

**Assertions of the Urban Poor towards Inclusion in cities of Global South:
Challenging the Spatial Plan in Chandigarh, India**

Richa Bhardwaj*

© Richa Bhardwaj

(*) PhD Scholar, School of Habitat Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, V.N. Purav Marg, Deonar, Mumbai-400088, India.

Email: bhardwaj.richa@gmail.com

Paper presented at the RC21 International Conference on "The Ideal City: between myth and reality. Representations, policies, contradictions and challenges for tomorrow's urban life" Urbino (Italy) 27-29 August 2015

Assertions of the Urban Poor towards Inclusion in cities of Global South: Challenging the Spatial Plan in Chandigarh, India¹

Introduction

“.....most of the political life of subordinate groups is to be found neither in overt collective defiance of power holders nor in complete hegemonic compliance, but in the vast territory between these polar opposites.”

James Scott, 1990

The countries of the Global South have a history of colonization leading to a differential and fragmented development trajectory which when coupled with the present day pressures of globalization and the desire to become a part of the global economic regime (Sassen, 1991) has resulted in an increased polarization of the city with skewed spatial and infrastructural transformation. In majority of the cities there exist both formal and informal settlements which are codependent but in most instances the former fails to acknowledge the existence and ownership of the latter on the city space. It is only the services that the residents of the informal settlements provide to the ‘legal’ residents which are welcome not the assertion of right over the city. The city becomes increasingly hostile towards its ‘illegal’ residents with the State often perpetuating the difference through its schemes. But a closer examination of this urban poor working class brings out their distinct strategies and tactics to assert their right to the city. These assertions might get represented in mass movements and large scale collective action but it is in the everyday interactions of the urban poor working class with the State, bureaucracy, politicians and amongst themselves that nuanced understanding of their subversion can be drawn.

Henri Lefebvre’s (1991), articulated ‘Space as Political rather than an abstract entity’. To understand the political nature of space and the associated spatial practice, Lefebvre proposed the concept of “**Production of Space**” which connotes that space is a product of the interaction of physical or real (perceived), the mental (conceived) and the social (lived) (Elden, 2004). These three forms of spaces are in a dynamic relationship with each other and together form the “**conceptual triad of spatial practice**” (Elden, 2004). Lefebvre’s key argument is that though the ‘conceived space’ of plans and policies exhibits a powerful position over the others, however, it is finally an interaction of all three which lends meaning to urban space. For Lefebvre working class is an essential component to bring about urban transformation and renewal by incorporating ways of living in a city with the planning process. This according to

¹ This paper is based on an MPhil dissertation submitted to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, under the guidance of Prof. Amita Bhide.

him can only be achieved when the everyday life is free from capitalist organization and space is managed by and for the masses. (Sanders, 1995)

While Lefebvre brings out an interesting insight into resolution of the urban crisis through control and management of space by the masses, but in actuality there is a multi-layered political spectrum operating within the city; subverting the local and global capitalist conceptualizations of urban life. Solly Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari Raman (2008), raise the importance of acknowledging that the city has a wider political terrain which includes a complex and multi layered interaction of the local street level politics, bureaucratic institutions and 'lower level administrative circuits' which in turn entails the 'embedded public sphere' for urban poor groups. They stress the need to understand the city politics not just in context to various schemes and policies of the government but rather in the multi layered local level interactions around land and resources which essentially challenges the neo-liberal politics through the creation of a 'porous bureaucracy'. They highlight the question of land and its location is extremely central to the urban poor economy and to achieve the same the urban poor groups engage in various 'stealth strategies' which involve both the invisible and the visible politics played out on the ground. In addition 'micro politics' exists within the 'bureaucrats and politicians, different state institutions and between state institutions' which in turn challenge the perpetuation of the neoliberal mandate in its totality. The claims for comprehensive city planning for better bargaining for global investments by the elite as well as the lobbying by large land developer is challenged by the 'vote bank politics' of the urban poor. At the ground level complex political alliances are forged which challenge investments in large infrastructure and housing and in turn urban poor groups are able to claim land and resources within the city. This local politics is a critique of the policies of inclusion followed by the neoliberal state which are limited to provision of basic services for the poor while allowing massive transformation for the elite by propagating 'globally competitive economic development'. While it is the state which perpetuates the notions of legality and illegality through its laws and policies, but at the same time the complex and multi layered relationship between politicians, bureaucrats and lower administrative hierarchies ensures that an institutional pluralism is maintained which in turn allows room for negotiations (Benjamin & Raman, 2011).

Across the world squatter settlements or slums or informal settlements or non-planned settlements are also viewed as lucrative markets but for the people looking for affordable housing in the cities, this marketization has led to increased vulnerability. The State, rich, builders, developers, old rulers whatever the case be in context to a particular country dominate the poor and use the advantage of their vulnerability by ensuring that the urban poor remain 'illegal residents' of the city. This title of illegal and informal has been perpetuated by delimiting the citizenship rights of the urban poor in many countries. But the resistance, struggles as well as creation of alternative models of survival from the vulnerable and exploited sections of the urban population provide the scope to work towards an alternative scenario. The ideal strategies from the bottom are most often to resist forced displacement and eviction but at the same time there are strategies of model building, to display the power of the poor to establish, develop and maintain their own localities. The strength of the urban poor is seen in their ability to collectivize and thus in turn bring self-transformation using their own resources

as well as negotiating with the government to secure their rights. The strategies vary ranging from direct confrontation to collaboration with the state as well as exhibiting alternative options of development. But in most senses whatever the strategy be, it is based on a premise of challenging the political and administrative structures both in subtle and obvious forms and at times working with them to secure the right over the city.

The current paper highlights the assertion of residents of one urban poor settlement in Chandigarh subverting the land-use and layout planning through their strategies of collective action, negotiation and bargaining within a history of exclusionary and restrictive spatial planning. This case brings to the forefront the everyday politics of the urban poor affecting gradual change in their lives as well as within the city.

Spatial Planning and the Urban Poor in Chandigarh: A Brief Background

Planning and building Chandigarh was a major milestone for India as it provided an example to the world, the new nation's commitment towards "modernization, growth and development" (Fitting, 2002). Chandigarh's Plan making passed through multiple hands but finally it was Le Corbusier who along with his team of three foreign and many more Indian architects designed and planned, "an administrative city accommodating half a million people and expandable to one million" serving as the capital for East Panjab (Fitting, 2002; Kalia; 1987; Sarin, 1982). Historically, Chandigarh was a product of influences of multiple actors with varying ideologies and purposes ranging from Le Corbusier to administrative personnel with the Capital Project Organization (CPO) to the Central government representatives in Delhi. The initial spatial planning process of Chandigarh was influenced by the post-colonial frame wherein the laws, polices and plans were developed perpetuating the legacy of the colonial rulers. The city of Chandigarh was an experiment with new modes of urban planning which were based on the notion that with a well thought out physical planning one could build a community with enhanced quality of life (Draft Chandigarh Master Plan 2031, 2013). It followed the Master Planning Approach strongly influenced by the CIAM's (Congres International d'Architecture Moderne) Athens Charter, (1933) propagating the functional principles i.e. Dwelling, Working, and Culture of the body & spirit and intellectual leisure and Circulation (Chandigarh Administration, 2013 p. 38; Sarin, 1982, p. 52). The Chandigarh Plan was based on **zoning principle** where living, working and recreation areas were allotted distinct spaces within the master plan connected to each other through a planned grid system of roads. The smallest unit of the master plan was the **neighborhood** called the **sector** which formed the essence of community life. (Evenson, 1966, Sarin, 1982, Kalia, 1987) The master planning approach ensured that macro issues related to land, resources and locationality are fixed while allowing for minor changes and flexibility during implementation. In addition, land and architectural controls were also formulated to maintain the overall design and aesthetic value of the city.

A substantial population of the city was believed to be government employees and people displaced due to partition which defined the primary uses for Chandigarh elaborated in the For the Establishment of an Immediate Statute of the land as,

“..a city offering all amenities to the poorest of the poor of its citizens to lead a dignified life and as it is a Government City with a precise function and, consequently, a precise quality of inhabitants” (Sagar, 2004, p.85; Sarin, 1982, p. 51).

Based on the understanding drawn from these two authors, it seems that the poorest of the poor referred only to the people working in the lower most hierarchy of government jobs and the phrase “precise quality of inhabitants” comes across as ambiguous. In the opinion of this author the above two uses of the city are clearly in conflict with each other. On one hand the vision is to provide for amenities for the poorest of the poor and on the other hand, there seems to be a preset belief about the kind of inhabitants that would be a part of the city based on the purpose of the city being merely that of an administrative town. The phrase, ‘precise quality of inhabitants’ can be interpreted as an estimation of the socio-economic status of the future inhabitants based on their designation within the government job hierarchy. It also highlights the intention of not estimating and planning for the other residents especially the vulnerable and the economically weaker sections falling outside the government machinery. While there was construction of a large number of government houses for different designations of employees, at the same time most of the sectors had **privately developed plots** (about 70 percent of the city) (Evenson, 1966) which were purchased by individuals through a process of land auction. Thus, even before the city was built about 70 percent of the available land became out of reach for a substantial working class population falling outside the government machinery as the highly serviced land became extremely expensive for the poor to purchase. Charles Correa (2009) in his article “What we learned” highlights that, “Almost 50 years ago, the urban economist, Ved Prakash, analyzing the land use in Chandigarh demonstrated that the real cross-subsidy in Chandigarh is of the poor subsidizing for the rich...Right from the start, the cost of housing and basic urban services climbed out of the reach of the poor” (Correa, 2009 as cited in Khan, Beinart and Correa, 2009, p.144-145).

Evenson (1966), Sarin (1982) and Kalia (1987) have highlighted that during the initial city building process, there was an emphasis on executing the plan and ensuring that Chandigarh emerges as a role model. While there is a vast array of literature appreciating as well as critiquing the Chandigarh planning and architecture, one of the most pertinent critique for the city comes from its inability to integrate various economic sections. According to Madhu Sarin (2009), “The planning methodology not only assumes the unqualified desirability of uni-functional land utilization independent of socio-economic context, but also a predetermination of the location of most urban activities on the basis of a priori assumptions. Fixed parameters and responsiveness to time and change is minimized” (Sarin, 2009 as cited in Khan, Beinart and Correa, 2009, p.110).

Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, architects who were part of the team of Le Corbusier were the first to articulate that, even the cheapest planned house for non-government employees was not going to be accessible to a large number of people as they were not included within the project estimate (Maxwell Fry, 1955 as cited in Evenson, 1966, p. 47). The people falling outside the plan included the construction workers, the sweepers, cobblers, laundrymen, tonga drivers etc (Sarin, 1982; Evenson, 1966). In the initial year the highest percentage of migrant workers were engaged in the construction of the new city (Sarin, 1982). Madhu Sarin stated that, “The construction workers who came to construct the city constituted both men and women who built their own dwelling in the form of thatch huts adjacent to the site where the construction work was going on. It would be wrong to call these settlements as slums but gradually as more and more workers came to the city, the only place they could find accommodation was within these settlements which gradually started being termed as slums” (Personal communication, October 10, 2013).

The realization of non-estimation of a vast section of the future population of the city of Chandigarh encouraged discussions among the architects and the members of the Capital Project Organization (CPO)². While the focus of the CPO was towards ensuring the creation of the key defining features of the new city in the form of the first sector, monumental buildings, varied house designs and structures for the government employees, there emerged key contestations of the non-planned with the planned parts of the city. In light of the existing planning norms defining the mandate of the city, the urban poor working class was presumed to be temporary and treated as encroachers of public land, continuously moved around by the administration. Subsequently, after a lot of pressure exerted by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew on the Capital Project Organization (CPO), few cheap housing villages were designed and incorporated within the master plan of Chandigarh towards the end of 1950s. In addition to the Cheap Houses, two sectors namely 29 and 30 were also set aside for Industrial Workers, the location of these sectors being close to the Industrial Area (Evenson, 1966, Sarin, 1982, Draft Chandigarh Master Plan 2031, 2013). The steady increase in the population of the urban working class poor led the Chandigarh Administration to set an occupational eligibility criteria (14 occupations falling outside the governmental machinery) to avail the limited housing available under the Cheap Housing Scheme. In the initial years of the construction of Chandigarh the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru after visiting the city recommended limiting the Cheap Housing Scheme to the provision of sanitation, lighting and water supply. He felt that good huts with basic amenities would be preferable and when resources are available more things can be added to these areas. (Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to Governor of Panjab, 1952 as cited in Kalia, 1987) This clearly sets the tone for the development trajectory for the new city and the nation which was bound in the notions of its colonial legacy. The then Prime Minister’s statement brings out that the focus of the State was not aimed towards creating equality but rather towards maintain differentiation. The labor settlements were largely ignored and inclusion for the poor was limited to water, sanitation and lighting. The financial spending on needs of urban poor was not the priority for the government which

² “a semi-autonomous development authority created by the Panjab Government to develop and manage the city” (Sarin, 1982, p. 58)

in turn ensured the propagation of unequal living conditions with basic minimal services. Thus, one observes that the state withdrawal from serving the interests of the most disadvantaged sections and concentrating on propagation of services and benefits to the elite and middle class of the society. (Chaplin, 2011)

The population not falling within the preview of the cheap houses and the industrial workers housing units was left to the informal settlements on the undeveloped land within the master plan area of Chandigarh. Thus, parallel to the growth of the “planned” city was the growth of the “non-planned” city i.e. settlements of populations which were not envisaged as its future inhabitants. The preset belief of the government officials about the temporary nature of the labor population was soon changed when it was realized that this population had developed livelihoods networks created by demands of the administrative city in the form of washermen, drivers, domestic helps in addition to construction workers and associated occupations (Duggal, 2010). The initial response of the State towards these non-planned settlements was slum clearance and non-acknowledgement of their existence which was similar to the approach followed in the rest of the country. According to Madhu Sarin, the first instance of removal of the non-planned settlements was in the year 1958 where in the inhabitants were issued notices to remove their houses at their own cost by the Capital Project Organization (CPO). A strong agitation was organized by Capital Workers Union (registered in 1953) affiliated to the Communist Party of India for the provision of alternative settlement sites or built accommodation before removal of the people from their existing locations. The administration identified 3 sites on the periphery of the newly developing areas of Chandigarh namely Sector 26, Industrial Area and land behind University in Sector 24 and stated them to be temporary locations for ‘labor colonies’ which would be subsequently provided with permanent locations. A fourth location in Sector 25 was added to the list subsequently. (Personal communication, October 10, 2013) According to Bindu Duggal (2010), the relocation of the residents of the non-planned settlements to alternative locations on the periphery of the city were done by giving sites at a nominal license fee of Rs. 1.50 per month. These new areas came to be known as labor colonies where the residents built their own improvised structures. (Duggal, 2010, p.63).

Gradually with widespread agitations and realization by the administration that mere oral promises would not solve the challenge of non-planned growth various schemes were introduced by the Chandigarh Administration for the spatial inclusion of the urban poor. After a review of these schemes from late 1950s to the present, it is the opinion of this author that the overall approach of the state for the urban poor was largely scheme driven aiming towards ‘conditional inclusion’. The approach of spatial inclusion in Chandigarh was welfare oriented supporting peripherization of the urban poor groups through leasehold of plots and tenements with every expansion of the city (Sarin, 1982). There was an emphasis on static and one time ‘solutions’, offered through various schemes dependent on financial assistance from central government.

The struggles, contestations and negotiations of the residents of non-planned settlements have mostly remained hidden. Chandigarh might not have witnessed massive collective action of the urban poor working class but there exists one settlement Bhaskar Colony which has

gradually been able to subvert the master planning and secure their locationality by adopting varying strategies to counter the administration's peripheral rehabilitation and resettlement. Thus, offering a vivid and interesting interplay of local politics and the urban poor working class, providing insights into the strategies and tactics at play at the ground level leading to gradual transformation.

Subverting the land-use plan: Case of Bhaskar Colony

Bhaskar Colony situated in Sector 25 Chandigarh is a case of assertion of the urban poor working class population against arbitrary evictions, resettlement and rehabilitation by the government within the restrictive and exclusionary master planning of Chandigarh. Though the name Bhaskar Colony is relatively new the history of this settlement coincides with the initial years of Chandigarh's construction. Two of the oldest labor colonies namely, Kumhar Colony and Janta Colony in Sector 25 were sites of "temporary settlement" initiated by the CPO during the 60s (Sarin, 1982, Duggal, 2010). The first enumeration process of labor colonies in Chandigarh in 1974 documented the existence of Kumhar and Janta Colony and they have since been mentioned in all subsequent surveys undertaken by the Chandigarh Administration and the Municipal Corporation. (Duggal, 2010) Both these settlements constituted urban poor working class who had migrated to the new city from several adjoining states as well as from parts of Panjab mostly working as blue collar workers like potters, domestic workers, street vendors, rickshaw drivers, sweepers, waste pickers, etc. Due to their status of being "temporary settlements" there were no plans articulated by the administration in context to spatial layouts, plots size and provision of basic services. Basic stand-post connections for water and few hand pumps were installed for the residents of these settlements. Gradually, mobile toilet facilities were introduced within these colonies to curtail 'open defecation'. (Sarin, 1982, Madhu Sarin, personal communication, October 10, 2013) The people has built their own houses and neighborhoods building internal and external social and livelihood networks. Both these labor colonies continued to be termed unauthorized and illegal within the government documents. Over the years both these settlements which were originally on the periphery got encompassed within the city's growth and thus, became an 'eye sore' as well as in conflict with the stated land-use plan for the sector.

Kumhar and Janta Colony were situated on land reserved for institutional purpose i.e. for the extension of Panjab University situated in Sector 14. The 'informality' and 'illegality' of the 'Sector 25' settlements continued without any planning or efforts by the administration for spatial inclusion of the people residing in these colonies, till early 1990s after which pressure intensified for the removal of these settlements from University land as new institutions were scheduled to be built on this location. The University was under pressure to expand and thus in turn engaged in various rounds of discussion with the administration for the removal of the slums. Multiple other reasons like unhygienic living conditions, open defecation, crime, livelihoods like pig rearing, poultry and milch cattle, making terracotta pottery, waste picking etc. considered 'illegal' within city limits were cited as reasons for removal and relocation of labor colonies from sector 25. Thus, in addition to implementation of the land-use plan for the area, health and quality of life became major reasons for the push towards removal and improvement of these 'slums'. The localities falling adjacent to both the Colonies were,

government housing for class I officer's like Doctors and Judges of High Court, government employees of various other department residing in Sector 24 in addition to the residential complex of the staff and faculty of Panjab University situated in Sector 14 as well as some located towards the western end of Sector 25. Therefore, one can deduce that in addition to the city's overall character, the location of the slums adjacent to some of the elite localities created a conflict and an increased pressure on the administration to plan for their removal.

The residents of Kumhar and Janta Colony actively engaged in opposing the rehabilitation to another location as their livelihood and social networks were established in and around Sector 25. Also, the residents did not find the rehabilitation schemes of the administration favorable as other labor colonies who had availed the same had experienced problems. There were collective agitations by the residents outside the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh (MCC), Chandigarh Administration, lobbying with the local politician and university authorities in addition regular appeals against the proposed eviction and rehabilitation were sent. According to Madhu Sarin member of various government committees in Chandigarh, the standoff between the residents of the labor colonies, Panjab University, MCC and Chandigarh Administration along with pressures from a local politician finally lead to a settlement in 1995. The Municipal Commissioner intervened with the Panjab University and clearly articulated that the MCC would not engage in moving the colony till the time the University was not ready to give up a part of their land for developing the colony within the same sector. Finally after rounds of negotiations, the University decided to give up quarter of its land located diagonally opposite to the then location of Kumhar Colony. It is here that the rehabilitation of Kumhar and Janta Colony took place which is currently known as Bhaskar Colony after the office of a Hindi newspaper daily located close to it. Thus, it can be deduced that while the role of the Municipal Commissioner seems prominent towards taking a stand on maintaining the locationality of the two labor colonies, the additional pressures exerted from the local political after continued lobbying by the residents and community leaders was equally important. The tactics of the urban poor to approach multiple actors for appeal and negotiations opened an array of public sphere which facilitated a change within the 'spatial inclusion' strategies of the Chandigarh Administration.

The Chandigarh Administration started the process of formulating plans for rehabilitation of Kumhar Colony as well as Janta Colony in 1996 with the process of allotments starting from 1998-1999 and commencing in 2005. The Estate Office of the MCC was responsible for allotments based on eligibility criteria. A total of 63 acres was allocated for this scheme out of which 19.44 acres constituted 4090 plinth sites for dwelling units measuring 13' x 15' each arranged in parallel lines with lanes and roads intersecting at 90 degrees. In addition to the dwelling units area was also allocated for playground, community center, dispensary, religious places, crèche, Sulabh Sauchalyas (community toilets), primary school. Also, 136 Type I houses measuring 18'-5' x 59'-0 were allocated towards the west end of the site. These plots were allotted to the eligible people on leasehold basis and they had to give a monthly rent of Rs 274 and an initial fee deposit of Rs. 20,000. It was only after 20 years of regular payment that the person could avail ownership of the plot. The author observed that though the overall layout plan for the new insitu slum upgradation site resembled the grid like pattern for the

sectors of the city, there were certain distinctions. One important point that came out was the size of the houses. The plot size was smaller than the ones in any of the sectors and this settlement exhibited a higher density of population. The layout presented a conventional picture without any distinct planning approach catering to the specific needs of the population for which it was being prepared. Achieving in-situ slum up-gradation was not the end of the struggles of the residents of Kumhar and Janta Colony but it is in their everyday lived experiences, interacting, negotiating and contesting the new 'planned' settlement of Bhaskar Colony which provide deeper insights into lives of the urban poor working class and how they subvert the arbitrary top down plans and schemes.

Everyday Life in Bhaskar Colony: Subversion of Layout Plan

The struggle against resettlement and rehabilitation was won by the residents of the Kumhar and Janta Colony but the long battle began with the process of allocation of plots by the estate office after proving one's eligibility. The two criteria for the same were, "Possession of the Survey Number given during the Survey conducted in 1996 and being a bonafide resident of the colony with the name of the person in the Electoral role of 1996 or any other official document substantiating their claim to long term residence within the colony" (Personal Communication with the Estate Officer, October 22, 2013). This was not a simple process as some of the residents had to pay the local community leader's (Pradhan) associates to ensure that their documents were released by the officials. Thus, there emerges a power nexus between the administration and local leader where the former exerts power based on the position of decision making in context to allotment while the latter uses his knowledge of official processes and political connections to influence and manipulate people. At the same time this paying of money should not be taken as mere bowing down to the power structures but rather seen as a strategy of '*co-operation*' adopted to secure the land (in the form of plots) and basic services linked to locationality which in turn is central to the livelihoods of people. Thus this clearly bring out what Benjamin and Raman (2008) call a merging of economy and political claiming and not just an issue of shelter and basic services for the urban poor. Multiple cases from the everyday life bring out the assertions of the residents of Bhaskar Colony to subvert the arbitrary layout plans prepared by the Chandigarh Administration without taking into consideration the local socio economic and cultural needs of the community.

The prime cause of removal of the labor colonies from their location was stated to be the unhygienic living conditions perpetuated by open defecation due to lack of toilets. But as per the residents of Bhaskar Colony in the initial layout plan the plinth levels plots allocated to the residents did not have the provision for construction of toilets within the houses. The allottees challenged this arrangement and negotiated with the administration to ensure that sewerage lines are connected to each house as well as the model house design has a provision of a toilet. The breadth of the lanes running in front of the houses was reduced to accommodate the additional space for the toilet. A more recent and interesting aspect of basic amenities in Bhaskar Colony is the **privatization of electricity** within the settlement resulting due to a policy shift of the MCC in context to electricity supply for labor colonies across the city while the rest of the city enjoys the state supply. The author understands this as the gradual unbundling and privatization of basic services through tendering and contractual agreements

in all slums of Chandigarh with the reasoning that recovery of bills becomes difficult for the government as the slum dwellers have a tendency of non-payment and stealing electricity. (Personal Communication with the Estate Officer, October 22, 2013) The private contractor is responsible for setting up of meters in the houses and monthly recovery of the bill. One interesting process under this contractual system was that the electricity connection was not correlated with the 'legal' papers of the plots but was supplied to everyone who was ready to bear the cost including the residents of 'temporary hutments'³ within the colony. But it is important to note that this unbundling of basic services from public to private has large scale economic repercussions. In Bhaskar Colony the private supply of electricity had resulted in accelerated household expenditure with the bills being generated across the colony ranging between Rs. 1000-2000 per month irrespective of the utilization. Even after regular complaints to the contractor at an individual level there was not change. The residents are not protesting with the MCC currently but they are gradually taking it up with the Pradhan so that a solution can be achieved. In the opinion of the author, this is an ironic situation where due to the differential attitude of the government authorities, the residents of Bhaskar Colony had to negotiate for basic amenities which are assumed to be present in most parts of the city.

The design for each dwelling unit was provided to the residents with one room and a toilet on the ground floor with stairs leading to the first floor consisting of another room and a kitchen. Only ground plus one construction was permitted and no balcony extensions were allowed. A common courtyard was shared by three to four houses. The house design did not offer much scope for modification and most of them lacked proper ventilation and natural light due to limited window and open space between houses. The residents brought about changes by adding balconies to the first floor and building separate staircases from outside to the first floor to ensure more space. Gradually the residents along with the Pradhan negotiated with the MCC for the construction of ground plus two storeys. Thus, instead of challenging the design of the dwelling units at the time of allotment, the residents gradually worked towards negotiating and bargaining with the local authorities for additional floors. The Pradhan highlighted that even though the balconies were not allowed the officials from the Estate office haven't objected till now therefore everyone has gradually started constructing them for additional space. While many residents utilized the additional floor for their family there were also instances where it was used for rental purposes ensuring additional income for the family. Even though the state exerts restrictions on the residents of Bhaskar Colony on using the allotted property for economic transactions like for mortgage for loan, additional household income etc. the hidden practice of renting and selling highlight existence of what Gulyani and Talukdar, (2008) call "Slum Real Estate" (Cited in Watson, 2012).

When one visits the colony, the spatial layout gives an impression of merely a residential settlement. But a deeper and long term association with the Colony reveals that the spatial layout planning has totally overlooked certain key occupational categories existing within Bhaskar Colony; Potters, ragpickers, scrap dealers, garbage collectors, street vendors, cobblers and mechanics to name a few. The plan did not allocate spaces for these key occupational

³ Over the years people who could not prove their eligibility for allotment of plots, new migrants to the city have gradually built temporary dwelling units located on land for open spaces.

groups who were an essential part of the economy of the erstwhile Kumhar and Janta Colony. It can thus be deduced that the distinct occupational groups within this colony were not considered an important part of the production economy of the city. Further substantiating the proposition that in an effort to comprehensively plan for the urban poor the state does not take into consideration the specific knowledge of local economic clusters or if it does then the plan mostly reserves certain zones for industrial/ commercial activity which becomes off bounds due to the high cost of serviced and developed land (Benjamin, 1999). During the course of the interactions with people of these occupational groups, the author realized that each of them had a distinct strategy of negotiation to assert their right to pursue their livelihood and in turn subvert the layout design of the state planned settlement.

The **potters or kumhars** as they are called within the Colony form a distinct group which has been unable to secure plots. They are settled on an open piece of land within the colony which functions as their residential as well as manufacturing unit. The case of the Kumhars of Bhaskar Colony is interesting as this occupational group was one of the main occupants of the erstwhile Kumhar Colony. Though the Chandigarh Administration had allotted big sized plots to potters on land adjacent to Maloya Village towards the periphery of Chandigarh, around 20 families whose name was not there on the electoral list of 1996 excluded. These families claimed that their forefathers had come to Chandigarh right at the time of inception of the city and they had been continuously promised allotment of affordable land for pursuing their occupation by the administration. However on being denied the same they decided to fight a legal battle to secure their right to bigger plots for their residential and occupational needs. Through networking with an employee (son of a potter), they were able to get a lawyer to fight their case without charging any fee. Over the years, the administration had tried to remove these potters from the Bhaskar Colony both through persuasion as well as force but the women potters had come forth and defended their area by pouring kerosene over themselves. After this incident the administration had backed out and let the potters continue within the colony. The legal battle has been long and during this time Kumhars of Bhaskar Colony realized that the administration even after 20 years did not give ownership of the land in Maloya to the potters. Therefore, they revised their demands to be allotted residential plots within Bhaskar Colony with permission to set up their ovens and manufacturing units in an open space at the corner of the colony. This revision was also articulated as the demand for earthenware had reduced drastically over the years and most of the potters had taken up alternative occupations, making pottery only during summer months and just before the festival of Diwali. The State through its tool of spatial planning rendered the occupation of the potters as insignificant within the Bhaskar Colony but at the same time provided an alternative site to some of the potters in the periphery of the city. This approach brings to the forefront the state's 'conditional inclusion' of people and their livelihoods based on the premise that the location and size of place would be predetermined by the state. It thus highlights the overpowering role that the state exerts on the urban poor and the unequal relations that it perpetuates through various laws and policies. But at the same time the agency of the people to retain and reclaim the available space is exhibited through the continued efforts of the potters in the Bhaskar Colony. Based on the situation at hand the small group of potters have modified their strategies of assertion ranging from collective action, legal to bargaining.

In addition to the potters, there is a large group of people who are engaged in the process of garbage collection, sorting, rag picking and scrap dealing as a means of livelihood. The scrap dealers are small business men who stay within the colony but due to lack of space for storage of the scrap being sold to them, have set up temporary tin shelters on the 60 feet road towards the north of the colony. In the evening one can observe multiple tempo trawlers coming to sell the scrap collected from all over the city. There is another set of people who do not own business but are **ragpickers** engaged in sorting and subsequently selling the scrap to the dealers. These people sit around in the open space around the colony and sort their collection which is subsequently sold within the colony itself. On closer observation, the researcher was able to identify that some of these ragpickers had settled in the Sulab Shauchalya Complexes⁴ around the colony as they were not allotted plots within the colony. There were around 6 such complexes spread across the colony. In each of the community toilets, one to 3 ragpicker families were residing redefining the meaning of the space allocated for a different purpose by the state by utilizing it for housing and livelihood purpose which fell outside the ambit of the 'planning for the settlement'.

The **cobblers, street vendors and mechanics** are a mixed lot some of who had plots/ houses while others had built temporary hutments within the colony. Even though most of them desired to buy or rent their own shops but their earnings did not allow for such luxury. Also, by placing their temporary shops on the main road of the colony ensured more business as local residents found it easier to access shops there than go to formal shopping complex in one corner of the colony. Even though in the layout plan market complexes have been reserved but such a planning lacks understanding of the community life which uses markets as collective interaction and social spaces rather than merely economic transactions. Thus, based on the needs of the residents of the colony, the existence of formalized market was challenged through the establishment of the 'informal' market space which were locationally more suitable and accessible. Both the markets exist but the important point being made is that space is politically contested where notions of legality and 'illegality' are challenged as well as perpetuated both by the government officials as well as the local leader i.e Pradhan. The multi-layered political spectrum provides for spaces for negotiations for alternative modes of spatial inclusion, encompassing within their fold elements of reclaiming the available place & location.

The residents of Bhaskar colony believe that nothing can change their status of being 'colony people' and thus, there will always remain a difference between them and the residents of the sectors. The difference is visible in interactions with the surrounding areas with one of the pertinent issues being of **accessing the 'back gate'** opening into the university area of Sector 25 used as a shorter and safer way to go to schools and also by cyclists and pedestrians to approach Vidya Path (one of the main roads near the Colony) for going to work. The difference is perpetuated through the impression of being spatially bound by walls on 2 sides demarcating it as separate from the university. A shopping complex housing the Hindi Daily, Danik Bhaskar (which provides the name to the colony) covers it on the south and the west of the colony touches a road dividing Sector 25 from Sector 25 west. The rationale for the construction of the wall was that the colony residents created mischief and it hampered the University safety.

⁴ Community Toilets

Most of the children from this colony especially till secondary level attend school in the vicinity i.e. one in Sector 25 itself (falling within the University premises) and another in Sector 24. To access both the schools the children and their parents utilize the road through the University but the objection of the University towards the small gate in the wall forced the children to travel on foot over a long distance on roads with fast moving traffic. The local residents along with the Pradhan requested the University to let the gate in the wall be open for people especially the students and pedestrians. However, initially the University did not comply but with repeated negotiations the authorities agreed to allow the gate to be used for the stated purpose. However, a metal rod was inserted in the middle of the gate to restrict the movement of the cycles and bikes through the institutional area. The University also doesn't allow people to enter or exit through the main gates after 6:00 in the evening till 6:00 in the morning. It should be brought to notice that, though institutes as per law have the right to restrict entry and exit from their premises, the Sector 14 campus functions like any other sector which allows thorough fare for people through all gates during the day and through one gate during the night. The continuous negotiation and bargaining in the form of request letters, meetings with the University officials by the Colony residents along with the Pradhan bring to light their capability to strive to bring about change within the preset spatial order prescribed to them. Also, it offers insights into the differential attitude propagated by the University authorities towards the settlement and its residents.

Thus, Bhaskar Colony brings to the forefront the vibrant strategies and tactics that the urban poor working class employ to subvert the arbitrary planning by the government. These processes when viewed collectively offer interesting insights into how multiple actors from the local political parties, bureaucratic circles, local government, representatives of institutions etc. and the residents of Bhaskar Colony transform the planned city in their small ways.

Conclusion

Chandigarh is an assertion of the post-colonial nation state to the world about its capacity to build a city based on principles of high modernism to ensure a better quality of life for its residents through effective spatial planning. The case of Bhaskar colony presents the complexity associated with contestations over city space. While on the surface the notions of legality and illegality are perpetuated by the government but a closer examination reveals scope for negotiations and subversions to secure right over the city. In Chandigarh the government processes for urban poor have been of 'conditional inclusion' which are in turn affected by the lobbying and negotiation processes undertaken by the multiple actors mainly for the removal of the colonies. But at the same time, the political strength of the residents of the colonies also play a key role in ensuring that the settlement is not shifted to a faraway location. The resettlement strategy adopted by the administration was one of slum upgradation which corresponded to preparation of layout plans, demarcation of plots, open space, market complexes, provision of house designs etc. and subsequent allocation of the same based on the eligibility criteria mainly defined by the cutoff date of December, 1996. The residents of Bhaskar Colony exhibited that even though at the face value they seem vulnerable and insecure, they follow multiple approaches and strategies to overcome these challenges. It portrays their belief in changing their conditions by employing their social connections outside the colony,

judicially articulating their demands (not necessarily being impulsive), using collective pressure in case of larger challenges and challenging the spatial norms by modifying the house design, reclaiming the spaces which are not serving any specific purpose within the colony, pursuing their livelihood which are otherwise not allowed within the city limits (purposely excluded from the spatial planning of the city).

While it would be conceptually agreeable to understand space as a political entity, at the same time the vibrant everyday political spectrum of the city needs to be acknowledged to offer deeper insights into its transformatory capabilities. The residents of Bhaskar Colony were essential towards challenging their arbitrary eviction but their strategies demonstrated mechanisms which helped transform the restrictive planning framework for their benefit. The inter-related and multi layered networks of residents of Bhaskar Colony, community leaders, politicians, bureaucracy, representatives of local government and many other actors continue to challenge and subvert the static, scheme driven spatial planning and inclusion perpetuated by the neoliberal agenda. It is this wide political spectrum which allows for and provides scope for greater transformation of the city space. In turn opening up an arena to understand the nuances of urban inclusion not limiting to state schemes and policies but located in the highly political public sphere of the city consisting of multitude of actors.

References

- Benjamin, S. (2008). Occupancy urbanism: radicalizing politics and economy beyond the policy and programs. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(3), 719-29.
- Benjamin, S. & Raman, B. (2001). Democracy, Inclusive Governance and Poverty in Bangalore. *Urban Governance, Partnership and Poverty*. Working Paper 26. Retrieved from <http://casumm.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/democracy-poverty-and-governance-in-bangalore.pdf>
- Benjamin, S. & Raman, B. (2008). Holding Spaces in Contested City Terrains. Retrieved from <http://igs.cla.umn.edu/pdf/Benjamin-Raman.pdf>
- Bjorkman, L. (2014). Becoming a Slum: From Municipal Colony to Illegal Settlement in Liberalization- Era Mumbai. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(1), 38-58. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2427.12041/pdf>
- Chandigarh Administration (2013). Chandigarh Master Plan-2031 Draft. Retrieved from http://chandigarh.gov.in/cmp_2031.htm
- Chaplin S. E. (2011). Indian Cities, Sanitation and the State: The Politics of the failure to provide. *Environment and Urbanization*, 23(1), 57-70.
- Duggal, B. (2010). Chandigarh Slums: Issues of Poverty and Human Rights. Chandigarh: Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development.
- Elden, S. (2004). Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible. London & New York: Continuum.
- Evenson, N. (1966). Chandigarh. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California.
- Fitting, P. (2002). Urban Planning/ Utopian Dreaming: Le Corbusier's Chandigarh Today. *Utopian Studies*, 13 (1), 69-93.
- Fry, E.M. & Drew, J. (1955). Chandigarh and Planning Development in India. *Journal of Royal Society of Arts*, 103 (4948), 315-333. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41364635>
- Fry, M. (1961). Problems of Chandigarh Architecture. *MARG*, 15, 20-25.

Kalia, R. (1987). Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Khan, H.U, Beinart, J. and Correa C. (Eds.). (2009). Le Corbusier Chandigarh and the Modern City: Insights into the Iconic City Sixty Years Later. India: Mapin Publishing.

Lefebvre, H. (1996). Writings on Cities (Kofman, E & Lebas, E., Trans), Oxford U.K.: Blackwell Publishers.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). Production of Space (Donald Nicholson-Smith, Trans). Oxford U.K.: Blackwell Publishing. (Original Work Published 1974)

Sanders, P. (1995). Social Theory and the Urban Question. London. Routledge.

Sarin, M. (1982). Urban Planning in the Third World: The Chandigarh Experience. London: Mansell Publishing.

Sassen, S. (1991). The Global City. In Frainstein, S.S. & Campbell, S.D. (Eds.). (1996), Readings in Urban Theory. Blackwell Publishers.

Scott, J. (1990). Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Scott, J.C.(1998). Seeing like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Shatkin, G. (2014). Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(1), 1-13.

Watson, V. (2012). Planning and the 'stubborn realities' of global south east cities: Some emerging ideas. *Planning Theory*, 12(1), 81-100.