disruptive, involving community leaders, political representatives and Civil Society Organisations. Long term aspirations, involving a new generation of actors, revolve around securing a better image and identity for the neighbourhood, increasing real estate value, ensuring safety and security by installing CCTV cameras, achieving segregation from nearby slums by erecting or repairing settlement boundaries, and establishing political alliances to promote and protect the interest of the community. They also revolve around organisational issues related to the Community Housing Society (CHS), the federation of CHS, regulations governing tax, sale, purchase etc, and convenience deeds. These longterm issues are addressed in subtle but procedural ways, driven by the CHS, using letters, formal grievance redressal mechanisms, and negotiations with political representatives. The image building of the settlement through new initiatives such as blood donation camp, communal harmony, encouraging sport events through new CBOs or rebranding the existing one. Social media plays an important role in communicating these new initiatives, especially among the new generations.

Insights from this case include the emerging role of the state as a broker. The state has withdrawn from direct engagement with citizens, and delegated the responsibility of rehabilitating PAPs to different agencies: to NGOs for eviction and resettlement, to developers for the construction of buildings and to the CHS for maintenance and management. This has caused confusion, overlapping of roles and responsibility, and lack of co-ordination among the implementing agencies.

In Bhalswa, a key boundary spanning initiative is the long history of Right to Information (RTI) campaigns, spearheaded by Pushpa from Lok Shakti Manch, an NGO working in the area. Though Lok Shakti Manch was only registered in 2014, has been working in the area since the time of resettlement. "*Ground zero se humne kaam*

kiya hai (We have worked from ground zero)”, Pushpa tells us. The RTI campaigns have been principally around issues of ration entitlements, and Pushpa claims that more than 350 women have filed RTIs in relation to their entitlements. Pushpa has educated women and other members of the colony on how to file RTIs. She has published a booklet describing the process, with sample RTIs and stories of colony members who have successfully brought change using RTIs. The group of women trained by Pushpa has also in the past put up a resistance against the proposal for cash transfers in lieu of rations. At the time of fieldwork in August 2017, she was in the process of running an RTI camp to mobilize women to file RTIs related to the cutting off of sugar from the ration card supplies. She also later met with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in this regard to push for demands. Based on information obtained through RTIs, and based on her reading of the Master Plan for Delhi, Pushpa argues that both the JJ colonies Part 1 and Par 2 should have 8-10 schools for the current population living there. She has also managed to get land sanctioned for some, based on this information obtained.

- a. *Accessing the state through “Jaan-pehchaan”.* The boundary spanning landscape in Bhalswa is composed of, at one level, institutions such as Lok Shakti Manch and the RWAs, and at another level, community leaders and individuals within these institutions. A third level is of elected representatives and their local volunteers such as those of AAP. But, in effect it is a few key individuals who help people claim entitlements like ration, and push for residents’ demands regarding the state of services. These individuals are like Kavita Ramakrishnan’s (2016) characterization of ‘*jaan-pehchan*’: someone who can get work done, and whom residents rely on for a range of everyday demands from the state. At the same time, this “jaan-pehchaan” is locally resident and embedded in the community, and leverages his/her political connections for enabling people access the state.
- b. *Boundaries and Geographies of RTI-activism.* While RWAs and “jaan-pehchaan” may be localised and place-specific, RTI-led activism is not. Lok Shakti Manch works also in other areas like Jahangirpuri in North Delhi, and while the specific issues may be different, the use of RTI as a tool is common. RTI-led activism pertinent across categories of informal settlements in Delhi, as CPR’s field engagement as part of various urban projects suggests. A consultative workshop on “Understanding the RTI in Urban Areas” brought to the fore the various ways in residents and their collectives and coalitions are using the RTI to push for information to advance campaign strategies. Participants at the workshop also acknowledged that information is a means to a larger goal, not an end in itself: “*Logon ko soochna mein kewal soochna ke vaastey excited nahi, soochna tab useful ki uske through unhe adhikar mil sake, RTI ka istemaal bastiyon mein har ek jagah jahan sarkaar has to provide services*” [“People are not excited by the prospect of information alone, information is helpful when it enables people to get their rights, RTI is being

used in bastis and elsewhere wherein services are expected from the government”].

In the East Delhi housing finance case, we trace how boundaries between individual and collective aspirations merge at the neighbourhood scale. Individual aspirations linked to home improvement/ownership (adding toilet or kitchen slab, installing water pump, adding floor, redeveloping plot) co-exist with collective aspirations (parks, parking spaces, etc.). These individuals may also be part of collectives like parties, RWAs, youth associations to express and negotiate community-based aspirations like better parks and better sanitation. These identities are leveraged strategically in the pursuit of home improvement finance. We therefore see borrowers suppressing individual identities so that they can harness collective identities (e.g. use group loans, microfinance) for home improvement needs. We also see organisations that emerge from collectivising movements, like Mahila Housing Trust and Sewa Grih Rinn Ltd, articulating their work as “help” as opposed to a service and referring to their customers as “members” (“saathi”) and “sisters” (“behene”). In this they behave differently from market-oriented finance players like HDFC or India Bulls.

Finance companies devise unique processes and methods to span the formal/informal boundary, specifically in the documentation of informal income by entrepreneurs and those working in the cash economy. Experience of working and understanding the informal sector is articulated as a positive factor in this regard. Households/individuals thus actualise and access housing finance, despite the hurdles of tenure and income informality, via the ‘workarounds’ found by finance institutions to regulations in highly complex landscapes. This demonstrates new ways in which the urban regeneration of informal settlements is shaped and achieved.

The regulatory boundary on tenure is more complex, and the degree of irregularity dictates the type of finance that can be accessed. Here too a gradation emerges, with the vector from formal to informal tenure mapping onto formal to informal finance options. Crossings are difficult within the formal finance space owing to stringent regulations.

While the state only comes in at regulatory level, finance institutions deploy the discourse of state to further their activities. This is seen in the use of state schemes like the PMAY (the credit linked subsidy component) and the SBM (construction of toilets) under the discourse of rights to achieve more neoliberal imperatives of individualised water, sanitation, and housing solutions.

Housing finance partnerships are at a nascent stage, but new strategies and coalitions are the way forward as we see success stories emerging from organisations that are experimenting with new ways of documentation and outreach.

Section 4: Case Studies

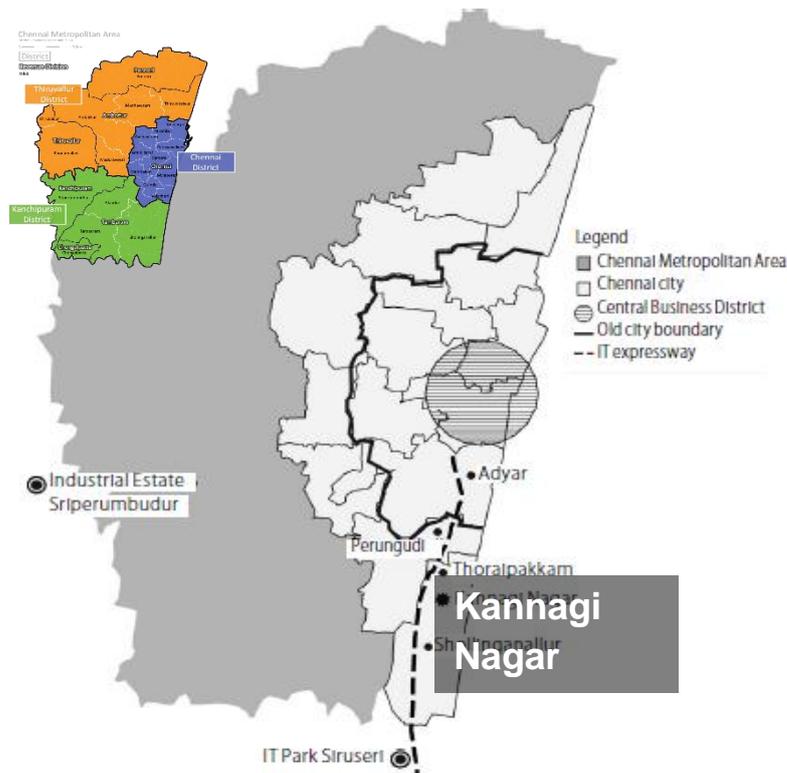
Case Study -1. Kannagi Nagar, Chennai

Introduction

Kannagi Nagar, the largest state-built resettlement colony in Chennai, is beset with contradictions and complexities. Comprising more than 25,000 families (over 1 lakh people) evicted from around 90 different sites in the city, it has undergone dramatic transformations in the 17 years since its launch in 2000 and is currently projected by the state as a success story in bringing about development through partnerships between state agencies, NGOs and the community. Yet, the site remains a ghetto of poverty and crime and has continued to earn notoriety for its high incidence of murders, drug and gang activity, and the criminalisation of youth.

Behind the transformed façade of this neighbourhood lies a complex of recidivist problems that are rooted in weak livelihoods, ghettoization of poor families, stigma, and internal tensions and divisions within the colony. Histories of change in Kannagi Nagar veer between accounts of dramatic improvements in living conditions over time, and accounts of ongoing and intractable problems that trap residents into a vicious cycle of discrimination and disadvantage. These histories also diverge among different micro-neighbourhood in the resettlement colony, and by gender, generation (youth versus older people), caste, duration of residence in the settlement, and other factors.

Kannagi Nagar was selected as a case because of these complexities in its trajectories of change, and because of the range of actors that have been involved in the process over the past 17 years, ranging from over 36 NGOs to various state agencies and a set of local CBOs and resident activists.



External boundaries -- Spatial

Kannagi Nagar, like the two other largest state-built resettlement colonies in Chennai, Semmencheri and Perumbakkam, is located off the Old Mahabalipuram Road (OMR), also known as the IT Corridor. When it was launched in 2000, the site was about 20 km outside the city, in Kanchipuram district. It was incorporated into Chennai's limits only in 2011.

Kannagi Nagar was built in phases, with 3000 houses built initially in 2000, and more units added over the years under various projects funded by sources, including the JNNURM, Emergency Tsunami Relief Program (ETRP), and the Flood Alleviation Programme of the 11th Plan. Thus, there is significant diversity within the settlement in the design of houses, size of units, services and amenities, year of resettlement, and resettlement package.

The earliest units, allotted between 2000 and 2004, were 150 sft in size, accommodated in 2-storeys buildings, with two houses sharing a common external bathroom, and no piped water. Between 2005 and 2011, 3-storeys buildings were constructed, with unit sizes of 180 sft, including an in-house bathroom and piped water. The 4-storeys were built after a gap, in 2013, in a separate part of Kannagi Nagar called Ezhil Nagar. These houses are substantially larger, 320 sft in size, with an in-house bathroom, piped water and electricity connections provided up front.

Early allottees recall Kannagi Nagar in its initial years as a desolate wasteland. Basic amenities and physical infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, sanitation, waste management, and public transport) and social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, ration shops, police station) were poor or absent. It took almost a decade of sustained pressure and campaigns from residents and NGOs to bring about improvements in these aspects. The slow pace of improvement was accelerated in 2011 when the area was included within Chennai Corporation limits.

The spatial boundary of distance (to the central city or their old neighborhoods) still figures in the everyday life of resettled residents. Many still travel to the city neighborhoods where they came from, to retain their old jobs, as they face difficulties obtaining employment nearby. As government schools within the settlement cannot accommodate the large number of students in the settlement, many children travel to the city or to private schools nearby. This boundary constrains the physical and social mobility of residents.

Spatial boundaries also include administrative and bureaucratic boundaries that came into play as part of the formation of this settlement. When the resettlement colony was built, it was outside the city limits. This meant that resettled households had to change their addresses on voter identity cards, ration cards, and other documents, which caused them many months and even years of effort. Even after some services were included under the Chennai Corporation's purview, the spatial/administrative confusion remained. For example, the primary school buildings in Kannagi Nagar are maintained by the Greater Chennai Corporation, but as education is still under the district of Kanchipuram, staff is appointed by the district education department.

A more recent development is the delimitation of Corporation wards. In 2017, Kannagi Nagar and a part of Ezhil Nagar were carved out as a separate ward, with the remaining section of Ezhil Nagar merged with the surrounding region. This raised concerns among residents of the latter section of Ezhil Nagar, that their specific needs and demands would not be prioritized and that their voices would be drowned out in the mix of the larger area.



External boundaries -- Social

Residents are largely from scheduled or lower castes and economically weaker sections, relocated here from various slums around the city largely as a result of forced evictions or natural calamities. The settlement, thus, has several features of a ghetto, forming a social boundary against the rest of the city.

As a large proportion of workers still travel to the city for work, long commutes keep them out through the day, returning late at night. Economic stress has rendered alcoholism, domestic disputes, and single-parent households common. Children, growing up in these conditions, frequently drop out of school and/or get involved in drug use and sales -- often as part of gangs -- and in petty crimes such as theft.

Safety emerged as a major theme in Kannagi Nagar, forming another important boundary to physical mobility, especially for women and girls. Child marriages were common, as many parents felt this was the only way they could protect their daughters from the range of safety threats they faced in the settlement.

Kannagi Nagar, and Ezhil Nagar have earned notoriety for their high rates of crime and violent conflict; this negative media attention has created an additional boundary of stigma, which has material repercussions for those living in the colony. It has led to the stereotyping of residents as untrustworthy and/or criminal. Most notably, this has impacted their ability to secure employment, even in low-paying jobs in house-keeping, restaurants, factories. Several residents report being turned away from jobs after hearing their address, and sometimes have to resort to lying about it.

However, even state officials viewed the residents of Kannagi Nagar through stereotypes that represented them as a distinctive type of people. For example, a staff member of the Slum Clearance Board's Community Development Wing, complaining about their poor attendance at training sessions and job fairs said: "What is needed here is lifestyle change. They have not thought about how their future is going to shape up. They are only concerned with fulfilling today's needs."

Internal boundaries – socio-spatial.

There were also clear internal boundaries that operated to block Kannagi Nagar from becoming a neighborhood that residents identified as a home, a place of belonging.

First, as several residents and commentators pointed out, residents did not evince a strong sense of ownership and engagement in the place. As a local activists put it: "You will see that garbage is piled up right outside the dustbin, which is empty! These things can only be changed by changing people's attitude. There is no ownership, that's the thing!" His explanation for this lack of ownership was that residents had not been involved in the process of creating the settlement. "When the houses are built, they should be asked, Are you okay with the size? Is the toilet size okay?" etc. The government never bothered about the people. Therefore there is no participation and no involvement."

Second, this lack of identification with the place was also evident in the way that people continued to identify themselves with areas they had come from, which in turn manifested itself in a highly segmented settlement. An unforeseen outcome of the way allotments were made was the creation of micro-neighbourhoods within the larger settlement. Each such micro-neighborhood has developed a distinct character and identity of its own, based on the area that the majority of families were relocated from. Differences in relocation packages, varying socio-economic backgrounds, distorted perceptions of others, and historic animosity created an atmosphere of hostility between some areas.

Mapping internal boundaries

We conducted a community mapping exercise to examine more closely how spatial and social boundaries overlapped to create these often mutually hostile micro-neighborhoods within Kannagi Nagar.

Micro-neighbourhoods were locally designated by different names, usually based on the area that the majority of families were relocated from, e.g. Pudupet, Thideer Nagar, RBI Colony. Some areas were named after the event/project responsible for the relocation – e.g. Tsunami Nagar. The names had stuck, even in places where almost no families from the originally displaced slum were present as most had sold or rented out

their houses. The newest sub-section, Ezhil Nagar, the 4-storeys, had a distinct identity compared to the rest of the settlement.

Each of these areas had a distinct reputation in terms of the character of the residents, the condition of the area, the incidence and type of crime, and/or levels of safety. Although Kannagi Nagar as a whole has a set of overarching issues and is perceived from the outside as a single large resettlement project, on the inside it is a tense grouping of diverse microcosms.

The community mapping provided a profile of the lines of socio-spatial difference within the settlement. We found that, for example, Pudupettai and Ezhil Nagar areas, known to be particularly notorious for violence and drugs, are also the areas that were not well maintained. Residents from other areas categorised people of these areas as less 'decent', less 'clean', and of a lower class, and sometimes as 'platform dwellers'. This reputation was reflected in the lower market value (for sale and tenancy) of the houses. The reputation of areas like RBI Colony and Slaterpuram was better on almost all counts, they were regarded as 'better' or more 'decent'. Notably, these areas were among the first to be settled here, suggesting that duration of settlement may have some bearing on the outcomes.



Aspirations and Visions

In attempting to understand the diverse aspirations of the residents, some commonalities emerged. The majority of residents expressed a general sense of contentment with present conditions, but it was clear that this was founded on a

comparison with the past. In other words, having suffered and struggled with poor quality services and infrastructure for many years, people were satisfied with the improvements that they saw – such as water supply once in two days – as compared to once in ten days – even if they were not entirely adequate.

However, some residents pointed out that this represented a sense of resignation to lower standards of living. As one activist puts it, “That’s what it [Kannagi Nagar] is: a whitewashed cemetery - as the body inside a coffin rots, that’s how the people here do too.”

Several people we spoke to said they would love to move back to their old homes, despite that fact that many came from informal settlements. But more telling is that for a large number of residents, the ultimate goal was for their children to leave the place. In their view, this would both give them a chance of social mobility, and would also be an indicator of having achieved it.

Residents of Kannagi Nagar had few aspirations for themselves, but high hopes for their children. Along with “getting out of Kannagi Nagar”, these aspirations included them getting a college education and a white-collar job.

Boundary Spanning

In its 17 years of existence, Kannagi Nagar has seen dramatic transformations, from the desolate wasteland to a dense and dynamic working class neighbourhood. After the initial years of shock and helplessness, residents found ways to navigate the system to access their needs and rights. With over 26 NGOs, local activists and state agencies engaged in providing various services in Kannagi Nagar, a range of actors, including the above but also residents, politicians, the police and the media, have contributed to creating this space discursively and materially. Our study traced the process of contested transformations in Kannagi Nagar through analysing the making, spanning and breaking of boundaries of various kinds, internal and external, spatial, institutional, and social. Three such efforts are described below.

1. The Postcard Campaign

By the mid-2000s, and particularly after the tsunami (which saw a new wave of evictions and resettlement), internal initiatives to ameliorate local conditions were launched in Kannagi Nagar, with the rise of a cadre of local resident activists. Of the various strikes and protests that occurred in this period, the post card campaign stands out as important as it was the first to draw city-wide attention from state officials and media to conditions in the resettlement site. A convergence of local activists and NGOs planned and organised this campaign. Fifty thousand postcards were printed with two columns, emphasizing problems with infrastructure and services and articulating a set of demands, and addressed to the Tamil Nadu Minister of Housing. The campaign

launched a door-to-door initiative where Rs.1 was collected for each signed postcard. People were encouraged to post as many postcards as possible, depending on the number of people in the household. Almost 40,000 postcards were collected and posted from the nearest post office. The event was amplified by carefully planned media coverage. Within a week, the loud reverberations of the event brought higher authorities of the state machinery such as the district collector, senior personnel of TNSCB and other departments, and local councillors, to visit the area for the first time.



Shortly thereafter, a grievance redressal meeting was arranged with senior state personnel, where a large number of complaints about the state of basic infrastructure were recorded. An informal association was formed among residents to stay connected in their negotiations with with the government. The campaigns and protests were important means for residents to navigate and make links across the vast area of the settlement.

The government-NGO-citizen interaction created an active interface for communication and exchange, which not only smoothed the process of grievance redressal but also assisted the government in making policy level changes for upcoming resettlement projects. The collective action which created this interface relied on tools such as RTI which expanded residents' knowledge about the working of the system.

The leadership of local resident activists and associations was critical to these boundary spanning activities that bridged the state-civil society boundary. In the wave of change that began the the late 2000s, the Tsunami Podhu Nala Sangam helped galvanise

people's support, worked with NGOs like Action Aid, presented demands and negotiated with the government. Stephen Raj, the head of the Sangam became the local go-to person for petty grievances and mediation. Rukmani, who heads an organisation for the differently-abled, secured funding from both the State and various CSR entities. Numerous tuition centres, tailoring institutes, night schools were opened by locals or NGOs, usually supported by the State in some way. These are cases of co-production where State actors, civil society and NGOs and activists have worked together to bring about change.

2. *Police-Led Transformations*

The police emerged as an important actor in bringing about change in Kannagi Nagar. The opening of a police station in the centre of the settlement in 2011 was welcomed by most residents as bringing in a sense of safety and security. Many residents reported a drastic fall in crime resulting simply from the presence of the J11 Police Station, currently housed in the local community hall.

However, in addition to police work and increased vigilance, the local police station, headed by Inspector Vivekanandan, decided to try innovative strategies to reduce youth crime rates. The local police undertook an expanded social role through community policing initiatives focused on education, skill building, and awareness efforts targeted at parents, students and school staff and focused on the most at-risk sections of youth. The efforts spanned numerous boundaries and worked through a range of partnerships and collaborations both locally and outside the settlement. The police had no specific scheme or funding for this project, but relied on NGOs, corporates and other sources of funding.

A few months after being posted in Kannagi Nagar, Inspector Vivekanandan obtained a list of NGOs working in the area from the TNSCB. He then called a meeting to plan various projects and activities with them, including awareness meetings, career guidance, sports coaching, school enrolment drives, medical camps, and vocational training. The idea was to provide youth a safe, productive alternative way to spend their time.

A range of initiatives were implemented. The Police Boys and Girls Club, in association with HCL and Magic Bus Foundation began to provide training and equipment in athletics, volleyball, throwball, kabaddi, boxing, etc. to school-going boys and girls. Many of these boys and girls today represent the district or state in throwball, kabaddi and football. In 2017, three girls were selected to travel to the US for further training in football, kabaddi, and leadership respectively. Mr. Tamilazhagan, a former state level athlete, trained in physical education, now responsible for the club explained: "When we started, the Boys club had only 58 people. Now it has 150 people, evening tuition plus sports activity. The Boys Club was started initially because in the evenings,

after school, kids roam around with their friends, and tend to get into bad habits. The Club’s main focus is sports.”

In addition, awareness meetings are regularly held for parents and young adults on topics such as health and hygiene, strategies for keeping their children in school, and the dangers and consequences of criminal activity. A survey conducted by Magic Bus enumerated children who were not enrolled in school. The police spoke to these students and their parents, and got around 300 students enrolled in schools in the Kannagi Nagar area in June alone. Those who had dropped out, and had taken to drugs and criminal activity, were compelled to re-enrol.

Career guidance is offered to senior school children. Young people from Kannagi Nagar were encouraged to sign up for the police; free coaching and materials were given to those who signed up to write the police selection exam, and 35 candidates from Kannagi Nagar wrote the exam in 2017, including women and transgenders. Durgasri, a transgender candidate and one of the earliest residents of Kannagi Nagar, says that the biggest change she has seen in the area is after the police station was opened. She claimed that the area was much safer now.





Figure 7 Inspector interacting with players at football tournament

3. Role of Local Politician

Kannagi Nagar's transformation was accelerated after 2011, when it was included within Corporation limits and more funds were allocated for its development. The Corporation Ward office was located inside the settlement, and infrastructure improved significantly. Roads and drains were laid, electricity connections were formalised, street lights were installed, and garbage collection became regular. The bus depot was expanded and the number and frequency of routes increased. Social infrastructure was also improved – apart from existing health centres, a 30-bedded hospital is being built. There are many schools in and around Kannagi Nagar, numerous ration shops and a police station was opened. The government and NGOs conduct several job fairs and skill development programmes.

T C Karuna, a local politician of the AIADMK party has played an active role in channelling resources to the settlement from 2011. Kannagi Nagar is a constituency reserved for SC and women, and its councillor, Ms.Poornima was related to him. However, Karuna was clearly the active acting councillor. He was identified in many focus group discussions and resident interviews as the individual who had brought several tangible benefits to the area. His dedication, swift actions, and constant presence in the area made him figure as a people's councillor.

Karuna's effectiveness consists in his working across several boundaries. Although he belonged to one political party, he maintained strong relationships with other parties. He was part of the host community, having grown up in the area. He recalled that when Kannagi Nagar was being built, he had hoped that the area would develop, but found to his dismay that only crime rates advanced. Part of his efforts were to bring more police stations and lookouts to the area.

Many projects have been pushed forward since his engagement with the settlement, enabled by his membership of the Works Committee in the Chennai Corporation. Some of the projects which he has been working on like the building of community halls, old age homes, expansion of the Hindu burial ground, changing of water pipelines, arranging sale deeds for residents, improving the performance of ICDS, and reducing school dropouts are still ongoing. Karuna holds degrees in business and law and has over a decade of experience in government (he worked at ITDC). This experience helps him to study and document issues effectively.



Limiting Boundaries

After nearly two decades of settling, a complex spatial connect is evident between residents and the neighbourhood. For example the facades of houses, once standardized and plain, are now highly diverse and expressive of a variety of relations with the place. The spatial transformations have partially loosened the stigma and stereotypes associated with the resettlement colony and facilitated a sense of home for many. Yet, despite infrastructural improvements through boundary spanning activities, the invisible barrier of a large single-class ghetto appears still powerful. The internal boundaries of micro neighbourhoods maintain social divisions within the settlement.

Unlike the ghettos of North Madras which are situated in working class areas, Kannagi Nagar is located in an upwardly mobile IT-led neighbourhood. Rather than facilitating social mobility, this neighbourhood disconnect has helped create a new projection of

class/caste segregation. Local political actors also maintain these boundaries for their own benefit as Kannagi Nagar serves as the largest vote bank in the ward.

Beyond boundaries

The days of protests and campaigns are behind them. As the colony has rapidly developed, opportunities for community participation and co-production have also reduced. Over time, the focus has shifted from infrastructural issues to social ones. With the introduction of the Corporation office, the hospitals and the police station, people's immediate needs were fulfilled. Most people say they are happy with the space, because they view it in contrast to how things were - they see how far they have come rather than what lies ahead. Despite the mesh of activities and infrastructure installed by the state and other players (NGOs, CSR), like education, job fairs, skills trainings, governance and policing, and so on, people still seem to fall through the cracks.

The positive press from all of these initiatives are already starting to turn the tide of opinion about the place. Sustained efforts at education, better employment opportunities, and improved infrastructure are only going to improve its case. The question that remains is how to involve residents and other stakeholders in a co-productive capacity. Thus far, it has been more-or-less a top-down approach from the government and from NGOs, right from the design of the colony, forced resettlement, to the denial of land ownership, to various schemes and initiatives. This has been a boundary - the boundary to equal participation.

Case Study -2. Aspirations, Struggles and Co-creation in Vashi Naka, a Resettlement Colony in Mumbai

Introduction

Mumbai is a city that is constrained in terms of land availability and has consistently received a very high share of migrants due to its position as a premier commercial and industrial centre in the country. About 8% of the land in Mumbai is occupied by about half its population in the form of slums. Infrastructural projects in the city have conflicted with the presence of informal settlements historically. The city has experimented with various forms of resettlement and relocation practices which range from giving plots of land in the peripheries, to serviced land in similar locations. The city has also been home to intense housing struggles which have successfully advocated the principle of no projects without rehabilitation and that resettlement should be within the city limits. Both these factors have limited the feasibility of land based options which were found to be increasingly unwieldy and costly. In the late 1990s, the city discovered the option of slum rehabilitation using incentive floor area ratio(FAR). The use of incentive FAR to construct high rise buildings to rehabilitate slum dwellers enabled the state government to declare free housing as an entitlement for all slum dwelling households prior to 2001 in the city. Simultaneously, the tool was also applied for resettlement in case of infrastructure projects.

The use of incentive FSI for relocation was piloted with the world bank supported Mumbai Urban Transformation project(MUTP)and subsequently extended to other projects funded through multiple financing mechanisms. Under this option, land owners/developers were asked to develop rehabilitation buildings in accordance with the policy and hand over these tenements to the MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority) which was given the overall responsibility of resettlement. The MMRDA involved NGOs in preparing a basic socio-economic survey which would confirm the eligibility of affected households and then they would be shifted to these tenements. Around 34 such resettlement colonies were constructed in Mumbai in the period 2000-2006, comprising over tenements. The city had found a solution to the costly relocation processes which were impeding infrastructure development. However, this solution too had its own contradictions, as the present study reveals.

Vashi Naka is one of the largest resettlement colonies, with 130 buildings constructed by six developers near each other. Less than twenty years ago, Vashi Naka was a largely industrial area, with petrochemical industries, few industrial housing units, traditional fishing settlements and a large Dalit belt which had made the mountain slopes their home. Density and heights were low. The rehabilitation buildings, and the

simultaneous development of the Eastern Freeway connecting this north-east tip of the eastern suburb to the core business district in the island city has completely transformed the space. Further, land for resettlement was assembled using the incentive FAR to rehabilitate erstwhile slums in the area. The area is now a complex of high rise (seven stories) rehabilitation buildings for host communities, buildings for resettled communities and the residual slum settlements. Infrastructure projects such as the freeway and the monorail, the reduced operations of the industries and consequently reduced traffic on a dedicated goods track are the other critical changes in the area.

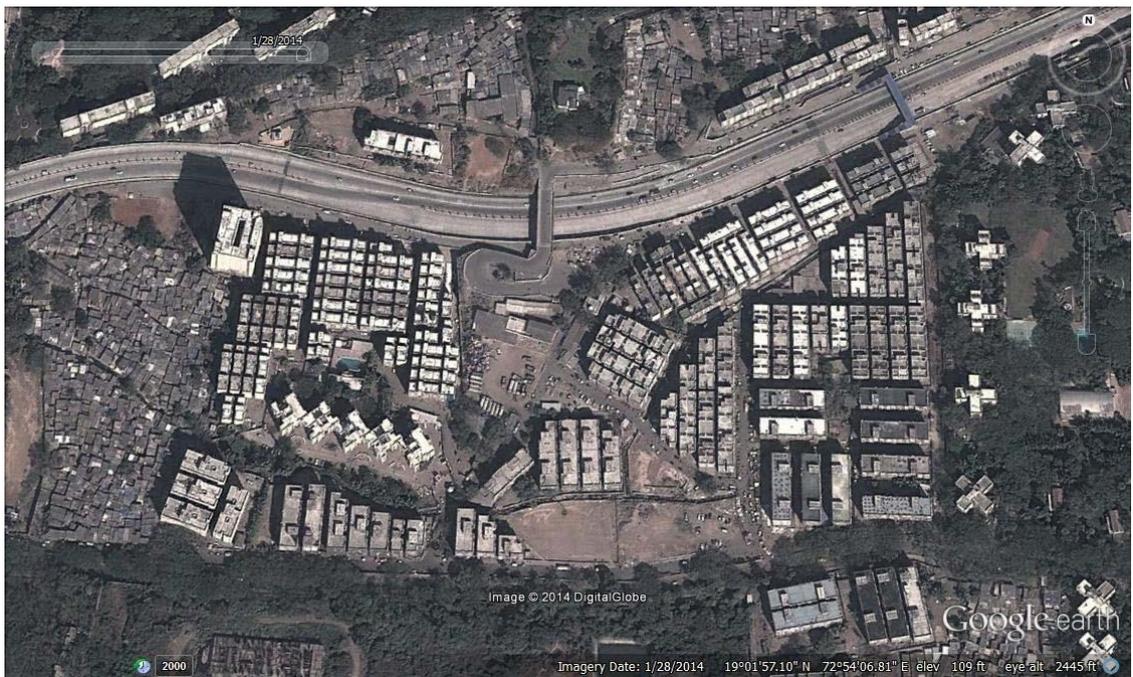
This case study is a study of aspirations of the resettled communities, their struggles to settle in a new locale and the emergent dynamics of organization, association and mobilisation in this area more than ten years after resettlement set against the backdrop of the changes discussed above.



Map 1: Area around Vashi Naka in 2000



Map 2: Area around Vashi Naka in 2007



Map 3: Area around Vashi Naka 2014

Study of select Projects of regeneration

1. Overcoming legacy of resettlement

The MMRDA colony in Vashi Naka is the rehabilitation colony of Project Affected Person (PAP) under four different broader project as MUTP, MUIP, MGPY, and SRA executed in Mumbai. The major rehabilitation started taking place during 2002-2003 and most of them have arrived by 2006-2007. Still some people are getting rehabilitated in the vacant building by MCGM. The houses were demolished to execute the project and PAPs were transferred to transition camp, till they get final allotment under the rehabilitation scheme. After the allotment of tenements in MMRDA colony, the rehabilitant had to struggle for all the basic services as basic as water. Mr. Yuvaraj, a rehabilitant in 2004 from Mulund under MUTP railway track project said that...

There was no basic services and social amenities at the time shifting, even promised infrastructure is not provided today (VN14.5).

The situation was so bad back then, people felt that their slum life was better than the rehabilitated life. Some were handed over the keys of their tenements and were asked to move into the same, surprisingly, only to be welcomed by the broken windows, dirt, and lack of basic services. They had to clean and repair the tenements to make it liveable. Mr. Sachin, a rehabilitant from Sion railway track in 2003-2004 under MUTP and Mr. Thakur rehabilitated in 2006 under Mahatma Gandhi Path Kranti Yojana (MGPKY) summarise the issues, challenges, complexities and prevalent general feeling post rehabilitation in the following words...

After moving here people started saying it was better in slums then these buildings. In slum, where we used to live, there we were getting enough water. Transportation services were on walkable distance. Distance between house and livelihood was low. Education was nearby. Solid waste issue was not there. But government showed us carrot of new house and this affected on our livelihood, education, transportation access and whole life (VN01.3). We live in Vertical slum not in horizontal slum (VN07.24).

The eviction and rehabilitation process itself was enforced, opaque, non-participatory and discriminatory. During the execution of the projects PAPs were compelled to vacate their original residence with little or no scope of being heard anywhere. MCGM being hand in glove with rehabilitation authorities and developers cease the basic services such as water supply, cleaning, light etc. post notification of eviction. NGOs engaged in this process used their expertise to expedite the eviction process but little to protect the interests of PAPs whatsoever as promised in the respective rehabilitation policies. There were multiple discriminations in terms of eligibility on the base of cut-off date, selection of site, allotment of tenements etc. Post 1995 residents in the project affected

settlements were left on their own post-eviction as 1st January 1995 was the pre-condition of eligibility for the rehabilitation. No one knows where those evicted ineligible people have gone? Mr. Sachin rehabilitated in 2003-2004 from Sion under MUTP and Mr. Singh rehabilitated in 2004 from Ghatkopar East under MUTP for railway track work shared their experience as under...

...they told us that we have to leave our houses because they were going to cut off services. And that literally started happening. After handing over keys, cleaning service of common toilet block was stopped. Then people started suffering because of hygiene issues. It was really difficult to live there. They reduced water timings. Families were struggling to survive. Generally, government policies for public are like this. Whenever they want to rehabilitate any community. They will cut off services and create challenges for them. How many challenges community will face? We cannot survive without electricity, water and toilet facilities. It was difficult to survive during summer. Man can live in these conditions but what about women and children in families? Government do these things intentionally and force people to relocate. We had to relocate for our kids. So finally, we moved here despite knowing that there were no services in this area (VN01.3).

...they disconnected our water service, we had to beg for water from nearby colonies every day and after four months they disconnected our electricity and were living in dark without fan for eight months. They made our life hell and we had leave with no other options (VN11.5.14).

Even the instrument of threat was being used to achieve the objective of eviction. The authorities knew the vulnerabilities of slum dwellers and used. Mr. Jagdish from Sharmjivi nagar, Chembur rehabilitated under MUIP shared his experience as under.

...they said either we had to go to transit camps or we will would get nothing. So we were scared and finally decided to relocate here. It was better than living on road (VN01.5.14).

Mr. Chand rehabilitated from King Circle under MUTP shares the similar feelings as—

We thought, that our slums were better than these buildings. There is not enough space.. Our family cannot manage in it. We are facing difficulties from all side (VN04.5.15)

It seems, rehabilitated households in Vashi Naka have been caught between two sides, one side they lost their livelihood and settlement and on the other side the cost of living has increased significantly as they had to bear all the expenditure on daily basis while

living in buildings, while most of these services were free in the slum. Mr. Kamble a footpath dweller rehabilitated under MGPKY in 2006 from Senapati Bapat Road said...

...in slums, everything was almost free. No light bill nothing. And here we have to pay maintenance money, electricity bill, traveling expenses. There everything, school, work, hospital, were very close. (VN06.5)

Several projects of co-creation arose through these struggles to undo the impacts of forced displacement, the distance from livelihoods, health and education amenities and lack of services such as water and transport. In the early phase of relocation, these projects took the form of building associations across the various buildings, irrespective of the projects that resettled them or the developers that built the buildings. These associations engaged in various actions to resolve some of the difficulties faced. There was a petition in which signatures were collected across Vashi Naka to increase the frequency of buses that connected the site to Kurla station. Similarly, there was a dharna (sit-in) for improvement of water availability. Ten years later, some of the difficulties continue. For example, Vashi Naka continues to be cut off and distant from the nearest railway stations such as Chembur or Kurla and public transport facilities are sketchy. The new monorail connection does not help the resettled households in any way. Water and the lack of health facilities also continues to be a problem. In terms of education, new options of private schools have emerged but public facilities are limited. These factors contribute to an increased cost of living, which several resettled households have not been able to afford and they have rented out the tenements and moved out of Vashi Naka. The contours of association among those who have managed to hold on have now shifted from larger area to particular localities as have been defined by developers. Rockline, MMRDA Colony, MHADA Colony and other such colonies represent the new boundaries of associational action. Within these localities too, the jurisdiction of a cooperative housing society is a sub-boundary that has become significant in terms of organisation of services.

2. *Ensuring Safety and Security*

Safety and security is one of the major concern of rehabilitated households in Mhada Colony and old demand of police station in the area indicates the same. The local police beat marshal of Mhada colony has accepted that earlier the crime rate was higher but it has reduced now still the notion of insecurity prevails. The local police station has initiated the construction of police chowky in the area and may operationalise anytime soon. However, there are multiple dimensions of insecurity concerns in the area and police presence is not the only the solution. Some dimensions of the security concerns can be understood as under...

- a. *Fragmentation created by nature of relocation.* People from multiple projects have been allocated and housed in buildings, depending on vacant tenements in

particular sites. This has meant that a single building has residents drawn from multiple informal settlements. In MHADA colony for example, residents have been drawn from over 122 slum communities. Space in informal settlements is often organised along community, region or caste lines. In this case, when people from distinct places in the city and communities were brought together, it has been difficult for them to forge a sense of community. The ensuing fragmentation encourages othering and distancing.

- b. *Verticalisation of housing structure.* the PAPs were shifted to the five and seven-storey congested buildings in tenements which are quite different from the housing structure they were living in the settlements earlier. Change in housing structure has its own implications on the social fabric and communication. Shut doors of the flats, individual toilets, taps, floors etc. has reduced the interface and interaction between the people. There is also a certain degree of fluidity among the residents due to emerging real estate rental market. In the slum people knew each other through their daily interactions, transaction, sharing which created a social fabric which not only created a sense of security but also kind of social control. Here people don't know who is staying next door.
- c. *Lack of control over space.* Space in the resettlement colonies is produced and controlled by the state authorities such as MMRDA and MCGM. There are several unallotted and empty tenements and entire sets of buildings which are empty as well. In particular, there are quite a few buildings where the lower floors are empty. Such empty spaces are a source of fear and insecurity. These spaces are used by drug addicts, alcoholics, couples and this heightens the sense of insecurity and leads to fights and disputes. The use of open space also creates the sense of insecurity. The biggest open space in the area is used for parking of big vehicles based on pay and park against the wishes of the local residents. Who manages and control this is unknown. CHS members talk about it in whispers and request intervention in this issue but hesitate to do something on their own. It is evident that such spaces are occupied by locally powerful people supported by a nexus of politicians and bureaucrats and CHS members afraid of going against them as they are also dependent on these people. The parking of big vehicles such trucks, dumpers, buses etc which causes inconvenience to the local residents. Mr. Yuvaraj from Mulund rehabilitated under MUTP has talked about the use of open space in Mhada colony.

...open space is used for vehicle parking by Dadagiri with the help of insiders and outsiders, because nobody can do dadagiri coming from outside (VN14.5.6)

In the above context, the following are some of the ways in which projects of safety and security are undertaken:

- a. *Sense of othering.* There is sense of othering of looking upon down towards some people. For example, MUTP rehabilitants label the pavement dwellers as thief, dirty, uncivilized etc. and avoid mingling with them. Similarly, the in-situ rehabilitants downgrade the non-in-situ rehabilitant avoid mingling with them. Since the beginning in-situ rehabilitants did not share the struggle for water or transport or any struggle with non-in-situ rehabilitants. Now the rehabilitants in the buildings do not tolerate the adjoining slum of Bharat Nagar. Such existing biases, labelling or undercurrent otherness takes many forms in dispute and crimes.
- d. *Emergence of CHS.* Though initially, crimes such as pick pocketing, fights, harassment were higher but it has reduced according to local police beat marshal. The emergence of CHS as an institution is filling up the void created by rehabilitation process. It is this institution which compiles the record of every resident in the building and co-ordinates with other CHS in area. They also enjoy some power to make and implement some rules in the buildings. Therefore, they enjoy certain degree of moral and legal authority over the residents and often act as gatekeepers to allow tenants or to refuse permission for the same. The CHSs also organise some programs to bring together the residents. Over time, the initial issues of powers struggle, identity are settling down and getting representation in CHS. For example, in some societies the different groups in the building are asked to send their representatives in the governing body of CHS.
- e. *Installation of CCTVs and compound walls.* This has emerged as one of the most common solution to the issue of non-safety and insecurity. Charishma has constructed a wall that separates it from the nearby slum which it deems to be the source of its insecurity. They have also installed CCTVs at several locations through the colony. Many other CHS in Vashi Naka are also in the process of procuring funds and installing CCTV cameras. Political representatives are emerging as patrons for this project.

Insights on Boundaries, boundary spanning and crossings

- Vashi Naka was earlier part of a slightly separated geography of the city due to its position in relation to the island city of Mumbai. It is this position which led to its choice as a site for hazardous industries such as petrochemicals, fertiliser and thermal and nuclear power. This was then layered with provisions of low density development and physically fragmented through a dedicated goods railway track and restricted mobility options. The Vashi Naka of today is geographically being linked to the island city and no longer disconnected. This is enabled by infrastructure projects such as freeway, monorail and the upcoming road links and Uran road-rail bridge. The goods track is hardly being used and there are talks of it being dismantled in some time. This connectivity comes at the loss of connections for few. For example, the informal settlements

of Sahyadri Nagar and Banjara Tanda have no connectivity to the main roads and people in need of hospitalisation face a lot of difficulty in accessing the roads. Similarly, the freeway has divided the settlements which can now be accessed only through a skywalk.

- The older boundaries in Vashi Naka were those based on land use and authorisation of the same ie industries, formal housing and informal housing. These boundaries have given way to form a more mixed, indistinguishable built-scape that comprises informal industries, formal industries, formal housing of various types and informal settlements. One of the most interesting facets of the new borders is its confused treatment by state authorities. There are certain aspects (for example dilution of building standards, incomplete amenities, arrangements for solid waste management) in which the authorities continue to treat the rehabilitation buildings as settlements of exception while there are other aspects (for example application of cooperative housing society form to all apartments, application of water taxes) in which authorities treat rehabilitation buildings along the same lines as formal buildings. This dilemmatic position is also shared by the resettled households. They continue to operate in the patronage politics mould, wherein political leaders are perceived as patrons for provision of services and support on several occasions. On the other hand, as seen in issues around safety; the cooperative housing society has emerged as the new mediator which strives to improve the safety 'within' the society and 'insulate it from the influence of the unsafe other societies'.
- This diffusion of boundaries between formal housing and rehabilitation buildings is only superficial. Even a small exploration below the surface illustrates that the borders between the formal city and the informal are quite deep and that there are several ways in which the rehabilitation buildings are not only set apart from other formal housing in terms of construction quality, availability of space and amenities but that there are attempts to also deprive them of control over neighbourhood and segregate services such as education, health, transport which have earlier been public or common services. The formalness of the built structure and the apartment management thus remain as facades which only partially disguise the poverty and vulnerability of several households.
- New borders of significance are those around developers and the projects. These new borders enable the cooperative housing societies to limit their areas of responsibility, to engage in competitive maintenance approaches for securing motivation of residents for collective projects and to pursue their demands for unfulfilled amenity assurances. Such a bounding has also been layered with social stigma to create a sense of some localities as unsafe and prone to criminal activities. On the other hand, these new borders also act as a barrier towards larger collectivisation which is necessary for advocating or resolving issues

pertaining to the site such as inadequate connectivity, pollution exposure and absence of social infrastructure.

Implications for theory, policy

- The shift from informal settlements to rehabilitation and resettlement buildings in peripheral sites is a significant shift that is associated with other projects of relocation; the additional dimensions are those linked to verticalisation and financialisation of space. The accompanying changes have meant a lot of distress and financial pressure on the resettled households in initial years and has resulted in significant numbers moving away, despite the risks of the same. This dimension of peripheralisation that is being experienced in all relocation projects needs to be recognised upfront and result in a policy approach that minimises relocation. In Mumbai, while the incentive FAR approach has eased the ability of authorities to relocate, it has not eased the process for resettled households; rather it has led to enhanced burdens. This needs to be recognised.
- The constitution of a formal resident association in the form of a cooperative housing society is an innovation in the resettlement colonies is an innovation in terms of relocation practices and resolves sticky issues of maintenance of assets from the perspective of authorities. It has also enabled a continuity and space for erstwhile leadership and through the democratic principles that govern it, also enabled new leadership to emerge in a few cases. The CHS is also innovative because it avoids the trap of being organised around ethnic, community bases and can accommodate others. On the other hand, it has also limited larger collectivisation, as discussed earlier. It has also created a lot of competitiveness and othering, between various localities in the same site.
- The engagement of the state in relocation colonies post resettlement is an aspect that deserves more study. In Vashi Naka, the experience is one where the state had a hands-off approach to relocation itself, letting developers and NGOs become the face. In the post relocation phase, it has tried to hand over affairs to the CHS. This process of disengagement is however, riddled with contradictions and this is what is revealed in the Vashi Naka case and the contours of aspirational projects and struggles seen here. The relationship with the state here is not confrontational but negotiated and tactical and has evolved in complicated ways over the years.
- Erecting and crossing borders seems to be an essential part of aspirational project –making, especially by the poorer and vulnerable segments of urban population. The Vashi Naka case reveals that the making and unmaking of these borders is heavily determined by the context. It also indicates that while earlier borders in cities were more solid and clearer markers of discrimination; the emergent borders are more complex, confusing, overlapping and hence more

difficult to navigate. They tend to favour the more educated, technically and legally aware leadership.

Case Study -3. Bhalswa Resettlement Colony, Delhi

Introduction

Like other Indian cities, Delhi has had a contentious relationship with its myriad *bastis*, settlements of the urban poor which have come to be characterised as “encroachments” and “squatters” in the contemporary world-cities discourse (Bhan 2013). If the eviction drives of 1970s were marked by the violence of Turkman Gate and the Emergency, millennial Delhi has inflicted displacement under neo-liberal imperatives of ‘world-class’ city making, and aesthetic norms of a “slum-free” city (Ghertner 2015). While Delhi has had a long history of evictions, what has made evictions particularly striking and different in millennial Delhi is that they have been ordered by courts and driven by “Public Interest Litigations” of middle-class actors leveraging a discourse of encroachments and pollution (Bhan 2017).

Settlements in Delhi are categorised into eight typologies, of which “planned colonies” house only about a quarter of the city’s population (see Bhan 2013, CPR 2015). “Jhuggi-Jhopri Clusters”, the official term used to characterise *bastis* house about 20.72 lakh people, about 14.8 % of the city’s population. The history of evictions in Delhi shows that *basti* residents have been relocated to peripheral sites over three separate waves—these margins have only expanded and the distance of these colonies from the city has increased overtime. Most of these resettlement colonies are also concentrated in the North and North-West part of Delhi, while the eviction sites are clustered around the centre, east and south/ south-east part of the city (Bhan 2017, p. 75).

This case study takes up one such resettlement colony, Bhalswa that emerged in this time period, and seeks to understand ongoing struggles and contestations that mark life in these colonies, and concomitant processes of boundary-making and boundary-spanning. Located in North-West Delhi, Bhalswa resettlement colony was established during the most recent wave of evictions in Delhi that took place in the run-up to the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The colony is situated in close proximity to the Bhalswa landfill site—one among three of Delhi’s huge mountains of waste—symbolic of the city’s ever-growing waste management issues. The settlement is also marked by the presence of the Bhalswa lake and the Bhalswa golf course towards its south-eastern edge. The colony is situated about 2 kilometres away from the Outer Ring Road and has a 200 metre long access road connecting it to the Bhalswa Dairy Road (collector road).

Residents from *jhuggi-jhopri clusters* (JJs)³ across Delhi such as in Rohini (Sector-13), Lajpat Nagar, East of Kailash, ITO, and Nizamudin were relocated here in early 2000s. The nearest of these, Rohini Sector-13, is at a distance of about 8 kilometres from the colony, while the farthest, Lajpat Nagar and East of Kailash are more than 30 kilometres away. The colony is divided into two parts, JJ Colony Part 1 and JJ Colony Part 2—each of these houses five blocks. Today, Bhalswa is a site of ongoing construction for EWS flats, and these are visible from one end of the colony. Thus, this is a site of not only past but future relocations as well. Narratives of “we were thrown in a jungle” abound here as they do in other resettlement colonies in Delhi. So do histories of struggles over access to basic services like water and sanitation, and entitlements like ration. Figure 1 shows the evolution of the resettlement colony.

The colony has plotted development in the form of row houses of mostly G+ 1 structures oriented in a very compact manner with common boundary walls. At some places, houses extend up to three storeys over and above the ground floor. At the time of relocation, residents received plots of sizes 18 square yards (*gaj*) and 12.5 square yards (*gaj*) based on their proof of residence. Plots of 18 square yards were allotted to those who held proof of residence (PoR) in Delhi before 1990—mostly this was in the form of V.P.Singh tokens. Those who held proof of residence for Delhi after 1990 were allotted plots of 12.5 square yards. People were assigned plots on a lease of 10 years, but it has been a long while since that expired. Land tenure as such did not emerge as a point of concern in our field interviews. Though not permitted under the terms of resettlement, buying and selling of the plots is widespread through the use of ‘Power of Attorney’.⁴

No official estimates are available of the population residing in Bhalswa or for that matter, any of the newest resettlement colonies in Delhi. The most likely estimate is obtained from RTI (Right to Information) queries filed by Pushpa, a local activist and one of boundary spanners in this study who works with an NGO, *Lok Shakti Manch*. According to information received, there are 3539 plots assigned in the area. Pushpa estimates that there are close to 4,000 households and about 20,000 residents in the resettlement colony.

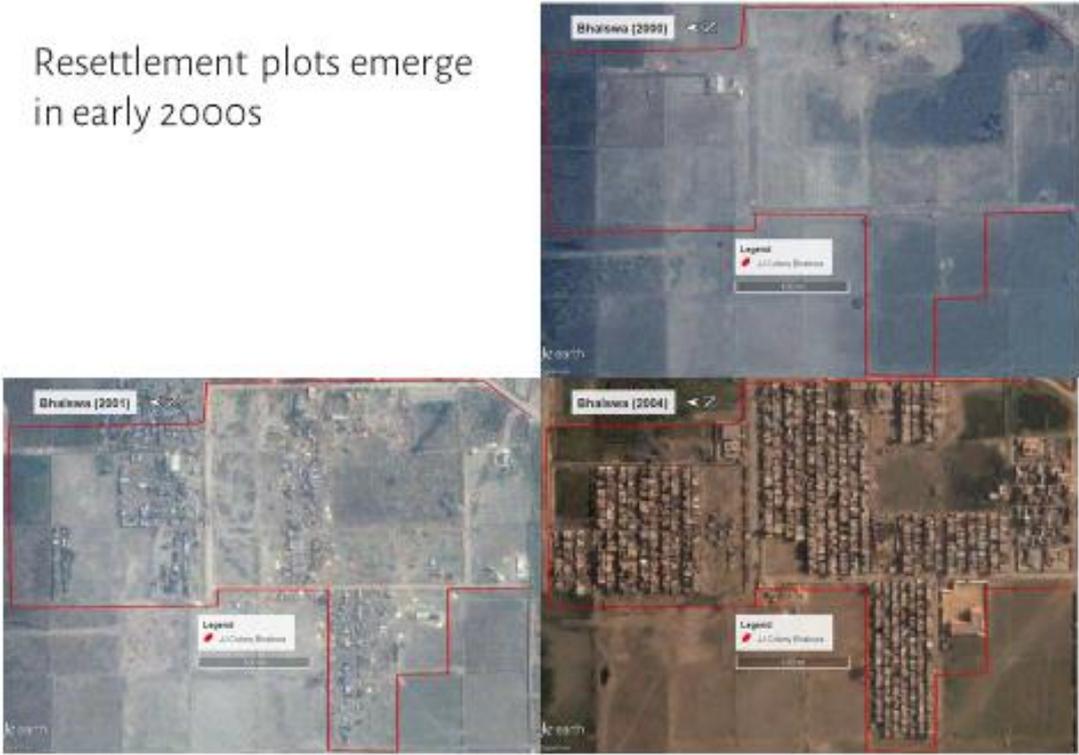
³ In the Delhi context, *Jhuggi-jhopri clusters* (JJs) are what are categorised in official discourse as squatter settlements located on public land, and are different from slums, which refer to areas notified as such under the Slum Areas Act, 1956. JJs are in effect non-notified slums. See <http://citiesofdelhi.cprindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Categorisation-of-Settlement-in-Delhi.pdf>

⁴ “The GPA was originally designed as an instrument through which an individual could give another the power to manage his or her affairs; however, the GPA has been widely used by individuals with property of “imperfect title who cannot or do not want to execute registered deeds of conveyance”.” (Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana—(2012) 1 SCC 656, cited in Sheikh & Banda 2016: 146).

Besides the obvious risk of living in close proximity to a landfill, residents in Bhalswa are faced with the risks of being situated in a flood-prone area. Much like other resettlement colonies in the city, services did not reach Bhalswa when people started moving in there. Infact, piped water connections were received in each street only in April 2017, prior to the municipal elections. This is attributed to the initiative of the MLA and a local AAP volunteer living in JJ colony 1. However, we heard lot of complaints about the quality of water as poor and yellow-ish, and people reported reliance on private water tankers for drinking water.

One of the major issues in the area is the lack of arrangements for drainage and sewerage. There is no provision for drainage outfall in the colonies, leading to water logging and lack of proper drainage creates several issues, especially during the rainy season. There is also no provision for garbage disposal in the area. There are no designated *dhalaos* in the area, and most of the garbage is either clogged in the open drains or is dumped in empty plots. A vast expanse of open land littered with garbage and wastewater is starkly visible as one enters the colony from one of its access points (See Figure 2).

Resettlement plots emerge
in early 2000s



Construction of EWS flats
begins in 2013

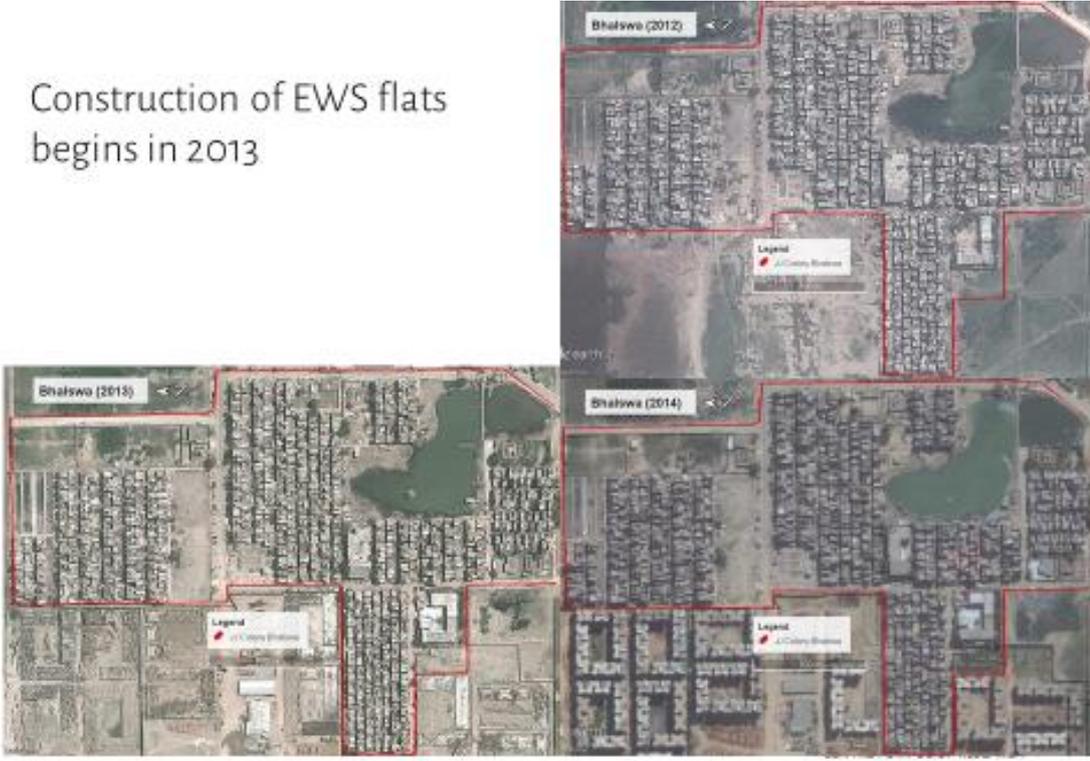


Figure 1: Evolution of Bhalswa resettlement colony:



Figure 2: Open lands at one of the access points littered with garbage and wastewater

Photo credit: Sharonee Dasgupta

Boundaries and resettlement colonies

Ironically, resettlement colonies characterise what many scholars have called a “planned slum”, in the sense that these colonies despite being planned and allocated by the government, reproduce housing and living conditions similar or worse than the spaces they have been evicted from. “Resettlement colonies have often, in fact, been called planned slums by activists who argue that it is impossible to create anything other than a ‘slum’ in recent resettlement colonies because of the diminishing size of the plots, the distance from employment and work centres and the abysmal state of infrastructural services” (Bhan 2017: p. 74).

This irony of the resettlement colony obfuscates the boundary between the formal and the informal, and the planned and the unplanned. What is formal and the planned ends up reproducing several characteristics of the informal and the unplanned. The ‘planned slum’ characterisation can be seen in the housing construction of brick and mortar structures similar to that one sees in JJs—housing is incremental and auto-constructed (Reference IIHS Savda Report). In matter of service provision, the new resettlement

colonies are far worse than JJs. Resettlement colonies are also notorious for breaking community ties and disrupting places.

Spatial boundaries. If the planned and the unplanned, and the formal and the informal are blurred in RCs, there are other boundaries that emerge. The first boundary that emerges in the case is spatial. Spatial boundaries are apparent because resettlement colonies like Bawana and Savada Ghevra are located in the extreme fringes of the city, about 40 kms away from the city centre, and in that sense are spatially distant from the city, “Off the Map”, as Bhan and Kalyani Menon-Sen have argued in their book. Bhalswa, on the other hand, is less peripheral, and may be somewhat categorised as semi-peripheral, located at about a distance of 22-25 kms from the centre of the city, and at a distance of 3-4 kms from bus stands and the Badli-Haidepur More metro station (though last mile connectivity is a serious problem, as we have ourselves faced on site visits). Spatially, the boundaries of the resettlement colony with the neighbouring areas, as also with the larger city are critical to look at. Some residents (including women domestic workers) continue to work at old places of employment, while others have renegotiated employment opportunities in surrounding neighbourhoods and industrial areas. The boundary between the colony and the Golf Course is a clear marker of class. Some boundaries are crossed—those in terms of spatial distance as residents from these continue to work at upper, middle class households and ostensibly also at the Golf Course, but not in terms of use-value of the Golf Course.

Temporal boundaries. Then, there are temporal boundaries to be considered. Early accounts of resettlement when everything was a jungle, to incrementally constructing houses brick-by-brick. Today, most houses are G+1/ G+2, and some have toilets within—but this has happened over a period of time. That water pipelines were laid only in 2017, with the support of the local MLA. And why, after 20 years of resettlement, residents are still agitating for infrastructural concerns like drainage outfall and drainage pumping station? What does the temporality of these processes tell us? Accounts of residents are contextual and temporal—they are rooted in place as well as time. The political situation in Delhi also has changed during this time-period: from the Sheila Dikshit government to Kejriwal, marking different kinds of political spaces and ideologies. The latter infact claims that there are “not victims of isms and ideologies...we are solution oriented.”

Regulatory boundaries. Third, there are regulatory boundaries to be considered. Resettlement colonies are included within the Master Plan, and are to be provided for services as per the plan. Despite this, incremental service provision has been the norm rather than the exception. In the same vein, however, resettlement colonies are bound by planning and building regulations that bound them in the sense of levels of construction itself. The leases and licenses also do not allow for sale and purchase of

property: it is only meant for use by the original allottee. Even then, there are workarounds around this, which show that regulatory boundaries are not fixed, they are negotiated.

Boundaries between state and citizen, and citizen and non-state actors (NGOs and RWAs). Negotiating regulatory boundaries has an essential element of negotiating with the state and state actors. This is first and foremost at the level of service provision and grievance redressal. Like other resettlement colonies in Delhi, services in Bhalswa followed years after relocation. In that sense, residents have agitated and mobilised for access to basic services and entitlements, as also deployed older techniques of clientilistic pressures. How are we to understand this negotiation of the boundaries between the state and the citizen? Further, the research also seeks to examine the role of NGOs and citizen collectives which are either organic or NGO-led. These point towards boundaries that are at the cusp of the state-citizen interface but also are critical to look at in the kind of language and discourse that they adopt.

Boundary crossings and maintenance

State-citizen boundaries spanned by an NGO activist. What makes Bhalswa interesting from a boundary spanning perspective is an active history of struggle through Right to Information (RTI) campaigns, spearheaded by Pushpa from Lok Shakti Manch, an NGO working in the area. Though Lok Shakti Manch was only registered in 2014, they have been working in the area since the time of resettlement. “*Ground zero se humne kaam kiya hai* (We have worked from ground zero)”, Pushpa tells us. The RTI campaigns have been principally around issues of ration entitlements, and Pushpa claims that more than 350 women have filed RTIs in relation to their entitlements. Pushpa has educated women and other members of the colony on how to file RTIs. She has published a booklet describing the process, with sample RTIs and stories of colony members who have successfully brought change using RTIs. The group of women trained by Pushpa has also in the past put up a resistance against the proposal for cash transfers in lieu of rations. At the time of fieldwork in August 2017, she was in the process of running an RTI camp to mobilize women to file RTIs related to the cutting off of sugar from the ration card supplies. She also later met with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in this regard to push for demands.

Based on information obtained through RTIs, and based on her reading of the Master Plan for Delhi, Pushpa argues that both the JJ colonies Part 1 and Part 2 should have 8-10 schools for the current population living there. She has also managed to get land sanctioned for some on the basis of this information obtained. The use of RTI by Pushpa to push for demands from a regulatory and planning perspective lies at the intersection of multiple boundaries: state and citizen, planned and unplanned, regulatory and legal—

in an attempt to lay claims as legitimate citizens who are deserving of services as a matter of right and not as a matter of political patronage.

RWAs and their exclusive/limited outreach (boundary maintenance). While most residents are unaware of the presence of any RWAs in the colonies, we found three RWAs in all, each of which has different political inclinations. The RWA in Colony 1 was apparently active under the Congress governments, while the RWA in Colony 2 is headed by someone with political inclinations towards the BJP. A third RWA which operates in both colony 1 and 2 is aligned to the AAP. The outreach of these RWAs appears to be very limited—one RWA for instance, only reported about 11-12 active members. Another has 21 members and represents 5 blocks in JJ Colony 1, and has only house owners as members, and no tenants. The third RWA has a total of 25 members, 45 volunteers and represents 5 blocks in JJ Colony 2. The RWAs perform a range of neighbourhood improvement activities. Two of the RWAs reported working on installation of street lights. Organising community events has been a hallmark of the RWAs, and all three RWAs work towards community events one way or the other. One RWA reportedly organises flag-hoisting functions on national holidays, while another has petitioned DUSIB for a larger *baraat ghar* (community hall). A third RWA has organized local awareness drives against drug abuse, in conjunction with another NGO active in the area. Drugs are reported to be a growing issue in the resettlement colony, with children as young as 10 years old reportedly influenced by drug mafias and addicted to substances. They are dealt openly in the streets as the police is reportedly hand-in-glove with the drug suppliers (and a distributor is apparently based out of Bhalswa making things much worse).

Accessing the state through “Jaan-pehchaan”. The boundary spanning landscape in Bhalswa is composed of institutions at one level, such as Lok Shakti Manch and the RWAs, and community leaders and individuals within these institutions at another level. A third level is of elected representatives and their local volunteers as in the case of AAP. But in effect it is individuals who help people claim entitlements like ration, and push for residents’ demands regarding state of services as also progress of projects in the JJ colony. In some sense, these individuals are like Kavita Ramakrishnan’s (2016) characterization of ‘*jaan-pehchan*’: someone who can get work done, and whom residents rely on for a range of everyday demands from the state. At the same time, this “jaan-pehchaan” is locally resident and is embedded in the community, and leverages his political connections for enabling people access the state. He also presents himself as ‘local’ in public meetings like the one annually organised by Lok Shakti Manch.

Boundaries and Geographies of RTI-activism. While the role of RWAs and “jaan-pehchaan” may be localised and place-specific, it is important to note that RTI led activism is not. Lok Shakti Manch works in other areas like Jahangirpuri in North Delhi

as well, and while the specific issues may be different, the use of RTI as a tool continues. RTI-led activism is pertinent across categories of informal settlements in Delhi, as CPR's field engagement as part of various urban projects suggests. A consultative workshop on "Understanding the RTI in Urban Areas" brought to the fore the various ways in residents and resident collectives, as also coalitions, are using the RTI to push for information which further informs campaign strategies. RTI is used to elicit information on wide-ranging matters like pension, ration, education, anganwadis, as well as larger urban developments, and subsequently, make political representations. Participants at the workshop also acknowledged information is a means to a larger goal, not an end in itself: *"Logon ko soochna mein kewal soochna ke vaastey excited nahi, soochna tab useful ki uske through unhe adhikar mil sake, RTI ka istemaal bastiyon mein har ek jagah jahan sarkaar has to provide services"* ["People are not excited by the prospect of information alone, information is helpful when it enables people to get their rights, RTI is being used in bastis and elsewhere wherein services are expected from the government"]. Sometimes, the long wait can be frustrating when people ask, "we filed so many RTIs, what has happened". It is here, as our informants at the workshop articulated, that people need to be reminded that rights have to be fought for, but that the RTI is only a tool and a route to claim rights from the state through eliciting information, and enabling certain forms of knowledge through that.

Concluding Thoughts and Reflections

Taking forward from the last point, knowledge now enabled through RTI queries is strategically juxtaposed with older forms of collectivisation and political representation. As one RTI activist put it, the relationship between electorate and elected representation is no longer *"mai-baap ka rishta"*, it is an informed relationship. Earlier, if people did not know what the MLA-LAD fund was used for, now an RTI query enables them with knowledge that ideally should have been in public domain but which now can be used to push for certain demands. What is emerging strongly from our fieldwork then is that these struggles for basic services are rooted in a discourse/framework of 'rights' and accountability, alongside older forms of patronage.

We develop this argument by contrasting with the case of Mangolpuri, an older resettlement colony established around the time period of the Emergency, late 1975. There, we find the narrative of political patronage quite strong. In Mangolpuri, there is an interesting memory that is evoked in residents' account of resettlement. Indira Gandhi as a political figure during the time period of the resettlement is commonly evoked in the narratives, with residents appearing to acknowledge Indira Gandhi with the establishment of the colony and the allocation of plots.

This does not mean the Mangolpuri did not have any active history of NGO-led activism, infact there has been, but it was back then, in the nature of petitioning the MLA and even then PM Indira Gandhi, and in other cases grievance redressal at offices of the public authorities, paperwork and so on. More recently, community-level interventions, spanning areas like education and continuing education, vocational training for women, self-help groups, legal aid and counselling, gender sensitisation, and child welfare. But this substantially different from the rights-based approach that drives Lok Shakti Manch. Infact, critiquing the project-driven approach of most NGOs, Pushpa said “Agenda jahan hota hain logon ka bhala nahi hota”. They identify their work as “fixing responsibility” and “empower people”, and not to handhold them in any form.

Cases like Bhalswa show us that RTI as a tool is part of a larger gamut of strategies in which residents of resettlement colonies lay claims as “legitimate citizens” of the state, moving away from cases of older colonies like Mangolpuri wherein people look at themselves as the poor who received resettlement as a form patronage by the then political figures. In this renewed landscape, boundaries between the state and citizen, and between citizen groups and elected representatives are not only contested, but also remade from the margins. This is particularly important to understand how those pushed to the margins of the city reclaim their place in the city. Seen together with the emergence of a larger rights-based discourse post-governance change in Delhi, politically there is an opportunity to push forward “right to the city”.

It may also be worth noting that use of tools like RTI enable certain forms of knowledge production. NGOs active in informal settlements may be leading the process, but in doing so, they hold trainings and build capacities of local residents to engage with the state through tools like the RTI. Active residents then lead the process, and while RTIs are filed individually, information can be used to mobilise collectively, or multiple residents may file RTIs on similar issues thereby building pressure on the state machinery. Further, it is ordinary residents and in many cases women leading these campaigns, including campaigns against drug abuse and liasoning with police representatives.

As we write this report, the central government has brought in certain amendments to the RTI Act on July 22, 2019. Sections 13, 16 and 27 of the RTI Act have been amended. The central government will now decide the tenure, salary and others terms of services of the Information Commissioners both at the State and Centre. The amendments also equate the status of the Central Information Commissioners with the Election Commissioners and the State Information Commissioners with the Chief Secretary of the State. Activists have argued that the amendments will compromise the autonomy of information commissions which is the backbone of the law. Prior to this

amendment being passed, protests had been organized by activists and members of the civil society across the country in anticipation of these amendments. For a tool that has been heralded as transformative by ordinary urban residents and seen to fundamentally alter the state-citizen boundary, the implications of these changes need to be carefully seen in the coming months.

Case Study -4. Kaatukuppam: Fly-ash and the future of fishing on a contested creek in Chennai

Introduction

Urban fishing villages in India are caught in interlocked liminalities – spatial, economic and cultural. Poised at the edges of land, in contexts of rapidly transforming livelihoods and political-economic changes, they are often forced to redefine the boundaries of their identities and communities. The creek fishers of Kaatukuppam in Ennore in north Chennai have additional boundaries to negotiate. Since the 1960s, the creek has faced an accelerating onslaught of destruction from heavy industrial and infrastructure projects including numerous thermal power plants, a coal container terminal, a shipbuilding yard and a port.

The steady destruction of the creek and the struggles of Kaatukuppam's fishers against these developments remained invisible to the rest of the city until they became part of a campaign called 'Save Ennore Creek', which brought the fishing village into partnership with environmental activists and other fisher communities from Chennai. The campaign has shaped a redefinition and revalorisation of water and land forms – mangroves, salt pans and fishing grounds – that had been erased in the city's land-use maps. Mapping, local knowledge and action research tools were employed to contest official assertions about the creek.

Behind the campaign mobilisation, however, are other boundaries, reflecting sets of internal tensions. While village leaders focus their energies on the revival of the creek and fishing livelihoods, there is a section of people in the village, including men, women and youth, who are sceptical of the future of fishing, and focused on finding opportunities for alternative livelihoods. The customary fisher panchayat, which has gained voice and visibility through the environmental struggle is also critiqued internally for its disconnect with the aspirations of sections of the village, like women, youth, non-fishers and others. A study of boundaries and crossings may fruitfully illuminate the aspirations and negotiations of a fishing village caught up in processes of destructive yet dynamic urbanisation.

Kaatukuppam and the Ennore Creek.

The Ennore Creek is a 8,000-acre tidal waterbed, part of a lagoon ecosystem that drains the Kosasthalaiyar River and the Pulicat Lake into the Bay of Bengal. Until the 1960s, it was a vibrant biodiverse habitat, its network of salt pans, mud flats mangroves, and fish farms supporting many forms of natural life and offering rich livelihoods for six fishing villages in the area.

Kaatukuppam is one of Ennore's three fishing villages that are exclusively engaged in creek fishing, in contrast to the other three that primarily engage in sea fishing and only occasionally turn to the creek for fishing. Kattukuppam occupies a unique position even among the three creek fishing villages. With nearly 300 households, Kaatukuppam is the most populous of the three creek fishing villages. Its direct dependence on the creek has also remained stronger as it received fewer compensatory jobs from the industries that were established in and around the creek. The fishers of Kaatukuppam have therefore maintained a stronger connection to the creek and continue to actively fish there, even if sometimes as a secondary occupation.

In addition, the village also possesses a fairly cohesive and dynamic leadership of fishers with diverse age groups and experience, whose primary focus has been the revival of the creek, in contrast to the demands of the sea-faring villages which have focused on compensatory jobs. Consequently, Kattukuppam has been on the forefront of the campaign for the revival of the creek and associated livelihoods, with its fisher leaders being the most prominent faces of the campaign. The leaders have represented not only Kattukuppam, but the Ennore creek and the region as a whole to the rest of Chennai and the world.

The spatial boundaries of Kaatukuppam village are not immediately discernible from the outside. From the main road, the village is indistinguishable from its neighbouring "nagars". Nevertheless the village boundaries are socially and spatially distinct. At the eastern entrance stands the Porkali Amman temple, Kaatukuppam's tutelary temple, central to the collective local identity and culture of the village. Until recently, the village used lands over an extended area for a range of uses including drying nets and holding fish auctions. However, fish auctions ended in the 1970s as the "periyavalai" (shore seine net) group fishing came to an end and independent fishing and marketing at city markets, facilitated by better connectivity, took over. Individual fishing was also facilitated by schemes that were promoted by the government via the cooperative society. These changes in fishing practices, accompanied by property acquisition and assertion by other castes on these open lands, resulted in a retraction of these land uses by the fishing village. Although Kaatukuppam grew significantly in population in the 1990s, with an influx of fishers that migrated from other parts of the coast because of its rich riverine resources of shellfish and prawns, the village territory became more limited and clearly bounded.

Meanwhile, unused village lands (Natham poromboke or residential common lands belonging to the village) were allotted over the years to the families of sons and daughters of fishers and to families of newcomers from other fishing villages who had settled here.

Despite its clear boundaries, Kaatukuppam, in contrast to the neighbouring creek fishing villages which are much smaller, houses a substantial number of non-fishing

households within the village. According to a survey we conducted in the village, 26 percent of Kaatukuppam's households were not of the fisher caste, mainly Nadar and Reddys, employed in factories or in service sector occupations in the vicinity. Their houses appeared larger than those of the fishers, and were located mostly on the edges of the village. There was little intermingling between them and the fishers, and many of the former distanced themselves from the kuppam and from the struggles over the polluted creek.

The more important part of the boundaries and geographies of Kaatukuppam was the river. The contraction of village lands did not emerge as an important issue, nor was there much evidence of struggle for expansion of village land. Instead, the feeling of being "hemmed in" related primarily to the shrinking of the creek boundaries. Struggles for reclaiming and protecting commons were about the mangroves, salt pans, and fishing grounds.

The creek was not a singular monolithic body of water; its various segments and pockets provided immense diversity in resources and livelihood options, from prawns and crabs to multiple varieties of fish and shell fish (kilinjal) during the monsoon. As a fisher leader states:

"There were so many options for us... We could go to the river and never come back empty handed. The river provided ideal conditions for many species. All that is lost now, due to the industrial pollution and sludge. The sludge has killed off crabs completely"

The fishing grounds were divided into paadu, bounded fields within the river within which each fisherman could fish. The paadu system is a long-standing tradition among river fishing communities. The paadu system is rotational to allow all fishermen opportunities to fish in the best parts of the creek. At present the creek has been divided into 56 paadu. The paadus earlier extended from Chintamaneeswarar temple in the north (about 15 km from Kattukuppam) on the way to Pulicat to a similar distance in the south.

Currently however, a number of the 56 paadus have been abandoned and declared non-fishable by the fishers of Kattukuppam. The paadus to the south of Kattukuppam have been heavily compromised due to pollution from the industrial clusters in North Chennai. These industries release their effluents (a number of them oil-based) into the Buckingham Canal that joins the Ennore creek at Kattukuppam. Fishers declare that fish caught in those paadus possess a particularly pungent smell associated with them and hence are not saleable in the market.

Other paadus in the vicinity of Kattukuppam have been directly affected by the industries in and around Kattukuppam. The dumping of fly ash and silt by NCTPS and

Kamarajar Port has reduced the depth of the creek at several paadus. Fishers state that not only are they unable to fix their stakes for the nets at the respective paadus but also unable to even stand in those paadus without sinking in. Additionally, the silt has also effectively replaced the muddy clayey soil that once provided a thriving home for mud crabs.

The Industrialisation of Ennore Creek and the destruction of fishing

The destruction of Ennore Creek was a gradual and incremental process which began in the 1960s, when the first industrial establishments, the Manali Industrial Estate, Ashok Leylands factory, and the Ennore Thermal Power Station were constructed on wetlands connected to the creek. Early impacts, fishers recall, were mostly health-related, from the effluents discharged into the water. The Buckingham Canal, which links with the Ennore creek near Kattukuppam, remains until the present a dark, viscous and foul-smelling channel, due to oily effluents from the Manali Industrial Area, and sewage released from Thiruvottriyur and Kathivakkam municipalities.

But it was with the establishment of the North Chennai Thermal Power Station (NCTPS) by Tamil Nadu's TANGEDCO in the 1980s, the central government's Kamaraj Port in 2000, and the Vallur Thermal Power Plant in 2014, that an accelerated and multi-pronged process of destruction of the creek and the livelihoods it supported began. In 2016, the report of a public hearing on destruction of ecology and livelihoods in the creek noted: "From being a river with clean water, sprawling mudflats and mangrove-fringed salt pans with intricate channels that abounded in mullets, shrimps and crab, the river has now been reduced to a stinking cesspool.... Villagers, particularly fisherfolk, have suffered gravely because of declining fish catch, compromised fish quality, disappearance of commercially valuable species, and health problems arising from contact with contaminated water." (p.7).

Different parts of the creek were impacted in different ways. The river mouth had turned into a dead zone by the discharge of hot water from NCTPS's coolant plant, which prevented fish from entering the creek, and scalded the skin of fishers who came in contact with the water. The main body of the creek was choked with fly-ash from NCTPS's ash storage pond, which was found being directly discharged into the creek as slurry through a channel, and also leaked out of pipes that crossed the river from the power plant to the storage pond. Fly-ash was also being discharged from the ash ponds of Vallur NTECL, which took over sections of the creek. This heavy discharge of fly ash resulted in reducing the depth of the river from over 10 feet to 1-2 feet, forming a hard concrete-like floor and making it difficult for boats to move.

A series of infrastructural installations – 10 bridges for railways, road, conveyor belts and pipelines – had been built across the river on columns and pilings. Debris from these constructions had been left in the water around the columns after construction. Fishers claimed that this altered the flow of the river and made it hazardous for them to navigate in these areas.

Over 1100 acres of the creek had been encroached on by various industries, the most egregious being large-scale encroachments on the water spread area by Kamaraj Port Limited (KPL). Through the dumping of sand and earth dredged from the sea into the creek, KPL had turned parts of the river into land for coal yards and container terminals, smothering saltpans, tidal mud flats, mangroves and natural drainages. All this compromised the river's ability to carry floodwaters. The effects of this were seen in the severe flooding which occurred in Athipattu, slightly inland from the creek, during the 2016 cyclone.

Another set of impacts was the pollution of water and air from coal ash slurry. A study conducted by the Aquaculture Foundation of India and three other institutions found dangerously high levels of heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium and chromium in the water and in fish, which they ascribed to pollution from industries and domestic sources. Many species of fish have disappeared.

In 2016, the NGT appointed an expert committee to study pollution levels in the creek. The committee, which tested the water at 70 spots, found that the water had high levels of mercury, chromium, and the fish were inedible. The research team also declared that this was due to flyash contamination from NCTPS.

Thus, the wide range of riverine resources offered by the creek has been eliminated due to industrial pollution. Shellfish and crabs, which have a high sensitivity to changes in the chemical/physical composition of river water, have been severely affected by the sewage brought in by the Buckingham canal and the sludge deposits. The only species now available are prawns, with competition intensifying among fishers for the same resource, leading to lesser catch per individual.

A fishing village or an urban slum? Struggles for the future of fishing in Kaatukuppam.

Fishing villages in Chennai are commonly categorised as slums in urban policy documents. Ennore's fishing villages were no exception. Even before they were incorporated into the city's boundaries, a TNUIFSL document in 2008 declared that the Kattivakkam Municipality had a slum population of 56 percent, which included the entire population of the eight fishing villages in Ennore.

The term in this usage is indicative of an official discourse that sees fishing as a dying if not already dead profession, and fishers as a future urban low-skilled labor force. State officials that we interviewed for this study, including from the Fisheries Department, were in vehement denial about the viability and the future of fishing as a livelihood in Ennore and in Kaatukuppam. None of their fisheries development schemes were being implemented in Ennore. When asked why, a sub inspector from the Fisheries Department declared: ‘There’s nothing to develop in Ennore Creek. Only when there is a scope for development can such schemes can be implemented’.

As outlined above, fishing as a livelihood has contracted severely over the last two decades. The fishing grounds, which once extended to the north and south of the village, are now restricted to the north, as the waters to the south are too polluted.

Yet, our survey results indicate that fishing is still the most dominant occupation among the residents of Kattukuppam, eclipsing all other employers/jobs in Kattukuppam. It was cited as the primary source of employment for 115 people in the village. In contrast, all local industries in the vicinity of Kattukuppam (there are about a eleven of them including Ashok Leyland, NTPS) put together provided only 30 jobs to the residents of Kattukuppam.

The creek was also not just the single largest employer of Kattukuppam residents but also the most diverse. The occupational fisher group comprised men of varying age groups and education levels. The survey data indicated that 44 of the 115 occupational fishers were less than 35 years of age. The majority of occupational fishers (53) were however middle aged (36 – 53 years). Similarly, there was a number of graduates/diploma holders (7) engaged in fishing, although the vast majority (65) of occupational fishers were high school drop-outs.

The only other noteworthy source of employment in Kattukuppam was the jobs (numbering 32) at the Electricity Board. However, it is pertinent to note that these jobs were the results of the massive protests in the early 90s by the fishers against the destruction of the creek by the NCTPS. The jobs were provided as compensation for the loss in fisher livelihoods due to the release of hot water/effluents at the mouth of the creek.

Fishers by caste, fishers by occupation: a porous boundary

The introduction of industrial jobs into the village has come to constitute a complex of boundaries. The radical decline in the quantity and quality of catch and the reduced market demand has forced an increasing number to seek jobs from the factories and industries that are responsible for the destruction of their livelihood. A few fishers who do not go fishing remain engaged in ancillary activities such as sewing nets. But a large proportion of erstwhile fishers now have fishing as their secondary and supplementary

occupation, with their main livelihood provided by industrial labour, primarily through daily wage or short term contracts in the factories and ports nearby. Occupations in the village are now diverse, ranging from white collar to coolie jobs, but the vast majority of these are temporary.

Thus, fisherfolk in kattukuppam are of two types- 'fishermen by caste and occupation' and 'fishermen by caste but not by occupation'. Contrary to common belief, however, this shift to industrial employment has not increased their income or well-being. "We used to get around 10 times the money in fishing five decades ago than what we get today. But today, we have to juggle between two jobs- fishing and factory jobs to earn a decent salary." says a fisherman who also works on a contract job.

Yet the vast majority of Kaatukuppam's fisher population still define themselves as fishers in terms of identity and belonging. Even while some perceive fishing as a dying occupation, this strong affinity toward their caste and occupational identity led them to assert that they would always be fishers, and would be happy to return to fishing if the creek was restored. A fisher who held a permanent compensatory job at the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board said: 'I am ready to leave my government job and take up fishing as my main source of livelihood'

The destructive industrialisation of the area has brought ambivalence and tension in the aspirations of the fisher folk: even as leaders and some members battle the pollution and destruction, others look to these industries for work. The next generation is expected to move out of fishing, as fishers discourage their children from taking up fishing. There are engineering graduates, ITI diploma holders and many youth pursuing college education in Kaatukuppam today. "My son should not go through what I am going through today" was a line we frequently heard from the fishermen.

Yet, the youth of Kattukuppam display a complex connection to the creek. Fishing still appears to offer the only source of employment for a significant proportion of employable youth in the 18-26 age group. A third of fisher men in this age group remain unemployed, for various reasons. Companies in the vicinity of the creek do not provide adequate employment opportunities for local youth, and the jobs they provide are of poor quality: low-paid, involving manual labor and casual or part-time with no security of employment. The youth claim that jobs in the new economy sectors or South Chennai are also unavailable to them as employers cite the long distance from Kattukuppam and their inability to be punctual, especially for late-night shifts. Only a limited few who have graduated college have been able to obtain gainful employment commensurate with their degrees, skills and abilities at private/state-owned companies that is.

Boundary crossings: Village Leadership in Kaatukuppam

The boundaries that mark the distinctive identity, culture and everyday economic functioning of fishing villages are primarily maintained and policed by their leadership institutions. Two types of institutions have long governed, and continue to play an important role in, the everyday lives of fishing villages: the “traditional” fisher panchayat and the modern state-linked institution of the Fisher Cooperative Society. Yet urbanisation has brought complex changes to the structures and roles of these institutions both “customary” and “modern”, altering their forms and scope of authority, and sometimes dissolving the boundaries between the two categories of institution. These institutions thus figure as important boundary-spanners in the story of struggles and the pursuit of aspirations of villages like Kaatukuppam. Both play a pivotal role in struggles against the state and industries, but also in negotiations with them.

Fishing villages all along the Coromandel Coast are distinguished by the active presence and continuing relevance, even in urban settings, of their caste panchayats. Every fishing village, irrespective of its size, has its own panchayat. Fishing villages of this region are usually homogenous in their caste composition, the vast majority belonging to the Pattinavar caste. Another common feature of Coromandel Coast fisher panchayats is the figure of the hereditary and permanent village headman, the Meenava Chettiar, who is from the highest lineage and is usually the head of the panchayat, assisted by one or two members from prominent and wealthy lineages. In Kaatukuppam, the single Chettiyar family had moved out of the village several decades earlier.

The overarching authority of the panchayat under the Chettiyar has given way to a more limited yet important role in administration and management of village affairs, broadly captured by the change in terminology from “oor panchayat” to “oor nirvagam”. The latter refers to an organisation that manages the village affairs, rather than an overarching decision-making and governing institution. Leadership is not hereditary anymore. The Chettiyar and Panchayathars are now replaced by “Nirvagis”, 12 people who are annually “selected” to the office. The selection occurs in a formal meeting with all village members, and the Oor Nirvagam is formally reconstituted each year after the selected nirvagis are approved by the village members. Modern party politics and the strength of political associations plays a strong role in the selection of Nirvagis.

The role of the Fisher Cooperative Society was earlier confined to coordinating with the Fisheries Department to channel benefits and schemes to fishers. It had no role in governing fishing activities and the creek. However, the fishermen cooperative society today works closely with the Oor Nirvagam, participating in all actions and protests relating to the creek. In fact, the leader of the fishermen cooperative society is now the most prominent local face of the campaign in the village. Meanwhile, Kaatukuppam’s Oor Nirvagam has also recreated its local strength and authority because of the village’s

leading role in the struggle against pollution in the creek. The campaign against the destruction of the resource base, and the fight to revive and restore fishing livelihoods has reinvigorated the village leadership and brought a convergence between the two major institutions.

Village protests and early struggles

The fishers of Kattukuppam have had a long history of protests/struggles against the destruction of creek and their livelihoods by the industries in the vicinity. One of the earliest protests was in 1992, when the NCTPS started releasing its coolant water at the river mouth. Fishers from all six fishing villages in Ennore united to protest against this release stating that this affected fish/crab populations and fish catch. As a result of the massive protests, 350 jobs (to be equally distributed among the 6 villages) were provided as compensation for the livelihood loss by TANGEDCO.

The fishers soon realized that the jobs were only a temporary solution, as the creek only continued to degrade further due to industrial activities/encroachment. In the late 90s, fishers protested against the release of oily effluents and sewage into the Buckingham Canal by industrial clusters in Manali. At that time, the fishers even forcibly closed down the lock where the Canal intersected the creek at Kattukuppam. In 2007, fishers agitated against the construction of Conveyer belt for Vallur Thermal Power Station that severely compromised the hydrology of the creek. This was followed by another set of massive protests in 2010 when the bridge connecting Ennore to Athipattu was built which further affected boat movement in the creek. Unlike the first set of protests in 1992 when the state provided compensatory jobs, the subsequent protests were simply ignored by the state. Constructions/discharges were allowed to continue despite being illegal and despite severely affecting not just the creek but also fisher livelihoods. Fishers also indicate that their voices were effectively silenced by initiating judicial action against the protesting /fisher leaders. This led to the fisher leaders' decision to canvass for more supporters for their struggle from different parts of Chennai.

Expanding the boundaries of the struggle: The entry of the campaign.

The struggle of the fisher folk intensified after coming into association with a campaign called the 'Save Ennore Creek Campaign' which brought them in contact with environmentalists and activists and brought about a major turn in the history of protests against the destruction of the creek. Kattukuppam village (represented by the customary panchayat) is the main village which coordinates with the campaign and is most actively engaged in matters pertaining to the creek.

The "Save Ennore Creek" has its roots in visit to the area by members (including a fisher activist) of the Coastal Resource Center, an NGO working in south Chennai, who were engaged in mapping land use and river use of fisher villages in coastal areas

around Chennai. In the course of this mapping, the activists became aware that large parts of the areas that were important for fisher livelihood had already become industrial land. By 2014, when activists were visiting the fishing villages of Ennore regularly to understand the issues, new thermal power stations like Vallur had come into operation and others like ETPS and NCTPS were fully functional. The Kamaraj port had also started functioning at that time.

An early strategy of the campaign was to examine the documents of the thermal power plants, to understand how the widespread destruction had been allowed to occur. The campaign launched efforts to obtain documents through RTI. The combination of the maps, documents and persistent on-ground investigations in collaboration with local fishers yielded a detailed spatial portrait of the multiple illegalities that had been perpetrated by the power plants. The takeover of land for ash ponds, illegal leakage from the ash ponds, and other destructive actions were identified as violations of conditions in environmental and CRZ clearances.

An important initial action that helped launch the campaign locally was the struggle against the dumping of earth into the creek by Kamaraj Port in Aug 2015. By then, the campaign had assembled a substantial base of information on the permissions and clearances obtained by different industries, the lay of the land, etc. The dumping was a trigger for the local fishers to use this information – specifically the maps of land and river – to contest this action. They won an immediate victory in the order by the National Green Tribunal for the dumping to be halted.

However, as the port began dumping earth in three new unauthorised sites in the creek, the campaign realised that the battle had to be fought on multiple fronts and needed a stronger and wider base of support. It began to focus on strategies to bring the attention of the larger public of Chennai to this site. The Ennore creek had remained invisible in the larger discourses of river restoration and ecological concern that had become part of Chennai's project of world class urbanism, bringing together government agencies, the judiciary, a large cross-section of environmental groups, ordinary citizens, scientists and students. While the restoration of the Cooum and Adyar rivers was being intensely discussed and debated, the Kosastaliyar River, a much larger river in the north, hardly figured.

Bringing the Ennore creek, its beauty and its destruction to the attention of the city became a major plank of the campaign. A first step was a public hearing held in (date), which had a panel of eminent persons, including a retired judge of the Madras High Court, and eminent water experts of the city, who visited the creek, travelled on it by boat, interacted with the fishermen, and listened to their complaints. This brought media attention to the creek. A second major event that propelled the creek into public attention was the Chennai floods of 2015, which highlighted the hydrological changes that had occurred in Ennore, especially when the petroleum refineries of BPCL and

HPCL got flooded. Also, the role of fishers from Kaattukuppam in assisting with rescue efforts in the city enabled the campaign to bring their plight to the attention of the Chennai public and win their sympathy.

The campaign began to organise regular “toxic tours” to the creek, for a wide range of Chennai citizens – media, school and college students, retired and serving bureaucrats, scientists and academics. Yet, strategies for expanding and enhancing local engagement in the struggle was a significant part of the campaign. This included toxic tours for children from Ennore to build their understanding of pollution and encroachments, and the initiation of the Kaattukuppam Boys Troupe, which attempted to get young local boys to understand and express the importance of the creek, through cultural forms such as *villupaattu*, skits and other folk arts.

A major challenge for the campaign in this period was to activate fisher villages to stand together to lead the struggles. As an activist pointed out, *“At that time there were a lot of inter village politics which they were not able to resolve. So when they formed the Ennore Anaithu Meenava Grama Koottamaippu, it became a powerful tool to bring all the villages together.”*

The campaign also focused on organising women. Activists of the “Save Ennore Campaign” held several meetings in which fisherwomen expressed concerns about the loss of livelihoods they had suffered due to the destruction of the creek. The visits of prominent personalities, including a famous actor and politician and a Rajya Sabha MP and discussions with local fishers also served to invigorate the local campaign. As a fisher woman noted, *“Kanimozhi herself has come here, spoken to us and raised the issue in the Parliament”*.

These efforts resulted in the large-scale participation of women and children in the Jal Satyagraha in 2018. The large protests that took place in January 2018 in the Ennore creek by fisher folk, demanding the withdrawal of the fraudulent CRZ map that had denied the existence of the creek, also involved women and children in large numbers. Following the protest, work on expansion of the Kamaraj Port was stopped and the RDO undertook to look more closely into the violations. The district collector of Thiruvallur met with representatives of NCTPS, Vallur TPS, Kamaraj Port, and ordered them to clean and desilt 22km of the Buckingham canal. She also asked Vallur TPS to submit the maps and drawings of the projects to verify.

Mapping and the Production of Alternative Knowledge

The major pillar of the campaign’s strategy was ongoing and systematic research and documentation, employing interns, volunteers, activists, fishers and others. The first such effort, as mentioned above, involved a thorough and detailed mapping and documentation of the uses of land and water for the livelihoods of fishers. This had

never been done before despite several “Social Impact Assessments” produced for environmental clearance. The second plank involved collecting and studying documents from a variety of sources, about permissions, licenses, clearances, laws and plans that governed the area and the interventions. Third, scientific studies on pollution were conducted. Air, water and soil samples were collected and analysed and two reports were prepared, to counter the data from the TNPCB. The campaign invited, enabled, and assisted researchers of various disciplines to carry out research in the area.⁵ Most of the documents obtained through RTI were also put up in the public domain to make them available for other researchers.

According to activists of the Coastal Resource Centre, the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNSCZMA) used a fraudulent CRZ map to facilitate a proposal by the Kamarajar Port Ltd to divert 1,000 acres of the Ennore Creek. These activists sought an independent inquiry to be conducted into the “fraudulent map” and the clearance given to Kamarajar Port to construct car parking terminals, warehouse zones and a coal yard in the creek to be withdrawn till the issue is resolved.

Legal strategies were also pursued. Nine cases have been filed on Ennore in the National Green Tribunal, of which the campaign was assisting in 3, with leaders of Kaatukuppam’s Fisher Cooperative Society as petitioners.

Insights on boundaries and spanning

The entry of the campaign emerged as key to renewing and invigorating Kaatukuppam’s long-standing struggle against the destruction of the creek, but also to dismantling several internal boundaries in the village and creating a coherent vision of a revived creek as the foundation of local development.

Detailed research and information gathering – a scientific mobilisation – was the main tool of struggle. The science introduced by the campaign was not about expert intervention but about systematic, strategic and targeted gathering of knowledge aimed at making the most effective case possible to the government and the courts while simultaneously mobilising the fisher community. As an activist associated with the campaign states, *“It was only after the campaign entered, we started protests in a more organised way. The protest against Kamaraj port was the first kind of protest which was done in a scientific way. We were able to question them based on the clearances they have obtained. Such things were never asked before. The industries also never took the fishermen seriously.”*

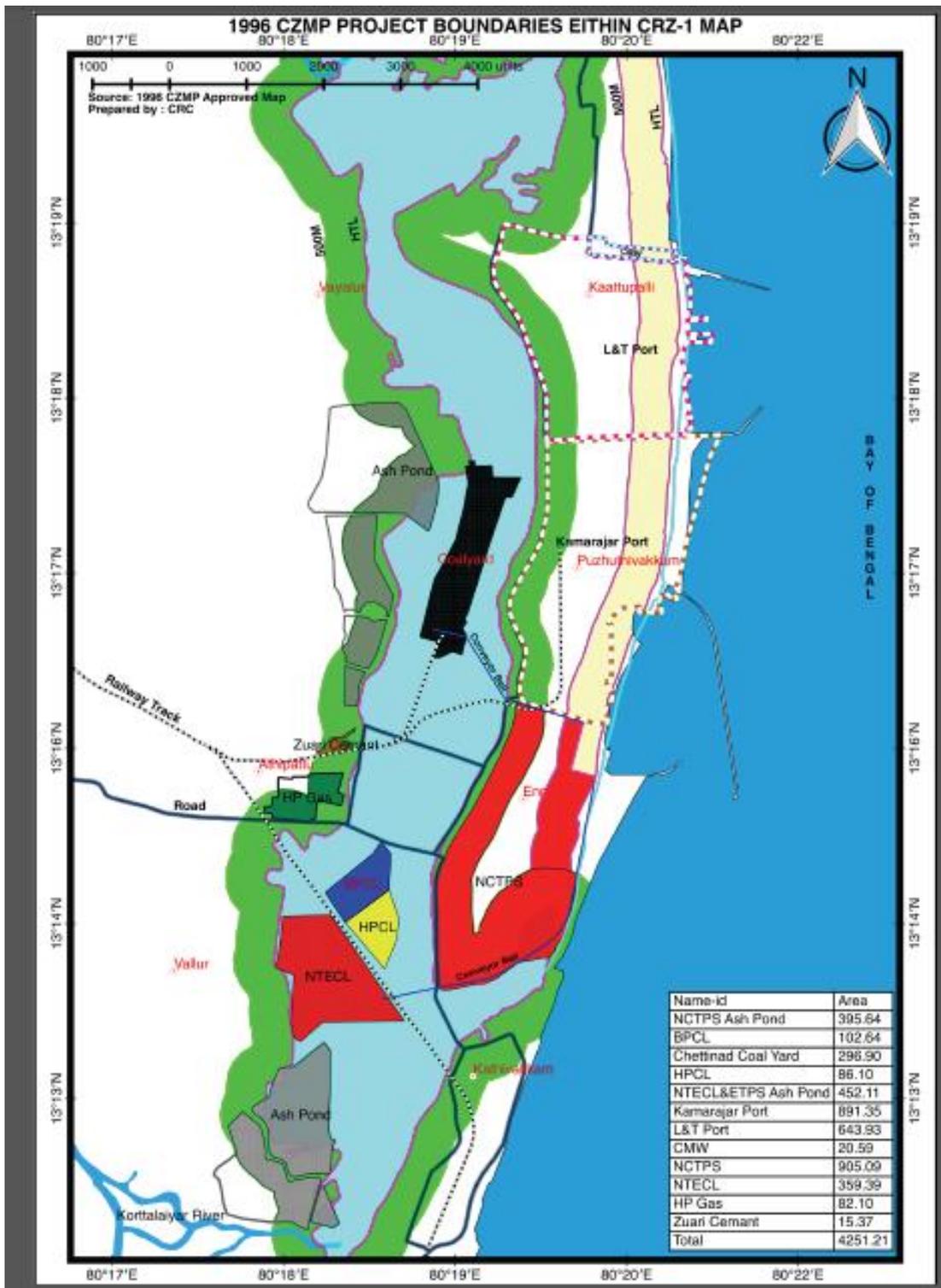
⁵ E.g., the study by Mukul Kumar, a scholar from University of California at Berkeley, funded by the Hindu Institute of Public Policy. His report is available in the Hindu institute of public policy research website.

The campaign also empowered fishers with the tools and confidence to battle the government. As the activist puts it, "*Before the campaign, people used to feel that since it is the government which doing all of this, it would be impossible for the fishers to fight against the government.*" The research carried out by the campaign unravelled the series of illegalities through which the industries and the government had been operating. They were able to file cases in court based on this information.

Breaking the socio-spatial boundaries between the hitherto invisible fishing village in a remote northern area and the larger Chennai public was a conscious strategy that the campaign actively pursued through numerous means through art and awareness: the song, music festivals and toxic tours.



Figure 3: Jal Satyagraha protest photo - Jan 2018



Map 4: Map showing industrial encroachments in Ennore Creek

Map source: *The Coastal Resource Center, Chennai*

Case Study -5. Trombay Koliwada: Reclaiming urban fishing commons amidst contestation

Introduction

The city of Mumbai has been formed by the reclamation of 7 islands all occupied by fisherfolk – an ethnic group called *kolis*. Seen as the original inhabitants of the city – they are often referred to as 'sons of the soil' (bhumi Putra) (Peke 2013). Like all urban fishing communities in the country, the *kolis*, and their villages – known as *koliwad*s – are undergoing a churning. Caught amidst pressures of mechanisation of fishing, rapidly transforming livelihoods, and political-economic and ecological changes in the megacity of Mumbai, the *kolis* are getting estranged from the sea and redefining the boundaries of their community, and their identity and aspirations as a fishing community. This case focuses on Trombay Koliwada situated on Mumbai's eastern coast that is coping with the rapid degradation of conditions for artisanal fishing practiced by the *kolis* due to a range of anthropogenic factors. The most important of these are increased pollutants⁶ and infrastructure in the sea⁷, both of which have cascading ecological effects not only on fishing, but also on land-sea boundaries due to reduction in depths of coastal waters and consequent growth of mangroves due to siltation. Trombay Koliwada has waged a long-running struggle with various state agencies to officially recognise its fishing commons – lands adjoining the fisher settlement area – that it sees as increasingly important to reimagining the community's boundaries, identity and future.

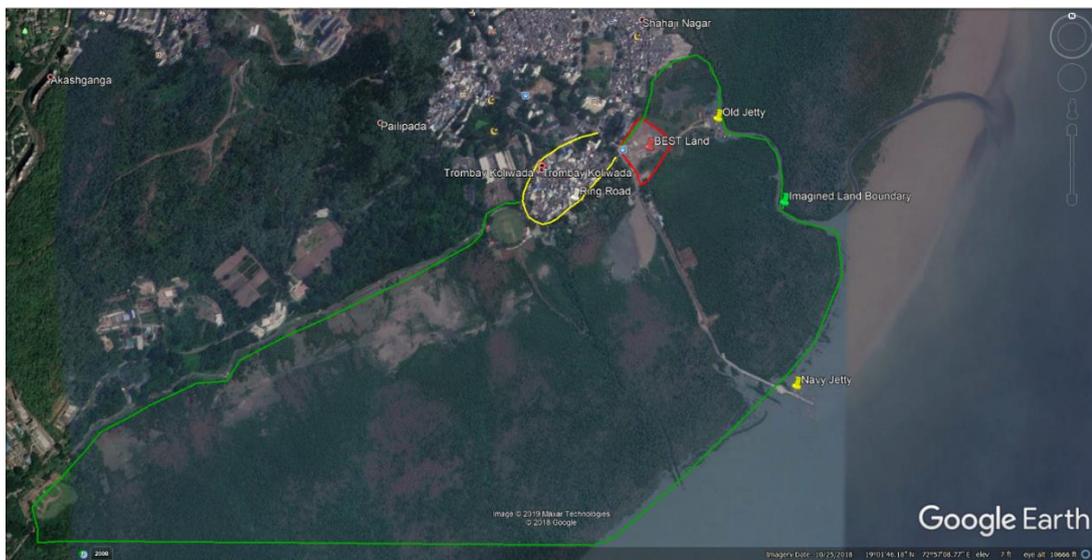
The case follows the Koliwada's efforts over 50 years with various state agencies (notably Mumbai's public bus agency – BEST, Forest Department, and the city corporation) in the struggle to recognize and protect their customary fishing commons, that today serves as an urban commons supporting both fishing and non-fishing uses. Legally owned by state agencies, it was transferred to the BEST in 1987 for the purpose of building a bus depot 'in the public interest'. Despite whispers that BEST proposes to commercially redevelop this land to cover their losses, the fishers quietly and persistently use the land as daily fish market, space for drying fish and mending nets, access way to their jetty, playground and site for their annual Koli festival. Through ethnographic and archival study, the paper explores this project of collective aspiration to understand notions of boundaries and processes of spanning.

⁶ The eastern coast of Mumbai has historically been designated for industrial development and is characterised by the presence of chemical and refineries industries (eg Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers, BPCL, HPCL), the Tata Thermal Power Station and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, and the city's dumpyard and abattoir. These are extremely polluting industries.

⁷ Such infrastructure includes the Vashi bridge connecting Navi Mumbai to mainland Mumbai, new road links like the Mumbai Transharbour Link and proposals for privatisation and expansion of ports, such as Yogathan port, located close to Trombay Koliwada.

Understanding Trombay Koliwada through the lens of boundary spanning requires grasping the clash between the remembered boundary of the community (that spans customary use common lands and sea rights), and the much smaller boundary recognized by the state which comprises the settlement (gaothan) encircled by the road. This initiative can be understood as an effort by different collectives of the community to enlarge and reclaim the land/sea perceived as once part of their village. We propose that every act of remembering and reclaiming the earlier boundaries reveals political agency. With repeated performance, Trombay Koliwada socially constructs the idea of an 'imagined fishing community' despite the fact that few people still fish today.

This regeneration effort can be seen as reclaiming that enhances the claims of the community as a whole, even as it also reveals re-workings of the notion of 'community'. Such a re-fashioning of 'community' implies increasing individualization (which emphasises internal divisions, competing claims and exclusions) as well as new forms of community solidarity (such as through sports and cultural projects).



Map 5: Remembered boundaries and Gaothan

Trombay Koliwada: early plans for expanding fishing on Mumbai's eastern seaboard

Trombay Koliwada is situated at the edge of Trombay, on the eastern seaboard and has a history of over 300 hundred years as a successful fishing community. The fishing area of Trombay Koliwada spreads from Vashi Bridge to Gharapuri (Elephanta Caves). One of several koliwadadas located within the Thane creek system, they are connected to each other through the sea lanes and traditional bonds of kith and kin. These fishers are creek fishers who have evolved a sophisticated system of demarcating fishing boundaries in the sea and govern this through traditional governance institutions like the Turbhe

Gaonkari Panchayat that has representation from the koliwada and whose primary responsibility was regulating fishing activity, managing common resources and its dispute resolution, organising community rituals and bringing basic services to the settlement. In the 1960s, the Turbhe Vividh Machhimar Co-operative Society (TVMC) was established under the auspices of the State Fisheries Department to manage affairs related to fishing. Today, the Koliwada population has grown from 711 households in 1987 to over 2500, comprising over 4000 voters, in 2018.

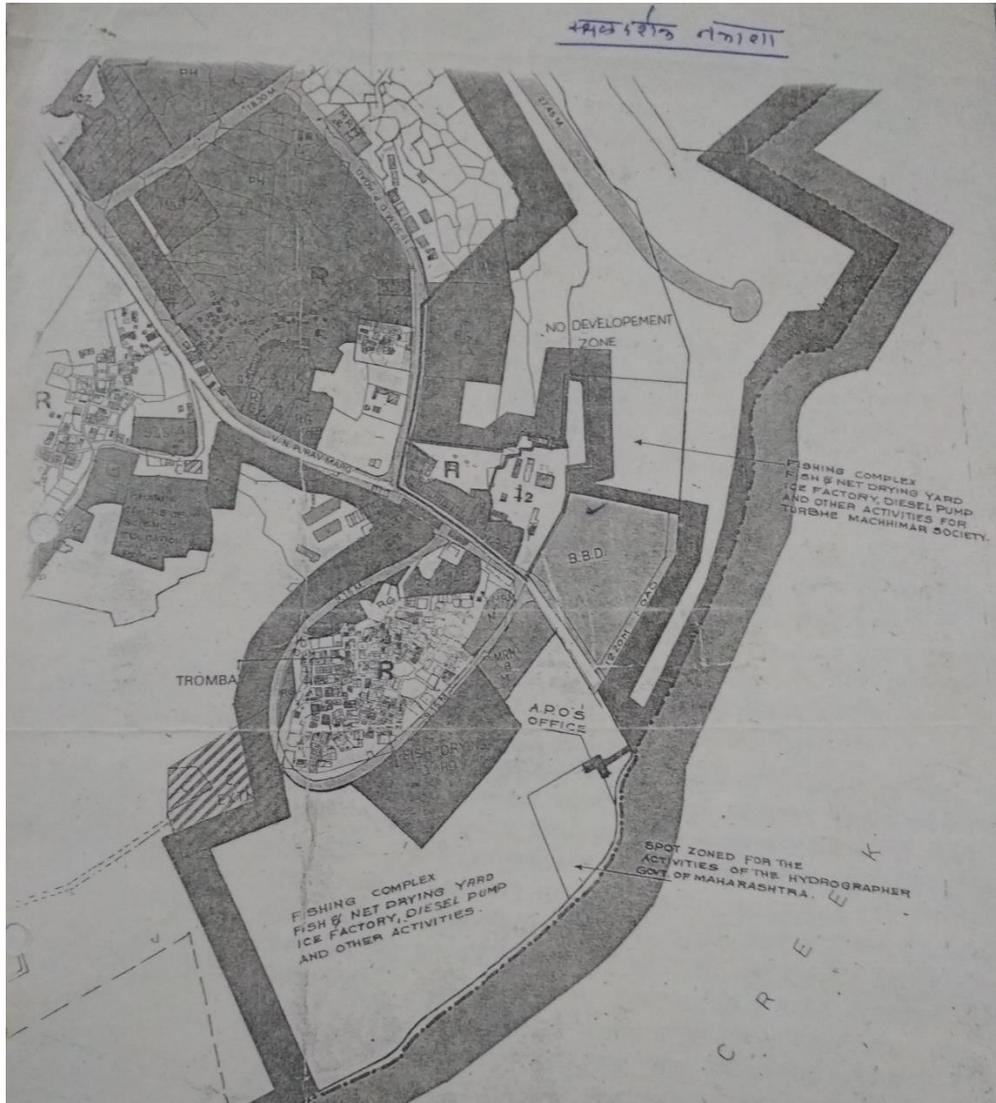
The livelihood of fishing communities spans land and water. The fishing is done in coastal waters, and a range of other activities are carried out in the adjoining lands – fish is dried, boats are parked, fish is sold in the local market and facilities are required to store the fish. Similarly, the fisherpeople of Trombay Koliwada have been using land adjoining their settlement for fishing purposes for hundreds of years but their customary rights over the lands were never recognised, even post-independence. In 1974, the fishing society demanded the legal recognition of their customary fishing commons by applying to the Additional Collector, Bombay Suburban District, the Urban Development Department and Directorate of Fisheries for 3,15,744 sqm of land referring to a State Government circular (1965) that sought to protect the common land adjoining the fishing villages,

“Government is pleased to direct that while disposing of non-agricultural land within or adjoining the fishing villages, preferences should be given to fishermen and their co-operative societies. The collector should ensure that the sites proposed to be disposed of area at sufficient distance from the high level water mark and they should consult fisheries department before their disposal.” (Seashore Land: Grant of-to fishermen for houses, drying nets, etc.) (GoM, 1963)

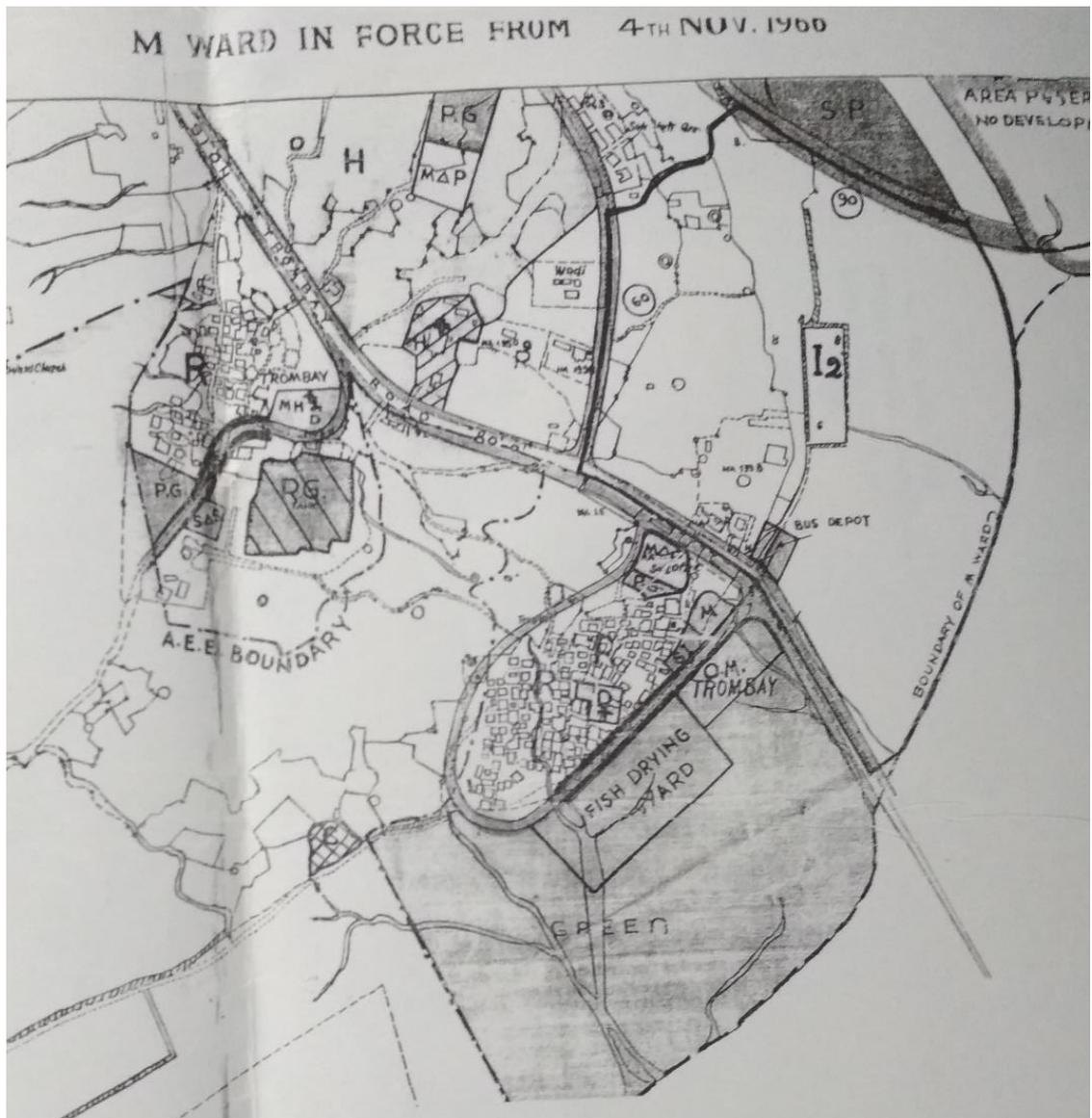
The Fisheries Department supported the Koliwada's demand for using the land for fishing purposes. In 1979, the State Government finally agreed to this request by changing the use of the land from "no development zone" to "fishing industry" and directing the municipal corporation (BMC) to modify the city's Development Plan to recognise this reservation. In 1980, the BMC sent the proposed fishing reservations to the Urban Development Department for approval. Meanwhile the TVMC started formulating several project proposals for developing the fishing industry in Trombay – an ice factory, wholesale fish market, fish drying yard, net drying yard – and submitted these to the Fisheries Department. Several of these were approved by the Fisheries Department.

The TVCM's plans for expanding the fishing industry however received a major blow when the Urban Development Department refused to approve the changed land use on the grounds that new coastal protection directives had arrived from the Prime Minister's Office in 1982 restricting any developmental activities upto 500m from the seashore.

Despite the new coastal regulatory zone (CRZ) directives, the Fisheries Department continued to support the TVCM's demands for reserving the land for fishing industry, stating that many of the fishermen were poor and this was their only means of livelihood. Subsequently, the TVCM found out that BEST had requested a portion of the same land for a bus depot. In 1987, 5154 sq m of salt pan land and 25,000 sqm of revenue and forest land was handed over to BEST for the bus depot. TVMC immediately wrote several letters to various state agencies reminding them that this was land being used for fishing purposes. Having exhausted all other options, TMVK Filed a Writ Petition at Bombay High Court in 1987.



Map 6: Initial Development of Trombay Koliwada (1964-1981)



Map 7: The revised development plan 1966

Applying to the Court: TVMC's strong beginnings and slow decline

The TVMC made several arguments in the court.

a. Discrimination

TVMC alleged that though the BEST initiated the process of demanding land much later than the TVMC, it still managed to get hold off the land. It saw the state administration as discriminating against the TVMC and the community as it applied the rule of 'No-Development Zone' to deny land to TVMC but then overlooked this rule to hand over the same piece of land to BEST. It also argued that while disposing off land adjoining the fishing village, it was required to consult the fishing community and the Fisheries Department but this wasn't done. Furthermore, when TVCM had applied to the Salt Department to demand for the land, it had refused saying the concerned land

could not be granted as it was to be transferred to the Central Public Works Department. Later, the same department sold the said land to the BEST.

b. Loss of livelihood and finance

TVMC argued that its members had taken loans from various financial Institutions to purchase nets, gear and sophisticated machineries in anticipation of a growth in the fishing industry due to the promise of land to them and their intention to develop planned facilities. The denial of proposed land would cause irreparable damage to their livelihood and lead to debt.



Figure 4: Fishermen drying fish at the BEST depot

c. Violation of easementary, natural and customary rights

An easement is a right which the owner or occupier of a certain land possesses to do something, or to prevent and continue to prevent something being done, in or upon or in respect of certain other land not his own that impinges on his enjoyment of his land (<http://www.legalservicesindia.com>). The TVCM argued that the said land has been under use by the members of fishing community since the time immemorial and is also under current use. It also provides an access route to the different spaces used by fishing community such as Katchha Jetty, Net Keeping yard, Navy Jetty and the construction of a BEST depot would violate the easementary, natural, and customary rights of fishing community.



Figure 5: Fishermen using BEST ground to access old katchha jetty



Figure 6: BEST board “This property belongs to BEST Undertaking, Trespassers will be prosecuted.”

d. Violation of fundamental right

The fishing society stated that the allotment of land to BEST is ultra-vires the Constitution and infringes the fundamental right of the petitioner to carry on the trade and occupation of fishing guaranteed under the Article 19.1.g of the Constitution of India.

The court case was finally dismissed in 2005 in BEST's favour on the technicality that the petitioner's lawyer didn't appear in court and not on the legal merits of the case. Office bearers of the TVCM stated that the lawyer was exclusively to blame for losing the case but there is evidence to suggest that internal divisions and conflicts within the TVCM, a reflection of those within the fishing community, were also reasons for this lapse.

Throughout, the TVCM led the struggle for legal recognition of their fishing commons, including the battle in the court. Indeed, the case survived so long because of its commitment. With time, however, the TVCM revealed internal conflicts that hampered its leadership role. The case was twice dismissed due to defaults in the court because the society was increasingly dysfunctional. The TVCM's lawyer, in his affidavit describes the rivalry between two camps within the society who were bitterly fighting

among themselves to gain control over the management of the society's affairs and its implications for the case:

“Whenever there was any meeting whether within the Society amongst the members or meeting with the BEST Undertaking and the other concerned Respondent Departments; the rival warring group made it a point to vehemently press their ideas and demands and at the same to oppose whatever suggestions were made by the then members of the Managing Committee of the Society.”

He further states:

“ in the meantime the members of the Managing Committee of the society and the officials of the BEST Undertaking were exploring the possibility of a mutually workable solution to the problems. Both the parties were in contact with each other and they were having discussions inter se amongst the Petitions and BEST Undertaking and concerned Department of the Respondents so as to work out an amicable settlement. ...I had also personally attended the various meeting for settlement of the issues...The concerned officers of the BEST Undertaking had then orally agreed to forgo their claim over one half portion of the land acquired by them and members of the managing committee were of the society were also in mood to accept the proposal and forgo their claim over one half portion of the marshy land...”

These negotiations ultimately fell through, likely caused by the divisions and rivalry within the TVCM. This decline of a once strong community institution can only be understood when set in the context of the livelihood transformations of the Kolis and political economic changes taking place in the city, as the next section elaborates on.

e. From sea to land: Shifting aspirations of Trombay Koliwada

When the court battle was ongoing to demand over land for the fishing industry in the village, most the families were the fishers and they united in their common interest in the fishing industry. However, with the passing of time, artisanal fishing as a major source of livelihood has started declining due to multiple factors – greater pollution of the sea, new sea infrastructures, and the commercialisation of fishing practices. Simultaneously, new infrastructure are opening up new geographies of development that connect M/E ward, where Trombay is located, with Navi Mumbai and the metropolitan region and beyond. These have contributed to higher land prices and burgeoning commercial, high-end residential, and leisure spaces. All these have served to encourage Trombay Kolis to explore non-fishing related livelihoods. This is seen, for instance, in the negotiations with BEST, when one group demanded 300 jobs

in BEST undertaking in exchange for forgoing the land to the BEST. This transformation in livelihood has clearly created a new boundary between "active fishers" and "non-active fishers", one that is only growing.

The community, which outwardly seems extremely united, also reveals internal conflicts and attempts to take control over community institutions in order to pursue conflicted developmental visions. Here, controlling established community institutions is seen as a source of power in the community since it provides a means of gaining control over common lands, and opening a window to initiate developmental projects in the community. This enhances personal status within the community while leaving scope for kickbacks that lead to personal profit. The court case revealed such intense divisions that disallowed the TVCM Managing Committee members from putting up a united front before the BEST during the negotiations, ultimately taking a toll and losing the court case.

While the initial aspirational project of TVCM was to materialise the reservation of 3 lakh sqm land and they worked toward it very worked systematically. However, with the grant of ownership of the land to BEST, it shifted the focus of its aspirational project to unsettling the fixed boundary of legality. It has done this through 3 major ways. The first, and most importantly, is through use rights and embodied practices.

a. Exerting land rights through everyday use

While the BEST has levelled the disputed land, it has not been able to completely control its use. This is largely because the fishing community persistently use it for various purposes, including fishing. Given that fewer of the community are "active fishers", it seems that non-fishing activities have increased. The fishing community uses it for the purpose of drying fish and nets, and for a wholesale market in the morning. The community members also use it as sport ground and as the site for their newly started annual Koli festival. Sometimes, neighboring communities use the ground for walking early morning or in the evening. All these uses indicate that the uses of the land have been expanded beyond fishing uses to those more generally associated with an urban open space. The logic behind this persistent use seems to be: the greater the use the greater the claim over the land. Everyday use influences control over the land despite not having legal ownership through everyday embodied practices and asserting presence. Overall, this move reduces the ability of the owner (ie BEST) to exercise its full ownership rights.

Meanwhile, the legal owner, BEST, also uses the land for its buses although it hasn't made any moves to construct a depot there. A BEST board has been installed warning against trespassers on said land but the fishing society counters this by installing their own flex boards to disperse information regarding fishing or community activities.

b. Using the RTI to counter the BEST's "in the public interest" argument

The second way it has unsettled the BEST's fixity of ownership is using the Right to Information very actively not only to gather information but also to counter the arguments that BEST presented in its defence. The core of the BEST's argument was that it needed the land "in the public interest" to cater to the growing public transport needs of the city. The fishers have wielded RTI especially since 2007 and hundreds of RTI applications can be seen in their files on different matters. The RTI applications are meticulously drafted and rigorously followed up because in multiple cases the Society has appealed at the state level against the denial of information. Out of hundreds of documents, there are 21 RTI applications made to the BEST requesting information like number of lands reserved for BEST, their current use, no. of staff allotted quarters, commercial utilisation of the BEST property in the city, annual expenses of the BEST. This has then contributed to building the argument that the BEST, in the context of increasing losses, proposes to commercially develop its properties, utilizing the higher FSI it is now permitted, rather than supporting the public transport needs of citizens.

c. Political Pressure

BEST is an undertaking of the municipal corporation, which is a democratically elected local self-government. The Trombay village members are continuously advocating with different politicians, from local councillors to the Member of Parliament, both formally and informally. A few politicians have assured the community that they will help resolve the matter in the interest of villagers. Being aboriginal and organised, Kolis as a community exert quite a significant power in the political space despite being very small numerically. They also tactically decide to vote in a block to amplify their voting power.

Insights on Boundaries and boundary spanning and crossings

We argue in this paper that fishers' practices are linked to their understandings of, and negotiations with, four types of boundaries

a. Remembered community Vs Physical boundary of settlement. The Kolis, being traditionally fisher people, have the remembered boundary of their village far beyond the physical ring road boundary of the settlement, and spanning not only land but also sea. However, these are not formally demarcated and officially recognised. Over the years, through community efforts, some lands outside their settlement area have been declared 'reserved' for community use, but due to conflicting public regulation (eg the CRZ), the community has never been able to formalise/actualize this claim. They

therefore currently engage in practices of reclaiming that serve to unsettle their physical boundary.

b. *Fluid claims and overlapping jurisdictions of state agencies.* The state's institutional boundaries concerning the Koliwada are fluid, contested and overlapping in nature. There are multiple institutions (BARC, Revenue, Department of Salt, Maharashtra Maritime Board, Department of Forest) which regulate, control, and claim the land surrounding the Koliwada. Some claims are more territorially fixed, such as Department of Salt but contested (between Centre, state and lessees of salt pan lands); some claims are fluid like forest department (as the mangroves grow, the jurisdiction of forest department grows too). Many older development plan (DP) reservations that were demarcated through community effort (eg fish market) are now in conflict with newer environmental regulations regarding protection of mangrove as 'reserve forest' under the Forest Conservation Act. Additionally, the community was denied its claim over fishing commons by the state government citing this was protected under CRZ, but the same land was then transferred to the BEST for a bus depot. This institutional fluidity has led to considerable uncertainty about the future of reserved lands.

c. *Shifting ecological boundaries.* The natural system's boundary are changeable, also due to anthropogenic factors. Engineered landscapes of existing and proposed sea infrastructure have led to changing tidal movements and fish patterns, shallower seas due to deposition, increasing mangroves and narrowing sub creeks. BEST's reclaiming the land, the Trombay fishing society's construction and extension of the Navy Jetty, and large infrastructure projects has caused siltation, making it the perfect environment for mangroves to grow, say fishermen. Mangroves have grown on lands that were formerly their fishing commons. This has altered the balance that fishers once shared with the wetlands. Earlier fishers had a different relationship with mangroves -- they protected them realising their importance for their livelihood but also used them for fuel and equipment -- now they cannot touch them due to the current inflexible regulation for their protection that sees fishers as encroachers in a pristine wetlands environment. Additionally, increasing pollution, especially due to pollutants from the Deonar dumping ground leaching into their fishing grounds at high tide, has led to catches of plastic and garbage, polluted fish, and a changing embodied experience of what it means to fish as an artisanal fisherman. All these have reinforced the community's turn towards seeing their land as their future, and motivated claim-making with respect to lands seen as commons.

d. *Contestations among community institutions.* Community institutions played key roles in spanning and unsettling boundaries: they are united in protecting community members from the state through collaboration and silence. They also engage in larger collaborations with federations of fishing villages to lobby the state government. However, increased uncertainty over their fishing livelihood and the greater stakes in land have led to re-alignments of power among community institutions and boundary

spanning/erasure processes internal to the community. Three community institutions are important: the Fishing Society, the Koli Kings, a newer youth organisation, and the Gaonkari Panchayat, the traditional governance structure of the Koliwada. The power struggles between these competing social institutions reveal internal efforts by splinter groups to control the community and its commons through its institutions. This can be seen via the emergence of Koli Kings who claim and use such common lands for creating solidarity around sports and culture; the revival of the Gaonkari Panchayat in a new avatar of resolving disputes around claiming of common lands by different community members; the claiming of 'reserved' lands by the Fishing Society through the construction of a fish drying yard that is not used for fish drying but serves as a means of controlling the commons.

Implications for theory, practice, policy

Sophisticated adaptation of array of strategies: This case is important not only for the fishers' intensity of resistance but the sophisticated adaptation of a repertoire of practices over 60 years. What is clearly witnessed over 60 years is the change in strategy from a formal, deliberate, confrontational engagement with the state through the courts to more quiet, everyday forms of "collective action of non-collective actors" (Bayat) that privileges use value in the present over legal rights that secure the future. Everyday, embodied practice therefore becomes important to understand how the fisher community works to unsettle boundaries in the contemporary context and thus imagine their remembered boundary anew.

The community's change in strategy for reclamation is a tactical one in response to larger political economic changes. Contemporary government policies are driven by a private property based regime that calls for capitalization of not only land but also the sea. We can see this clearly reflected in the state government's calculated shift from earlier reserving seashore lands for the community's fishing use in the city's Development Plan, to annulling this under the guise of coastal protection and the 'public interest' of the city's BEST commuters, to proposing plans for new infrastructure projects in the sea (the Transharbour Link Road that destroys traditional fishing areas). Trombay Koliwada experiences the everyday impacts of such a change though their increasing stakes in land, as a consequence of urbanisation and soaring land values, just as their stake in fishing and the sea have decreased. This change in stakes is reflected in changing institutional configurations within the Koliwada and changing practices of boundary spanning. This opens up new directions for research on state-society relations.

The re-working of 'community': The entire process of reclaiming is a two-faced process. On one hand, it leads to fractures within the community. On the other hand, it is seen as furthering the overall community's reclaiming efforts and through their institutions members act to collectively protect and defend each other's claim to outsiders although not all members benefit from claiming lands. Thus overall, competing internal claims

mean very real exclusion of the majority. The power struggles between competing social institutions and their leaders reveal internal efforts by splinter groups to control the community (and its commons) through its institutions. This indicates that greater focus on studying commons in an urban setting, the 'community' that uses and nurtures such commons, and the manner in which it is governed could be important future research agendas.

New knowledge and practices based on living histories: The living histories of the fishing community reveal their knowledge of use rights on land/sea and the evolution of communal rules and systems of governance. In a time of increased climate uncertainty and disasters, harnessing the fishers' living histories and knowledges about living in and amidst the changing seas could hold some learning for building resilience along the coast.

Case study -6. Korattur Lake Restoration

Introduction

Urban *eris* (aka irrigation tanks) are in the midst of a churning. In planning documents, urban *eris* are no longer valued simply as irrigation structures, but as necessary infrastructural markers of a world-class city and as vital ecological entities. *Eris* across several cities in India have indeed even been taken up for restoration and rejuvenation. In the city of Chennai, Villivakkam *eri* and Korattur *eri* are in the process of being restored, whereas the restoration of Chetpet *eri* was completed in 2014. Additionally, local land-use changes driven by rapid urbanization have also radically altered erstwhile farmlands surrounding *eris* into dense residential and commercial neighbourhoods along with concomitant changes in social structures.

Eri foreshores have typically been sites where the urban poor have built their homes while staking out their foothold in the city. Such settlements despite their long history of occupation are increasingly being viewed as inimical to state-led valuations of *eris* as infrastructural markers of a world-class city. Consequently, informal settlements have increasingly been facing threats of eviction by the state. This response from the state has met considerable on-ground resistance from affected communities. In an effort to articulate their demand and right to housing/livelihoods, communities have engaged with the state in myriad ways, including direct action/street protests and judicial activism. Communities have coalesced together to assert themselves, forging new associations in the process, and strengthening older associations with political parties/leaders. In the process they have generated new alternate knowledges about *eris*/housing rights challenging state assertions regarding water bodies that they have presented in various forums, both formal and informal, including courts, public consultations and meetings with political leaders.

Eris are also witnessing the burgeoning of several citizen-led environmental movements catalyzed by state inadequacies in pollution control/monitoring. Such efforts have been at multiple scales: While local citizen groups have tended to focus on a specific water body, some city-wide NGOs have been targeting multiple water bodies in the city, reaching out to a wider audience in the process. Their actions and aspirations are diverse and includes, not only valuing *eris* as aesthetic spaces, as tourist spots, as biodiversity hotspots, as open spaces in a congested city and as vital necessities that need to be protected for assuring drinking water security/flood protection for the entire neighbourhood. While some have engaged in actions like clean-ups and citizen monitoring, others have also been demanding action from state agencies to strictly enforce pollution laws via judicial action. In the process, these groups have also come up with new ways of engaging with the state/other communities and generating alternate knowledges regarding *eris* and their uses.

Urban eris thus provide a lens to understand the impacts of urbanization on lived space and communities. The conflicts around the eri represent conflicts around what kind of a city is envisaged by different communities that are differentially affected by state actions. The city of Chennai provides an excellent backdrop to study these processes. More specifically, Korattur eri in Chennai provides an excellent case study. With a 594 acre water spread area, the eri is possibly the largest within the city limits. In 2009, the Madras High Court ruled to restore Korattur Eri to its original size and evict settlers inside the boundary. It has also been under active restoration by the PWD with funding from the MoEF since 2014. The eri is also home to two different groups: One of them, based on the eri foreshore consists of working class families who have been resisting eviction orders for over a decade. The other group, based out of the erstwhile ayacut, consisting of middle-class residents has been formed fairly recently with a stated aim of protecting Korattur eri. Both groups have actively engaged with the state but their demands, actions, aspirations and strategies have been widely different.

The struggles/action/activism around Korattur thus provide a valuable prism to understand how multiple transformations driven by urbanization intersect with each other generating new avenues for engagement with the state/other communities, boundaries/barriers for engagement, conflicts and also opening up possibilities for new alliance formation and conflict resolution. While some transformations could be empowering (dismantling older boundaries/barriers for action/formation of new alliances), others could create new boundaries (for example between the two groups) that could potentially hinder truly progressive action.

Lines in the mud: Contesting eri boundaries in Korattur

The concept of the eri boundary offers one pertinent way to examine hegemonic assertions about urban waterbodies and the contestations they provoke. Eris are complex socio-natural hybrids whose boundaries are influenced by a multitude of factors – ecological, societal and political. State agencies and court judgments however, refer to eris as possessing an original and “natural” boundary deemed to be sacred. This is also echoed by activists working on eri restoration with quite a few even demanding to demarcate this boundary with permanent structures. Informal settlers on the banks attempt to redraw these boundaries as part of their struggles to retain their housing. Using Korattur as the backdrop, this paper maps how the informal settlers articulated their demands through calling into question the physical land-water interface, highlighting the shifting nature of the boundary over time and seasons, and arguing that the eri no longer retained the characteristic of a waterbody.

The residents consistently insisted during site visits by external researchers/agencies (and by photo documentation) that the land that they occupied could no longer be termed as a water body, given the distance of the current land-water interface from their dwelling area. The residents also argued that water in the Korattur eri was declared unfit

for drinking by the Chennai Metro water and sewerage board in 2003, and hence the eri itself had fallen into disuse. In addition, the settlers also hoped to capitalize on ambiguities and discrepancies present in the state’s policy stand on encroachments in government lands – specifically government orders GO No.854, dated 30.12.2006, and GO No.579, dated 03.10.2008 that regularized encroachment. One group of residents had mapped the extant of patta and non-patta lands in their neighbourhood to showcase the fact that their neighbourhood was in fact sandwiched between two patta lands and hence could not efficiently redeemed as a water body (Figure 1). Finally, the settlers also presented data on the extent of occupation in Korattur (~10%) vis-à-vis occupation in other eris in order to showcase Korattur as a special case. Finally, the settlers also documented state-provided services (identification cards, ration cards, even street lights) and tax receipts (property tax, water and drainage tax, electricity bills) to prove their long history of occupation in the neighbourhood.



Figure 7: Some of the documentation used by the settlers

The arguments used by the settlers however, have not found favor with the state. On 30 October 2015, a full bench of the Madras High court delivered its verdict on the 6-year-old petition of the residents categorically denying them their request. And on 13 October 2018, the PWD demolished the 1000-odd houses in Korattur, despite massive protests that included attempts to immolate one-self. Their homes turned to dust; the residents have been forced to re-start their life all over. The residents have been given tokens for flats in Perumbakkam but, not everyone is keen to relocate, given the distance that would entail from their current job locations. The brick and mortar rubble of the demolitions might have settled in a few hours, their lives are going to take much longer to recover. This report argues that recognizing the dynamic and contested nature of

urban eri boundaries is a crucial step in formulating a more inclusive approach to informal settlements in the city.

Korattur Eri Protection Group: New community, alliances and exclusions

The emergence of bottom-up citizen-led eri protection movements could be considered as an offshoot of a growing urban environmental consciousness and as a response to state apathy towards water bodies and state inadequacies in monitoring/control. These movements offer newer ways of community engagement not just with urban “nature” but also with state agencies. Using the actions of Korattur Lake Protection Trust, this report traces the formation of a “new urban community” around the lake, the articulations of their goals and aspirations, their engagement with the state/other communities and the pitfalls associated thereof.

The membership itself is diverse: While some trace their ancestry in the neighbourhood itself for more than four generations, others are newer residents. The members also hold a diverse set of opinions/values on eri preservation and these differences play out during weekly strategy meetings. These differences also reflect in the diverse set of activities that the group engages in. Some members have been active in citizen-monitoring of pollution, documentation of the eri’s biodiversity and organizing weekly clean-ups and festivals/activities centered on eri protection. Others have been active in demanding accountability from state agencies, be it the PWD (Using RTI as a tool to demand transparency in funding) or the Pollution control Board/Corporation (Case filed at the NGT to stop effluent inlet into Korattur). Conflicts are attempted to be resolved through debates and discussions during weekly meetings although not all conflicts have been resolved amicably. Figure 2 documents some activities/events of the group since its formation in Dec 2017.

While the group has been successful in forging new alliances among older/new residents, and even members of other Eri protection groups (For example Ambattur in the vicinity), it has been unwilling/unable to include demands of the foreshore settlers. Similarly, the group has not offered any formal environmental critique of the restoration plans of the state that could potentially have adverse impacts on water quality and the ecology of the eri. (For example the plans to have boating facilities).

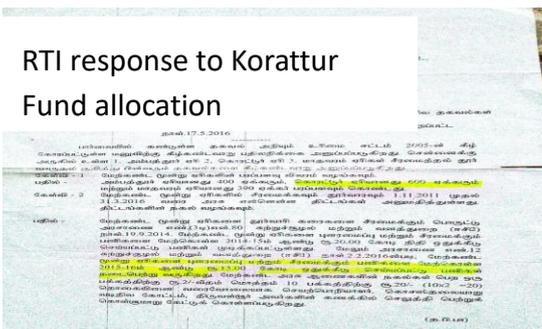
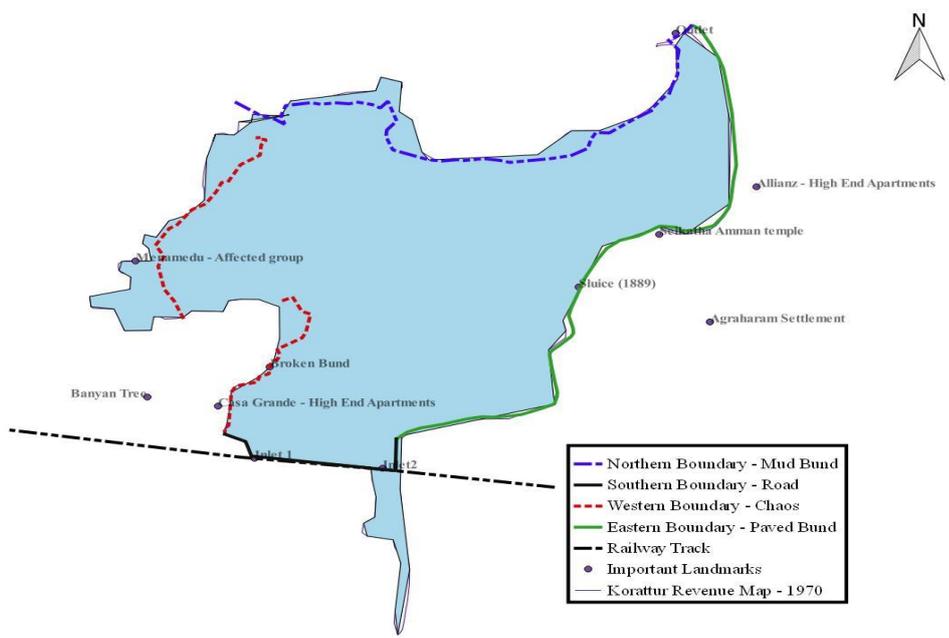


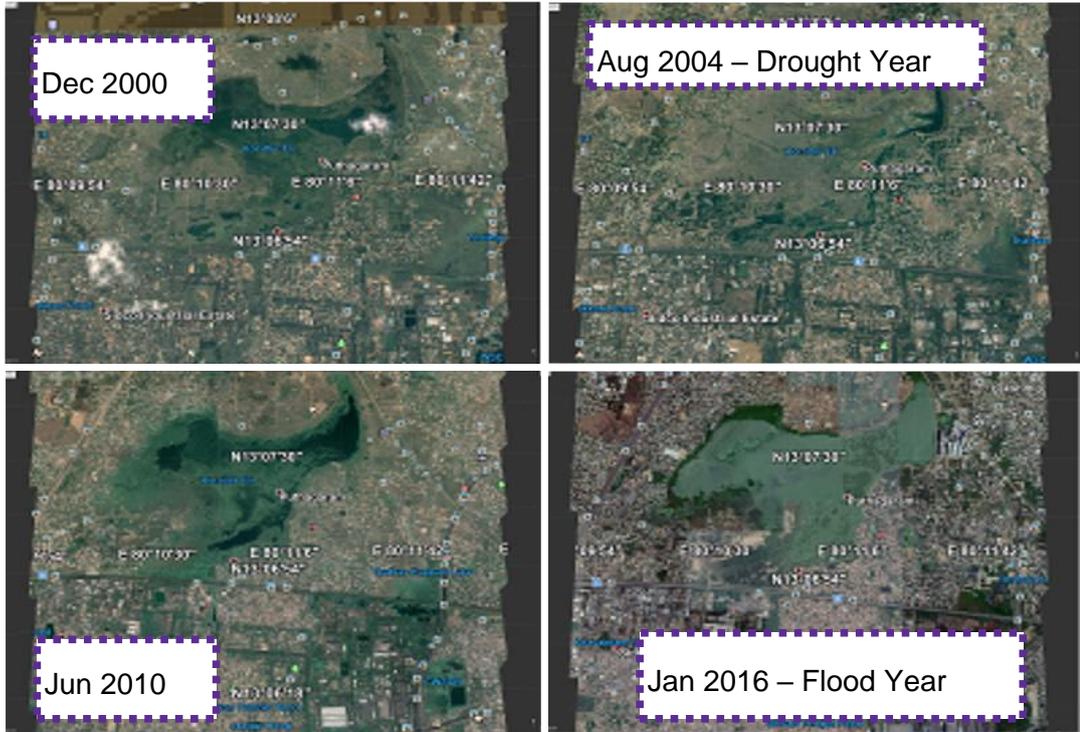
Figure 8: Actions/Events organised by the Korattur Eri Protection group



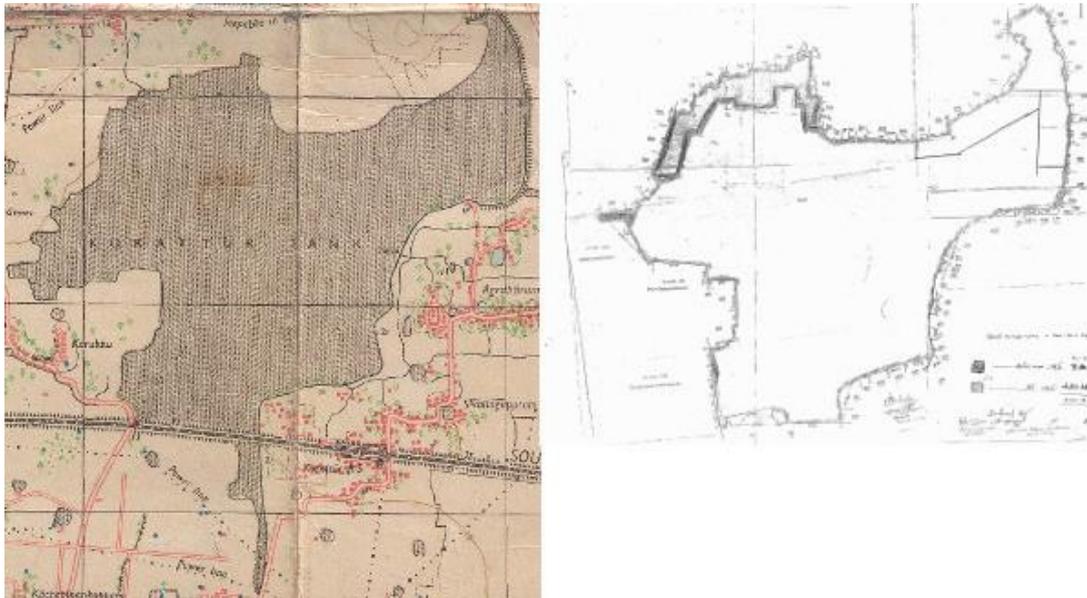
Map 8: GPS path of the circumambulation-Fluid nature of eri boundaries



Figure 9: The land-water interface at the four edges of Korattur eri



Map 9: Google Earth Images of Korattur eri for four different years



Map 10: Korattur eri (In 1970 in the left and 2007 in the right)

2008

Boundary

Feb 2018 Enumeration

inspection – Press Clip

Protests



Public consultation with the PWD, Sep 2018

2018 PWD Evictions – Citizen Video



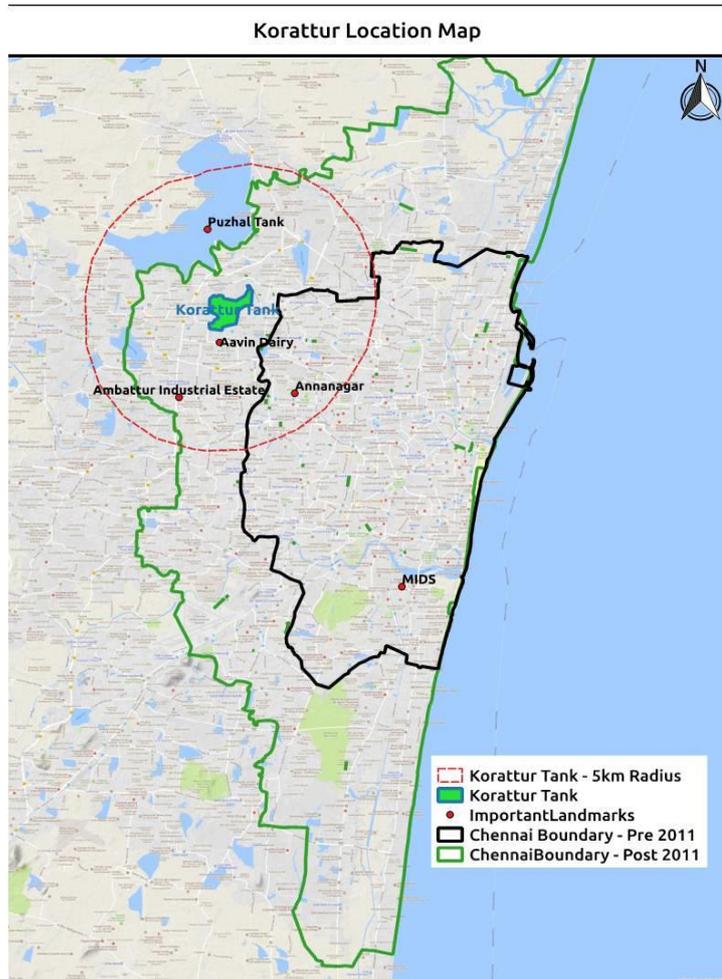
Figure 10: 2018 Protests and Demolition

The next section describes a history of the transformations around Korattur eri from a systematic reading of maps and detailed interviews with residents, along with relevant maps/figures and quotes.

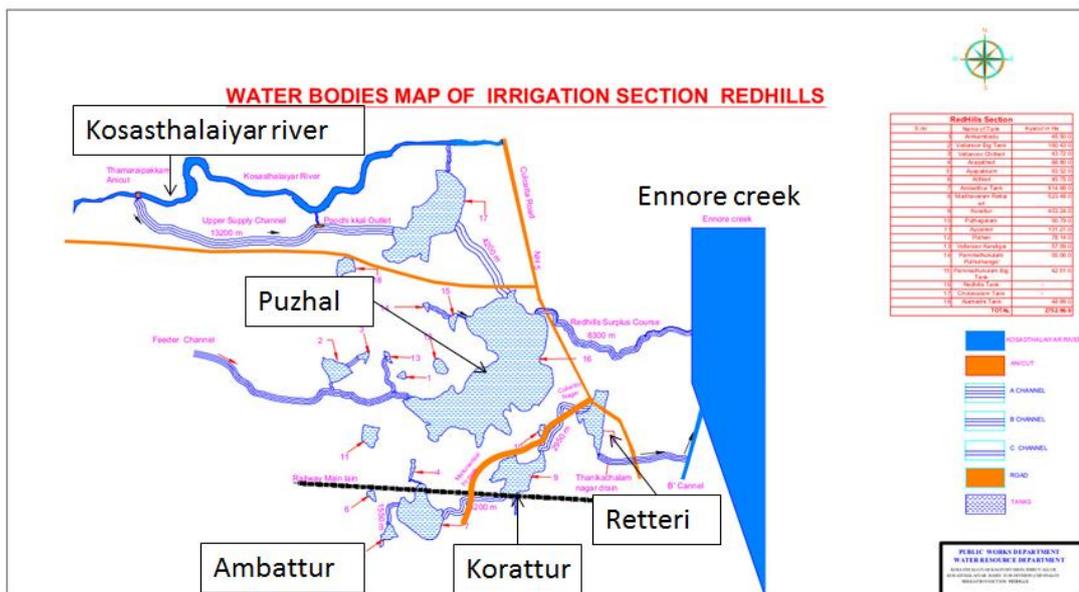
Korattur eri – Land use changes and transformations

Korattur eri is a 594 acre water body situated in north-western Chennai. This is possibly the largest extant waterbody within the limits of the Chennai Corporation. The eri and its environs were incorporated into Chennai Corporation limits in 2011, prior to which they were part of the Ambattur municipality. Several important sites are located within the eri’s 5km radius – Puzhal eri (one of the drinking water sources of Chennai); Ambattur Industrial estate that houses more than 3000 small scale industries and the upmarket residential neighbourhood of Annanagar (Figure 1).

Korattur eri is part of a system of 3 eris (Ambattur-Korattur-Retteri) with the surplus waters finally draining into the Kosasthalaiyar river basin via the Buckingham canal and the Ennore creek. (Figure 2). Jurisdictionally, it falls under the Red Hills sub-section, Kosasthalaiyar sub-division of the PWD.



Map 11: Korattur Location Map



Map 12: Water bodies map of Red Hills Division PWD (Map Source : PWD)

Korattur eri – history

The eri was traditionally used as an irrigation tank with an ayacut of more than 4000 acres. It is bounded by a 2km long earthen bund marking its eastern boundary. The bund also houses the historic Seikatha Amman (aka Seeyathamman) temple that dates to the time of the Pallava king Nandivarman (circa 700 – 800 AD), according to local legend. The temple was common for all seven villages and in the past, a yearly ceremony during the month of Aadi (July-August) marked the coming together of various settlements to the temple for a communal celebration. As a native resident of Korattur Agraharam (Interview 14 July 2017) put it:

“This Seikatha Amman temple is common for 7 villages... Agrahaaram, Thaathankuppam, Kachanankuppam [on this side] and on the other side of Patravakkam, Karukku, Kallikuppam, Maadhanankuppam...total of 7 villages and also Kandigai. And, in the past about 50 years ago, when the chariot pulling ceremony happens, it used to go around this area for 10 days... We would give our Goddess and chariot to them and they would decorate it and take it”

The eri's inlet is located at its south-western corner with the outlet weir at the north-east corner. The eri's ayacut included three old settlements of Agrahaaram, Thathankuppam and Kachanankuppam. The irrigation waters to the agricultural lands in these settlements were controlled via a sluice along the eastern bund. Although the sluice is no longer functional, locals proudly point to a slab there dated circa 1889. In addition to the settlements within the ayacut, other old settlements around the eri included: Madhanankuppam in the north; And, Karukku, Patravakkam and Kallikuppam in the west-south west (These villages in the foreshore despite being contiguous to Korattur eri were technically part of the upstream Ambattur eri's ayacut).

Native residents fondly reminisce about the pristine water quality of the eri and it being used in the past even for cooking during the temple festivities. As a native Agraharam resident put it (Interview July 20, 2017):

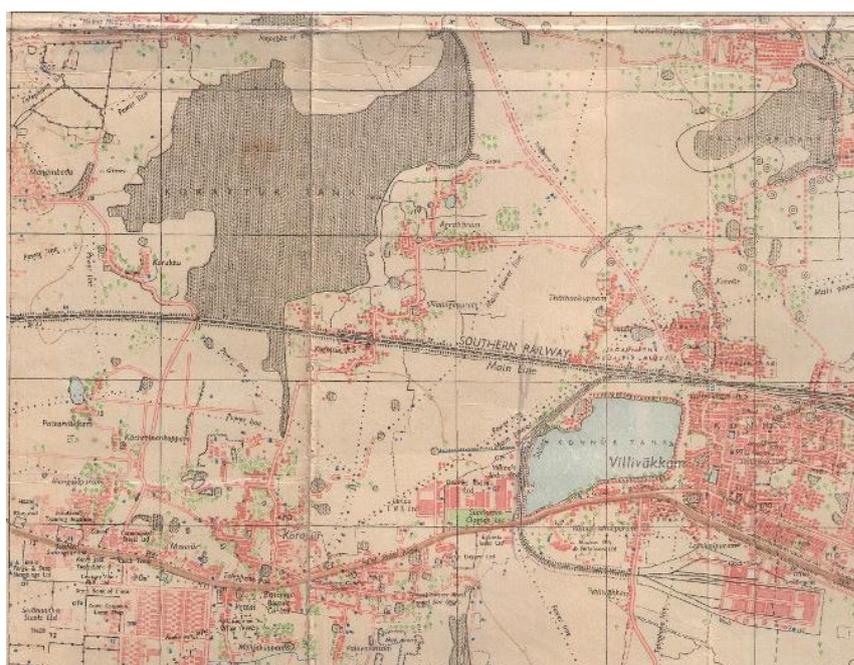
“..before that the lake water used to be so pure that...when people came to the temple to make pongal for festivities, they would not bring water from home...they would bring vessels, fetch water from the lake and then make pongal using the lake water...the water was pure and clear...if you drop a 1 rupee coin, you could see it falling all the way to the lake bed”

In the mid-70s, it is even stated by some residents that the eri was briefly used by the Metro water board as a source of drinking water for Chennai (along with Puzhal that is in the immediate vicinity). The metro water board discontinued these efforts, for reasons that are not clearly known (Interview 27 July, 2017).

“[In] 1974 timeframe...water has been supplied to Chennai from this lake...after Puzhal lake, this lake was used to supply water...one year during the summer season water used to be supplied from here and Puzhal...everyone in the village from that time will attest to this, we all knew this...”

Land use changes around Korattur eri – 1970 to 2017

A 1970 map of Chennai and its environs (Figure 2) reveals that land-use in the immediate vicinity of the eri remained largely agricultural, with residential land-use limited to the older settlements alone. According to several local sources, this continued well into the 90s.



Map 13: Korattur Map 1970

However, the map reveals that several industries were already operational further south of the eri – Aavin Cooperative, the TVS group’s plant at Padi junction, Ambattur Industrial estate (that was set up in 1964) and even companies like Dunlop and Britannia. Native residents supplemented their agricultural income by working in these industries.

Land use changes in the erstwhile ayacut – East of Korattur eri

These industries provided employment to not just local residents but also migrants from all over Tamilnadu. Private residential layouts, converting farm lands into real estate started sprouting all over the east of Korattur eri. The Tamilnadu State Housing Board (TNHB) also acquired large tracts of land in the neighbourhood in the 70s and converted them to TNHB quarters. This planned residential layout still exists south of the eri,

close to the Korattur bus stand with wide/planned lanes and other services. Additionally, the TNHB also acquired Ambattur eri itself for building MIG and HIG residential homes. In fact, one of the residents I was casually speaking with had even cheekily remarked that if it had been upto the then chief minister MGR, Korattur eri would also have been parceled and sold off like Ambattur eri. The 100 ft road (Inner Ring road aka SH 2) that connected Manali, Madhavaram, Padi all the way to Kathipara junction in south Chennai vastly improved Korattur's road connectivity, while simultaneously pushing up real estate prices. The expansion was also aided by the rise of Annanagar in the 60s – an elite/planned residential neighbourhood of Chennai - that was only about 4kms from Korattur. This proximity and availability of “cheaper” real estate (compared to Annanagar) also provided an impetus to real estate, especially in the east of Korattur. As another native resident put it (Interview 27 July, 2017):

“Yes...slowly little-by-little the place started developing...people started saying “Next to Annanagar” and the “Next Annanagar” etc. and started selling the lands.”

The layouts in the east (and south) of Korattur eri predominantly served the housing needs of the middle/urban middle class migrants, changing the social landscape of the neighbourhood completely. Currently, the majority of residents, according to natives are “outsiders” from different parts of Tamilnadu and India.

During 1985-86, plans to use Korattur eri as a temporary reservoir for waters coming to Chennai via the Telugu Ganga scheme was floated by the then MGR-led ADMK state government. Some residents remembered the destruction of native palm trees during the strengthening of the bund as part of this effort (Interview 14 July, 2017).

“In 1985-86 timeframe, the lake boundary walls were being strengthened and all along the lake from Madhanaangkuppam to Ondi Veeran temple, there used to be around 2000 palm trees and while reinforcing the boundaries, bulldozers were brought in and all the palm trees were razed to the ground...as per Telugu Gangai Scheme...this was done...Then, MGR was the chief minister...”

This plan was also eventually shelved, but the state used this as an opportunity to evict about 1200 hutments that were on the eastern bund of Korattur eri. The hutments predominantly belonged to the poor and the landless who used to work as construction/agricultural laborers in the vicinity. Each was provided with 2 cents of land (meikal poromboke) in Madanangkuppam. As a resident who had been given lands in Madanangkuppam (who later moved back) puts it (interview 14 July, 2017):

“There were about 1200 houses on the lake bund itself – all around, on both sides of the bund. This was during the MGR period. He was the one who evacuated people from here on the banks on the east side, and gave us land in

Madanangkuppam. We were all given 2 cents and we were asked to live there. Everyone was given for free, 2 cents of land. Now, some have built, some sold it off, about 1200 homes.”

In 2004, the state government re-initiated plans to use Korattur as a drinking water reservoir and even planned to allot Rs. 5 Crores for de-silting as part of Chennai’s water security plan (GO No 131 dated 27.2.2004). But, local oral accounts indicate that these plans were abandoned.

“Then in 2003-2004, the State Government handed over the area to Metrowater... Then, Metrowater conducted all the chemical tests, analyzed it and said that this water isn’t suitable for drinking, so there is no use of it for us (ie for Metrowater) and they, in turn, handed over the land/lake to PWD... Yes, this happened. The Revenue Department also has the record of all this happening. “

Land use changes in the erstwhile foreshore – West of Korattur eri

The western end (upstream of Korattur and technically the foreshore) also witnessed similar changes. The foreshore settlements of Karukku and Patravakkam, despite being in proximity to Korattur were technically part of Ambattur’s (the upstream eri) ayacut. In the past, residents of these settlements used Korattur eri during the dry season – for cultivation, as grazing lands and for harvesting silt for application in their own fields. As a group of native Karukku residents put it (Interview 24 Aug, 2017):

“We were never dependent on Korattur for watering the fields as the water from Ambattur Lake (4 km away) (which flowed into the area) was used...but we used other things from Korattur...the silt from the Korattur lake was used for building houses and as manure for the fields...the silt was like fertilizer”

Native residents of Karukku (and the newer settlement of Menamedu) reminisce about the neighbourhood (extending upto Ambattur Old Town) being only paddy fields, even up until 20-25 years ago, and the first sign of change being the construction of SIPCOT and Ambattur IE in 1973. It was only in the 80s that residential houses started coming up on erstwhile farmlands, for example, in Menamedu that is about a km away from Karukku. Native residents also mention that livelihoods started shifting from agriculture to formal employment during the same time frame. Residents started taking up jobs in Railways, and then later at Dunlop factory that was set up in the 80s.

While farmlands were being converted by native residents in the 80s, locally powerful politicians also started appropriating the eri foreshores, converting them to layouts in the 90s. These were predominantly bought by new residents who had found jobs in the

industries nearby and were rapidly moving into the neighbourhood. As a new resident, who worked as temporary labor in Ambattur mentioned (Interview 6 Aug, 2017):

“..there was no proper land owner...so those local politics people bought it, converted into housing layouts and sold it off...When I came here, it was 1997...But before that, in the 90s itself they had put this housing layout....Right in the beginning, only one family came – the house with the roof-tiles, it is right in the center of the place”

These new residents who bought these lands mention cost as an important factor for buying this piece of land. They also mention being ignorant about the fact that this was part of an eri, as they saw paddy stalks standing while buying the land. As a group of residents mention (Interview 13 Aug, 2017):

“We bought this land because this was cheap..But, we saw paddy stalks standing..Little did we know that this was lake...We are all from outside Chennai..I am from Arani, she is from Tiruvannamalai, and others from different parts..I work as a Auto driver, her husband works as a lathe operator..construction..We sold our jewellery, bought this piece of land in the 90s and constructed in 97...we were given registration deeds for this place even..”

These interviews detail changes along one particular settlement in the western foreshore, namely Menamedu. However, similar transformations were also occurring all along the foreshore of the eri. A 2017 Google Earth image of the eri indicates that the agricultural lands in the 1970 map have all been converted to housing structures (Fig 3).



Map 14: Korattur Map 2017

Case Study -7. Housing improvements in East Delhi

Introduction and context

The enquiry in this case was provoked by the forms of urban regeneration anticipated through the regularisation of unauthorised colonies (UACs) in Delhi, particularly in the eastern parts of the city where many of these are concentrated. The regularisation process is expected to result in improved services as well as property rights. The negotiation for services as well as property rights have been key to urban politics and find prominence in right to the city debates in India (Bhide 2009, Coelho et al. 2009, Nair 2006).

East Delhi: A patchwork of settlements

In the post partition context in Delhi, the low lying lands to the east of the River Yamuna, until now considered agriculturally fertile but unfit for habitation, developed rapidly and in an unplanned manner. Refugee colonies that came up post independence have remained inadequately serviced neighbourhoods, where the addition of sewerage and drainage was challenging because of its loose soil and high water table. Even after the master plan for Delhi, the first in the country, was created in 1962, formal sector housing supply was slow and did not keep pace with the demand for homes as the capital grew exponentially in the post-independence years. While incoming populations occupying empty lands to create squatter settlements is a well known phenomenon, in East Delhi agricultural lands were platted to create residential areas without the necessary conversions required by the master plan. These ‘unauthorised colonies’ have been in a state of limbo since, navigating a process of de facto legalisation known as regularisation, elaborated later. From the ‘90s, East Delhi became the site of state-led planned development, leading to planned industrial estates, co-operative group housing schemes and prestigious projects like the Commonwealth Games Village being located here. In the early 2000s, this part of the city also experienced large-scale slum evictions and slum dwellers were resettled in peripheral sites in the north and north-west parts of the city to beautify the city for the Commonwealth Games 2010.

East Delhi, the most densely populated and least developed of the three municipal corporations in Delhi, forms the broader spatial and geographic context of this case. This part of the city is marked by a patchwork of settlements with varying legal status, including jhuggi jhopri colonies, planned colonies, unauthorised colonies (UACs), regularised unauthorised (RUACs) and resettlement colonies (RCs). The planned and unplanned are co-located and inextricably interlinked in East Delhi.

Regulatory context of unauthorised colonies

In this case, we explore the processes of community-led urban regeneration in the specific context of unauthorised colonies, as they negotiate and achieve ‘regularisation’, a process of post-facto legalisation that is notified by the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD); further, we explore and analyse the boundary assertions and spanning that occur as a result of these negotiations.

Unauthorised colonies are settlements that are built in violation of zoning regulations and Master Plan guidelines. Bhan (2013: 61) describes unauthorised colonies as “built on land not included in the development area in the plan [Master Plan]” or “built on land within the developmental area [of the Master Plan] but not yet zoned for residential use”. Typically, these are colonies wherein residential plots have been constructed on private and/or agricultural land that has been illegally subdivided (Sheikh, Banda, Jha & Mandelkern 2015; Zimmer 2012).⁸ Such land was either privately owned by farmers or was village commons that belonged to the village council (*gram sabha*). Though sale and purchase of such land, and subsequently the plots built-up on it, was a documented and formal process, it was not legal. Principally, this has involved sale of rural land for non-agricultural use, in violation of zoning regulations. This is what renders an unauthorised colony “illegal” and “unplanned” (Bhan 2013: 61).

Estimates of population residing in such colonies are highly varied. The *Economic Survey of Delhi 2008-09*, drawing on data from the Delhi Urban Environment and Infrastructure Improvement Project (DUEIIP)-2021, estimates that over 700,000 people reside in UACs. On the other hand, estimates by the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) count about 4 million people to be living across 1639 unauthorised colonies (see Sheikh & Banda 2016, CPR 2015).

While UACs could be on private or public land, they are not seen as occupiers of land as in the case of a slum, but as a zoning violation. Their residents have some form of *de facto* security of tenure (ibid.) and UACs generally do not face the threat of demolition. This *de facto* security is brought about by some form of semblance of land ownership, often through sale and purchase of property using an instrument known as the General Power of Attorney (GPA)⁹ (Sheikh & Banda 2016, Zimmer 2012). However, the GPA is only “documentary proof of transfer of the land (and/or built-up structure), it is not a proof of the property title—which remains with the original owner of the land” (Sheikh & Banda 2016: 146). UACs therefore have been categorised as

⁹ “The GPA was originally designed as an instrument through which an individual could give another the power to manage his or her affairs; however, the GPA has been widely used by individuals with property of “imperfect title who cannot or do not want to execute registered deeds of conveyance”.” (Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana—(2012) 1 SCC 656, cited in Sheikh & Banda 2016: 146).

“semi-legal” (see Zimmer 2012). Given this specific context, what kind of aspirations drive community-led urban regeneration initiatives and projects in UACs and who are the actors involved in shaping these projects of urban aspiration? What strategies do residents deploy towards the fulfillment of these aspirations? What boundaries do various actors assert, negotiate, cross as they participate in processes of urban regeneration?

Methods

We conducted our research in two phases. In Phase 1, we conducted 72 interviews (during April-July 2016 and in April 2017) in two East Delhi communities (Lalita Park in Lakshmi Nagar and Mandawali) among residents, elected representatives, members of resident welfare associations, party workers and volunteers, etc. to understand aspirations related to urban regeneration against the backdrop of the forms of dominant urbanism created by the interaction of State and capital. From these, we identified certain projects of community-led urban aspiration and investigated these from the lens of boundaries.

In Phase 2, we selected a specific project related to aspirational urban regeneration. We chose to study housing finance as a route to housing improvements, upgrades and reconstruction. We see investments in housing as a key expression of urban regeneration in these neighbourhoods, and housing finance as a *modus operandi* to achieve these at the scale of an individual or household; broadly, we examine housing finance as an enabler of urban regeneration in semi-legal settlements in East Delhi. In order to investigate this aspect, we conducted in-depth interviews of key officials and field staff in a diverse array of lending organisations operating in East Delhi, as well as studied the documentation provided by them about lending processes. We also spoke to housing finance experts.

Aspirations and urban regeneration: The pursuit of better lives, and status

To provide some context to our case study areas, Mandawali is an agglomeration of several unauthorised colonies in East Delhi situated amidst the planned apartment complexes of Patparganj. Accessed by two key roads, Narwana Road and the Patparganj road, the settlement is marked by two prime marketplaces, which also serve as key landmarks for navigation: Shiv Mandir Marg which is situated in Block-A of the settlement and the Mandawali Main Road. The latter runs a little over 1.5 kms and stretches through the entire settlement, connecting it to one of East Delhi’s arterial roads. Typically, houses in the settlement are constructed by land owners over a period of time and are currently three to four storeys high. The settlement is visibly under-serviced with open drains and criss-crossing electricity wires across a dense network of cables and poles.

Lalita Park is predominantly a regularised unauthorised colony (RUAC) in East Delhi, located along two large motorways, Vikas Marg and the Noida Link Road. The locality is part of the Laxmi Nagar constituency in East Delhi with an approximate area of 10 square kilometers. Some portions of the area were not regularized as they were on untenable land, owing to their location on city green belts or their proximity to high tension wires transmitting electricity.¹⁰ Lalita Park is a hub of coaching institutes for Chartered Accountancy (CA) and houses a large number of students. The outer boundary and main streets in the settlements are visibly commercialised with coaching centres, shops, property dealers and travel agents, cycle and auto repair shops, electrical and welding shops, internet cafes, food stores, restaurants, juice shops, paper merchants and photocopy stores. Despite regularisation, Lalita Park also has the look of an underserviced settlement with open drains, exposed electricity cables and poorly maintained infrastructure.

Unauthorised colonies in East Delhi are neighbourhoods that have been built through what Teresa Caldeira (2017) calls ‘peripheral urbanisation’. By this she means that residents build not just their own homes but also contribute to building their neighbourhood, by strategizing their actions carefully, in interaction with but outside the rubric of official planning. In this, she writes: “they operate inside capitalist markets of land, credit, and consumption, but usually in special niches bypassed by the dominant logics of formal real estate, finance, and commodity circulation. In the process of house/city building, many make themselves into citizens and political agents, become fluent in rights talk, and claim the cities as their own.”

In outlining how communities in East Delhi have articulated aspirations related to urban regeneration, we conceptually draw on what Leary and McCarthy define as aspirational regeneration: “urban regeneration is area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature” (Leary and McCarthy 2013: 9). Taking our cue from this, we conceptualise urban regeneration as a process in which aspirations and desires for change get framed and articulated within a wider context of state-led urban developments/redevelopments.

In consonance with this, in our fieldwork we find that aspirations for change are articulated alongside the more routine, everyday negotiations around quality of services. In the first phase of our fieldwork, we found that physical boundaries between unauthorised colonies and regularised unauthorised colonies are often blurred, and residents continue to face substandard infrastructure and service provision. Therefore,

¹⁰ Safety norms determine that no housing can come below or within a certain distance of the wires. 15 of either side of the wires according to interviews with planners.

while they continue to make demands about service delivery and infrastructure improvement on elected representatives and government departments individually and via collectives like Resident Welfare Associations, their articulations of urban regeneration emphasized more aspirational aspects related to beautification of neighbourhoods, crime control and housing improvement and redevelopment.

In phase 2, we focus on exploring housing improvement and redevelopment as a key form of ‘aspirational regeneration’ (Leary and McCarthy 2013: 9). The literature on state-citizen relations has largely focused on modes of claim making that involve collectivising in the form of protests and rights-based negotiations. In our sites, residents mention these modes as well as the more traditional methods of taking grievances to elected representatives, party workers and volunteers and using networks or ‘jaan pehchaan’ to articulate demands for services and infrastructure improvements (Heller et. al. 2015, Anand 2012, Benjamin 2008, Ramakrishnan 2017).

However, these are not the modes that residents have used to demand a legal status for their settlements in the context of unauthorised colonies. Instead, motivated by the process laid down by the GNCTD, there has been a different form of collectivisation that designates the resident welfare association (RWA) as an important intermediary in the regularisation process. As such, given the more ‘middle class’ nature of unauthorised colonies compared to jhuggis jhopri clusters, RWAs have been the fulcrum to organise initiatives that address other aspirational demands like beautification, park improvements, street lighting and gating of colonies to improve security; of course, doubts have been raised about whether RWAs truly represent the cross-section of diverse residents that inhabit such spaces. Overall, we find that for landowners in unauthorised colonies, urban regeneration is fuelled by more individualistic articulations about citizenship, and is expressed through a desire for improvements in housing. Residents have two clear expectations from the tenure security that the regularisation process would bring: service improvements at the level of the settlement and unlocking of housing finance at the level of the individual/household. We did not find evidence that regularisation was a necessary condition for service improvements; indeed, sewer lines and water supply did exist in some unauthorised colonies while regularised sections of Lalita Park did not seem to be substantially better off in terms of services. However, regularisation does unlock specific opportunities for housing improvements through improved access to finance.

In interviews with supervisory and field staff at various lending institutions, we found a clear recognition that the middle income segment in Delhi urgently needs finance to improve, build and buy homes, and that they face a regulatory barrier because they largely live in settlements where the tenure is not formal. In order to be eligible for a formal sector home loan, which offers the lowest interest rates and longest tenure of lending, the landowner would need to offer their home as collateral. For this, the home would have to be recognised as a financial asset within the formal regulation and

revenue system. The documentation for three distinct stages of formality: first, the approval of the layout plans of the settlement; second, the registration of their own plot; and third, the building plan approval for what they plan to construct on it. Additionally, the borrower would need to prove ability to repay these loans through proofs of income. All of these pose significant challenges in the context of unauthorised colonies. How do borrowers and lenders navigate these complexities? What boundaries emerge in such a scenario and how are these boundaries asserted and spanned?

Types of boundaries

1. State/Citizen/Market boundaries and bounded regulatory regimes:

Despite Delhi's complex categorisation of settlements, there is a lack of clarity about where one type of settlement ends and the other begins. This creates a blurring of spatial boundaries, in the most physical sense.

Boundaries between state-citizen, market-citizen and state-market are asserted through regulatory regimes, in this case mainly concerned with land and finance. However, it is not clear how the notions of land tenure as defined by *spatial regulatory regimes* map onto *financial regulatory regimes* that housing finance players follow. For example, we found that the word 'regularised' is used very differently in by respondents that function within the spatial regime, for example property brokers or planners, as compared to what was meant by those in the financial regime, viz. bankers. These two regulatory regimes, we find, are bounded and do not interact with each other. We can identify this, in itself as an important boundary, which is implicit and given to misinterpretation.

- (a) The State-citizen boundary is about how regulation impacts land and housing, but also about how regulation moulds financial behaviour in the context of housing. In the case of land/housing regulation, the GNCTD delineates the regularisation process, and citizens must organise themselves in specific ways to improve tenure in unauthorised colonies. The Delhi Development Authority (which is under the Government of India) is responsible for the Delhi Master plan and sets development controls under which the East Delhi Municipal Corporation, which is the local government, must vet building plans that homeowners submit for approval. In the context of financial regulation, policy changes that brought in lower interest rates and income tax exemptions for purchasing homes brought down barriers to home ownership starting the 1990s and have enhanced the aspiration for home ownership. However in our case sites, we find that residents rely on informal sources of finance and are unable to approach banks for home loans.
- (b) In a similar vein, the state-market boundary is maintained/asserted through regulatory regimes set by the state in conversation with market players. For instance, regimes for taxation and access to finance dictate the flow of funds by

financial institutions to certain segments of citizens, e.g. middle class home buyers.

- (c) The market-citizen boundary is an important aspect of this case and mainly is about how finance companies service citizens' demands for housing finance. A range of institutions are in the fray: (a) Micro-Finance companies (MFCs) and Small Finance Banks (SFBs) that are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and serve the finance needs of low-income customers; (b) Gold Loan companies; and (c) Housing Finance Companies (HFCs), which are regulated by National Housing Bank¹¹ and are geared towards formal sector lending for the housing market exclusively.

Overall, we find that housing finance institutions respond to aspirational demands for housing by navigating the regulatory frameworks (for land and finance) in distinct ways, offering a range of products to suit varying tenure categories and deploying creative means to assess informal incomes in order to serve a larger number of customers. We find different burdens of proof (on banks and borrowers) and varying processes of documentation for various types of financing mechanisms. We also find that an organisation's lending operations in specific areas are determined by its regulatory structure: while housing finance companies do not operate in unauthorised colonies due to National Housing Bank regulations, micro-finance initiatives can be more flexibility adapted to various spatial categorisations. Everyday operations of these spectrum of organisations, are therefore, enmeshed in a regulatory and spatial landscape.

Because the regulatory requirements for mortgage lending are higher, HFCs offer loans against property (LAP) in regularised unauthorised colonies. A mortgage is a financial product designed specifically for housing. It is a secured loan in which the property acts as collateral and borrowers can get financed for upto 90 percent of the home value for a time period of upto 30 years. Mortgages are also eligible for income tax exemptions. A LAP is also secured and uses the plot of land as collateral, but has higher interest rates. Borrowers can only get financed for upto 60 percent of the property value, for a maximum of 15 years and no income tax exemption can be claimed. It is a product not meant specifically for housing, but which uses the land/house as security to finance anything, essential it is a personal loan. HFCs and SFBs we interviewed were widely using LAPs to provide housing finance in regularised unauthorised colonies and resettlement colonies across Delhi. They were, in general, comfortable lending to those

¹¹ The latest budget announced that the Reserve Bank of India would be the regulator for HFCs, replacing NHB. It is not yet clear on how this regulatory landscape will evolve and what its implications will be

properties that showed a clear ownership record for the past 13 years, but not to those who were transacted of General Power of Attorney or that had pending disputed. These financial institutions hired legal expertise to make these assessments. Additionally, they developed organisational processes and their field personnel developed expertise in assessing and documenting informal incomes through a host of measures, like monitoring stocks for shopkeepers, keeping a roster of passengers and trips for auto rickshaw drivers, talking to family members. In another example, gold loan companies are able to finance small housing improvements because they do not monitor end use at all.

We find that different categories of financial institutions have different approaches towards lending in communities where tenure is unclear or where borrowers work in the informal economy. Financial institutions with origins in the not-for-profit sector – many of the organisations we interacted with originated as NGOs and crossed over from NGO space to micro-finance (e.g. Mahila Housing SEWA Trust) and housing finance (e.g. Sewa Grih Rin Ltd.) – are embedded within communities and have experience working closely with the state (e.g. through CBOs), and leverage this experience in their work. On the other hand, we find that housing finance companies entering this new market of customers with informal tenure and finance, rely on ‘business correspondents’ working with the microfinance sector who have an intimate understanding of these communities from their work on savings schemes, personal loans etc. The boundaries between market and citizens are therefore, fluid and overlap, especially in the case of those finance organisations that have stronger community linkages.

2. Collective/Individual boundary

As mentioned before, this case highlights that individual aspirations linked to home improvement/ownership (adding toilet or kitchen slab, installing water pump, adding floor, redeveloping plot) co-exist with collective aspirations (parks, parking spaces, etc.). We can see a gradation of individual aspirations for housing improvement, ranging from small upgrades like adding toilets and water pumps, to adding rooms and floors, and the construction/redevelopment/purchases of plots and floors. These same individuals may be part of collectives like parties, RWAs, youth associations to express and negotiate community-based aspirations like better parks and better sanitation.

These identities are leveraged strategically in the pursuit of home improvement finance. We therefore see borrowers suppressing individual identities so that they can harness collective identities (e.g. use group loans) for home improvement needs. We also see that those organisations that emerge from collectivising movements, like Mahila Housing Trust and Sewa Grih Rinn Ltd that both emerged from the SEWA group, articulating their work as “help” as opposed to a service and referring to their customers

as “members” (“saathi”) and “sisters” (“behene”). In this they position themselves differently from market-oriented finance players like HDFC or India Bulls.

The significance of boundaries

The case demonstrates that the boundaries created by regulatory categories do not necessarily coincide with those shaped by spatial and social factors. This is seen in how spaces blend into each other and it is hard to delineate a regularised portion of a settlement from the part that remains unauthorised. Or in how various kinds of settlements experience incremental house building activity that remains similar in terms of process. Caldeira (2017) explains this through ‘transversal logics’ rather than through the concept of informality. She points out that categories like formal/informal and regular/irregular are not binary, but *shifting and unstable*. As we have found, this is partly because regulatory frameworks evolve, but also because different sets of regulatory frameworks use unique vocabularies and remain bounded. In the absence of boundary crossings between regulatory regimes, it is more difficult to resolve ambiguities.

The other contradiction between the boundaries set up by regulatory regimes and the actions and assertions of borrowers and lenders is the persistence of processes of peripheral urbanisation despite regularisation, a regime of land regulation, and the infusion of housing finance, which imposes the checks that come with the regime of financial regulation. Caldeira’s (2017) observations that peripheral urbanisation takes place not within the logic of planning but in interaction with it can loosely be applied here, where certain kinds of regulatory regimes unlock housing finance for customers who were previously unserved; however, this is possible without going through the formal planning processes of building plan approvals. Therefore these houses will continue to remain outside the purview of formal sector housing pending significant changes to the development control regulations of the master plan.

This inflexibility of regulatory regimes, their boundedness, is a key barrier for residents to achieve their aspirations for better housing in East Delhi’s unauthorised colonies. Moreover, different regimes of regulation – in this case those connect with land and housing finance – result in boundary articulations that are quite different from each other. Households/individuals are actualising and realising housing finance despite the hurdles of tenure and income informality via the ‘workarounds’ found by financial institutions. Loan officers and field staff are crossing boundaries by taking on the burden of the creativity and additional work needed to document informal incomes. This is permissible by the regime of financial regulation, however regimes of regulation related to land tenure are less flexible and do not allow these sorts of crossings. Therefore, financial institutions have responded by developing new products to cater to borrowers living in regularised UACs.

Boundary crossings are also enabled when individual aspirations are met through collective agency, as in the case of group loans, or when market-based organisations take on the attributes of the state or deploy the discourse of state to further their activities.

For instance, the microfinance initiatives of MHT leverage the organisation's role as an extension of the state (through its network of CBOs), and its intimacy with community as a not-for-profit. SGRL, an HFC linked with SEWA, draws on field areas with existing SEWA interventions, while branding and positioning itself as a lending institution. Both MHT and SGRL, however, articulate work as a response to community demands and in the community's interest, and in doing so, distinguish themselves from formal banks and moneylenders. Lamont's notion of "boundary work," that is "constructing a sense of self-worth by interpreting differences between themselves and others" (Pande 2009:157) is relevant when we look at how HFC staff construct and articulate their work as different from formal banks, as "helping people" {"hum chahte hain ki beheno ke paas suvidhaaen honi chahiye" (we want that our members should get the services) at MHT and "humein duaaien milti hain (we get blessings from people) at SGRL"}.

The use of state's discourse is seen in the use of state schemes like the PMAY (the credit linked subsidy component) and the SBM (construction of toilets) under the discourse of rights to achieve more neoliberal imperatives of individualised water, sanitation, and housing solutions.

Conclusions and Reflections

The role of aspiration is key in situations of peripheral urbanisation, like this case, as processes of transformation "offer a model of social mobility". Thus the expectation that spaces will improve and one day look like wealthier parts of the city drives changes today and these landscapes are "continuously remodelled" to meet these aspirations (Caldeira 2017). We argue that the home/property becomes the conducive 'action space' for residents to meet aspirations while collective demands for improvements are also being made in parallel, but with far lower chances of timely intervention. We also contend that the shift to individual aspiration via housing improvements enables residents to depend less on a single form of legality (of land) that has been elusive for long, and expand their options to rely on another form of legality, in this case financial.

We find that while the state is successful in asserting certain boundaries through regulatory regimes of land and finance, the boundedness of these regulatory regimes and their inability to inform each other is holding residents back from meeting their aspirations for a better quality of life. Market players, chiefly a range of finance institutions and individuals within them, are leveraging the persistent and urgent demand for affordable housing in quasi-legal settlements and are spanning state-market

and market-citizen boundaries in order to be able to make finance available to people. This is being done strategically, by being creative and finding workarounds within the bounds of the financial regulatory regime.

New strategies and coalitions are likely to emerge in this space as organisations continue to experiment with new ways of documenting informal incomes and by crafting new financial offerings for quasi-legal land tenure situations. At the same time, residents will continue to build incrementally and redevelop their land, working through networks of credit to continuously improve their homes even as they engage in collective modes of bargaining to upgrade community infrastructure, services and resources

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