



Seasonal Labour Migrants' Housing in Cities: The Case-Study and Local Dissemination Workshop

Renu Desai



Seasonal migration to cities has been a neglected phenomenon in discussions of cities and urban policy, planning and governance. One reason is that there is no reliable national-level data on the magnitude of these phenomena. Based on micro-studies, scholars have estimated that there are 40-100 million seasonal labour migrants in India today, 36 per cent of who work in construction, a sector that has become central to the urban and national economy. Despite being crucial actors in producing the city, these migrants are one of the most marginalized groups in our cities today. My case-study, titled “Seasonal Labour Migration, Translocal Lives and Urban Governance: A Case-study of Migrant Construction Workers’ Housing in Ahmedabad” explores the spatially lived experiences and practices of seasonal migrants who come from the tribal regions of north-east Gujarat, southern Rajasthan and western Madhya Pradesh, to work as construction labour in the city of Ahmedabad, to draw out an understanding of the factors and dynamics that shape their experiences, practices, choices and constraints vis-à-vis housing in the city. The paper uses two analytical lenses for this: a multilocal and translocal lens and a lens of urban governance vis-à-vis informal housing.

Three key findings emerged from the research. First, labour recruitment and migration pathways play a significant role in shaping migrants’ pathways of housing in the city. For migrant workers who look for construction work through a naka (informal, street-side labour market), kin and other migration-source-area based social networks crucially shape these pathways, thus influencing their housing location and typology. Second, while migrant naka workers come to inhabit a particular location and informal housing typology through these networks – becoming squatter migrants, homeless migrants or tenant migrants – urban governance with respect to these particular typologies play a predominant role in shaping their conditions and everyday experiences and practices around housing. Third, along with urban governance, the trans local lives of these migrants – which are forged through multi-local livelihoods and multi-local households as well as the village being the main venue of social events, networks and obligations as well as a relatively more secure place to recover in case of ill-health – shape their habitations of the city in vital ways. These three findings have important implications for urban policies, planning and governance in Indian cities.

The study was presented at a local dissemination workshop in Ahmedabad on September 25, 2017, co-organized with Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action, a NGO that works with migrant construction workers in Ahmedabad. The one-day workshop was attended by approximately 50 participants, which included urban scholars like Professor Amita Bhide (Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai), Dr. Debolina Kundu (National Institute for Urban Affairs, New Delhi) and Manish (Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi); NGOs from Ahmedabad and Mumbai working with different groups of migrants (such as Aajeevika Bureau, Janvikas, Human Development and Research Centre, and YUVA) and officials from Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Surat

Municipal Corporation (SMC). The workshop included a presentation of the case-study as well as presentations by some other researchers on their studies of migrants, NGOs on their experiences working with migrants and the issues that emerge on the ground, and municipal officials on the homeless shelter schemes currently being designed to reach out to homeless groups including migrants. Together the presentations led to a rich discussion about the varied migrant groups (permanent and seasonal, migrants from different caste backgrounds, families and single male migrants, etc) in our cities and how urban policy and governance currently ignores them and often even marginalizes them and impoverishes them further through evictions and harassment. The possibilities of mainstreaming these groups in policy and governance through a continuum of interventions, from recognizing their settlements and extending them basic services to homeless shelters to rental housing programmes, were also discussed. The case-study in particular led to a discussion around how policy and governance needs to be sensitive to the ways in which seasonal migrants' lives are stretched across village and city. Officials from the Gujarat Building and Other Construction Workers' Board had been invited to make a presentation at the workshop on their temporary housing scheme, as well as to engage with their perspective on my case-study, however, the concerned officials eventually did not turn up. Creating spaces through which government officials would engage with our research continues to be very challenging.

The case-study was also presented at a local dissemination workshop in Ahmedabad on November 22-23rd, 2017, at CEPT University to an audience of urban scholars, planning educators and planning students. The discussion on the case-study brought forth important thoughts with regard to bringing in questions of temporality into the planning approach of our cities, planning housing and infrastructures for fixity versus mobility, as well as the how the case-study could be used for pedagogic purposes and what further work on the writing of the case-study would be required to make this possible.

Workshop on 'New Directions for Urban Planning Education in India'

Darshini Mahadeva

The Centre for Urban Equity (CUE) and Faculty of Planning, CEPT University organized a Local Dissemination Workshop titled 'New Directions for Urban Planning Education in India' on November 22-23, 2017 in Ahmedabad. About 70 participants participated over the one and half day duration. The participants consisted of the academics from BinUCom project partners, experts on planning education in India, faculty members from CEPT University and CEPT University students. All major urban planning Institute of India were represented.

The past two decades have witnessed an array of critical debates and perspectives on the role modern urban planning has played since its birth in the industrial city in the late nineteenth century in the global north, its transplantation in the global south and the impacts and the future role urban planning can play in bringing about inclusive, just and sustainable urban trajectories. In the global south, critiques have focused on how modern urban planning in the colonial period created dual cities based on colonialism's divisions of class and race/ethnicity, which then continued in the post-Independence era through the continuities of both colonial-era planning legislation/mechanisms / institutions and modernist visions rooted in notions of spatial order. These critiques have called attention to how urban exclusions in these cities are etched by modern urban planning in terms of formality / informality and legality / illegality.

In India too, these debates have arisen and the content and pedagogy of urban planning education has been questioned by practitioners as well as academics followed by introduction of new pedagogies as well as contents. This workshop is an attempt to bring them together and contribute towards continuing the discussions about new directions that urban planning education need to take in the specific context of India.

The first session deals with Challenges of Inclusions in the Urban Planning and Development in India wherein the case studies of the BinU-

Com project would be presented. The second session is devoted to discussions on Urban Planning Education with its contents and pedagogy and its distance from the real dynamics of urban change. The third session, through presentations on alternative contents and pedagogy, presents possibilities of New Directions for Urban Planning Education in India.

The inauguration session set the tone for the workshop. The second session presented findings of the case studies developed under the BinUCom project. Renu Desai of CUE presented complex housing arrangements made by the recent and temporary migrants in Ahmedabad city and raised the question as to how urban planning would respond to such needs as well as demand. Ravi Sannabhadti of Faculty of Planning as well as CUE looked at the housing-livelihood linkages as well as space requirements of the waste pickers in Ahmedabad and once again raised the question of how urban planning mechanisms and practices would include these. Shweta Wagh of KRVI A discussed the tenure systems in Koliwad as in Mumbai and emerging conflicts on account of new policies on housing in Mumbai city. Partha Mukhopadhyay of the Centre for Policy Research aptly moderated the discussions guiding them towards the crux of the workshop.

This first session raised some real urban planning concerns in Indian cities. However, as the presentation by Darshini Mahadevia on critical assessment of urban planning education in India showed, that the urban planning paradigm itself, as it emerged in the Global North and uncritically accepted in Global South, was silent about the realities of India cities, some of which presented in session one. The paper also argued the technocratic planning mechanisms disregarded the reality; in fact it did not have tools to include the reality and as a result excluded and marginalized the urban poor. Debjani Ghosh of the National Institute of Urban Affairs also presented the review of urban planning education in India and stated that the courses that dealt with inclusiveness, informality, and gender were all electives and were limited in the planning schools while the traditional subjects and approaches dominated.

N.Sridharan aptly moderated the discussion and presented his views.

The third session was a panel discussion on Gap between Content, Pedagogy and Reality in urban planning education. V.K. Phatak of Faculty of Planning, CEPT University talked about his experience of planning stating that the urban planners dealt with limited scope and often were engaged in bureaucratic processes of granting permissions. Aneerudh Paul presented KRVI A's experience. Ratoola Kundu of the School of Habitat Studies, TISS, stated that the urban planners were oblivious of the reality. Chetan Vaidya gave his opinion of matching the need for technocratic education, regulatory mechanisms and emerging structures.

The fourth session on the second day on New Practices in Urban Planning Education, chaired by Darshini Mahadevia had presentation on experiences of participatory Solid Waste Management by Avni Rastogi of CUE. This was one of the case studies under the BinUComm project. The inter-disciplinary teaching experience in short fellowship programme conducted by the Indian Institute of Human Settlements was presented by Sudeshna Mitra. Anant Maringanti of the Hyderabad Urban Lab illustrated as to how internship approach was used to train urban practitioners. Chetan Vaidya gave his observations as a Chair of All India Planning Education Board of the AICTE. The last session ended by concluding the need for variety of pedagogies of urban planning education in the Indian context.

Urban Planning and Its Education – Dilemmas in India

Darshini Mahadevia

Neha Bhatia

Expected high rate of urbanisation and multiple challenges of climate change, rising economic and social inequalities, large development deficits and violence necessitate planned interventions in cities and towns in India. Consequently, since 2006, the national government has allocated large funds to urban infrastructure, housing and IT-enabled services provisions in the cities, under different programmes; Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY): Housing for All (Urban), and Green Mobility. There is reaffirmation of need for planned interventions (Aranya and Vaidya, 2016¹: 33) for addressing these multiple urban development challenges and creating capacities to implement the various programmes mentioned above. India's urban planning has been criticised for being in a very poor state, esoteric nature and non-practical (MGI 2010²) and also for impossibility of its implementing due to various subversions by the agency of state itself (Roy 2009³).

Urban planning in the countries of the global South has posed a quintessential dilemma; 'to do or not to do'; on the need for urban planning on the one hand due to multiple simultaneous challenges to be addressed but in practice it being engine of exclusions: "in many parts of the world current urban planning systems are actually part of the problem: they serve to promote social and spatial exclusions,

are anti-poor" (Watson, 2009⁴: 151), in much the same way as 'development' has been in the global South (Rehnama 1997⁵). In India, interestingly, Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) guidelines acknowledged urban planning lacunae stating:

The urban poor "live in inhuman conditions that deny them dignity, shelter, security and the right to basic civic amenities or social services in an environment in which crime, ill-health and diseases.... (that draws) them deeper into vulnerability and poverty"; a quarter of urban population living in slums "is an indication of the iniquitous and exclusionary urban planning system, urban land management practices and land legislation that have not been able to adapt themselves to the pace or profile of indigenous urban growth"; and the urban planning has not created spaces "within the formal system of planned living and working spaces to accommodate the informal working classes."⁶

The upcoming case study titled **Planning Education Review for Inclusive Agenda: Global and Indian Perspectives** highlight these dilemmas of urban planning and following from it in its education programmes. We first discuss briefly as to how these dilemmas were reckoned with in the global North. Thereafter, presenting the urban challenges in the global South in general and in India in particular, the paper presents the on-going discussions on urban planning education in India and concludes by arguing for relooking at the profession to bring in inclusivity in the cities and thus necessitating change in the structure, content and pedagogy of education programmes in the urban planning schools/ institutes/ departments in India. A brief section also presents a brief history of urban planning in India. We take a position that Indian cities cannot be transformed without them being inclusive.

Urban planning programmes have been in place for last century and in India since last six and half decades or so. In anticipation, and

¹ Aranya, R. and C. Vaidya (2016), "Planning Education for a Smart Urban India", In A. Kumar, D.S. Meshram and K. Gowda (eds.) *Urban and Regional Planning Education: Learning for India*, Singapore: Springer Nature.

² McKinsey Global Institute (2010), *India's Urban Awakening: Building Inclusive Cities, Sustaining Economic Growth*, India: McKinsey & Company. Available at http://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/global%20themes/urbanization/urban%20awakening%20in%20india/mgi_indias_urban_awakening_full_report.ashx accessed on April 24, 2017.

³ Roy, A. (2009), "Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization", *Planning Theory* 8:1, pp.76-87.

⁴ Watson, V. (2009), "The planned city sweeps the poor away. Urban planning and 21st century urbanization", *Progress in Planning* 72:3, pp. 151-193.

⁵ Rahnema, M. (1997), "Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigms." In M. Rahnema and V. Bawtree (eds.), *The Post-Development Reader*. London: Zed Books, 377-403.

⁶ In the Preamble of the RAY guidelines (MoHUPA, 2011) available at <http://mhupa.gov.in/writereaddata/02-RAY-Guidelines.pdf>, accessed on April 24, 2017.

recognition of the profession, large numbers of urban planning programmes, at the bachelors and masters level have opened up. The present-day bachelors programme is competing with the architecture programmes. But, many questions have arisen and remained, unanswered, globally as well as in India as to (i) what is urban planning supposed to achieve and for whom; (ii) whether urban planning is a discipline or it is multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary or intra-disciplinary; (iii) falling from the previous question, what would be the contents of urban planning; and hence (iv) what should be the contents of the education programme for urban planners – how much of theory and how much of practice; (v) how this education be imparted; and lastly (vi) how much of it should be universal and how much of local. This paper attempts to answer these questions in the Indian context, however, drawing learnings from the global context.

In the global North, and we are referring to the capitalist countries, urban planning, as a profession, has witnessed an array of critical debates since its rising importance in the early 20th century and its universal acceptance post Second World War (SWW). Urban planning was a response to industrialisation, massive migration flows to the new industrial cities and hence urbanisation, declining living and appalling public health conditions in these cities, increase in inequalities, rise of democratic states and need to address urban residents' aspirations. Over decades, the trajectory of planning, both in theoretical and practical terms, has traversed its course from public health and housing improvements to the urban design tradition till 1960s to the rational-comprehensive paradigm of positivism and modernity, to neo-liberalism and challenges to neo-liberalism through ideas of just city, and insurgency planning. In parallel, in the global North, the profession has been continuously challenged by the neo-Marxists' analysis of structural relationships between planning and capitalism in the 1970s, with Lefebvre conceptualising urban planning as production of abstract space for accumulation and control. These criticisms led to concepts such as radical planning, advocacy planning, communicative planning and new urbanism. Scholars in the global South observing auto-development of

the cities and presence of informality too have questioned the urban planning profession for creating exclusions in the name of plans and have studied consequent insurgent responses to these exclusions. Post-colonial contexts have grappled with the aftermath of colonial divisions along class, race, ethnicities and religion in the cities, aggravated through the colonial-era planning legislation/ mechanisms/ institutions (e.g. Bombay Town Planning Act 1915 mandating Development Plans/ Master Plans, Improvement Trusts, etc.), which largely focussed on solving the existent problems. The efforts have been to understand and create mechanisms to address these dualisms. Lastly, the urban planning profession has opened its boundaries with inclusion of housing, infrastructural services, transportation, environment and climate change, municipal budgeting, community development, etc. as part of the profession.

With this backdrop, as part of the research project "Building Inclusive Urban Communities (BInUCom)", this particular paper attempts to discuss the six questions presented above. The aim of the paper is to recommend changes to the planning education in India, keeping in focus the context of informality and poverty.

The Unexplored truths of Coimbatore

24th – 28th November 2017

Choksi Jaykumar Rajesh



Coimbatore is the second largest city in the state of Tamil Nadu, next only to Chennai (state capital). It derives its importance and significance due to its geographical location, lying in the midst of three South India states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala & Karnataka. In spite of being such an important city, only little has been explored with respect to its dynamics.

The main purpose of this workshop is to unfold the unexplored layers in the working of the city as a studio exercise with the 4th year students of architecture as well as BINUCOM team through their case studies. The studio involved an in-depth survey of the old city (Ukkadam) of Coimbatore, from where the morphological changes were mapped and explored. The main intention behind the exercise was to make students understand how positive interventions can enhance inclusivity through basic infrastructure provisions. This exercise was executed in groups. The neighborhood was studied in terms of land-uses, building heights, morphology, social fabric etc., and a study model was prepared to assist. Along with this, a Participatory exercise with students and faculty of Karapagam University was attempted to understand sensitivities involved such as gender, religion, security – both under physical and social banners.

Day -1.

The workshop was managed by 4th year students which started with introductory note and ceremony with Dr. S. Sudalaimuthu (Vice-Chancellor), Shri. K. Murugaiah (CEO), Ar. P. Kathiravan (Dean, Faculty of Architecture) and Ar. Tania Berger & Astrid Lenger from Krems University - our partners in BINUCOM project (funded by the Erasmus programme of the European Union). The works of the students were displayed as a part of the "Exhibition Walk", and every group was given an opportunity to discuss their work with our chief guest, Ar. Tania Berger. Students' work was a series of urban interventions through infrastructure projects attempting to improve the inclusive nature of different wards in the neighborhood on the basis of on-site survey of land-use, public transport, socio-economic spaces, building heights, keeping in mind the pilot observations on socio-cultural behaviors. It was achieved by proposing a new project like a market place and ways to improve the existing infrastructure facilities through provision of bus bays near the railway station. These projects were critically analyzed by the guest and other experts invited to the workshop. This brainstorming discussion led to in-depth understanding about how a minor intervention can have a major impact on the urban fabric of

the neighborhood and how inclusion in parts of neighborhood can lead to an inclusive whole. Therefore, it also formed the base for the panel discussion on day-2 of the workshop.

Day-2.

The enthusiastic Exhibition Walk on Day-1 framed the main highlight of the workshop, followed by presentation by Ar. Tania Berger about "Social Inclusion: Global approach", during which she explained inclusivity through case studies across the globe to help enrich our perspectives and help us connect to the dynamics of a growing world.

Further, an interactive panel discussion was put across with an attempt to define/debate on "What is inclusion?" and the factors affecting the inclusive environment around the informal settlement in Coimbatore. This panel was moderated by Ar. V. Balakrishna along with the panelists: Er. Sasikumar, Ar. Bhuvan Sundar, Ar. Arun Prasath, Ar. Arun Kumar, Ar. Sri Vidya, A. Shanil Riyaz. The panelists invited were experts in various fields such as are practicing architects and engineers actively involved in different infrastructure development projects, slum redevelopment projects in Coimbatore. This panel discussion highlighted a practical approach towards securing a sense of "inclusion" amongst the residents of such informal settlements and also highlighted the context based issues/factors like government politics, economic policies, weak governance and social inequalities that are creating hiccups in constructive and participatory development. The next segment of discussion outlined the possible future trajectories for an "inclusive Coimbatore", by scrutinizing the planning schemes and outcomes of ongoing projects such as the Smart city project, redevelopment and renewal projects (specifically connecting all the lakes in Coimbatore and improving biodiversity) etc.

The Unexplored Truths of Coimbatore Workshop was successful in touching upon the dynamics of one of the oldest neighborhoods of Coimbatore city, through the Exhibition Walk conducted by the students which unfolded the unexplored layers of the city and probable urban interventions by understanding the city's

past, with observations on the present scenario and in-turn fueled the theme for the panel discussion to glance upon the future challenges of the city. So it was successful in learning from the past, informing the present and it inspiring a constructive future.



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