

# **Transforming the Slum through creation of Property Market: A Case Study of M-ward in Mumbai**

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**People, Places and Infrastructure: Countering urban violence and  
promoting justice in Mumbai, Rio, and Durban**

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## Table of Contents

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1. Introduction	1
2. Shifting Relationship between the State and the Slum - A Conceptual Framework	3
3. Of Settlement in M ward	8
3.1 Mapping in the project	10
3.2 Ghatla: Method of Parallel Settlement Perfected	12
3.3 Cheetah Camp: Displacement, settled, unsettled, resettled?	13
3.4 Baiganwadi: Formal and Informal Settlement Fused	15
3.5 Slum: Shift towards Complex Narratives of Settlement	16
4. Connecting the Slum to the Property Market	19
5. Everyday Life and Settlement in the Redevelopment Regime	1
5.1 Being 'state' in times of redevelopment	1
5.2 Redrawing Electoral Geographies	2
5.3 Commodification of land and Housing and New Vulnerabilities	3
5.4 New Frontiers of Violence: Transit Camps and emerging settlements	4
5.5 Spatial Labelling, Othering and Surveillance	6
5.6 Denial and Withdrawal of State from Provision of Basic Services	7
5.7 Livelihoods at Risk, Livelihoods of Risk	10
5.8 Emergence of Masculine Public Spaces	11
5.9 Everyday Life of Women	12
6. Struggles for Justice	1
7. Connecting the dots	1
References	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Mapping References	7

## List of Abbreviations

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BARC	Bhabha Atomic Research Centre
BMC	Bombay Municipal Corporation
CBO's	Community Based Organization
CORO	Committee of Resource Organizations
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
DP	Development Plan
ELU	Existing Land Use
GBGB	Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao
HDI	Human Development Index
HSVA	Hamara Shaher Vikas Abhiyan
MMRDA	Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority
MUTP	Mumbai Urban transport Project
MUIP	Mumbai Urban Improvement Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
RTP	Right to PEE
SPARC	Society for Promotion of Area resource Centres
SRS	Slum Rehabilitation Scheme
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
ULCRA	Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act
USHA	Urban Social Health Acitivist

## List of Tables, Images and Maps

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Table 1: Description of the selected sites of case study.

Map 1: Location of the case study sites in M-ward.

Map 2: Development Plan of 1991 Showing the concentration of Undesirable Land Uses in M-ward

Map 3: Formal Housing to slum clusters proportion as per existing land use 2013

Map 4: Sanctioned 120 SRA project in M-East Ward.

Map 5: The map of state assembly constituencies below illustrates the same.

Map 6: Showing toilet seat per population of different areas of M-ward.

## 1. Introduction

This case study chronicles the story of the slum in relation to the city of Mumbai, particularly focusing on the slums in the M (East) ward of the city. The story of slums is interesting because it represents the ups and downs in an ongoing struggle of the precariat to assert its right to the city. It is a struggle characterised by violence in various forms – that of the state in its imagination of the settlements and the actions that follow, the use of violence as an instrument by the poor to assert their claims, the everyday violence in slum life and all of these set in a context of larger structural violence that enhances the inequality among regions, rural and the urban and among people, contingent upon their social groups. While there is significant continuity in the forms of violence that characterise the slum, there are critical shifts in the forms, intensity, nature, sources and instruments of violence since the 1990s with the introduction of property market-based programmes. These shifts can be largely explained by the changes in the state- market axis. People in slums are engaged in the business of survival and consolidation of their lives in the city. These shifts and the violence/s embedded therein impact the residents and women and young girls in particular in highly complex ways that enhance the insecurity in their lives. Women and slum inhabitants are, however, far from being passive victims of this violence/s are engaged in highly creative struggles to confront the multi-institutional injustices experienced by them. We attempt to ask new questions –about the nature of the contemporary Indian state and its relationship to the market, the implications for the poor, the shift in its often understood governmentality in relation to the urban poor and the changing nature of the slum and the city itself.

Violence is writ into the very existence of the slum. The fragility of its claim to city and the vulnerability to the state actions is indicated in the term ‘slum’ which is symbiotic of a ‘problem’ whether defined in terms of material conditions such as infrastructure, density and housing or in terms of legality of claim to land and its cognition by the state or in terms of services or in terms of health and morality. There is clearly a sharp difference in how the external reality defines and perceives slums and the actual experience of life within the settlement. This is particularly so in the understanding of violence. Law perceives the ‘slum’ to be a site of ‘loss of morality’ and hence ‘incidence of crime’. Its settlement is seen as ‘encroachment’ and thus, all further actions are then seen as illegal. The violence of the state in demolishing houses or evicting slums is thus ‘legal’; its denial of services is legal while actions to contest the same are seen as violent and threatening to the peace. When narratives of caste, minority intersect with the legality, they are infused with other dimensions of violence such as migrants, outsiders, anti-nationals, terror etc. Slums are thus an object of policing and surveillance for maintenance of peace in the city. On the other hand, slum residents have a distinct view of the actions and inactions of the state. Currently, the Indian state has actively adopted the language of inclusion, even in cities. Mumbai’s current Development Plan thus sets itself a goal, of being efficient, competitive and inclusive. This inclusion is confined to particular realms and is effected through the strategy of slum redevelopment. The influence of

slum redevelopment has become so expansive over the last two decades that it can almost be considered to be a regime. This case study documents the violence/s generated by this so called 'inclusionary' process and argues that the redevelopment regime is, in fact, an attempt to colonise the slum which is being challenged by few initiatives by slum inhabitants who have a different view of the city.

The case study is divided into six sections. The first outlines the theoretical and conceptual debate around slums and the methodology for the study. The second outlines the emergence, and the overall situation of slums in relation to the city of Mumbai followed by an empirical account of the nature of slum communities in M ward. The third section focuses on the slum rehabilitation scheme and the resettlement programmes and how they have transformed the manner in which state and market are experienced by the slum dwellers. The fourth documents the violence/s embedded in these shifts and the attempts by residents to confront the emergent situations. Section Five chronicles the struggles for justice emanating from the settlements. In the final section, we attempt to identify the emerging theoretical possibilities.

## 2. Shifting Relationship between the State and the Slum - A Conceptual Framework

The relationship between the 'slum' and the 'state' is of particular interest in the context of the ongoing project of state-making in this part of the world, highly influenced by the trajectory of cities in the developed world. The term 'slum' originated in industrial cities and is widely associated with poverty, squalor, and dense, substandard living conditions. It also represents a space that was unacceptable and would be vulnerable to state action due to its 'substandard' nature. Slum was thus antithetical to the idea of order in the city. Internationally, it is an issue that has merited attention since the days of the four-point programme that marked the beginning of international development assistance and developmentalisation post the Second World War. The same discourse has been applied to cities in India. The slum clearance policy (1956-1972) was a clear import from the west that saw slums as aberrations that were to be corrected and order restored in the city.

Seen as a moral and health hazard, global attention has since shifted to the acknowledgement of 'a planet of slums' (Davis, 2006) and a pragmatic focus on resolving the urgent issues of infrastructure such as the millennium development goal of improving the living conditions of half the slum dwellers in the world. This is a response to the fact that 'slums' house a bulk of the urban population in cities in the developing world and the margins, in numerical terms, are no longer marginal. This has forced a change in the policy approach towards slums. In India, slums are now recognized as 'an integral part of urbanization' and are censused<sup>1</sup> and studied<sup>2</sup>. The level of state penetration into these settlements has increased and Indian cities are witnessing a new paradigm of state relationship with slums. The concept of 'inclusion' is a cornerstone of new policies which translate into 'rehabilitation', 'upgradation' or 'improvement' of slums. In this new paradigm, the national government is emerging as a key player along with local and state governments. The current study locates itself in these shifts in the relationship with the state. Its location in Mumbai is particularly interesting as it is the city that has piloted various policies towards slums that constitute more than half its population.

Does this change in governmentality (surveys and policies) bring in changes in citizenship? There are several studies that link slums to the housing question and the injustice in the allocation of space (Das and Gonsalves, 1987; Bhan and Jana, 2015). Buch (1996) comments on the duality of the city systems generated via the nature of services which are substandard in relation to the standard available in particular cities; Chatterjee (2004) studies the secondary citizenship accorded to slums and observes how the claims of slums are much more to do with

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<sup>1</sup> Census is undertaken as a decadal exercise in India, a separate slum census has been instituted since 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) collects the official statistics for the country. The NSSO began collecting data on slums since 2002. Additionally, extensive data on slums has been collected through USHA (Urban Social Health Activist) These initiatives are critical because there is little understanding of actual life and living conditions with the state



negotiations and human values than to a notion of citizen rights. Do these shifts then signal the advent of a new urban politics based on need, the social function of land and property, and justice? Is it a positive response to movements of slum dwellers which nurture aspirations and usher a democracy from below (Appadurai, 2000)? Violence is writ into the DNA of a slum community. Its process of settlement, everyday life represents a struggle of marginalised people to stake a claim to the city against the grain of law, land ownership and the state logic of 'being' and citizenship. Further, the people who 'populate' the slum are those who have been excluded from mainframe Indian society- scheduled castes, backward castes, and Muslims. This has meant that the slum fuses multiple realms and logics of exclusion. How does the new policy paradigm deal with these multiple 'exclusions'?

Slums first emerged in the city of Mumbai before independence; the proportion of city population that currently stays in slums is over 49%. This has meant that several slums of the city are not new migrant settlements but second and even third generation slums whose dynamics have considerably changed. Their relationship to the city has also transformed, as expressed both in changing politics and policy around slums and in terms of the mobilisations, aspirations and conditions of living in these settlements. We believe that the evolution of slums, the trajectory of policies that are deployed to deal with them and the ensuing experience of living in these settlements is highly diverse and hence, there is a need to contextualise these changes to broader politics of appropriation and exclusion particular to cities and the patterns of control by the state and access to city space. This study thus represents an ongoing struggle between the poor and excluded sections to expand claims using legal, extralegal and sometimes illegal means and the state which seeks to penetrate and expand its realm and control over these settlements that are illegible, partially visible and governed. The advent of property relations into this territory thus almost represents a process of colonisation, by a state that embeds market logic, operations and interests within itself. Its strategies appear inclusive at face value while its actual outcomes for the poor are violent and structurally invasive. The study of violence compels an examination of the relationship between the slum and the city. It brings to ask questions about the nature of the state, its relationship to populations at the margins, the modes of generating sovereignty and establishing power, and instruments of the same such as law, planning, rights, entitlements and projects of inclusion/exclusion.

This takes us to the realm of biopolitics and the nature of the state and market in Mumbai as a subset of a more generic neoliberal, communal and urban shift around the globe. Gandy (2006) understands the biopolitical as 'the gradual colonization' of 'bare life' by an increasingly elaborate skein of institutional structures and relationships which find their axiomatic expression in various forms of sovereign power. This has particular resonance with the manner in which the 'slum' initially constituted by the margins as a highly vulnerable and fragile space against the grain of the state and market is gradually converted into a 'space of exception' and one that is now experienced as a deliberate strategy, a form of application of power by which the state generates opportunities for the real estate market. James Scott (1998) points out the

strategies of the state such as mapping, surveillance in extending its power over the marginal bodies, in the context of developing societies. Schemes such as the redevelopment of slums and the discourse of inclusion through a promise of a free house are critical to legitimising this notion of the extension of sovereignty. However, this is also a project wherein the state begins to dislocate and reconstitute itself outside the realm of planning and law, through an extended ‘exception’ regime. It operates through a range of intermediaries with varying interests; its actions are arbitrary and based on differentiated citizenships. This multiscalar project itself is violent and its outcomes are also multiscalar and violent as well. These include the weakening of the modes of self-organization, enhanced struggles for a living, increased visibility and legibility that impact the ability to stay out of reach; but also blunting of erstwhile instruments by which the margins in the past extolled the state. On the contrary, new modes of resistance emerge as well. Some of these new modes directly engage with the state and implore it towards a new contract. The margins thereby become co-constituters of the new urban space, albeit in highly unequal transactions.

We make a few methodological shifts in this case study. Firstly, in undertaking the study of an administrative ward of over 800000 population with 133 slum communities, we focus attention on a meso level where the relationship between the city and the slum is a critical aspect of enquiry. Further, we attempt to understand the heterogeneity of the experience that is the slum. Thirdly, we seek to focus on the transformations in this experience, suggesting that the slum itself is not a constant but a changing reality constructed through an interface between excluded sections of society and the state- market axis. The sample for the study is thus drawn at the level of a settlement. The six settlements chosen for study represent diverse facets of slum settlements and challenges. The following table describes the aspects considered critical and the distribution of study settlements along these dimensions

Name of settlement	Period of settlement	Trigger for Settlement	Status vis-a-vis SRS	Social Composition
Sahyadri Nagar-Vashi Naka	1970	Migration from Country side , encroachment on public land	Completely transformed with few fringe settlements on hill top	Dalit
Cheeta Camp	1976	Second Resettlement by state	No project proposed under SRS	Muslim-Christian

Ghatla	1985	Subdivision and encroachment	Scheme proposed in 2012 and rejected through judicial intervention	Marathas-Other Backward classes
Bainganwadi	1976-85	Resettlement plus encroachment	No proposed scheme under SRS	Muslim
Mandala	1990	Encroachment on mangrove – public land	Violent demolition, alternative plan for redevelopment proposed	Muslim
Transit Camp	2000	Transit settlement by state	Resettlement status in abeyance	Dalit-Denotified tribes

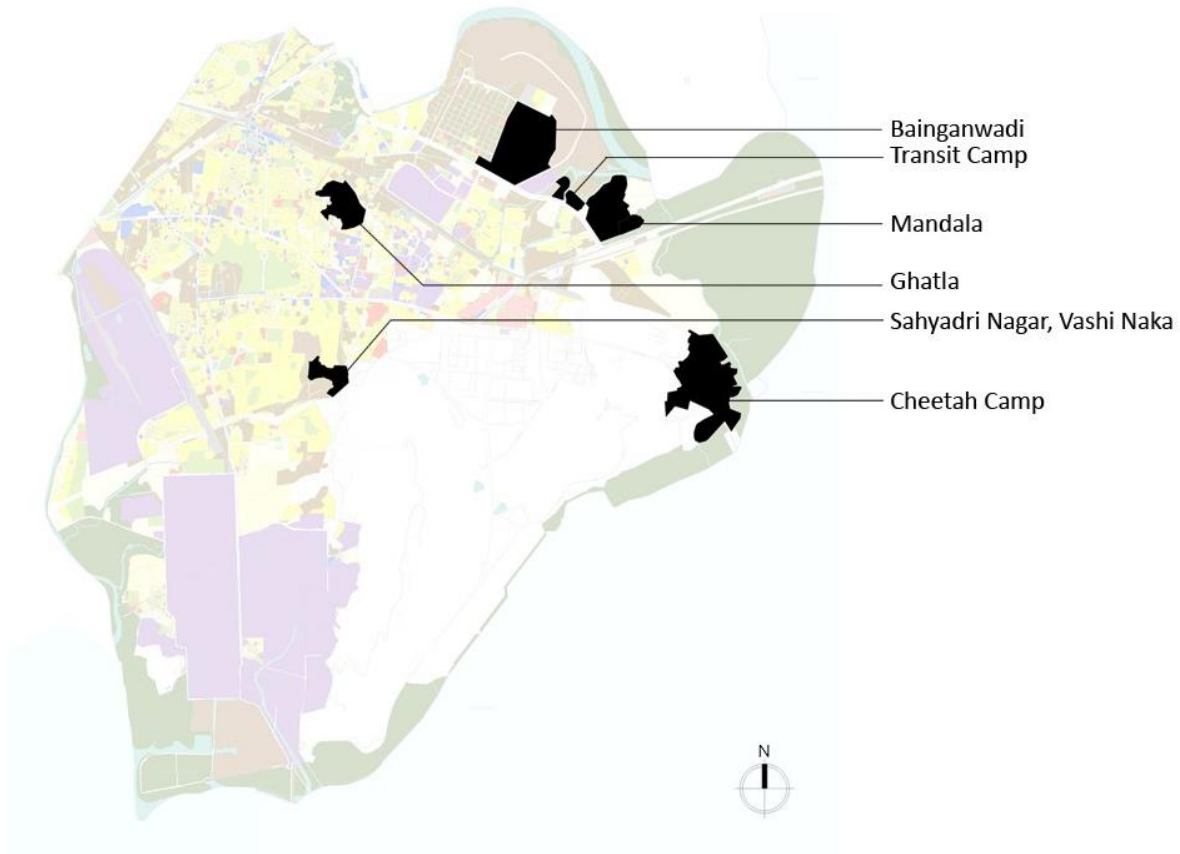
Table 1: Description of the selected sites of case study

The city is not a homogenous terrain and its construction as a socio-spatial entity occurs through contrasting and often conflictual processes. All studies thus reflect a standpoint. This case study privileges the standpoint of those who are marginalised in urban society and understands the shifts in the reality of the slum and what it means through their perspectives. This further raises other ontological and methodological questions. How does one gain access to this perspective? Would talking to people and interviewing them be enough to understand their day-day struggles and the experience of violence/s? Is there homogeneity in the perspectives of the marginalised? Do all slum inhabitants, women, Muslims, Dalits share a perspective? Is there experience of marginalisation same? We chose to engage with local activists from various settlements and engaged with them to understand their stories of change. We also went a step ahead and sought to strengthen these efforts through a partnership with the ‘Transforming M-ward’ project<sup>3</sup> and Mahila Mandal Federation. This stance that may be seen to be compromising the objectivity of ‘research’ has, on the other hand, yielded a rich insight into dynamics of change.

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<sup>3</sup> Transforming M ward is an action research project of Tata Institute of Social Sciences that seeks to influence the human development parameters of the poorest citizens in the ward positively. It was initiated in 2011.

## LOCATION OF THE CASE STUDY SITES



Map 1: Location of the case study sites in M-ward.

The core of this study is comprised of long time inhabitants of slum communities and their experience of their changing habitats, their attempts to better themselves and the prospects of their communities and thereby create a more inclusive and peaceful city. The unit of analysis for us is a slum community and M-ward is a larger story of this unit. This enables us to capture the micro-realities of community life and how these have changed, how people are responding to the changed reality of a city where the boundary lines between state and market are becoming diffuse. Additionally, the study has used maps (some drawn by communities); focus group discussions and data drawn from other parallel experiences through an action research project in the same site<sup>4</sup>. Municipal officials, politicians play a critical role in generating a differentiated settlement pattern; they have been extensively interviewed about their experience, perspectives on slums and how they interpret the contemporary situation, its contradictions, and their own

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<sup>4</sup> The researchers sincerely acknowledge the immense contribution of the ‘Transforming M ward’ project of Tata Institute of Social Sciences and its committed team members to this study through sharing of data, joint discussions and field exercises. We also acknowledge the contribution of members of CORO (Committee of Resource Organizations) towards the study.

role. In addition, the findings of an extensive survey conducted by the ‘Transforming M ward Project’ in 2011 have been used to supplement the findings of the study.

### **3. Of Settlement in M ward**

The slum is thought of as a built environment that exists in a non-market space while there are others who argue that it is a sub market space, actively linked to the formal property markets. The reality that emerges from the case studies is much more complex.

Mumbai as a city is a colonial creation. The history of the growth of the city from the late eighteenth century to the dawn of independence ie a period of nearly 200 years was marked by an unequal, often tension filled alliance between the British and the elites who benefited from the growth of the city. Municipal and other city planning institutions in the city were developed under a colonial tutelage within this context. The institutional and legal regime actively supported landed interests while terming auto- constructed developments as ‘unauthorised’ or as ‘encroachments’. The approach towards the working classes was characterised by neglect, arbitrary improvements in the name of public health, and pushing them towards the periphery for several causes, which included road network expansion, threats posed by hazardous activity, disease and also in the name of public housing (Kidambi, 2004 and Bhide, 2014). In a context where citizenship was denied to working classes and poor; informality and negotiation with accessible power networks were the only means available to gain some access to the city which gave several growth opportunities. Space was however tightly controlled in colonial Bombay and so only 5% of the population (Sharma and Narendra, 1996) stayed in slums in the city while there was significant informality at the city’s peripheries which then were controlled by gram panchayats (village councils). The story of settlement in M ward also begins at this time when the Trombay Island was treated as a periphery where hazardous industries and uses could be located. Thus, the Burma Shell factory was set up here in the 1940s; a garbage dumping ground was set up at one end close to the marshy areas. Due to the hill that provided strategic security, a naval base was set up in the Second World War. It also became home to institutions (like Tata Institute of Social Sciences) and institutional populations (beggars’ home, women’s reception<sup>5</sup> home etc). Informal divisions of land and construction were initiated around the industries and in the gaothans<sup>6</sup>.

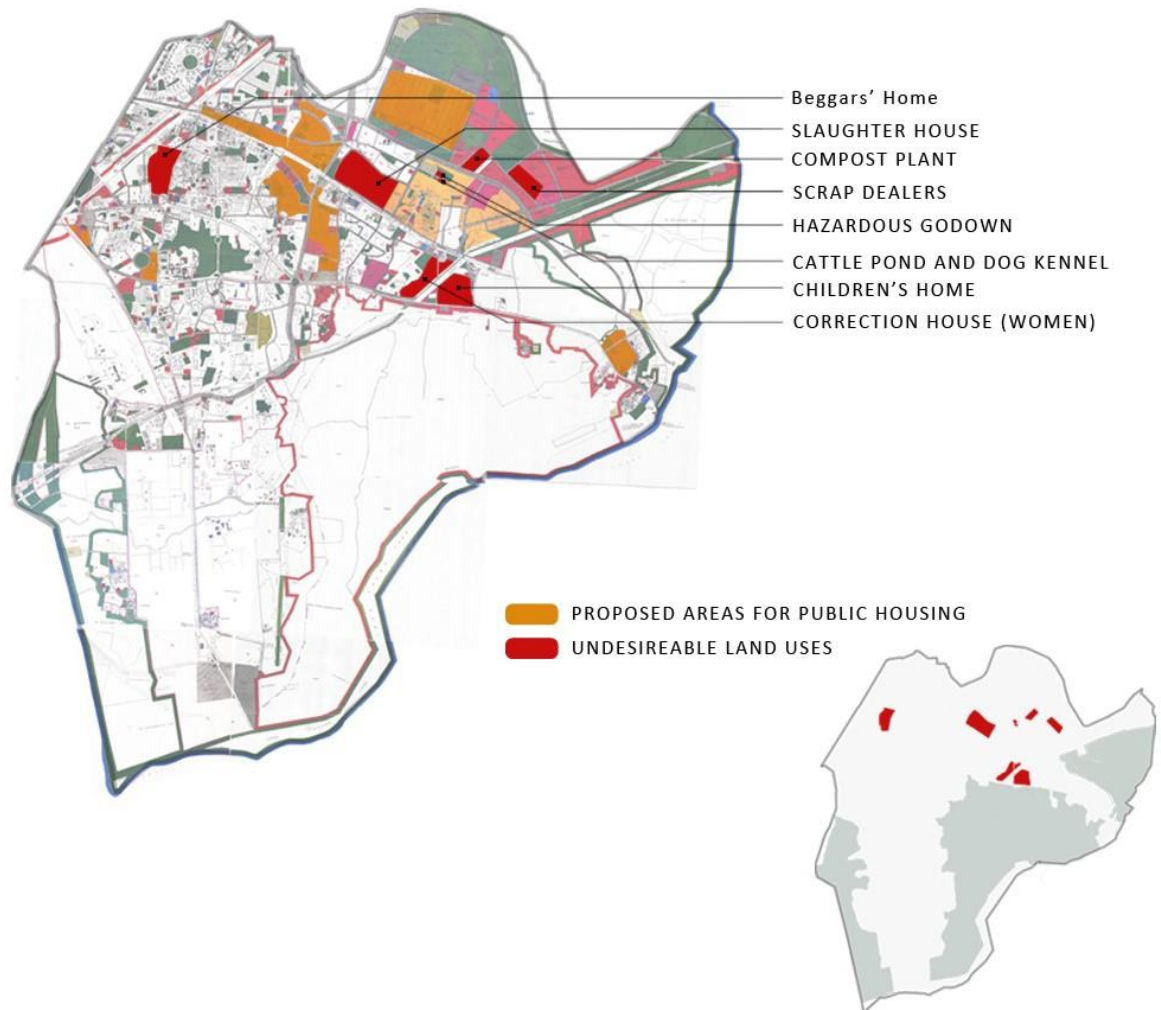
Our entry point is around 1970 when "slums" emerged in spaces of neglect and self-created housing, becoming hubs for migrants and the poor who couldn't afford to live elsewhere. These settlements were urban villages, housing people who migrated and settled from the rural hinterland on the basis of kinship ties. They created settlements in ways that they knew in terms of technology, and resources that were around. In the political economy of the city, the labour of those staying in slums was required but the spaces they occupied were not protected, located on tracts of uninhabitable (often marshy) land. This is also a phase when people from different parts of the city were resettled in M-ward. The informal settlement followed a parallel course.

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<sup>5</sup> The British laws attached several destitute groups with criminality and adopted a mode of confining these group into institutions for their reformation.

<sup>6</sup> Gaothans are residential lands of a village. As agricultural lands were acquired for urbanization, these lands were left untouched; the city grew around them.

## THE PROPOSED UNDESIRABLE LAND USES



Map 2: Development Plan of 1991 Showing the concentration of Undesirable Land Uses in M-ward

We examine the formation and development of five settlements to trace these complex interplays of top down and bottom up forces in the making of the settlements.

### 3.1 Mapping in the project

Vashi Naka is a settlement that grew along the hill slopes of a hill adjoining the industrial complex of high risk, polluting petrochemical and power industries in Chembur. This area, which was considered a no residential zone due to the presence of hazardous industries, was transformed into a vibrant and expansive settlement by the 1980s through a continuous stream of Dalit migrants drawn from varied parts of Maharashtra. In 1970, 580 households which were demolished near Aashish cinema were settled at the bottom of the hill and gradually, the

settlement spread towards the higher parts of the hill. As Srimati<sup>7</sup> described “there were only trees in the 1970s. We would go for a picnic with my school friends. But slowly people started settling and people are still making a house on top of the hill”. Bijutai shifted to Vashi Naka when she got married as her aunt had a spare house. The process of settlement expanded during the decade of 1972 which saw successive years of drought in the state. Almost the entire Dalit population of Livdunk and Raskshi Bhavan villages from Beed district shifted to Vashi Naka. People constructed houses of plastic and gunny bags.

The settlement resembled a village with kith and kin forming the basis of neighbourhoods. Vashi Naka by the 1980s became a sprawling settlement with over 13 small slums that called themselves Nagar. Each of these Nagar represented a distinct mode of self- organization and a process of identity creation. The names of these Nagar’s were geographical (Sahyadri Nagar named after a mountain range in the state), personalities that were critical to the development of a Buddhist identity (Milind Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Rahul Nagar). The settlements organized themselves spatially, formed representative associations and created structures such as Buddha Vihars which would enable them to interact and organize. The slum that thus began as a last option for people who were displaced from their rural roots became the beginning of a more urban mobilisation that took on several progressive tones (literacy, anti-liquor, women empowerment<sup>8</sup>) while retaining strong community values (often in conflict with these progressive ideas).

The intervention and relationship with the state were mediated through *karyakartas* (activists) who in turn connected with formal political representatives to respond to needs of basic amenities. The level of services was inadequate and unequal. Thus, settlements towards the top of the hill were generally those who were least served and poor. There was no motorable road and the path became narrow and difficult to navigate as one moved upwards. The settlements towards the top had no electricity. Water was available for only 2 hours through public taps, provided by the municipality to an overhead tank system managed by a local association. Toilets were public and very few in relation to the population. The nearest schools were towards the main roads and children thus had to move down the hill to access the same. A municipal health centre was created in 1988, again near the main road. Overall, life was not easy but represented an ongoing struggle at the individual, collective levels to improve and to consolidate stakes in the city. Multiple local initiatives, festivals (traditional and new), and a vibrant community life were essential characteristics of life in Vashi Naka.

The 2011 survey of settlements in the ward enumerated over 11000 households in Vashi Naka. Most of these are Dalits drawn from various parts of Maharashtra. A bulk (more than 50%) of the houses are now pucca with household electricity meters and water taps. A most striking development is that most children are enrolled in schools with over a quarter of the young

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<sup>7</sup> Interview,

<sup>8</sup> FGD in Vashi Naka. These were the stories of past struggles shared by the women activists in Vashi Naka.



population engaged in higher education. Yet more than 60% of the earners are engaged in unskilled and casual employment.

### **3.2 Ghatla: Method of Parallel Settlement Perfected**

The story of Ghatla represents a distinct trajectory as a story of the parallel settlement of the city. Till 1980, Ghatla was a Goathan. The ex-village comprised a number of medium size landholders. Their agriculture gradually came to a halt with expanding urbanisation. Further in 1976, the passage of the Urban Land Ceiling Act meant that these lands were considered 'excess' lands, and were slotted for acquisition by the state at an extremely cheap price<sup>9</sup>. While larger landlords in the city identified a series of legal loopholes through which acquisition was kept at bay, these medium landholders began to identify means by which they could make some profit from land (Navtej, 2008). Settlement in alliance with local infra-power became the strategy of choice. The local Bhai became the agent in settling the area through demarcation and sale of plots to the needy. It was also a selective process. Thus, Ghatla is an area where primarily Maratha migrants from various parts of Maharashtra stay.

Asha tai bought a plot of 10 X 10 where they are currently staying for 500 Rs. She got the land from Gotya, a bhai who was an important player in Ghatla development. She commuted from her joint family home in the city to consolidate this housing option. On one of the initial visits, she discovered that the plot that she was initially allocated was claimed by someone else. She then pleaded Gotya to allocate her another plot of land, which he did. She could have claimed a large pitch since a lot of vacant land was available but she only took a small plot as the construction cost would be prohibitive. She filled the uneven and marshy land with debris and constructed her house with gunny bags and grass which was similar to the material used in villages to build houses. Reshma tai's story is slightly different. She bought a constructed house made of gunny bags and tin shed from a person who in turn had bought it from Ghadge, another infra-power like Gotya. In 1985, there were just 100-125 houses. There was no electricity. People would rely on oil lamps for light in the night. They would get water from municipal common tap or near Karnataka High school. Electricity was controlled by infra-power.

The settlement in Ghatla is a replica of rural life in urban space with caste and regional links forming the basis of communal life. Different caste groups follow a distinct spatial geography with the land owners ie the agaris staying on one side of the settlement which is high ground while the dhangars (shepherds), waghri (cloth recyclers) located on the outer peripheries, closer to the nala.

Ghatla underwent a major process of consolidation along with the rising political fortunes of Narayan Rane, who played a role in the settlement of the area and also lived in it. He controlled

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<sup>9</sup> The Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA) proposes a maximum price of Rs 10 per sq meter for acquiring private land in excess of the ceiling limit

the infra-power in the area and financed it through a network of liquor production and distribution. He gradually consolidated his power in the political realm. He was elected as a member of the state assembly saw a key infrastructural development i.e. the construction of an open storm water drain (nala) which put a stop to the perennial flooding in the area. As the settlement process lost steam; the alliance between infra-power and political mobilisation began to transform. The rise of the leader in the political hierarchy of the Shivsena, his ascending electoral fortunes meant that the relationship with people in the area began to acquire more official colours. Gradually, other infrastructure such as water and electricity got more 'officialised' and the hold of infra-power reduced.

The level of services in Ghatla today is fairly high, with individual water taps, houses that have been consolidated into one storey structures, well-aligned lanes, roads and drainage services. It is also well integrated into a fabric of other services such as schools, health centres etc. There are thus several residents who say that 'Ghatla is not a slum'

### **3.3 Cheetah Camp: Displacement, settled, unsettled, resettled?**

Cheetah Camp was formed in 1976 during the emergency when 72000 residents of Janata colony were evicted and moved to Cheetah camp. Janta Colony itself emerged during the late 1950s as a 'permanent squatter' for pavement dwellers and people living in slums in a different part of the cities. It was established by the first chief minister Morarji Desai, whose ambition was to make Bombay like Paris. Formation of Janta colony was part of the initiative of cleaning the streets of South Bombay and evicted all the pavements dwellers from Karnak bandar, Marine Drive, Worli, Tulsi wadi and resettled them in an area on the northward edge of the city; surrounded by mountains from all the side and covered with trees.

Even as the residents began to settle in this area, the work to initiate the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), a project of research in nuclear energy and thus of national importance was started. The construction for BARC started from 1965. Rehman Bhai<sup>10</sup>, a current resident of Cheeta Camp remembers the construction of a boundary wall around the Janta colony which had 5500 houses. This virtually isolated the access to the basti and residents couldn't move in and out from the basti from any other road. This was followed by an assault on their existence itself. In 1970, BARC purchased the current Cheetah camp land to resettle Janta colony over there.

In 1970, an eviction notice was issued by BMC on behest of BARC. The residents of Janta Colony resisted the eviction and petitioned the Bombay High Court and Supreme Court. They lost the case in both places. The main argument used for eviction was Section 105 B of the Bombay Municipal Act of 1888 that provided that the Municipal Commissioner could declare any Municipal land as being required by the Corporation for a public purpose, and vacate the

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<sup>10</sup> Interview, 29/12/2014

same (Deshpande, 1976). The key question whether housing for the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) personnel (some 700 apartments) constituted a public purpose while displacing 72000 people out of which roughly 2000 people worked in DAE as class IV staff was not public enough to be public purpose did not enter the discourse (Patel, 1977). The matter of a second displacement too proved to be an inadequate argument as the residents couldn't find any written document or record which assured that their shift to Janta Colony was permanent. Thus, the testimony of ex-Bombay Municipal Commissioner regarding eviction from different parts of the city on the premise of permanent settlement in Janta Colony was not considered. The violence in the discourse was even cruder on ground. Out of 5500 households, only 2500-3000 households who were paying rent to the BMC were considered eligible for an alternate pitch in Cheetah Camp which was a municipal land further north. The others were considered as encroachers and were shifted to Malad or Charkop.

The demolition was carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 just before monsoon and people were brought to Cheeta Camp. The Cheetah camp pitches of 10' X 15' were half the size of their pitches in Janta Colony. The land wasn't levelled and many-of the plots were subject to periodic flooding. The monsoons made things even more difficult. The residents lived on charpoys reached by little plank bridges. The amenities that people had developed over the period of time in Janta colony were demolished too. Janta Colony was walking distance from Mankhurd railway station but in Cheeta camp they had to take a bus and go to the station. This increase in distance impacted everyone including people who had small scale business.

The impact of demolition can be best understood in the words of Rehman Bhai, who was a child when the Janta Colony was demolished. He says "When the demolition happened, my father was in jail. We didn't construct the house in cheeta camp for a while because it was marshy land with a lot of mosquitoes. We didn't even get our shop because dad was in the jail. Our business was also shut and we were facing a lot of difficulties. We stayed in open space for few days. I remember at times we didn't even eat or cook anything for an entire day. Then we stayed with another family for a few days before we constructed our own house. It was an extremely difficult situation. After coming I failed twice. I failed in ninth and tenth class<sup>11</sup>."

The demolition of Janta Colony and establishment of Cheeta Camp is now forty years old. However, the spectre of insecurity of tenure continues to haunt residents of Cheeta camp. The land is owned by the Municipality, and they could be unsettled again if a new 'public purpose' is invented. The settlement of Cheeta Camp is thus a project of attempts to settle and make a life against the grain of the state which has already demolished them twice. The impacts of these demolitions live through the memories of losses and missed opportunities of people like Rehman Bhai.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview, 29/12/2014

Cheeta Camp however also reflects the grit of a community which put up a strong fight against the demolitions in 1972 and was able to rebuild itself. Currently, of the 11000 plus houses in the area, over 76 percent are pucca and have a tap inside the house. More than half the population has managed to secure regular employment or self-employment and over 75% have a bank account. Bag making, zari are established as industries with entrepreneurs emerging within the settlement. There are vulnerabilities and insecurities as well. For example, about 20% people do not have their own electricity meter, the proportion of illiteracy is about 23% and a similar proportion is engaged in casual employment

### **3.4 Baiganwadi: Formal and Informal Settlement Fused**

50-60 years back, Bainganwadi was a lake on whose periphery, people would grow brinjals (baingan in Hindi). The lake was a contested property between Anand Seth Machiwala and the municipal corporation. Anand Seth was a landlord who used to stay in Chembur and had acquired rights of fishing in the lake. But after losing the court case he lost the rights and lake started deteriorating. Two parallel stories of settlement begin here. One is that of the local corporator -Velluswami Naidu, who asked the people who didn't have a house to start occupying vacant land and make houses. The other is the story of the municipal corporation which closed down the slaughterhouse in Bandra and shifted it to Deonar. It also relocated the butchers from Bandra to an adjoining area ie Bainganwadi. There were other relocations as well. Raziya Begum<sup>12</sup> a resident of Bainganwadi says when they were resettled from Chembur-Ghatkopar road in 1976 there was nothing in Bainganwadi except the abattoir and a factory of burning bones. The rest was with open fields and water and a few roads. The process of settlement through relocation in the demarcated but unserviced plots and the swampy area around started simultaneously. As in other slums, the bhais started selling plots to people. Rafiq Bhai<sup>13</sup> who currently runs an embroidery unit in the Baiganwadi says that the place where he is staying currently was a gift from the local Bhai in exchange for a past service. He was asked to mark a territory and start filling it with debris. The amount of land he occupied depended on how much land he can fill with the debris. While constructing the house he feared the local goons more than the police.

Bainganwadi is currently a sprawling settlement that has over 17000 houses. Of these, 7000 are in plots while another 10000 houses are located in slums such as Umerkhadi, Adarsh Nagar, Shanti Nagar, Padma Nagar, Shastri Nagar, Kamala Raman Nagar, and Raman Mama Nagar in the peripheries of the plots. The division between the 'plots' allotted by the state and the informal housing in the peripheries marks the everyday life of Bainganwadi as it forms the basis for insecure tenure and above all, lack of access to legal water supply. More than 75% of the

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<sup>12</sup> Interview, 12/03/2015

<sup>13</sup> Interview, 15/03/2015

population of Bainganwadi is Muslim. Multiple axes of contemporary marginalities coalesce in Bainganwadi slum post-1995, Muslim, North Indian migrant and poor.

### **3.5 Slum: Shift towards Complex Narratives of Settlement**

The narratives of settlement described above illustrate an increasingly complex pattern of formation of slums. It follows a temporal linearity that follows an evolving trajectory of state policy towards slum from clearance to tolerance as a subset of housing and land market policy that progressively constrained the real estate market and limited its capacity to produce. Slums, as a result increasingly emerged as a parallel mode of settlement development. The settlement processes in Vashi Naka to Ghatla to Bainganwadi show that there is a definite element of non-commodity spatial claims in the settlements in their beginning points. In Vashi Naka and Ghatla, the slum also represents the reproduction of a spatial organization akin to a village with familiar elements clustering together. It thus became the basis for a community that mobilised itself along several realms in order to consolidate its claims. Multiple actors, intermediaries, and networks are hinted at through these narratives of the people who identified area for settlement, the link with municipal employees who had access to construction debris, the networks that publicised the settlement, the protocols of sale, the manner of protection of settlements and networks around accessing services and management of the same. There also seem to be other logics that were followed in the settlement process because what has emerged is an identity based social geography. Overall, these early slums in the ward do not show a history of violent and mass scale evictions, though policy tilted towards clearance of slums. The reason for this may be the fact that the M-ward itself was a neglected and peripheral ward in the view of the local government. On the other hand, the ‘method’ of settlement seems to have evolved into a ‘modus operandi’ in more contemporary settlements like Bainganwadi peripheries. It has meant identification of lands by political actors, the deliberate use of goons to settle and sell, to small needy households but also the simultaneous occupation by large players; the sale of debris, the introduction of services and retaining control over them in liaison with police, municipal officials and private service providers. The activity becomes more organized; the role of ‘caste’ and ‘community’ in the settlement has reduced significantly.

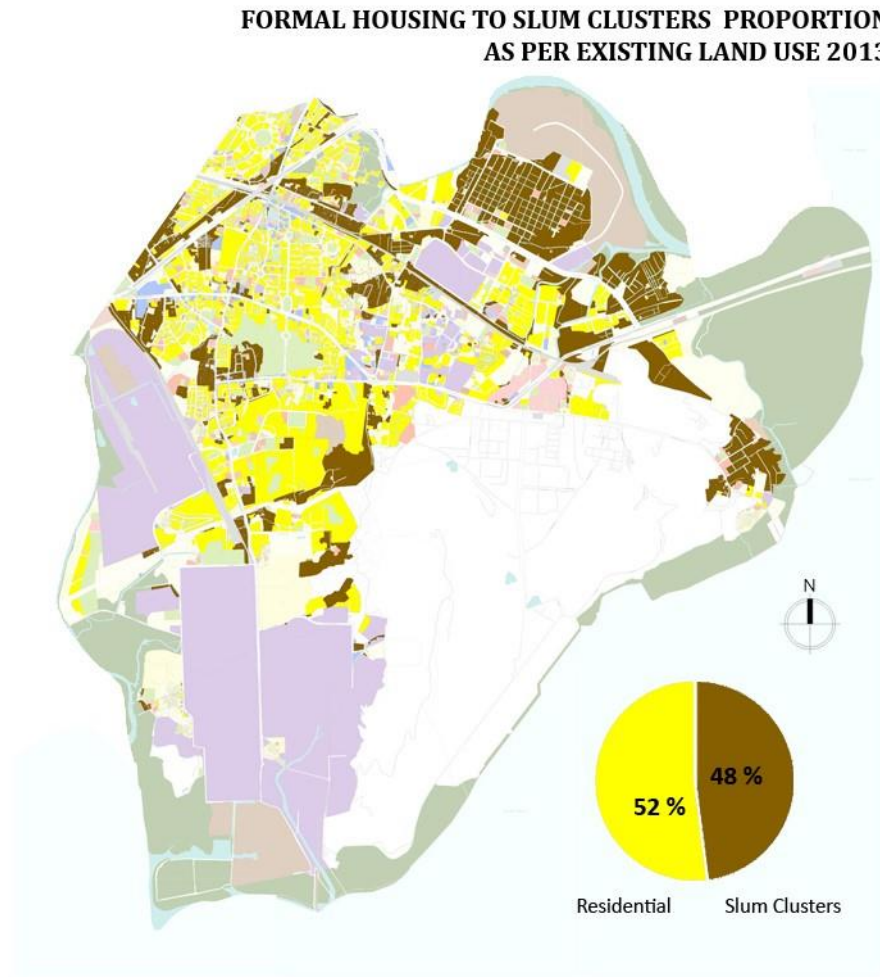
The state has played a very active role in developing the M-ward as primarily a slum ward. The First Development Plan of the City prepared in 1964 envisages the ward as a low human activity ward, primarily to be used for locating hazardous industries and institutional populations. However, the first deviation from the same was also at the behest of the state. In 1951, the then Chief Minister took a decision to clear several pavement settlements in the city areas. Thus houses of roughly 3000 inhabitants from Karnak Bunder, Tulsi Wadi, Marine Drive, Worli were cleared and were given pitches in Janata Colony, an area that was close to the Trombay Hill, uninhabited and had a dense jungle. A similar drive in 1970 by the Municipal Corporation produced Shivajinagar, Lotus Colony and Bainganwadi, a huge resettlement colony that gave more planned layouts for the pitches. These resettlements were also followed by resettlement

of the abattoir and the dumping ground to the ward. The shift of these people, (primarily Muslims and Dalits) and activities to the ward gave a foundational character to the ward. It is these relocations which became the nuclei for further settlement in the areas. Interestingly, these relocations in the imagery of the state were merely a geographical shift of settlements from the inner city and thus have also been imagined as slums. In spite of two waves of relocation, Cheeta Camp continues to be seen as a slum and so do the plots in Bainganwadi. The ability of the state to declare these settlements as illegal and thereby keep a Leviathan sword hanging is perhaps, the greatest threat that the settlements face.

Conditions of life in these settlements range from Ghatla whose residents do not see it as a 'slum' anymore to peripheral areas of Bainganwadi which are struggling to get the status of a 'recognized' slum. The application of the term by the state, including notions of legal and illegal, is seen as highly arbitrary (Cheeta Camp continues to be illegal even if it is a settlement by the state) while for the inhabitants who create this settlement, slum is an inevitable stage in their settlement process in a difficult terrain of the city, one that is associated with high levels of vulnerability and lack of basic services and one that they aspire to conquer.

At a functional level, the state, market, communities are all intertwined in a system that creates settlements, services through a range of intermediaries. They produce a differentiated and diverse geography of settlements under the broad rubric of the term 'slum'. The nature of intermediaries differs in the varied stages of the settlement process. Given that most of these settlement processes are outside the rubric of 'law'; intermediaries that utilise sheer physical power to intimidate various competing interests and protect settlers are necessary in the initial stages. Thus, Vashi Naka, Ghatla, Bainganwadi - all report the presence of bhais who demarcated plots. While several respondents said that they had paid for the plots, there were also others who were given plots gratis. The bhais also played a role in producing order and governance in an environment where multiple logics compete. Interestingly, Vashi Naka inhabitants did not report the presence of bhais in the provision of services but this was experienced in early stages in Ghatla while water and electricity continues to be in the hands of an organised mafia in Bainganwadi. As the state services in the settlement become more established, the presence of bhais seems to reduce. The figure of the bhai emerges as that of an individual connected to higher levels of power and enjoying significant discretionary powers. In Ghatla, one observes a greater fusing of the bhai with politics and in Bainganwadi, political power emerged as the weapon for aggregation of the physical power of the bhais and administrative, legal power of the police and municipality. Bainganwadi illustrates how electoral politics has become the dominant form of power over settlement formation and its organized networks with other official forms of power. It follows a track parallel to a policy that became more accepting of slums after 1976. Most political parties began to have slum cells after 1980, marking the settlement of slums as constituency building, moulding and change as well. From the demand side too, the more recent slums are not characterised by the regional migrant but by migrants coming from more distant, North-Indian states. There are several second

generation migrants as well, looking for housing options in a city where housing was becoming more and more out of reach of the working poor.



Map 3: Formal Housing to slum clusters proportion as per existing land use 2013

These narratives also illustrate that slums are becoming a more differentiated terrain. The experience of slum ranges from the everyday struggles for water in Bainganwadi to the perception of ‘this is not a slum’ in Ghatla. This differentiation is linked to the nature of patronage enjoyed by the settlement and its ability to mobilise and place itself in relation to municipal officials, police, and particularly political parties. It is also evident that the terrain is becoming more competitive and complex due to the involvement of several layers of mediation. The slum post-1990s is no longer an anomaly; it is part of a regime that creates more slums, uses informality as a modus operandi of settlement and created a well-knit network that binds electoral politics, municipal governance and service provision and land development. The slum has conditional access to services but each of these settlements has a certain critical lack of

provisions such as water in Bainganwadi, or individual electric meters in Cheeta Camp. They are further differentiated in terms of cut-off dates, Muslim, non-Muslim, local-migrant, near the main road - interior and planned v/s self-organized. These markers of difference are an essential part of the politics linked to slums. They underscore Chatterjee's observation about the basis of politics in slums i.e. the link to humanitarian grounds rather than citizenship but in a far more complex manner i.e. of differentiated humanisms, denials, and violence (2004).

#### **4. Connecting the Slum to the Property Market**

By 1980, slums had become a seemingly intractable problem for policy makers and the market in the city of Mumbai. The policy of Slum Improvement that was initiated in 1976 meant that slums were becoming tolerated structures and struggles of slum dwellers were becoming



critical. The landlords who had perpetrated slums as a temporary solution to the threat of the ULCRA found it difficult to dispense with them due to the legal protection. The World Bank had proposed a solution of Slum Upgradation<sup>14</sup> under which slum dwellers would be organized into cooperative societies and given an official lease of occupied land was found to be threatening as it would take the 8% land under slums permanently out of the land market. In 1991, the solution which was found to tackle this issue was that of slum rehabilitation (henceforth the SRS) - settle the horizontal slum into vertical buildings, release the remaining land (with additional incentive in the form of a development right or additional floor area ratio) into the market and thereby cross-subsidise the price of construction. The scheme gives every eligible slum dwelling household a 225 sq feet at the initial stage and later it was increased to 269 sq feet house free of cost. Seventy percent of a demarcated slum community gives its consent to the proposal initiated by a developer which is then approved by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority. The developer is awarded an incentive FSI or TDR (dependent on location, land available) to enable a profit that is enough to cover all rehabilitation housing costs and the payment of a premium to the state. The ownership of the free tenement given to eligible slum dwellers is transferred to them after ten years. Eligibility implies all slum-dwelling households who were in Mumbai prior to 2001 and in continued occupation of houses since then.

Over the last two decades, this policy has received a sanction from across the political spectrum. The nature of the execution of the scheme is such that the government only acts as a facilitator who gives necessary sanctions to developers and prepares lists of slum dwellers eligible for rehabilitation. It is the developers who are the planners, executors, financiers and controllers of the scheme. The SRS has emerged as the policy of choice for developers who see slum redevelopment as one of the only modes to get cheap development rights (i.e. rights to vertical development of land) and make exorbitant profits<sup>15</sup>. Slum areas- once the zones of neglect have been transformed into precious realty zones which await the attention of developers.

The Slum rehabilitation scheme has so far been able to shift over 26000 households from slums into apartments. However, almost every slum in the city is in the net of the scheme with some prospective developers trying to capture the slum through their agents or at some stage of negotiation or implementation of SRS. In fact, it has also encouraged a new parallel industry that produces slums and prepares forged documents. Further, it has created a huge nexus between developers, politicians, bureaucrats and organized crime, converting slums into a site of constant negotiations over property, bribery, shifting mobilisations and violence. The most important outcome of SRS pertinent to the discussion here is that the land under slums which have been redeveloped has reduced to less than a third of its original land area. SRS has thus further densified the slum, causing an indirect displacement. Further, the high maintenance costs

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<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed analysis refer to Pratima Panwalkar - Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme in S. Patel & A. Thorner, *Bombay: metaphor for modern India* (1st ed.). Bombay

<sup>15</sup> A rough calculation made in the People's commission report estimates the profit to be in the range of 500% to 800%

in the redeveloped apartments are driving people out. As per a few studies (Bhide, 2002), at least 33% inhabitants of the original slum are displaced by the act of redevelopment. This excludes the people who stay on rent or who are otherwise ineligible to benefit from the scheme. As Bhide (2014) notes, “Redevelopment [of informal settlements] has emerged as the key instrument of change in a city where property prices are extremely high, available land area for development is highly restricted due to varied factors, and there are multiple and contesting pressures on space” .

The M (East) ward was a peripheral ward in the city with some of the lowest land values when the SRS was introduced. It also had very large slums with over 70 % of its population staying in slums, according to the 2001 census. As a result, very few SRS schemes took off in the ward. Till 2000, only 3 schemes were proposed in the ward and only one of them was under implementation. Low land values meant that the progress of these schemes was highly protracted. The resettlement programme under MUTP and MUIP changed this scenario completely. Over 13 resettlement colonies were constructed in the ward for rehabilitation of households impacted by infrastructure projects in the city. The resettlement programme, which ordinarily would have meant state investment of resources and land, was instead financed using incentive FSI in combination with TDR as a financial instrument. Thus, land on which these resettlement colonies were based was acquired using spatial incentives, the construction of apartment housing as rehabilitation tenements and the cost of actual shifting were all met, using a combination of these instruments. Nainan (2008) reports that over 64% of the slum TDR generated in the period between 1991 and 2005 was generated from M (East) ward. Conversely, very little of this FSI has actually been used within the ward. What is even more interesting is that the state became an entrepreneur that generated FSI and thus a party to the real estate market. The impact of the resettlement programme on the slum dynamic in the ward has been dramatic. It has been able to penetrate the thick non-property market in slums and generated a renewed interest in SRA schemes in the ward. Currently, there are over 120 SRA projects proposed in the ward, albeit along the major roads in the ward. There has been a tremendous appreciation of prices of slum housing in the ward. In Ghatla for example, an advertisement on an online housing website announces a price of Rs 20,00,000 for a house with papers prior to 1995. However, the real impact of this tying of slums to the formal real estate market is seen in many other realms.

## Slum Redevelopment Projects Sanctioned By SRA



Base Map: Google Earth Satellite Image

Map 4: Sanctioned 120 SRA project in M-East Ward.

The Vashi Naka area has been completely transformed under the cumulative impact of slum rehabilitation schemes and resettlement buildings. The organic continuity of the settlement on all sides of the hill has been disturbed by its division by the Eastern freeway. These infrastructure developments that have connected the city to its satellite city and made travel faster; have disconnected the varied parts of Vashi Naka and restricted its connectivity to other parts of the ward. There are very few, marginal *kaccha* housing structures left on the hill; buildings of four- seven stories have replaced most of the former housing. The names of Nagars have given way to names that take after the developers- Kukreja Compound, MMRDA Colony, MHADA complex, RNA Park etc. Schools, Buddha Vihars now stand as isolated structures and have become vertical too. Another creation of the redevelopment regime is the Transit Camp – a settlement which was supposed to have a temporary character but has emerged as one of the most uncertain and insecure territories inserted into the fabric of a large, almost continuous belt of ‘informal’ settlements along the Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link road. There are no such dramatic

developments or transformations of the built environment in other study areas. However, the impact of the private property- redevelopment regime and its correlates is being experienced in all the study areas without exception. We explore these impacts at multiple scales in the following section.

## **5. Everyday Life and Settlement in the Redevelopment Regime**

The impact of the slum redevelopment policies is seen at multiple scales. The scale ranges from the ward level (the ward in relation to the city) to locality level and at a household level too. Its direct impact is linked to the mode of operation of the schemes and the conception of rehabilitation. Its indirect impacts are linked to the manner in which the state has withdrawn from realms other than housing, the dynamics that are generated due to the changes in actor orientation and the way in which communities are organised.

We argue here that redevelopment cannot be seen as a single policy but as a plethora of changes in the state-market orientation to slums. These have significantly changed the meaning of slum for its inhabitants and the relationship of this entity to the city. It may be difficult to attribute each of the changes chronicled below to a direct impact of redevelopment alone; these changes are definitely linked to the shift to the redevelopment regime, though.

### **5.1 Being 'state' in times of redevelopment**

Acceptance of the slum through the Slum Act of 1976 opened a new chapter of municipal governance. This is because the slum is the antithesis of the spirit of municipal governance and municipal acts do not provide any framework for how to govern or serve a locality that is seen as 'illegal' but 'tolerated'; which does not generate any taxes for the local government but where there is considerable asset formation; and in whose case there is considerable political interest but few resources. The terrain of governance generated is arbitrary, uncertain and fraught with risk. An interesting instance of this is the case of the height of slum structures. In the M (East) ward, several houses in second and third generation slums are more than one storey, in contravention of the rule that their maximum height can be fourteen feet. The BMC does not give permission to build higher and as a result, all these structures continue to exist in an 'illegal mode'. A senior municipal official<sup>16</sup> asks, 'How does one govern the rampant extension of slum structures to one or more storeys when the rule is that they cannot be extended beyond 14 feet? When I requested my seniors to regularise this and grant permissions for the same; the response was that the corporation should be afraid more of the risk to life and the ensuing responsibility for loss of life than a regularisation move which may bring in additional resources to the corporation and decriminalise the construction'. Such illegalities are directly posed against illegalities committed by people and institutions with means. There is thus a case of a developer who has constructed an international school with additional floors above the permissible limit, inviting demolition as a punitive action. In this case, the official was persuaded to think otherwise by some high-level politicians. The school thus continues as an institution with a building that is 'legal' in appearance but isn't while the buildings in slums continue to be 'illegal' and cannot be regularised.

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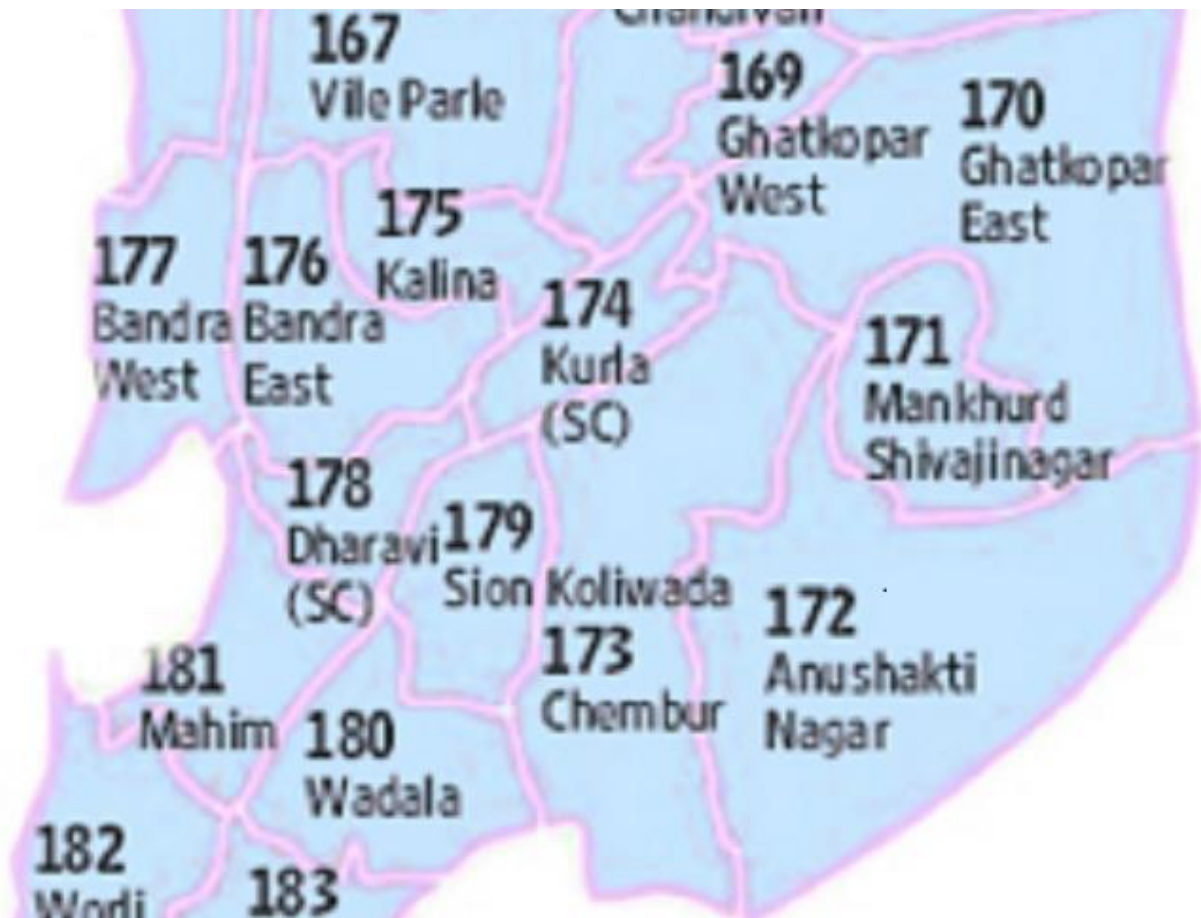
<sup>16</sup> Interview with senior official of BMC

The concept of redevelopment was introduced as a ‘solution’ to such ongoing and intractable ‘problem’ of slums, and one acceptable to the bureaucracy as well as the political wing. In reality, slum redevelopment has not ‘solved’ the problem. It has instead created an even more uncertain and dilemmatic terrain of governance. This is because it takes the state further away from law-based governance and into the realm of negotiated governance. It compels the state to negotiate with several non-state actors – developers, agents, politicians, mafia, nongovernmental organizations, and their competing interests. Slums have become a territory for layers of control. The immediate level includes intermediaries (often ex karyakartas, NGO representatives), people who forge consent and silence conflict (politicians, mafia, police); The next layer is one of people who manage government offices (consultants – architects, engineers, ex-government officials) followed by higher levels of control (joint ventures, mergers and alliances/splits between builders and developers of various scales) and the fusing with higher level politicians and bureaucracy at the level of policymaking. At the operational level, the dynamics involve intermediaries of various kinds who determine access to housing. The distinctions between various actors have begun to blur. Senior municipal officials talk about how councillors and representatives of NGOs are engaged in allotting tenements in resettlement colonies for a bribe. Contemporary politics in slums centres on the creation of new territories (such as Transit Camp discussed later), claiming control (competition for control over territories, bodies, services and votes) and speculative mobilisations and manipulation in anticipation of redevelopment. Eviction, their savageness, permanence otherwise of security of the area and unofficial guidance to new occupiable areas, all have become part of the governmentality of the new regime.

## **5.2 Redrawing Electoral Geographies**

Overall the M (East) ward is characterised by a high concentration of Dalits and Muslims in the city. These concentrated pockets have developed over time through the process of slum settlement. Often they have been deliberately nurtured through a political control over a settlement that emerged in the 1980s (as in the case of Ghatla). These concentrations in particular pockets enabled the creation of an identity based electoral geography at the municipal level. The municipal councillors are thus, the most prominent actors in the settlement of slums, as seen in the case studies.

Redevelopment has facilitated the emergence of a new scale in the engineering of electoral geographies. The addition of 50000 new tenements and the accompanying shift of nearly 100,000 people into the ward have meant a new opportunity for social engineering. It has attenuated the difference based on identities and created large belts of identity-based settlement. Thus the entire Ghatkopar- Mankhurd road can be divided into two belts; one, a Dalit belt towards the Ghatkopar-Chembur side and two, a Muslim belt towards the Mankhurd side. The constituency demarcation exercise undertaken in 2011 has enabled particular political parties to consolidate their hold over these belts.



Map 5: The map of state assembly constituencies below illustrates the same.

This consolidation of settlements along lines of identity enables inhabitants to mobilise as votes for particular parties on one hand, on the other hand, it strengthens the labelling of the areas such as Bainganwadi-Mandala as Muslim constituencies with all its accompanying notions such as 'backward', 'terrorist', 'criminals' etc and treated as such by varied arms of the state. Qudsiya thus describes how the water problem in Bainganwadi is interspersed with notions of othering (2012). It is evident that the contemporary political economy is nurturing slums and rehabilitation as a mode of social engineering in which the city is being constructed socio-spatially as an entity that facilitates identity-based politics.

### 5.3 Commodification of land and Housing and New Vulnerabilities

The advent of redevelopment schemes has resulted in a tremendous appreciation of house prices in slums. Its ripples are experienced not just in slums that are redeveloped but also those which await redevelopment and those which are being newly formed as settlements. This has meant that even the slum as not remained as an affordable housing option for many. It has created several new forms of vulnerabilities and marginals.

In a fairly consolidated settlement like Ghatla where the level of services is fairly high; rentals are expensive. This has led to a new system called *khanawalis*. Khanawalis are a board and lodging service to male migrants in the city who can't afford to buy or rent a house in the city. The current rates in Ghatla are Rs 2500-3000 per month for food and Rs 400 for sleeping in a room with Rs 1000 deposit. Depending on the size of the room it might be shared by 4 to 12 people. There are around 5000-6000 *khanawalis* in Ghatla. Cheeta Camp and the plots of Bainganwadi are not easy candidates for redevelopment as inhabitants over the years have consolidated their houses to one and even two storeys, which is not amenable to the rehabilitation tenement of 269 sq feet. The prices here too have appreciated considerably, leaving almost no room for new buildings to emerge.

Mandala has a highly insecure tenure and has faced very violent evictions in the recent past. In spite of this, a thriving housing market is operational in the area. Unlike earlier settlements, people can't construct or even move a brick without the permission of the housing mafia which has replaced the earlier land mafia. The current rate for a house which has documentary evidence dated before 1995 is roughly Rs 12,00,000 of size 10X10 and Rs 5,00,000 for houses with documentary evidence dated before 2000. The peripheries of Bainganwadi have a similar situation with an additional dimension of water insecurity added to the same.

A shadow rental market has emerged in the rehabilitated buildings of Vashi Naka. The state has restricted the sale of tenements in the open market for ten years. Several other modes of bypassing these restrictions and generating quasi-legal documentary evidence have proliferated with tenants having to shift house every eleven months.

#### **5.4 New Frontiers of Violence: Transit Camps and emerging settlements**

Slums represent geographies of social difference. As discussed earlier, they are also highly heterogeneous. The onset of redevelopment schemes has added new layers and intensity to these differences by connecting these to larger political economies. The quality of life in the resettlement colonies is a different story but within the settlement trajectory of the ward, they represent the highest form of security of tenure which has enhanced the personal insecurity of the residents. In contrast to this are settlements like Mandala which represent a new settlement where insecurities assume multiple forms. There are two transit camps which situate themselves midway and represent a new geography of violence created by the state itself.

The new dynamic of eligibility that has engulfed slum areas post-SRS is one that creates new exclusions. It does not result in a reduction of slums but creates new ones that are hopeful of getting a free house, sees a recirculation of those who sell their rehabilitation tenements and move to a new settlement and enhances the vulnerability of those who are termed ineligible and stay in areas that have seen massive changes through construction.



### Exclusion and Precarity

In Vashi Naka, the massive transformation of built environment has seen an expansion of settlement on the hilltop while the hill itself has undergone tunnelling, tall buildings on either side making it vulnerable to landslides. A landslide in 2014 flattened seven huts on the hill and resulted in the death of a young child sleeping in one of the huts. All these huts belonged to households considered ineligible for rehabilitation. The death of the child itself became a trigger for a re-examination of eligibility of those who stayed on the hill but did not cause any real change in the situation. The number of such huts in the extremely high level of precarity has in fact increased violence.

Till 1990, the land on which Mandala stands was covered with thick mangroves. In early 1990's emerged as an option for migrants in the city who were looking for a house. Here too, a network of bhais demarcated plots and began selling them to people. Aaisha<sup>17</sup>, who lives in rented house described the situation as "*Mandala bas raha hai, toh udhar jakar plot kat lo*" (Mandala is settling, you can have your plot of land there). The plots would still be submerged under water and it was still marshy land. These lands were made habitable through struggles of the residents who would get debris to fill it up. For instance, Rafiq Bhai<sup>18</sup> had to put 62 trucks of debris to fill the land and it took him almost three years to fill it. Each truck of debris would cost 2000-3000 along with some money to government officials. Mandala is highly vulnerable location both from nature as well as the state. Its location on the edge of the creek makes it vulnerable to frequent floods. It has also experienced several demolitions. Till 2000, there were regular demolitions of small parts of Mandala. As Rafiq Bhai says "BMC would destroy the houses and then they would say 'Our work is done now you can reconstruct it'. Police would come while constructing the house and they would take money from us."

The transit camps represent another key site of violence. Transit accommodations refer to temporary housing offered to those households who await a permanent allotment of a rehabilitation house. In the context of the MUTP and MUIP<sup>19</sup>, the responsibility of rehabilitation was given to a few NGOs, primarily SPARC (Society for Promotion of Area resource Centres). The NGO was thus a powerful actor which mediated the allotment of rehabilitation and transit tenements. The NGO used the transit camps to settle those households whose eligibility to resettlement could not be ascertained. The transit camp in Mandala is an example of a space generated by the dynamics of resettlement wherein more than 250 families from Azad Maidan were promised a permanent house and shifted to the present location in M ward in 2000. They were not even among those who were affected by the MUIP project but were shifted in the name

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<sup>17</sup> Interview, 6/2/2014

<sup>18</sup> Interview, 30/12/2014

<sup>19</sup> Mumbai Urban transport Project (MUTP) and Mumbai Urban Improvement Project (MUIP) were large transport infrastructure projects undertaken in the city between 2000-2010. Together they displaced around 40000 households living in slums in various parts of the city.

of 'improvement of housing condition'. Their shift to a settlement where there were almost no basic amenities, except a house made of asbestos sheets in a neatly aligned settlement alongside a drain. As the community began struggling for some basic amenities, they discovered that they were considered ineligible for a permanent accommodation; the existence of the settlement in which they lived was not acknowledged by anyone, including the MMRDA which was the rehabilitation agency and SPARC which was the NGO that actually shifted them to the location.

Transit Camp and Mandala are stand posts where the politics over claim and control of territories is very sharp. The sheer degree of organization of the mafia that has now established networks with the BMC, lobbies of debris operators, water tankers, police, electricity companies and politicians is immense. Yet it is also a highly competitive arena with a multiplicity of actors. As bodies and settlements become the arena on which this competitive enterprise(s) cum politics is based on, sheer physical violence is an instrument of intimidation and control. Youth in the community and neighbouring areas are deployed to use random acts of violence to establish and perpetuate control as well as to extend territories. Open and currently 'vacant' spaces in and nearby these settlements are particular targets and the route for the same is often violence unleashed on current inhabitants through the breaking of houses, silencing voices of dissent, breaking water or electricity connections, threats, forcing out residents from particular houses, and forceful occupation of others. Often the police and the municipal officials become a part of the use of violence. Residents of these settlements often see these official as arms of the state which are hand in glove with the non-state actors as they pursue similar goals and protect the same interests.

### **5.5 Spatial Labelling, Othering and Surveillance**

Since the 1980s, when slums began to be seen as a mode of nurturing vote banks and settlement began to be more organized, their emergence as geographies of social difference began to be more pronounced. This is seen in the settlement of Ghatla where there was a conscious move to only bring in people from Maratha caste. The Dhangars and the Waghris could only find space towards the edges of Ghatla. This strategy became more and more pronounced in later years. Settlements began to be named after leaders of parties that protected them and reflective of their own social identity. To name a few, Indira Nagar, Annabhau Sathe Nagar, etc. The riots and the SRS regime intensified the social difference within settlements; they also added a new intensity to creating large zones of difference.

The riots in 1992-93 resulted in a complete purging of the few Muslim households in Ghatla. Cheeta camp was one of the few places which were not affected by the riots in 1992-93. In fact, one of the respondents recollects the efforts that they took to prevent communal violence in the area. Their memories of how Cheeta Camp was affected by riots in 1984 played a big role in their determination to maintain peace at any cost. In 1984, Cheeta Camp was affected by violent

riots in relation to the uprising of the police<sup>20</sup> in the city. These riots resulted in a tremendous cost to the residents in terms of loss of property, livelihoods and lives. The residents, therefore, initiated meetings between different influential people from all religions to maintain peace in the area in 1992-93. The relative peace in Cheeta Camp meant that Muslims across the city and especially staying in close proximity of the area took refuge here. Many of them stayed back in the area after the riots. Cheetah camp, which has not experienced riots after 1984 thus, provides a sense of security for the minority Muslim community. This peace is fragile, however, and is a facade that requires constant negotiation and mediation by the inhabitants as the locality itself is seen as a breeding ground for terror. The area is under constant police surveillance and raids are common whenever there are terror threats in the city. Interpersonal conflicts often get fused with the narrative of terror and thus activists, people with a voice are marked as 'suspects' to be marked. Afroze, a young man was arrested and detained by police after the 9/11 bombings as he combined two attributes- being a trained pilot (a training he actually never completed) and being Muslim from Cheetah Camp. Every conflict in the community has to be mitigated so that it doesn't acquire the colours of 'religious conflict' or being 'anti-national'. This illustrates the intensity of the labelling process and the fragility of peace that is facilitated by the creation of identity-based spatial pockets.

## **5.6 Denial and Withdrawal of State from Provision of Basic Services**

There has been a major change in the manner of provision of services to slums in the last ten years. The BMC has failed to provide water to slums that have emerged post-1995, in spite of directions of the court to do so in 2014. The construction and management of toilets have been transferred to NGOs and CBOs in the name of community management. A similar shift has also taken place in solid waste management. These shifts have tremendous implications for the way in which life in a slum is experienced. The stories of Vashi Naka, Cheeta Camp, and Ghatla are about how people self-mobilised to access services from the state with the help of political intermediaries. Services were often inadequate but they were free, open to all, public in character and people could access the state to make further demands upon it. The shift has created new challenges linked to not just the existence of services but about accessibility, and accountability. Water or rather the absence of official water is the biggest problem faced by settlements like Bainganwadi and Mandala. The entrance to these settlements is marked by a complex maze of drinking water pipes running on both sides of the roads. Often, there is hardly any distance between the drain and water pipes. The network of water pipes keeps getting complex and denser as one moves to the inner parts of the community; at many places tubes are strapped around pipes like bandages strapped around wounds to stop leakage. This visual

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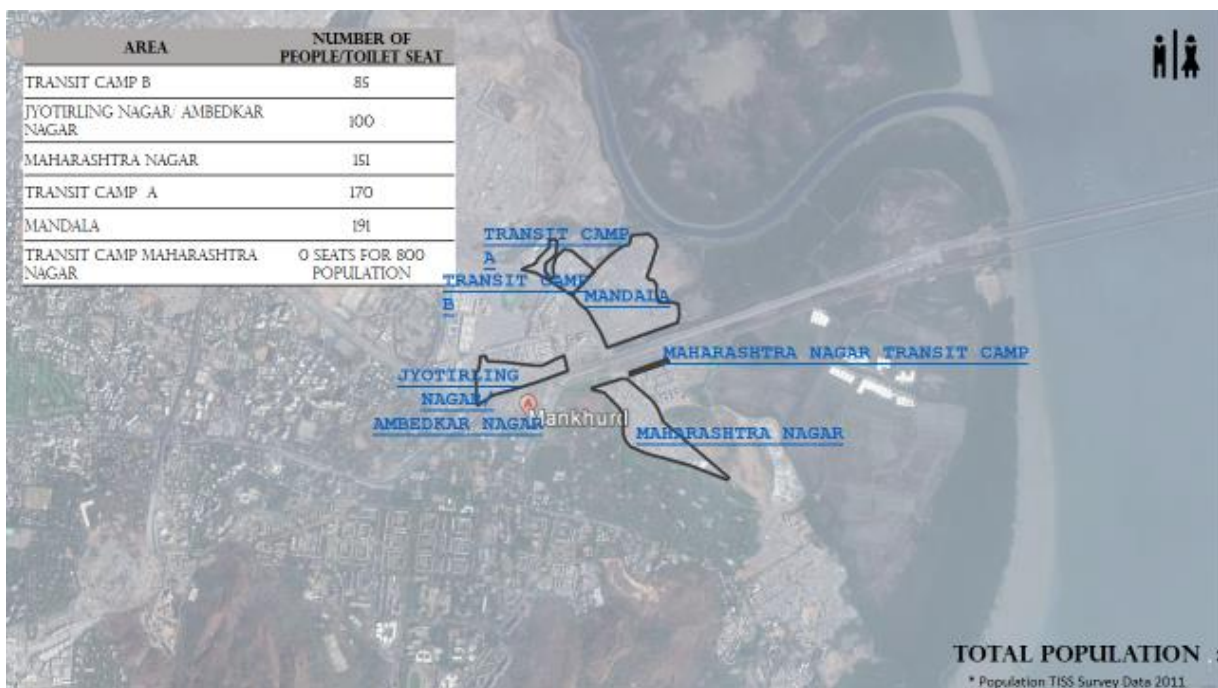
<sup>20</sup> The uprising of city police in 1984 is a silenced event in the city, for which very little documentation exists. It represents an eruption over the exploitation of the lower cadres of the police force with respect to basic needs. These riots were accompanied by episodes of rioting in certain pockets of the city. Cheeta Camp was one of those and it took the form of residents v/s state.

complexity is reflective of the daily struggle for water that residents face. People have to pay Rs 5 per container of 10 litres of water; every use of toilet that demands water is charged Rs 5 as well.

### Yellow Water

Several people collect rainwater from their roofs in buckets and drums in order to reduce the demand for paid water. There are others who have sunk borewells within their houses to access the creek water which is used for washing and other daily needs. This water from the creek is highly polluted, smells as it has seepage of sewage and is called ‘yellow water’. It represents an only option for an area where the state has linked water provision to the legality of settlement and thus made daily life into a struggle.

There are public toilets in the ward, of which are located in slums. Several of these toilets are constructed by NGOs and are given to either NGOs or CBOS for maintenance. These NGOs/CBOs are engaged by the state but are expected to maintain the toilets through money collected from residents. Given the inadequacy of amenities, the intensity of use is very high. A study by TISS reveals that the ratio of toilet seats per population is in areas Transit Camp B is 85, Transit Camp A is 170 and Mandala is 191. Irrespective of payment or lack of payment, the state of toilets is very bad. In the Mankhurd area that comprises Transit camp, Bainganwadi, and Mandala, toilets were in a state of disrepair with broken windows and doors, broken seats, overflowing septic tanks and lack of outlets for sewage.



Map 6: Showing toilet seat per population of different areas of M-ward.

### **Death By Toilet**

In July 2015, a woman in Transit Camp died when she visited a toilet whose floor caved in and she fell into the septic tank. This toilet was constructed and managed by an NGO. No agency – the NGO or the BMC or the state government took responsibility of this violent outcome. The NGO considered the death as an unfortunate outcome of the complex challenges of the terms of community toilet management while the BMC did not consider itself responsible as the toilet was constructed and managed by the NGO. After this incident, the BMC conducted a survey of toilets, demolished some of those considered unsafe; creating yet another challenge as several of these areas where toilets were demolished have no other sanitation option currently.

Solid waste is another area of challenge in terms of basic services. The CBOs who have been contracted for the same work in a patchy manner, do not provide regular services and are unaccountable to the communities that they serve. On the other hand, supervision by the BMC is also lax as the CBOs are seen to be outside the rubric of municipal services. In the resettlement colonies in Vashi Naka, the MMRDA expects that solid waste management is the responsibility of the residents and thus there is almost a total lack of services in buildings where residents are not organized.

The ‘social’ services have been completely neglected. There is just 1 school per 2863 people in the ward. Moreover, in a ward with high levels of poverty, the number of government schools is pathetically low. There are 73 elementary schools and just 3 schools that provide secondary education. A similar situation is seen with respect to health. The public health system in the ward comprises of a single underequipped municipal hospital that often turns away patients, 2 maternity homes and a network of health posts engaged in preventive work. The lack of adequate public educational or health services translates into a proliferation of private, often illegal and expensive services with dubious standards. Providers of these services represent another layer of power in the settlements.

The new forms of organization of services and the shift from a patron-client model to a service provider- customer model is one that has impacted the settlements and left them worse off. On one hand, there seems to be a better presence of services. On the other hand, the access and quality of services remain as poor as ever. The introduction of NGOs and CBOs in the service provision realm has diffused accountability and enhanced the financial burdens of the poor. It also restrains the claims on citizenship and political processes that earlier regimes allowed, shifting the discourse to a customer orientation.

This shift in orientation in service provision indicates the contradictions in the discourse generated by SRS. Slums were previously seen as settlements of the poor that need to be

tolerated and treated with a humane approach; service provision was a part of this orientation. The introduction of SRS as meant that slums are today seen only as a housing problem, other dimensions of services are either neglected (such as solid waste management in rehabilitation buildings), made more difficult (denial of water to post 1995 slums) or accountability shifted to intermediaries (toilets and solid waste to NGOs and CBOs). This has enhanced the challenges of everyday life for slum dwellers and those shifted to rehabilitation buildings. At a ward level, this translates into the ward having the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) <sup>21</sup> in the city at 0.2

### **5.7 Livelihoods at Risk, Livelihoods of Risk**

Settlement in M ward has been characterised by precarious livelihoods. The ancillary industries linked to the large hazardous industries in the ward, the abattoir which was shifted here in 1976 and the dumping ground that was created in 1960 are the principal sources of livelihood in this ward. Large industries have reduced their operations in the city in the last twenty years. The operations in the abattoir have also been reduced through a gradual process of outsourcing. The dumping ground has been marked for closure and parts of it have been handed over to a private firm for initiation of closure operations. This has meant a reduction of access to the dumping ground for recyclers. Some new opportunities have been generated for the ward through an enhanced connectivity (by road and rail to Navi Mumbai- a satellite city). However, by and large, it remains a ward on the periphery, away from the growth centres of the city and with no plan to effect a change. The advent of a huge population through the resettlement programme has further added to the competition for livelihoods in the area, resulting in patterns of criminalised, highly risky livelihoods with few prospects for mobility and decent life.

In Mandala, for example, the main avenues for work are vending, manual cart pulling, work on construction sites and tiny industries located in Mandala. These industries include soap manufacturing; painting and redoing old iron cupboards, scrap dealing, removing silver from x-ray machine, chappal manufacturing and glass cutting. Most of these are hazardous industries and dangerous to the persons working as well as people residing in that area. Few months back there was an explosion in one of the scrap units where around 8 children living in the vicinity died. Bainganwadi has a high presence of scrap and recycling units as well. Several people here pursue an itinerant livelihood through quick trips to the dumping ground despite restraining walls and lack of licenses. Ghatla and Vashi Naka have a significant proportion of people who have secure livelihoods through employment in the BMC but there is a large presence of households who have been resettled in the area whose livelihoods are lost. In Ghatla, there is a significant presence of single male migrants.

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<sup>21</sup> The Human Development Index for the city was developed by a study conducted by All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIIILSG) in 2009.

The livelihood options for women are even more constrained. The social restraints on their mobility accompanied by the lack of viable industries in the ward means that the options for home-based work are limited and those linked to site based work are confined to the hazardous industries in the settlements. Small workshops run in hutments where there are no basic amenities, long hours of work and poor pay are the mainstay of livelihoods for women as well.

This seems another major shift in the prospects for mobility of slum residents. Even in the 1970s when people migrated from drought-struck areas to the city, the city represented a space for hope. While they faced struggles in their everyday life, work opportunities were ample and several actually became upwardly mobile. Currently, the shift in the economy of the city towards services and the limited industry, infrastructure and mobility options in the ward have intensified the struggle for livelihoods, forcing people to undertake more precarious and risky options.

### **5.8 Emergence of Masculine Public Spaces**

The narrative of redevelopment intersects with that of masculinity to produce spaces that reify the presence of men while creating barriers for women in their everyday life. A classic instance is that of Vashi Naka. Transport projects, particularly the Eastern Freeway have completely transformed the geography of Vashi Naka. Vashi Naka was earlier a settlement along two slopes of a hill; it was settled as a series of villages with a spatial organization in which movement was free and interspersed with several spaces that could be regarded as community spaces. Its geographical contiguity has been completely transformed by dividing it into two parts- the part with R&R colonies and the part not transformed with scattered SRA buildings. There has been a rapid densification of the area lead by the state through different R&R sites and the advent of the population from various other parts of the city. Around 90 buildings of seven floors have been constructed by five builders for R&R of different people affected by various infrastructure projects. This has resulted in the loss of livelihood of people who have been settled here from different parts of Mumbai. Several unemployed youth hang around; the earlier sensibility of community has also changed. It has also altered the spatial organization of the area and made the place much more insecure for women and young girls. Several young girls face an accentuated threat of abuse while pursuing their daily activities. An FGD with young girls revealed the following features of unsafe places -

- 1) In the vicinity of gymnasiums. Gymnasiums have emerged as a new feature of the area. Several of these gymnasia which are frequented by male youth are in the vicinity of schools and give an opportunity for youth to harass girls passing by.
- 2) Rickshaw stand and small *taparis* (small tea stall on the road, where men gather to talk about different issues) where unknown people gather: Vashi Naka has been highly densified in the last ten years while public transport services have not been expanded proportionately. This has meant a rapid rise in rickshaws - a form of paratransit. Rickshaws have also become the mode of livelihood for resettled population. The spots

where rickshaw operators have created their waiting spaces are also spots for small tea shops, pan vendors and thus the new male gathering spots.

- 3) The new spatial organization of Vashi Naka has generated several spaces that are defunct in terms of use and governance. Their designations such as parking areas are misnomers as they are largely unused places with little population movement and are seen as a source of active threat by women.
- 4) The basements/entrances of the rehabilitation buildings are spaces where bikes are parked by politically connected youth; they are also spaces where they place tables, play cards and also drink at times.
- 5) A bar strategically located at the point of crossing over of a pedestrian bridge that connects the two divided parts of Vashi Naka creates insecurity and fear for women who are compelled to cross the bridge which is the only access for them to the other side which has schools, market etc.

The spatial organization of the erstwhile slum communities was one which was highly permeable and one could move from one lane to another with ease. Most lanes had houses on either side and thus there was a presence of constant eyes on the street. Further, the community itself was largely composed of familiar and connected people. Public spaces thus were also fairly secure due to the presence of the known and the familiar. The densification has brought in a lot of strangers into the area. This also breeds confidence that acts of masculine bravado often go unpunished. The changed spatial organization generates spaces that then become indefensible and hence insecure. Young girls and women often face harassment or an active risk of the same.

The situation in peripheral areas of Bainganwadi and Mandala is worse. Here the pattern of formation of new settlements means a high level of strangers. There are several rooms which are empty, others where new migrant workers stay and work and where new transactions are happening; these become spaces for crimes against women. In the last four years, there have been 12 cases of violent crimes against very young girls in the area. In the same context, it is interesting to note that overall while the slum is policed, the police are not very active when it comes to security interests of slum residents. Thus even in the resettled Vashi Naka, there is just one police station on the main road and one Police Chowki near the main road. There is no police presence in the inner parts of the area.

## **5.9 Everyday Life of Women**

Women in the studied settlements live a life shaped by the domination of state, market and community. In the past when settlements were more village-like, the force of community and tradition was dominant. It meant that women enjoyed significant collective life; it also meant that there were few opportunities for expression of individuality and choice. Violence within



the home was common and often condoned by the community, except in extreme cases. Income generating options were few. Women played an important role in settling the areas and building houses. Surrekhatai, Reshma tai have played important roles in persuading their husbands to invest in a separate house, in filling in the plots and constructing the house in Sahyadri Nagar, Vashi Naka or in Ghatla. They have borne the brunt of improvement and the burden of lack of or limited availability of services like water.

The struggles of women in the post-SRS phase seem to have become more challenging. The enhanced emphasis on housing and the neglect of other services and needs impacts the opportunities and spaces available for women. In Bainganwadi, the lack of water creates particular challenges for women. Aaisha says<sup>22</sup> that 'We have to go down in the ditch to get the water as the goons would break the pipes in the ditch and give us access to the same. This provides them an opportunity to touch our bodies inappropriately. We have to face this problem daily as men go for work'. The gendered body comes into play in the matter of sanitation as well. Women face a daily threat to their dignity in areas like Transit Camp where men gather in the path towards the toilets and pass comments on girls and women passing by. The failure to proportionately increase public education and health facilities has meant that women from poor families now undergo home births, often without trained attendants or undergo treatment at private facilities of dubious quality. It has placed a restriction on the level of schooling that a girl can have. In areas like Vashi Naka, while the struggles around basic services are a thing of the past, young girls face enhanced the risk of harassment in some of the new spaces. The claims of women, especially single, widowed or deserted women are denied in the homogenization of regime and reduction of property claims through the SRS. While the police system has become more sensitive towards the complaints of abuse and domestic violence; their response towards crimes in slum areas is as negligent as ever and they appear to be hand in glove with many of the criminal elements that harass women.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview, 6/2/2014

## 6. Struggles for Justice

Inhabitants of slum settlements can be seen to be engaged in struggles at multiple levels. At an individual and household level, the decision to migrate and make a home and life in the city despite adverse conditions, the constant search for a better livelihood for self and the investment in children, in assets and the settlement –all represent struggles. There are also multiple kinds of actions and mobilisations that they become a part of to further their aspirations and consolidate their stakes in the city. Appadurai thus describes the pragmatic, often silent and gradual repertoire of strategies by which the urban poor expand their claims in the city (2000).

Earlier settlement patterns of slums were embedded in violence with bhais emerging as the figures that would create the manoeuvring room for settlement. Yet the way in which people would settle would be as a networked group, known to each other and thus give an area a village like a feel in terms of its spatial organization and functioning. In the case of Ghatla, it was already evident that the process was becoming more organized and thus, selective in terms of identity. These settlement patterns, accompanied by the public nature of service provision became the basis for the mobilisations in slums in the 1970s. Their basis was housing rights, basic services and an overall right to exist. The Janata Colony demolitions in 1972 were a trigger for a massive mobilisation of slum dwellers in which civil society comprising human right groups, NGOs took a lead. This was a struggle that was fought on ground as well as in legal and to a lesser extent, mediated realm. The actual demolitions on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1976 could only be carried out after the preemptive arrest of around 40 (25 men and 15 women) community leaders and the brutal silencing of dissent through the application of state force in the name of emergency. The resistance to demolition, the negotiation for resettlement, the gradual resettlement process and the establishment of amenities in Cheeta Camp has been facilitated by this mobilisation of the community. Its memories have also helped the rebuilding and maintenance of peace in the area.

The redevelopment regime, with its blurring of boundaries between actors, has introduced new dynamics into the overall terrain of politics and organization around slums. Electoral politics has become not only accommodative of slums but is centred on slums which represent the active votes. Civil society and NGOs, on the other hand, have become much more entrepreneurial and have forged collaborations with the state (Ramanath, 2005). This makes the terrain of community action extremely slippery, challenging and dilemmatic. At a ground level, various arms of the state, market, politicians, service providers, mafia, NGOs often seem to act in collusion (and competition) to produce and control territories and services. The highly organized modus operandi of these colluding actors are not matched by the fledgling efforts of inhabitants of slum settlements whose everyday life has become insecure, whose means and resources are limited; to improve their individual and collective lives. Yet each of the study areas registers vibrant initiatives which go beyond the ‘weapons of the weak’

The Transit Camp in Mandala is a case in point. Some of the youth in Transit camp were young when their families were shifted from Azad Maidan and other places to the transit camp. While the initial years were spent in an endless wait to avail permanent housing with the NGO- SPARC as a mediator; after a decade several realised that the permanent housing was not materialising. Instead, they had spent several years in a settlement where the basic amenity provision was poor. Some of the youth mobilised themselves to access water and realised that the existence of the settlement was not acknowledged by the state agency (MMRDA) at whose behest they were shifted and that they were 'ineligible for resettlement' and that transit camps were closed down with the closure of MUTP. They have subsequently accessed water 'illegally' and began distributing it to the inhabitants. A year ago, they were slapped with a humongous electricity bill and connections were disconnected. Subsequently, it was found that the NGO who had the primary onus of shifting was liable for the same and had failed to do so. Negotiations with the NGO as well as electric company followed resulting in a partial payment by NGO, some payment by residents and a concession by the company. They also attempted to negotiate with the electricity company and the NGO about the humongous electricity charges slapped upon them; they are currently trying to get their toilet which is in a poor condition repaired and also organising themselves to negotiate for alternate models of the settlement, claiming the land that they were shifted to fifteen years ago. Their struggles are offset by counter attempts by the NGO to divide and resettle some people<sup>23</sup>, and those by some elements of infra-power who unleash violence in a bid to control the allotment of tenements in Transit Camp and other resettlement colonies. The complete denial of the state in acknowledging the existence of Transit Camp and leaving people to the mercies of the NGO have made them even more vulnerable than in Azad Maidan where they had direct access to state agencies through political mobilisation. The community is being disadvantaged both in terms of its everyday life and its overall movement towards consolidation and yet there is an active production of counter-narratives as well from certain members of the community.

Mandala is the site of one of the bravest struggles put up in the city against demolitions in the city. Narratives from Mandala indicate that the community has always faced threats of demolition, being a post-1995 settlement; parts of it have been demolished several times with an implicit agreement with the BMC and police that this was not a permanent action and that they could reconstruct their houses. 2003 was a different story altogether. In 2002-03, about 100000 homes all over the city were demolished by the various state authorities in one of the most sustained drives against slums. What is more, all the cleared settlements (over 17) were fenced and private security guards were posted round the clock to guard against re-occupation. Mandala was one of these settlements. The Ghar Bachao, Ghar Banao (Save homes, make homes) movement emerged from this wave of evictions with the leadership of Medha Patkar,

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<sup>23</sup> There have been at least 2-3 instances over the last few years where any attempt to mobilize has seen the NGO step in, give allocations to some households in the resettlement colonies in the ward, thereby reinforcing that it is this NGO which would be the ultimate dispenser of permanent option of housing. These allocations are seemingly not based on any objective parameters.

who had become an established activist figure through the Narmada struggle. The movement helped to galvanize several dormant resistances in the community, Mandala became a forerunner by the large-scale participation of the community in agitations and was successful in a gradual reoccupation of land under the cover of monsoons. There was one more brutal eviction also characterised by violence towards the activists (arrest, thrashing, and assault, setting fires) in late 2005. Since then a significant section of people has been fighting a struggle to get official recognition of their claim to the land. Its tactics have ranged from pleas to the central government (as central policies were more liberal in terms of cut off lines as opposed to Maharashtra) to applications and agitations for inclusion in a housing scheme called Rajiv Awas Yojana<sup>24</sup> to exposing how housing provisions for poor were being utilised by the elite in collusion with the state and pleading the state to actually deliver for the poor to court battles. Yet none of these battles seem to have yielded a positive outcome in the last ten years. The residents of erstwhile Mandala now live in adjoining slums while the plot on which they stayed earlier stays empty and walled. Many of them feel frustrated that their agitations have cost taken a lot of toll on their personal lives but seems to have yielded very little in terms of a difference to their conditions of life. Some activists continue to be engaged with the GBGA but several have now withdrawn from an active participation. The successes and failures of the Mandala community reflect the potentials of a ‘classic’<sup>25</sup> struggle in the contemporary political economy of the city.

The discussion on struggles for justice would be incomplete without reference to two contemporary initiatives. The first is the Right to Pee (RTP) campaign that began as a simple outcry against the discrimination that women face with respect to the use of urinals. In public toilets in Mumbai, men have the free use of urinals while women are asked to pay a rupee per use. It has grown to a struggle that today has begun to question the inadequacy of public toilets for women, the designs of toilets that do not address the full range of women’s sanitation needs, the allocation of budgets for toilets and the allocation of space for the same. In a city that recognizes only housing needs and by overlooking the gendered and classed nature of public spaces; creates tremendous access barriers or difficulties for women; the RTP represents a demand for paying attention to women not just as home-makers but as active actors in public space and as workers; it is a demand for expanding the thought of ‘inclusion’ beyond housing and property and beyond the space of the slum and extending it to the city. It also introduces a grounded understanding of the city which dreams of being a world-class city while neglecting the day- day needs of its citizens, in particular, those who stay in slums. RTP began as an initiative of a women’s collective in M-ward in 2013. Currently, it connects over 40

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<sup>24</sup> Rajiv Awas Yojana, introduced by a former government in power at central level, promised property rights to all slum dwellers in the country through a wide range of city wide housing programmes

<sup>25</sup> Non party popular struggles was a common phenomenon in India in the 1970s. These struggles based on Gandhian principles implored the state to respond to the needs of hitherto neglected constituencies and to expand the rubric of rights to them. GBGB moulds itself after these struggles in its orientation and form, hence the classicness

organizations and groups in various parts of the city and some of its work has also extended to other towns in the state of Maharashtra. It has conducted social audits of toilets, it has consistently advocated with the BMC to initially make urinals free and then to enhance the budgetary allocation to toilets and it has engaged social media to connect women across classes in this demand for making the city more gender friendly. It has made alliances- CBOs that operate slum toilets, other organizations working in slums and feminist organizations. The RTP also represents a struggle that has emerged from one of the poorest wards in the city where women face innumerable everyday struggles. Within the ward, the campaign has yielded some positive results – the use of urinals has been made free of charges for women; a model toilet is being constructed and the BMC has begun to pay some attention to the issue of toilets as reflected in its new initiatives. The challenge is however far more serious as illustrated by the incident in transit camp where the poor condition of toilet resulted in the death of a woman. The use of strategies deployed by the campaign is interesting as well- the extensive use of media such as press, television, agitations that do not necessitate a mass presence but small mobilisations at critical locations such as office of the solid waste commissioner, dysfunctional toilets, toilets where women are made to pay higher and studies that also engage other sections of women. The campaign thus has the city at its arena and while the demands have particular relevance for poor women and women in slums; the attempt is to build a relationship with the rest of the city.

In contrast to RTP that focuses on pragmatic demands is the campaign for a more inclusive development plan for the city. The Development Plan (DP) for Mumbai which articulates its development vision and land use from 2014-2034 is currently under preparation. The DPs conventionally are an extension of the propertied vision of the city and thus completely overlook the slum settlements. In the past, thus, DPs have proved the bane for the existence of slums or have constrained their legal recognition and provision of amenities. Further the redevelopment regime has made residents aware of the potential of lands and claims upon them. Thus, a process of enhancing the visibility of the poor in the DP was initiated in 2013 with the announcement of the existing land use plan. The ELU(Existing Land use) which documents the current way in which land is used ignores the presence of slums( some slums are not marked on it at all while in other cases, they have been clustered together with only outer boundaries marked) ; and other settlements like Gaothans and koliwadadas. Similarly, several informal markets have been invisibilized in the ELU. The M ward initiated a process of objections to the ELU through the involvement of local residents. Over objections to the ELU were suggested through the M-ward alone and of these, the BMC had to cognize. A formal city level campaign called 'Hamara Shaher Vikas Abhiyan (HSVA) was launched with the involvement of over 30 organizations in the city. M ward has been particularly active in this campaign which has since taken the form of proposing alternatives to the plan proposals through active consultations with local people. These alternative proposals have included ways of enhancing social, educational and health infrastructure in the ward; it has demanded the expansion of public spaces and open spaces in a ward in which residents live in highly dense conditions with very few amenities. It has also

asked for enhancement of local market space and internal road connectivity to encourage growth opportunities in the ward. It has also demanded the setting up of alternative goals such as a just and more peaceful city in addition to the goals of ‘competitive, efficient and inclusive city’ set by the DP. The sheer strength of the campaign has meant that the organizations are actually being consulted on certain proposals. The actual outcomes of this process are yet to be determined but there has been a tremendous rise in the consciousness of inhabitants with respect to needs and claims beyond housing.

Both the struggles described above represent an inception by an NGO but have been taken up with great vigour by several community-based activists who are trying to make their voices heard beyond the current developer, politician, entrepreneurial NGO and CBO nexus. The challenges they face are multiple and multilayered. While the struggles are operating in two different realms –sanitation (for which there is much greater acceptance) and land use (at the heart of the political economy of the city); their central challenge is to a city and the development paths that it is pursuing. These development paths are based on an abstract dream of being world class and global through strategies that privilege an actively growing nexus of capital- politician – bureaucracy. Redevelopment is a dream sold to the ordinary citizens and slum dwellers alike; these struggles expose the violence that this dream entails. Their demands express the things that are lost or being threatened under the mindless pursuit of housing and private property through densification of a built environment. Another thing that these struggles share is that they are not confined to the space of slum but extend themselves to stake claims of the city; they are an echo of the right to the city that extends beyond the right to housing.

The prospects for their real success and justice seem to be remote. The power of the real estate economy which is being challenged by these initiatives has expanded beyond the city to the national level where housing policies that connect the urban poor settlements to a formal property market are being designed. These initiatives demonstrate that just as slum settlements have emerged against the grain of an adversarial state; their struggles to create and expand spaces and make the city less violent and more just will also continue, despite the penetration by the state and the colonisation of the slum.

## 7. Connecting the dots

The study commenced with an examination of the changing relationship of the slum to the city in the backdrop of changing state- market axis and the ensuing notion of spatial justice. The ways in which the city is being socially and spatially transformed is critical to this study. These transformations have occurred at several different scales and the examination at the ward level gives us an important entry point that introduces a distinct meso level scale in understanding these transformations. Large infrastructure projects like the freeway have altered the geography of the region. In many places the freeway has cut through communities, displacing many settlements, and creating a physical boundary. In addition to the freeway, the processes of redevelopment and resettlement, as discussed earlier, have also altered the landscape of the ward. Another important transformation at the city level is the increasing formalization of the labour force. Thus, while initially labour was required to fuel the many industries of the city, including its cotton mills and docks, now most of the labour force living in informal settlements provides goods and services within these settlements. Slum settlements are no longer just labor camps but also production houses of the city. However, in a ward like M ward where the presence of industry has been minimal, livelihood opportunities have always been marginal; now they have become precarious. The economic geography of the ward as a periphery of the city has been scripted several times over and the emergence of the ward as a home for households impacted by infrastructure projects is a rewriting of the same.

In all these city-scale developments, it seems that the state has tilted towards the market, especially the real estate market. It has moved to create new opportunities for the same and has imbibed several aspects of a market-like thinking into its own functioning. There is also significant withdrawal from the arena of basic services where new actors are being brought in as service providers. This significant tilt towards the market is in continuity with trends in the past where under a broad umbrella of intervening in the market for the benefit of the poor, the state actually neglected to provide for the poor and instead benefits were usurped by people close to power. Currently, the discourse is becoming more explicit in certain dimensions and institutions while others continue to be more embedded in the past legacy of public services. The legislative dimension is far more conservative while a lot of market-oriented changes have been in the operational and functional realm. Further, the market itself is highly divided, competitive and responding to contrasting demands. Thus, while several of the changes mentioned above seem to be pushed under the label of the world class city project; their actual nature encourages a nexus political economy characteristic of selective state patronage of the market. Thus, particular developers, NGOs, contractors, CBOs are unduly favoured in spite of instances of failed partnership projects. The state-market axis is thus a peculiar combination of the past trajectory with a contemporary push towards private sector partnerships without disturbing the structure of patronage. The partial changes have also meant that governance

becomes more arbitrary and uncertain; especially in an arena like slums where new aspirations are being articulated, several contradictions are generated as the issues move into second and third generation and which are seen as the frontier of new colonisation by the state-market, progressively escalating their stake in the same.

While the role of the state and the market in transforming the city is often discussed, little attention has been paid to the transformation of these spaces by people themselves in particular through the auto-construction and occupation of previously uninhabitable and highly precarious land such as hill slopes, marshes, adjoining railway lines, pavements etc. Slums in M ward initially emerged out of such a process. The tilt towards a real estate economy in slums has meant that the narrative of settlement has become increasingly more complex, controlled by a loose collusion between state and non-state actors using politics as their lubricant. Marginalised communities are utilised as pawns in the settlement process and are compelled to be part of it as there are no alternatives.

Soja (2010) in his work lists the three principles of thinking spatially which include, “the ontological spatiality of being” or that we are inherently spatial beings, “the social production of spatiality” or that “space is socially produced and can, therefore, be socially changed)” and finally “the socio-spatial dialectic” or that the social and the spatial are constantly shaping each other (2010:2). The new modes of (slum) settlement are increasingly accompanied by identity-based settlement, surveillance, and control. It produces a highly differentiated terrain through the processes of redevelopment and resettlement, differentiated and controlled access to basic services, and degrees of insecurity of tenure. While Mumbai as a city is less socio-economically segregated than many cities in the global south, its geography bears testament to the ways in which the state is able to discriminate against groups on the basis of caste, class, and religion. The case study demonstrates that there are more wedges being driven in the mixed and embedded geography of the city, creating more exclusions and pressures that impact the everyday life of citizens in the M-ward which has now become a large poverty space associated with multiple negative identities such as ‘migrant, North Indian, Muslim etc. The notion of spatial (in) justice thus assumes greater relevance.

Redevelopment is not a single policy; it represents a regime – a collusion of actors and actions that produce particular kinds of dynamics. This regime is violent by its very nature and as seen in the study produces violent outcomes at multiple scales – at city level (peripheralisation, labelling of ward, changes in electoral geography that perpetuate this possibility of control and exclusion), settlement level (creation of differentiated terrain of services, providers, (in) securities and increased levels of control and surveillance by organised state- market forces) and at the level of people (struggles in everyday life, precarity and uncertainty as a characteristic of all spheres of life).



The most striking outcomes of the changes in state- market axis are at the level of bodies, of people who are poor, often first time migrants to the city, and whose access to means, opportunities and skills have been predetermined by their regional, caste or religious identity. For them, the city is a terrain of opportunity but one that is also mediated by daily struggle – for a piece of shelter, water to drink , place to bathe and shit, electricity, and then widening the opportunity for the next generation through education etc. Each of these becomes a challenge as the slum becomes a site of control by larger<sup>26</sup> level market forces and an absence of the state as a direct and accountable provider. The assumption that services provided by the private sector or NGOs are more accessible, friendlier and accountable falls completely flat in our examination of M ward. The absence-presence of the state has meant that slum inhabitants are compelled to pay for every aspect of service for an often dubious quality of service for which lines of accountability are diffuse. It is interesting that the state thinks of risk to life as a prime consideration while not giving permission for extension of heights of buildings in slums while this risk does not enter the horizon of policy when it comes to construction and maintenance standards of toilets by NGOs or cleaning of slums by CBOs or when entire landscapes are transformed by the built environment in cases like Vashi Naka. The violent outcomes of these absences are again enacted upon those who are most vulnerable- the young sleeping child in the case of Vashi Naka and the woman who used the toilet in Transit Camp. The new regime compels women to make choices like – Is it better to invite the violence and indignity involved in shitting out in the open or to use a toilet which is structurally weak?

The slum of yesteryears was a settlement that gave some credence to community and self-organization around the neighbourhood; it was a settlement that established its existence against the grain of the state and market in some ways. The contemporary slum has been established as a creation of state- market forces outside the realm of the formal state and interventions in it are shaped by the logic of the real estate market. Its ultimate production is that of a built environment like Vashi Naka where the built environment has been given a facade of formality but disguises and enhances insecurities of the household, and public realm. Further, state-market make inroads to such an extent that more than two-thirds of the land in the slum is given away for projects or for commercial use. This is akin to the logic of colonisation experienced in Bombay during the British rule. In that case, the colonial land regimes were extended and established over indigenous occupancies and claims by recognising and consolidating the rights of a few (Parsis, Gujaratis in most cases). The colonisation of the slum in contemporary Mumbai uses the incentive of a free house that enables the state and market to convert the multiplicity of occupations and claims in the slums to that of ownership of a single tenement. The violence unleashed by this colonisation of mind and body is multifaceted as seen in the study. Yet, the initiatives undertaken by slum inhabitants illustrate the possibility of counter-narratives and the uncertainty and ‘vulnerability’ of the colonisers (state- market collusion) itself.

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<sup>26</sup> By larger we mean market forces that are not amenable to control or response at the settlement level



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## **Mapping References**

Map 1: Location of the case study sites in M-ward.

*base map-* existing land use 2013, *source* - <http://www.mcgm.gov.in/>

Map 2: Development Plan of 1991 Showing the concentration of Undesirable Land Uses in M-ward

*base map-* development plan of 1991

Map 3: Formal Housing to slum clusters proportion as per existing land use 2013

*base map-* existing land use 2013, *source* - <http://www.mcgm.gov.in/>

Map 4: Sanctioned 120 SRA project in M-East Ward.

*base map-* proposed land use 2014, *source* - <http://www.mcgm.gov.in/>

Map 5: The map of state assembly constituencies below illustrates the same.

*Base map-* Assembly election constituencies, *source* - <http://www.freepressjournal.in/maharashtra-assembly-elections-2014/451230>

Map 6: Showing toilet seat per population of different areas of M-ward.

*Drawn by-* Purva Dewoolkar