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**Improvement, Resettlement, Redevelopment and Right to the City:
The Case of Kolkata**

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Preface

Eight years ago, in 2008, half of the world population became 'urban' and at present more than 56% of the total population lives in urban areas. The present century in the new millennium is now termed as the 'urban' century. So, it is pertinent that the more and more discussion and researches are required to understand type process and nature of the urban growth. Some of the points worth mentioning are:

1. A major contribution to this growth of urban population comes from the developing countries, specially Asia and Africa;
2. Though most of these countries suffer from top-heavy urbanisation, the small and medium-sized towns are also growing;
3. The major source of employment for the urban population is in the tertiary sector. As the manufacturing sector has almost become stagnant, there is a noticeable shift from the primary to the tertiary sector.

India is no exception to this urbanisation process. With the opening up of the economy in the last decade of the twentieth century, the process of urbanisation has noticeably changed. The inequality (not only in income but also in terms of access to basic amenities and social sectors) has increased over the years, not only between the rural and the urban but also within the urban. With closing down of factories in the big cities and different beautification drives, there is an exodus of the poor from the urban areas. This has brought the issue of 'exclusionary urbanisation' in the forefront. In the present discussion paper, Dr. Sarani Khatua, UGC Post Doctoral Research Associate at the Centre for Urban Economic Studies, has taken up the issue of urban poor in the context of the 'Right to City' which was one of the main agenda of the just-concluded Habitat III Conference in Quito. She has discussed in length the initiatives in the city of Kolkata in the recent years.

I hope this would encourage academicians and policy-makers to carry on the discussion on this important issue.

Mahalaya Chatterjee

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Improvement, Resettlement, Redevelopment and Right to the City:

The Case of Kolkata

Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed a highly skewed development in the direction of the urban studies. Practically every parameters of development have been urbanized or bellini studied through the urban lens. The world started the new Millennium by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2000) and then replaced it with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015) after fifteen years. Even if we are to look further back in the last fifty years of the past century, it was clearly evident that urbanisation would dominate the present century. Today, not only more than fifty percent of global population are urban inhabitants, it is the cities that dominate over nations in every aspect globally. The city has spilled over on its hinterland and there is ever so much increase of urban influence in the last few years that it has become rather relevant to have an urban centric study than city centric.

The colossal changes in urban scenario have brought forth colossal challenges in terms of space, services, housing, and employment etc. Socio-economic inequalities, struggle for resources, politics have become rampant and more specifically urban. Even poverty has become overwhelmingly urban. The urbanisation of poverty is neither spontaneous, nor could be considered to be coincidence. The context of poverty finds its place in the recent development literature equally from the time when unprecedented urbanisation was predicted in the last half of the millennium. The World Development Report started its published its first report in 1978 based on 'prospects for growth and alleviation of poverty'¹ (World Bank, 1978), and repeated its apprehension on the global poverty and ways to deal with it in a number of reports thereafter (World Bank, 1990 and 2000). A closed study of these reports would feature not only a change in approach of dealing with poverty as a whole but also its spatial form. There is no doubt that poverty should not be compartmentalised into rural and urban and a more holistic approach is needed, but it cannot be denied at the same time there is some distinctiveness that has rendered poverty in urban areas more vulnerable compared to

¹ The World Bank Website www.worldbank.org cites the World Development Report 1978 with this theme though it is not mentioned explicitly in the Report itself unlike other World Development Reports.

that in the rural areas (Beall and Fox, 2009). The last two decades have been more about focussing on the vulnerability than to concentrate on absolute poverty and the changing role of state in dealing with it.

The sharp increase in the number of megacities in the non American continents hinted in the raising concern for the lack of basic amenities and services as well as shortage of housing and growing number of informal settlements. Growing numbers of the literature, global conventions like Urban Management Programmes by the United Nations group (2006), Habitat I in Vancouver, 1976, Habitat II in Istanbul, 1996 and Habitat III in Quito, 2016 etc have repeatedly hinted on the mismatch between the growing urban population and the availability of housing, basic amenities. Simultaneously there was also an attempt to tackle poverty in the cities through freeing them from the slums. The slums here included both the formal settlements accommodating the low income group as well as the informal settlements mushrooming within and in the peripheries. By the beginning of the millennium there was a massive drive to eradicate slums from each city, more specifically to create 'a slum free world (Cities Alliances, 2005).

Urban Management gained immense momentum with liberalisation forces coming into play in order to include different actors beyond conventionally only the state. Even there were different layers of government which was not so important before. That governance was to be constituted by the government at central, state and local level and there is private sector, civil society, organisations like the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs). But how they would contribute or who exercise political influence over the other is crucial for the functioning or even drafting of an initiative. Another important stakeholder is the international funding agency instrumental in providing financial assistances conditioned bound with certain pre-conditions which would encourage structural adjustment, adoption of privatisation etc. There was also drive to make economies adopt economic policies based on open market. Now the biggest question in this regard is how poverty alleviation is included in the whole discussion.

It may be observed that context of informal settlements found to be frequently featuring in the policy papers and planning documents at the national and international level. The perception about informal settlements and slums, are intricately linked to the questions of urban poverty, environment and last but not least right to the city. It is important to note that slums are not always an informal settlement.

At this juncture this discussion would tend to enter Indian scenario, were there are both slums as well as squatter settlements.

Slums may be notified or recognised. In case of notified, there is legal attribute because settlements are declared through a specific Act like The Slums Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1956, The West Bengal Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance Act) Act, 1972 etc. The recognised are those, which are declared slums by any government centre, state or local. In a way they are legal settlements. The last is those living in dilapidated conditions and neither declared nor recognised by state. Recently in the 2001, they also have been included within census enumeration and in 2011 Census they are termed as the identified slums (Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2011). One of the main reasons for them being not notified or recognised is that they were encroachers on land/ public space like railway lines, canal banks. Most of the time central policies or state policies often ignored these informal settlements owing to lack of any legal status. Again it would not be completely correct if one assumes that these settlements sustain in the cities without formal support from the state. In Kolkata particularly these settlements have long survived and sustained through political support. Kolkata is one of the cities that are constituted by both slums as well as these kinds of squatter settlements. The sites of each of them are different. Squatter settlements are primarily found in the margins of the city and are concentrated in the additional areas. The slums are recognised through their locations in the city, more or less paved roads, electric connections; water supply arrangements from the municipal connections. The squatter settlements are not equipped with these facilities. One of the primary reasons is that they were not part of regular schemes for slum development. Any facilities provided by the state through central or state government initiatives were meant for the population living in the notified and recognised slums. In case of the squatter settlements, there was support extended through political means.

Post nineties urban development trajectory has shown a growing concern regarding lack of tenure security, absence of basic services in these settlements. One of the common solutions was to provide them with housing along with better infrastructure and services.

The other crucial aspect in this case is that these projects or initiatives were more being single or stand alone but part of larger initiatives like arresting environmental development, or urban renewal or rejuvenation. They were clubbed with different other infrastructural development components like sewerage and drainage, canal rehabilitation etc.

Another facet was community participation or simply participation component explicitly attached with them. Whether it is World Bank, Asian Development Bank or any other United Nations organisation calling for urban development, the greater involvement of the municipal government or the local self government became the central focus of these projects. It was increasingly observed that without effective decentralisation it was not possible to tackle grass root level problem even in the urban areas. The cities in the country were fast becoming a platform for private investment, both from national and international level, but they lacked necessary land as well as infrastructure for availing the investment. Also the cities needed to be decked up in certain way that would particularly enable inflow of fund capital. The traditional balance between the urban space and its dwellers were fast changing. The urban space which was so far exclusive to the state government started gaining visibility in the centre's planning scenario. Each project targeted at the city reflected strong influence of the centre and international urban policy literature tuned in the tone of globalisation. What is noteworthy here is that city which already had a definite trajectory of development had to accommodate these changes and sudden increase in importance; the section of population living in the slums and squatter settlements did not escape this. In fact they came under direct scrutiny of the state. Not that there was absence of contestations between the state and informal settlements so long. But there was also a negotiation and accommodation from both sides.

One more significant turning point in the Indian urban scenario which had huge impact on urban management was the constitutional recognition given to the local self government in 1992. There may be much criticism regarding the actual devolution of power from the regional to the local, but it created a whole new space of urban governance. Even in cities where local self government was already present, difference was clear between pre and post 74th Constitution Amendment Act 1992.

Such global phenomena or even if it's called global initiative/drive did not escape most of the cities, particularly the southern ones. While there have been a number of changes being witnessed in the urban realm of the global south, this paper would like to concentrate on the governance of poverty alleviation policies and the multilayered politics associated in producing a distinct type of space.

If governing the city has gained so much prominence in the last few decades, the alternative approach of having right to the city space is not lagging behind. Right to the city owing its

origin to the work of Henri Lefebvre in 1968 has come a long way from being the base of urban revolution in Paris. The right to the city, was further discussed by Lefebvre (1996) and refined more prominently in the writings of David Harvey (2008), and later by various others namely, Mike Purcell (2002), Peter Marcuse (2009). Today right to the city is being reviewed in the line of human rights. The right to the city is not possible to be obtained if the basic human rights are not valued or observed. Eventually the concept was developed as contemporary framework to the globalisation in Latin American countries. Right to the city is currently been incorporated in different policy at global level like European Charter for Human Rights in the City, or in the world Social Forum formed in 2004 or in Brazil's City statute in 2001. It is also being considered to be adopted as part of New Urban Agenda in Habitat III conference held at Quito in 2016, and there are reports linking urban development in India with right to the city (Zerah, Marie Helen *et al.*, 2011).

Right to the city has enabled to raise some crucial questions about the development process introduced and adopted by a state, like whose development, what kind of development for whom or who is included in the process and who is excluded etc.

India adopted New Economic Policy in 1991 and introduced structural adjustment programmes through constitutional recognition to the local self government in both rural and urban area. Post these major changes a series of policies floated out for the urban development. These development initiatives were not exactly new to the urban scenario, but differed in their approach widely from their previous versions. The Ninth (1997-2002), Tenth (2002-2007), Eleventh, (2007-2012) and the lastly the formulation of Twelfth Five Year plan (2012-2017) unfolded the changes in policy approach towards urban distinctively.

At present the state is embarking on a new journey through change from five year plans strategic plans in 2017 to be shaped by the newly formed NITI² Ayog, which has replaced the Planning Commission. The strategic plan is supposed to be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals adopted recently worldwide.

However the manifestations of these changes were not always homogenous and each city reflected different pace of adopting and adjusting to these changes as well as different outcomes also. At the same time it is also true that there was vast changes happening in each

² The full form of NITI Ayog is National Institution for Transforming India.

of these places and rarely any urban areas especially the bigger cities could escape the transformation.

The background story of India's transforming or already transformed urban scenario has very strong implications for the right to the city with respect to the poverty alleviation initiatives taken up by the central and regional government or even at the city level.

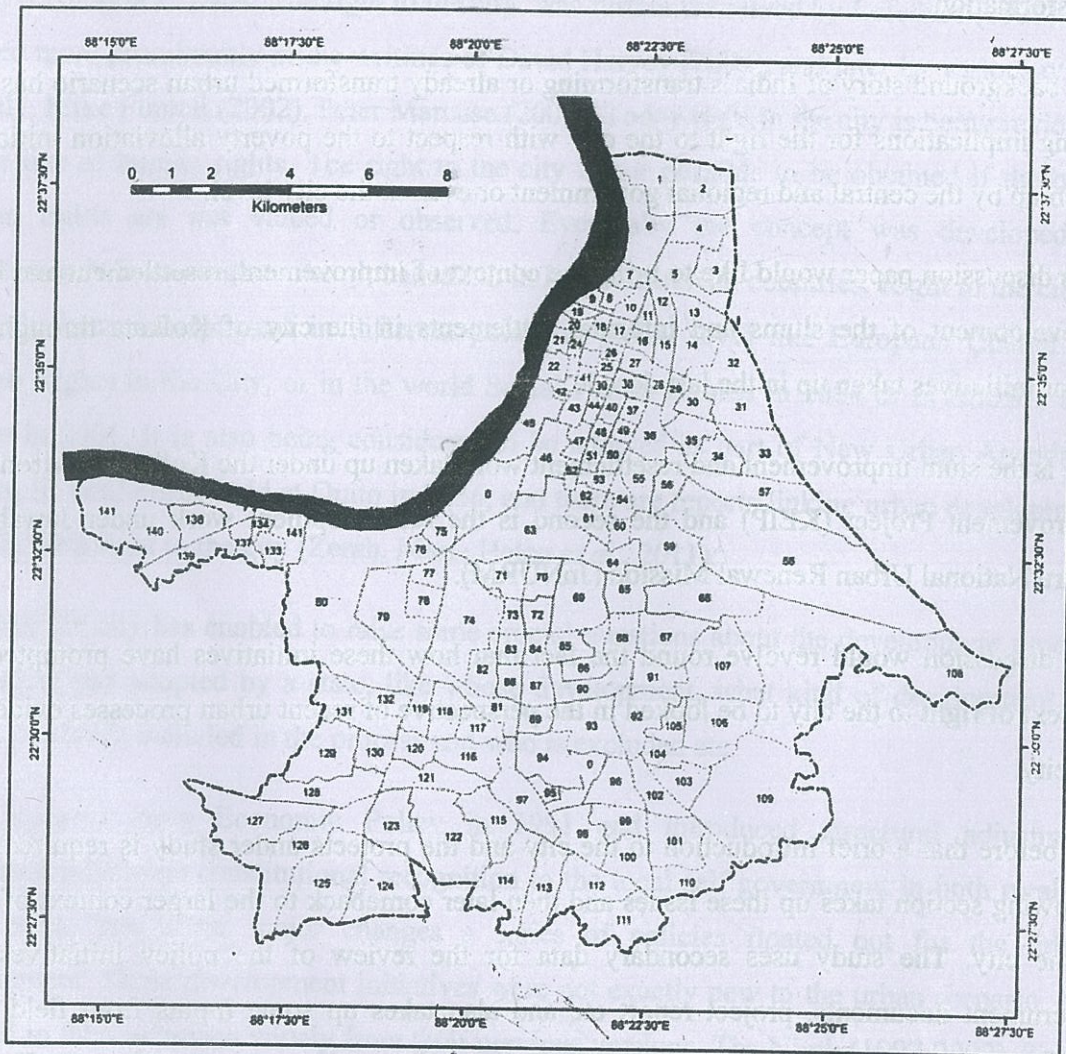
This discussion paper would like to bring the context of improvement, resettlement and lastly redevelopment of the slums and informal settlements in the city of Kolkata through two major initiatives taken up in the last decade.

One is the slum improvement and resettlement work taken up under the Kolkata Environment Improvement Project (KEIP) and the second is the redevelopment work under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM).

The discussion would revolve round the fact that how these initiatives have prompted the context of right to the city to be looked in the perspective of recent urban processes evident in the city.

But before that a brief introduction to the city and the projects under study is required. The following section takes up these issues and then later come back to the larger context of right to the city. The study uses secondary data for the review of the policy initiatives like government documents, project report etc and also takes up some inputs from field level work. The work is primarily based on the Kolkata city or the area covered under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) (Fig no.1).

Figure No.1: Kolkata City



Source: KMC.

Note: The KMC has recently undergone an extension in its southern margin with addition of three new wards of 142, 143 and 144. This map is showing the 144 wards since the projects under discussion were implemented when KMC had 141 wards.

Recent initiatives on improvement, resettlement and redevelopment in slums and squatter settlements in Kolkata

The study on Kolkata city is not only significant owing to the reason of being the largest city in the eastern India or the primate city of the state of West Bengal; it is about a city that underwent changes owing to its adoption of country's new economic policy. This change started late with respect to the other metropolis of the country but yet it maintained a course of its own since it also happened to be same city which had quite a distinct governance pattern of its own since before the nineties. The city already had its own municipal system of

governance, a number of World Bank projects for the city's slums, a plan prepared for its development by Ford Foundation in the sixties and a strong enactment of Thika Tenancy Act to protect the interest of the thika tenants against eviction (to be elaborated later). The city is also known for already having a local self government prior to the Seventy Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act 1992; for having undergone redefinition through addition of areas on its eastern and southern peripheries which happen to be the sites of high urban activities. The city is also said to house a huge number of informal settlements or the squatter settlements on its additional wards as well as notified slums. So slum improvement initiatives have not been new to post nineties. Then what changed in the post nineties or how the globalisation or the new economic policy even impacted the city development policy?

In Kolkata there were already incidences of slum improvement projects with both central funding and international funding. There was presence of Kolkata Municipal Corporation before the structural adjustment and functioning of a number of non-governmental organisations working in the sphere of slum improvement. Then the spontaneous question is what changed or how the changes at the international and national level affected the pre existing set up?

In case of Kolkata this change is possibly best understood through two initiatives of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project (KEIP) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban renewal Mission (JnNURM) or simply NURM. Both initiated in the beginning of the century and both are completed recently but the effects are fresh.

The two initiatives under discussion are the:

1. Slum Improvement and Resettlement under (KEIP).
2. Basis Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP), a sub-component/mission of (JNNURM)

*****Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project (KEIP)

- KEIP has been the first project targeted on the environmental degradation of the city with Kolkata Municipal Corporation as the implementing agency. Previously there had been projects like Calcutta Slum Improvement Project, Calcutta Environmental Management and Strategy Action Plan (CEMSAP) funded with foreign agency and targeting environmental improvement. But they were implemented by the

Government of West Bengal (GoWB) at the municipal level. Despite having municipal governance in the city since eighties, KEIP was the first project with KMC as the executing agency. The collaboration was made with KMC, Asian Development Bank, but under the auspices of the GoWB and Government of India (GoI).

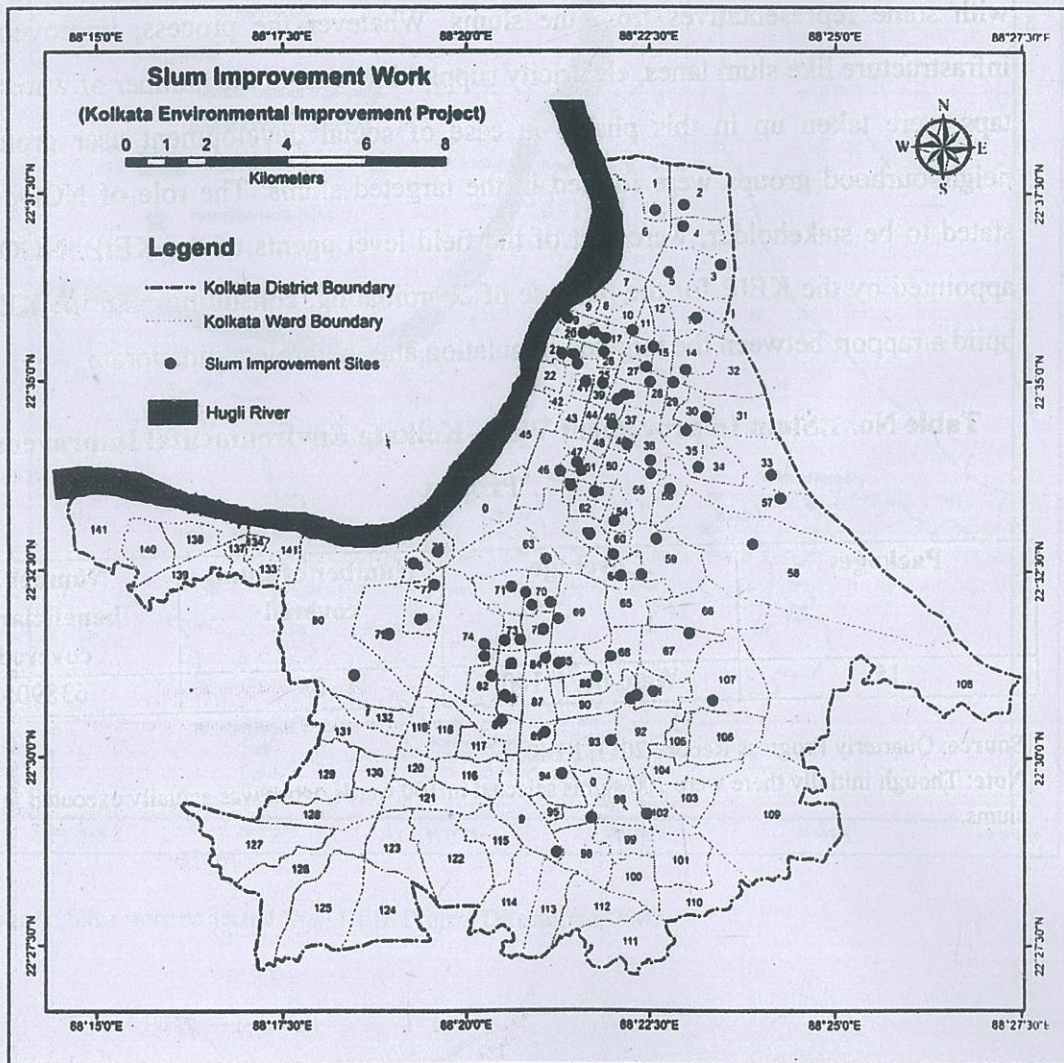
- KEIP is also a multidimensional project, not witnessed in Kolkata urban scenario before. It had four components addressing four environmental aspects, namely, solid waste management, sewerage and drainage, canal rehabilitation and slum improvement. There was another component, namely the Capacity Building Programme (CBP) aiming at the improvement of municipal governance in the city. This part was collaborated with funding by the Department for International Development (DFID) with KMC. It is to be noted here that solid waste management and sewerage and drainage were already functions of KMC.
- Canal rehabilitation was new to the urban scenario. This component was co-implemented by the Department of Irrigation and Waterworks under GoWB. Canal rehabilitation is also significant since it included resettlement of the canal bank dwellers displaced for the purpose.
- Formulation of a resettlement plan following the resettlement plan of involuntarily displaced population of ADB. Though there were instances of state reaching out to the displaced population through political means, there was no formal effort prior to this project. Also this was a formal effort targeted exclusively to the squatter settlements.

Slum Improvement-KEIP:

In case of slum improvement there is focus on increasing access of infrastructure and services to the existing structure. It does not necessarily involve any form of displacement, temporary or permanent, horizontal or vertical. The other half of the improvement also involves awareness generation among the slum dwellers for the maintenance and sustenance of the improvement work or for the creation of micro-credit groups among women to enable forced saving. These micro-credit groups not only are instrumental in having forced savings but also they are often entrusted with the maintenance of neighbourhood parks, water bodies. They could also avail various vocational trainings through erstwhile Swarnajayati Sahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) [now the programme is changed to National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)] which would assist them to become self dependant.

But what had been the governance of these improvement initiatives? Who are the stakeholders? The stakeholders to this particular section of the project consisted of the project directorate comprising of the local self government, KMC, the funding agency that is ADIB and the community. The choice of one slum from each ward in core area (ward no.1-100) was decided at the project directorate level (Table no.1) (Fig. no.2). The definite slum selection was done by the respective ward councillor. The councillor is the elected representative of the bottom level unit of administration and his decision was considered as directly representative of the community.

Figure No.2: Slum Improvement Sites in Kolkata under KEIP



Source: Sites were collected from KEIP project directorate, 2009

Post selection of the slums, there would be regular meetings held by KEIP with slum dwellers and the NGOs entrusted with the execution of the work at the field level. In each stakeholder meetings the slum dwellers would be consulted regarding the type of work to be done or formation of neighbourhood groups. The aim would be identify the type of physical infrastructure needed at the priority level; then identify women who would form neighbourhood groups. Lastly there was also need to form a user groups who would be entrusted to monitor the maintenance of the work. There were different mean to prioritise the work done. In some slums, there were internal survey among the households to prioritise on the type of work needed to be done; in some case there would be decision to what kind of work to be done would be decided by the councillor with some representatives from the slums. Whatever the process, improvement of infrastructure like slum lanes, electricity supply, increase in the number of water supply taps were taken up in this phase. In case of social development user groups and neighbourhood groups were formed in the targeted slums. The role of NGO, though stated to be stakeholder, were that of the field level agents of the KEIP. NGOs were appointed by the KEIP for the purpose of coordinating, consulting with the KEIP and build a rapport between the targeted population and the project directorate.

Table No. 1. Slum Improvement Work-Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project

Packages	Coverage	Number of slums covered	Number of beneficiaries covered
15	Ward no. 1-100	85	638905

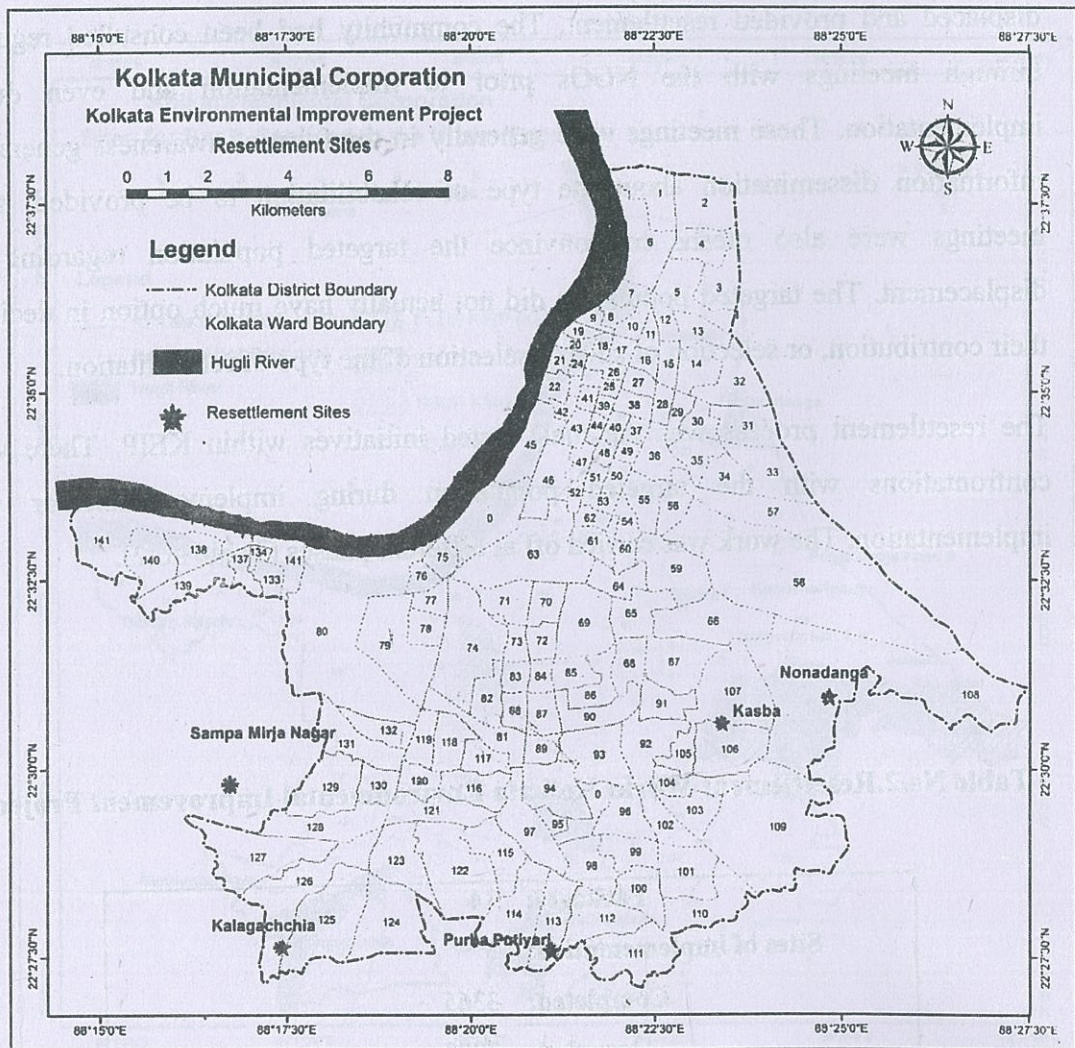
Source: Quarterly Progress Report, 2011, KEIP.

Note: Though initially there were 100 slums selected in 100 wards, work was actually executed in 85 slums.

Resettlement-KEIP:

The selection of the sites was the biggest challenge. The resettlement had to be done within 2 km of original canal bank location (Fig. no. 3). This was a decision taken up by the directorate and land had to be taken up from KMDA.

Figure No.3: Resettlement Sites in Kolkata under KEIP



Source: Sites were collected from KEIP Project Directorate, 2009

In looking at the governance of the KEIP-Resettlement, the same arrangement was there like presence of NGOs, conducting regular stakeholder consultation meetings. But the implementation was different.

The stakeholder consultation meeting would be constituted by the Borough Chairman³, ward councillor, the project directorate, the NGOs, and the targeted community. There was also a survey, which was actually enumeration of the canal bank households to be displaced and provided resettlement. The community had been consulted regularly through meetings with the NGOs prior to implementation and even during implementation. These meetings were generally in the form of awareness generation, information dissemination about the type of rehabilitation to be provided; these meetings were also means to convince the targeted population regarding the displacement. The targeted population did not actually have much option in deciding their contribution, or selection of sites or selection of the type of rehabilitation.

The resettlement process was the most tested initiatives within KEIP. There were confrontations with the targeted population during implementation or post implementation. The work was carried off at different phases (Table no.2).

Table No.2. Resettlement Work: Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project

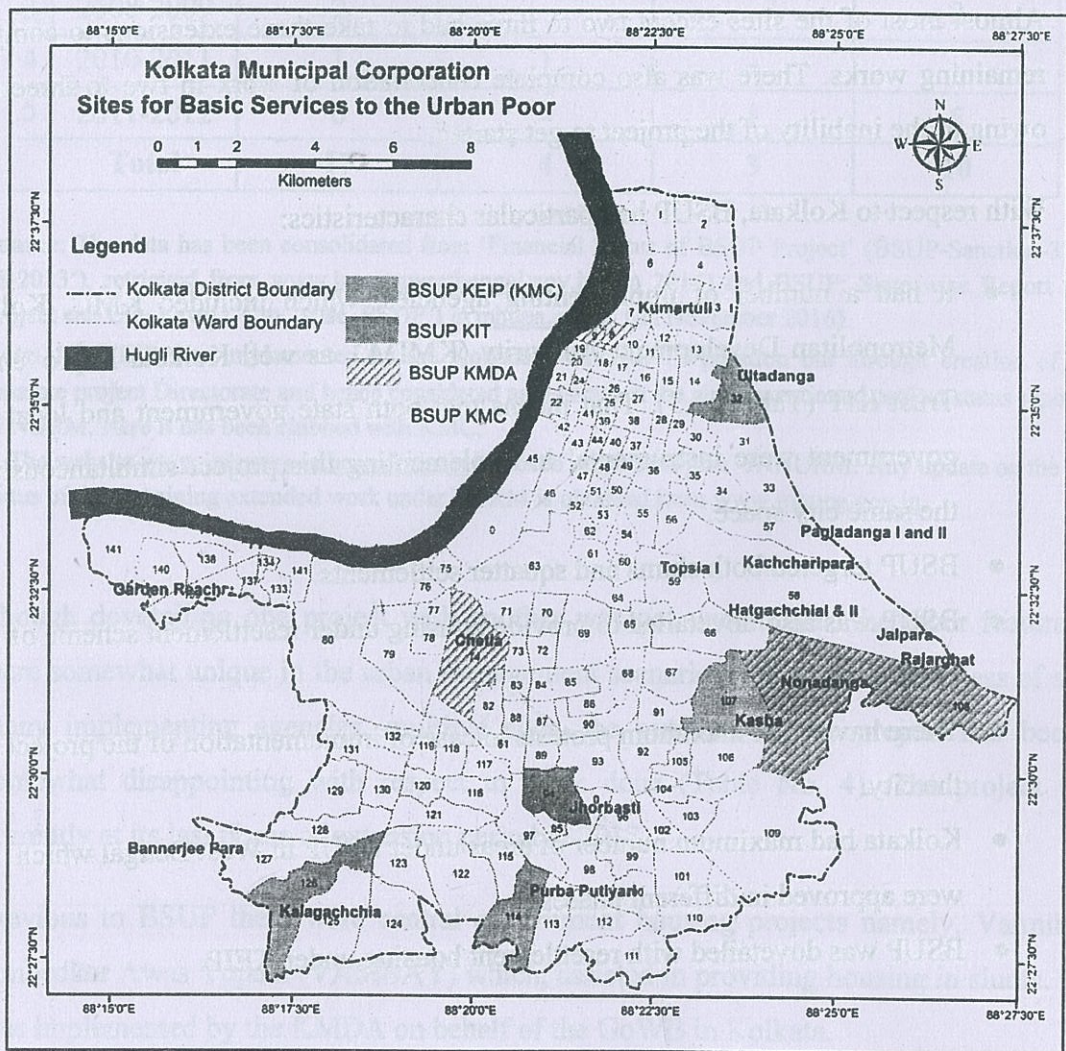
Packages:	14
Sites of implementation:	5
Completed:	3365
Occupied:	2908

Source: Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2013: *Resettlement Planning Document, India, Updated Resettlement Plan*, Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project.

³ The Borough is the next higher up unit in the local self government's structure. It is formed by clubbing a number of wards within a municipal area. So the domain of Borough Chairman (who is also ward councillor in one of the constituting ward) is larger than that of ward councillor.

**Basis Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP)-Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban
Renewal Mission (JnNURM).**

Figure No. 4. BSUP Sites in Kolkata



Source: Project Sanctions, BSUP, February 2012 in www.jnnurmwestbengal.gov.in. The breakup in KEIP areas have been taken from *Quarterly Progress Report No. 35*, December 2011, KEIP

BSUP on the other hand was a part of the largest initiative on urban areas in post independent India, which covered every state. Launched in 2005 by the Government of India, JnNURM or simply NURM came with a set of reformatory agenda targeting urban governance and aiming at the urban infrastructure and renewal. BSUP within NURM enabled to create much ruckus in city owing to its delayed implementation, disruptions and non completion of the work within stipulated period. In 2014, near the end of NURM, some of the incomplete projects were granted extensions up to 2017. Almost most of the sites except two to three had to take these extensions to complete remaining works. There was also complete cancellation of work in two to three sites owing to the inability of the project to get started.

With respect to Kolkata, BSUP had particular characteristics:

- It had a number of implementing agencies, which included KMC, Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA), as well Kolkata Improvement Trust KIT (Table no.3). That means that both state government and local self government were instrumental in implementing this project simultaneously in the same city space.
- BSUP targeted both slums and squatter settlements.
- BSUP was also dovetailed to provide housing under resettlement scheme of KEIP.
- There have been maximum protests in case of implementation of the project in the city.
- Kolkata had maximum number of areas under BSUP in West Bengal which were approved in different phases.
- BSUP was dovetailed with resettlement housing under KEIP.

Table No.3 Sanctions of Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) in KMC area

	Year of Sanctions	Total number of Projects	Implementing agencies		
			KMDA	KIT	KMC (including KEIP)*
1	2006-2007	4	3	-	1
2	2007-2008	4	-	2	2
3	2008-2009	2	-	-	2
4	2010-2011	1	1	-	-
5	2011-2012	6	-	1	5
	Total	17	4	3	10

Source: The data has been consolidated from 'Financial Status of BSUP Project' (BSUP-Sanction-31-08-2013'), retrieved from www.jnnurmwestbengal.gov.in (on 2014) and BSUP: State wise Report at Project and City Level ('City_wise_BSUP') in mhupa.gov.in (on November 2016).

Note: 1.* KEIP was implemented by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation but through creation of a separate project Directorate and hence considered as separate in the abovementioned project status report of NURM. Here it has been clubbed with KMC.

2. The website www.jnnurmwestbengal.gov.in has been suspended post -JNNURM. Any update on the status of the remaining extended work under NURM is obtained from www.mhupa.gov.in.

Though dovetailing one project with another was not uncommon, the other features were somewhat unique in the urban management scenario of the city. Regardless of so many implementing agencies, multiple sites, the outcome of the project had been somewhat disappointing with respect to work done (Table No. 4). The project is currently at its last phase of extension period in 2017.

Previous to BSUP there were central government housing projects namely, Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) which, assisted in providing housing in slums. It was implemented by the KMDA on behalf of the GoWB in Kolkata.

The planning strategy and implementation rationale of BSUP in the city could not be described through any single and simplistic means. As already mentioned there were multiple of implementing agencies, targeted at different forms of settlements. The project had no such explicit component of participation that would scope of community participation or stakeholder consultation. In many cases the targeted community were

informed just prior to the start of work or when there was need to resettle them temporarily; in few instances the community had prior idea about the project.

A detailed project report was submitted to the centre and once the project approved, the work would be initiated. BSUP like the resettlement-KEIP witnessed disputes when work started to be executed. There was delay and even inability to start a project completely. Some of these projects have been cancelled in 2015 being absolute non-starter since their approval in 2006-2007. Some, which were completed by more than fifty percent, have been granted extension for completion by 2017.

In Kolkata how the implementing agencies got arranged for specific project sites is not very clear. For instance in case of some sites the ownership of the land was important. The slums where housing was provided by the KIT on their land, it became the implementing agency for their redevelopment. Likewise in case where housing was previously provided by the KMDA, redevelopment work was taken by the KMDA only. Then there are areas on the eastern margins where there is high density of the slum population, BSUP was taken up by the KMC. But there is no certainty regarding who owned the land, was it KMDA or KMC. The land also had mixed characteristics like some were squatter settlements and some under thika tenancy. The ownership of land in east Kolkata had always been fuzzy and there was no definite means to ascertain the ownership. Infrastructure development and privatisation of land by the state was rampant in this area since late nineties and early years of millennium. The east Kolkata was most dynamic in terms of urban expansion. This was also the area which had maximum sites under BSUP as well KEIP resettlements. This was also the area where there were maximum conflict arising from the implementation of the projects.

Table No.4. Status of Basic Service to the Urban Poor in KMC area

Implementing Agency	Total Projects	Cancelled	Complete
KMDA	4	1	2
KIT	2	2	-
KMC	10	6*	3**

Source: BSUP: State wise Report at Project and City Level ('City_wise_BSUP') in mhupa.gov.in (on November 2016).

Note:* Of the 6 cancelled projects, one was cancelled in 2012 and the others cancelled in 2014.

****** Of the 3 completed projects shown, one is of KEIP project, and for another there was curtail of number of dwelling units in 2014. The full completion refers to the end of construction of curtailed numbers and not the original approved allotments.

Post completion of BSUP or NURM in 2012, a new project Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) was launched, which was again replaced by Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) also called Housing for All (HfA) (Box No. 1).

The PMAY is at its nascent stage and it is too early to predict the outcome of the project. But certain aspects are explicit from the provisions of this project.

- This project is not only limited to slums and informal settlements. It addresses housing issues of those living in low income settlements.
- It is not only about constructing new housing but also includes scope for enhancement or up-gradation.
- The project has clearly provided for the involvement of private participation in the housing for poor. Whether it is in-situ redevelopment work or for building affordable housing, the public-private participation as been strongly called for.

Box No.1: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)-Housing for All

PMAY also known as “Housing for All” was launched post NURM in order to provide housing to the slums as well assist the economically weaker section (EWS) in constructing their own housing, renovating them through central assistance. The project has four components. They are:

1. In-situ rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers, using land as a resource through private participation.
2. Credit-linked subsidy.
3. Affordable housing in partnership.
4. Subsidy for beneficiary led individual house construction/enhancement.

This project explicitly tags private participation with housing for the poor unlike the NURM.

The project aims to address the housing issues in eighteen million slums and around two million non slums. The project replaced Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY).

The credit linked subsidy is central sector scheme while the other three components are centrally sponsored scheme that is they would be implemented by the state government with centre-state share. The credit linked subsidy would be directly and fully funded by the union.

The project initiated in 2015 is supposed to take place in three phases.

- Phase I: 2015-2017: Will cover 100 cities
- Phase II: 2017-2019: another 200 cities
- Phase III: 2019-2022: Rest of the selected cities.

Around 185 cities within West Bengal have been selected for the entire project.

Source: Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, mhupa.gov.in

Again another new project/mission was launched for augmentation of basic urban services, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) (Box No.2). It is noteworthy that in the last decade there has been an immense thrust on housing and basic services in the urban area with special focus on the low income groups. Each of this mission are accompanied with a set of reforms meant for improving the municipal governance, a set of action set aside for the state to take in

order to access the funding and at the same time the local self government. This is not simple case of centrally sponsored schemes anymore.

Box No.2 Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

The mission aims to tackle with the basic services relating to water supply, sewerage, septage, storm water drainage, urban transport, development of green space and parks, reform management and support, and capacity building programme.

AMRUT is not a poverty alleviation project nor it is addressed on slums; but is targeting the basic infrastructure at the household level. In a way instead of core aspects of urban development.

The project also has improvement of municipal governance in its agenda through capacity building in order to enable better delivery of these services.

The Mission under the implementation of the Ministry of Urban Development since 2015 directly calls for public private partnerships (PPP) and direct citizen feedback in preparation of State Level Improvement Plan.

The Mission is still at its nascent stage and it is not possible to gauge the outcome at the moment.

Source: Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India.

Kolkata is one of the cities selected for the all the projects as well as there is initiation of the Kolkata Environmental Improvement Investment Project (KEIIP), which is the second phase of KEIP. The new phase is also funded by the ADB. Strangely, the new phase does have neither slum improvement nor canal rehabilitation as a subcomponent. But resettlement is there to include resettlement of those displaced for sewerage and drainage works or other forms of development work undertaken in this project. There has also been modification of the previous resettlement plan in 2013. This phase other than resettlement plan does not have any component directly linking the informal settlements.

But the discussion is not about whether the projects are complete or not or when they would be complete or how many are complete by what percentage. This discussion is also not about what is the success rate of these initiatives. But the outcome of these

projects does raise larger issues of governance and urban processes at play. The larger question here is whether mere completion of a project or provision of housing to some selected households is solution to the problem of vulnerability faced by the people living in these informal settlements? Or whether such initiatives are intended to do so? There are a bunch of projects in line supporting the housing needs and the basic services of the low income households (already mentioned above). It is also a time when urban researchers re-evaluating the urban process in the wake of post 2015 development scenario. This period is particularly relevant and is being referred as post development, post globalisation or even post neo-liberalisation period. There are also urban researchers who are increasingly calling for southern policies, something not dependant on the framework of urbanisation experienced or designed in the global north. Kolkata though demographically the third largest city of the country, it is or rather it was never the type of city Mumbai or Bengaluru. Simply put, in Kolkata the run for the global city started more or less in the late nineties. This was evident from massive privatisation of land in the East Kolkata, taking up of a number of projects with either central or international funding for the overhauling the infrastructure or preventing degradation.

Right to the city and security of tenure

If right to the city is right of all the urban inhabitants to shape the city space or access the city, then security against eviction is crucial in maintain that right. It is not always possible for the urban poor to have land ownership, but some form of protection against any form of displacement assures the sustenance of these inhabitants. The city had its own way assuring this right through Thika Tenancy Act. The Kolkata Thika Tenancy Act has undergone many changes in post independent period. At present it is West Bengal Thika Tenancy Act 2001 that is in prevalence. Not all land occupied by the low income settlements are under this Thika tenancy. Most of the inner city slums are protected within these slums.

At present the city has different forms of tenure:

- Slums still under the thika tenancy.

- The dwellers of squatter settlements, which were not under any regulated landholdings and residing over encroached land through political support were now to be resided in a lease holding land.
- The others, which are under the ninety nine years of lease of land.

KEIP slum improvement works was primarily done in the slums under Thika Tenancy Act, whereas the resettlement slums were taken up in the squatter settlements. Housing under KEIP resettlement project, were on land with ninety nine years of lease. The ninety nine years lease was also another form of security against eviction.

But in case of the BSUP, redevelopment work slums selected were of both kinds with and without thika tenancy protection. In case of squatter settlements granting housing with ninety nine years of lease on land was understandable, but what about those which were already protected under thika tenancy Act prevalent? In case of one of the selected sites in Kumortuli, work could not get started because those residing on these kinds of land refused to move or be part of the project. Selecting a site which is under Thika Tenancy Act was also cited in the latest report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (2016) to be the cause of cancellation of the project.

There have been various discussions regarding this Act and how it provided a base for security against eviction as well as ground for the settlements to be legitimate and eligible to qualify for the municipal services (Mitra, 2016) or how the Act itself has evolved over time (Ceil, 2011). The provisions for thika tenants got changed through various enactments (Box No.3) over the years. At present there is prevalence of the West Bengal Thika Tenancy Act 2001. This Act was further amended in the recent years and gave separate rights to both the thika tenants as well as the tenants to change or alter the structure of the house by getting no objection certificate directly from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. However such change has also been subject to encouragement of the interference of the private sector companies or in short the real

estate agencies the access to these areas through directly getting in contact with both the thika tenants and the bharatiyas⁴.

Box No.3. Brief on Major Thika Tenancy Acts

The Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act,1949:	Protected the rights of the thika tenants and prevent eviction by the landlords.
The Calcutta Thika Tenancy(Acquisition and Regulation) Act,1982:	The lands vested with the landlords were taken up by the State that is the state government became directly the landowners.
West Bengal Thika Tenancy Act, 2001:	Repeal of The Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act 1982. The Act had some major amendments in 2010

Source: Compiled from, Swati Ghosh 1992: *Thika Tenancy in Bustees of Calcutta: A Study*, Discussion Paper No. 6, Centre for Urban Economics, Department of Economics, University of Calcutta and A. Mukherjee and A.Alam 2014: *West Bengal Thika Tenancy Laws*, Tax'N Law, Kolkata

The new housing provided under the BSUP was set to make the targeted slums de-notified post occupation and bring them under the ninety nine years lease, without the provision of reselling or letting out. This is creating a form of house ownership where the land would be under the lease and the ownership of housing would be restricted to living in without the option of reselling or letting out. The ninety nine years lease though provided the security against eviction which was not there in squatter settlements; it did not necessarily provide ownership of a property.

Right to the city and participation

The idea of Right to the city becomes all the more critical in the context of the participation. Who would be selected for a particular project may rest with the project funding organisations, the number of households to be included within a particular project may rest with the state, but how community participation is envisaged? In many cases the community participation has been included as a necessary project component in order to gain more inclusive development or a problem free implementation of the

⁴ Bharatiyas is the Bengali word for the tenants. In this case they are particularly the tenants of the Thika Tenants. The Thika tenants since eighties have been the direct tenants of the State.

projects. The Calcutta Slum Improvement Project, the KEIP etc already had pro-participation planning. Despite this, resettlement under KEIP met with much resistances and chaos during implementation. In case of BSUP in many places work could not either take off or faced disruptions from the population. The reasons have been many like the gap between the proposed benefits and actualisation, choice of land for resettlement, occupation being affected owing to relocation, exclusion from the project or inclusion without option, quality of the benefits to name a few. In many situations protests started with the completion of the first phase, and in some the project could not get initiated due to opposition raised by the targeted population themselves. Such conflict would generally more likely to happen in cases of redevelopment related initiatives that involved the relocation of the population from one place to another or relocation from horizontal/ ground level dwellings to vertical structures. Generally in situ improvement of slum infrastructures and services allotted to the households involving no form of displacement did not attract any severe form of protests.

What needs to be seen here is even if participation is there in a project component, what kind of contribution one would expect from the targeted population like whether their opinion prior to the planning of the project, their contribution during implementation or participation is only about making them aware of the types of benefits to be obtained from scheme or in some case awareness regarding the new place of resettlement etc. In such case the participation through stakeholder consultation had been reduced to the awareness generation or orientation programmes for the targeted population. So despite being part of community participation, these are basically one sided non-interactive process where the population do not have much to say or rather much left to contribute, instead of accepting whatever is being offered.

In some case despite having a prior knowledge regarding possible benefits to be received from the project, the community starts protests in the midst of the implementation. In case of BSUP implementation in Kolkata there has been initiation of protests after first phase of work is almost done. This is because of the fact that the community is unable to realise the full implications of shifting from slum kind of housing multi-storied housing. The awareness generation programmes or information

dissemination initiatives were often partial, like they were not always fully aware of the maintenance cost associated with flat kind of housing. In some instances initial maintenance cost associated with flats were paid through the project, but in the long run the community had to take the responsibility. This created conflict and implementation of the further faces were disruptive. The quality of houses, quality of basic services provided through these projects is another ground for protests.

But it's not always about the gap between what promised and what delivered. There are conflicts regarding who are in the selected list of the state and who are not. In case of both resettlement under KEIP and redevelopment of BSUP, objections were also raised for not getting included within a project or why some were chosen over the others. Though it's not clear whether this could be attributed directly to the lack of participation, but raises question what kind of stakeholder consultation took place or again, who are at all participating in the entire process.

It is hard to deduce if resistances are manifestation of governance failure or a mandatory part of it, one cannot disregard the fact that it is integral to any form of urban change. It is also an important medium through which the community particularly the urban poor gains foothold to the city space, or exercise their right to the city. When negotiation between the state and the community does not work anymore or in case where there was neither scope for such negotiation nor the intention for it, resistance stood as the only alternative. It is also true numerous protests marred the implementation of redevelopment projects in different pockets of the city, and pushed for delay or total cancellation of the projects. The obvious question in this regard is how delay or total abandonment of a project contributes to the larger question of requirement of participation as well as the whether such incidents contribute positively to the larger development that is whether such events could have any affirmative direction.

Conflicts are not always pre-event. There are reports of dissents post receipt of the housing where the community have found gaps between what was promised and what was delivered. The increasing distance between the resettlement/ redevelopment area and their respective work sites, the increasing transport costs, absence of proper

infrastructure like market place, primary schools, and medical centres in the vicinity of the relocation sites eventually results in the mass discontent for the benefits received.

However protest rallies are not anti-project, there are demonstration for getting included within a project or for being excluded. Incidences have occurred where a different section of poor community has asked for the same kind of benefits. This section may be from completely different locality, or displaced owing to a different project, or community who have already suffered eviction but were not provided rehabilitation.

Right to the city and legality/illegality

As stated by Usha Ramanathan (2006), urban poor residing in slums or even squatter settlements have been the reason of sufferance for the state. So the context of legality or the opposite, illegality gets automatically tagged into the discussion of tenure security, participation, resistances etc. While most of the contemporary projects aim at providing formal housing, bringing more of the informal into formal domain, how far such measures assists in improvement of the living standard or whether such initiatives at all instrumental or meant to be upgrading the community from the poverty remains debatable.

These initiatives also raise questions on whether the scope of right to the city space of the urban poor increases or further reduced. While exercising these rights has never been easy for the low income settlements, it is doubtful that these initiatives undertaken had anything to do with providing or guaranteeing rights to the urban poor.

Many of the contemporary housing projects addressing the urban poor mainly aim at city cleansing, getting back land, gradually diminishing the informal (which is next to impossible) etc.

So long in the developing countries, informal settlement formed a large section. The rapid changes in urban scenario and the attempt to make city look better, more global, more investment friendly, an identity for the state has fastened up change or enforced the city to embrace changes never experienced before. This has affected the community residing at different economic layers differently. The informal community who had been encroaching on the public land and attained a quasi legitimacy for their staying through acquiring voter identity card, ration card were now under the mission to be relocated to different sites.

KEIP's resettlement process has been one of the first formal attempts taken up by the state to provide a formally planned rehabilitation for the displaced. The initiative took shape primarily at the auspices of the funding agency, Asian Development Bank (ADB). This rehabilitation may be stated to be forced on the state. The first resettlement plan (KEIP, 2006) clearly stated that initially there was proposal from the state to provide Rs30, 000 to each of the household. It clearly clarified that owing to the illegal status of these settlements, the state was not interested in paying any compensation. However it was because of the ADB's resettlement for involuntarily displaced population, they had to include as well as provide a planned rehabilitation. This is to be noted here that these resettlement sites were not new to urban space of Kolkata. Such settlements started forming post 1945 and then post seventies. Some of the settlements attained status of refugee colonies while there were others on the railway area, canal banks continued to encroach and live. Since 2000, which also marked the time when Kolkata actively started to witness liberalisation, privatisation, these settlements started becoming visible to the state as illegal settlements, or encroachment sites.

Visibility of illegal is not only spatial but temporal. It is not that illegality was not present before liberalisation, nor is it true that prior to the period there was no displacement. Rather such illegality was accommodated within the urban space through

political patronisation or more specifically termed as the existence of political society as opined by Partha Chatterjee (2004).

The functioning of the political society got somehow disturbed with the onset of liberalisation when these settlements, long protected through the invisibility on part of the state became discernable to the state as encroachers. Again even such attention was not owing to the requirement of giving better living conditions or to provide housing with secured tenure, but more a compelled requisite of providing compensation for displacement as a precondition to avail international funding.

The 'improvement' of slums in this respect might be considered to be much more safe option both for the targeted population as well as for the project implementers. This is because of its nature of working. Most of the slums selected for the purpose were notified slums, already enjoying security of tenure and at the same time already been subjected to improvement initiatives through other governmental projects. These initiatives did not threaten displacement; neither faced with dissent because these were secured sites of project implementation. In many cases, there were slums or other settlements often left out that needed those improvements more than the ones selected for the purpose. One of the common ground for selection of slum sites to be converted to model slums under KEIP was the discretion of the respective ward councillor.

Redevelopment sites under JnNURM-BSUP were rather complicated. They were in situ development but definitely involved displacement. In this case the displacement is vertical. One of the most common problems that arose while implementing the project was to get neighbouring land for providing temporary accommodation to the displaced households. In each phase of work, work could be carried out section-wise/phase-wise. Once a section is completed and housing provided, the next section was to be started. During this phase a temporary accommodation was required for the targeted population. The state could not always find a suitable land for accommodating the displaced even for temporarily often, which delayed the project. In case there was availability of immediate relocation sites, there were other problems like unwillingness of the community to be part of the project.

The legal status of these settlements were many time fuzzy. Many times it is possible there are settlements under thika tenancy and then there also settlements on encroached land in the neighbouring areas. Many times a part of the site where work could be carried out got housing on land with nine years land and the other part where work could not be carried out remained under previous pattern of land holding.

It has also been observed many canal bank dwellers who received housing under resettlement project, accepted and occupied them and eventually rent it out to somebody else and moved to their original location. This is beyond doubt be dubbed as illegal, but many times the community alleged that there were vast gap between what was delivered to them and what was told earlier and the new location was directly affecting their livelihood. So they had returned. Many also alleged that canal rehabilitation work did not happen, which was the reason of their resettlement, so they returned. Many time targeted community also alleged that the lottery system through which allotment were settled were politically oriented and favoured those who had access to political access. While these are more or less anecdotal and not easy to prove, and at the same time not confirming to state provisions are definitely illegal, it is also

true that many times these becomes the critical options at the hand of the community to fight for their sustenance in the city. It could also be said any project that gets implemented without thorough participation of the community and directly affects their livelihood often faces repercussions from the communities which are not legal but reality.

The fast changing city space, which is less and less accommodative to the informal settlements, might often lead to re-encroachment or other illegal activities by the same.

Vulnerability and Right to the City

Last but not least this discussion would like to go back to the initial discussion where the poverty was not be seen from an absolute point of view; rather to be seen as a condition where a definite group of people staying in groups in different locales of the city space are vulnerable owing to their lack of tenure against eviction or lack of basic services. The question is then whether the measures taken up like those discussed above namely improvement, resettlement or redevelopment had contributed to the changing the level of vulnerability or not; if yes how, if no why not?

There is no need for further explanation to the fact that improvement did have a better outcome than resettlement, but at the same time it was targeted on settlements which were in less vulnerable position than those staying in the squatter settlements. Then the concern is whether resettlement or redevelopment enabled moving from at least few communities from vulnerable (e.g. staying on canal banks in extremely unhygienic situation) to better situation. Had it been so, then why there were protests with respect to both the resettlement and redevelopment initiatives? Or is it the fact that one initiative of vulnerability reduction led to increase in other forms of vulnerability like detachment from place of occupation or lack of proper infrastructure in the new settlements?

Right to the city may also be considered as the right of all the inhabitants in the city to fight this vulnerability to survive and sustain with dignity and resist from going back to or further denigrate to a worse situation.

Resettlement and redevelopment which are designed and implemented in the low income settlements do take place with a number of purposes than only keeping the welfare of these settlements in mind.

Conclusion

Governance has been quite complicated for the rapidly changing urban areas, be it in any sector. If fast change in urban scenario has been triggered by the massive infrastructural development, more focus on urban services, making urban the international sites, it has simultaneously raised issues on exclusion created by such expansion, high competition for the land, redefinition of urban boundaries to bring in more areas under urban control. Thus governance has become crucial in the sense it is not only about managing a particular section of the population or about managing the land, controlling the resources, but a complex network where control of one would directly or indirectly be impacting another.

Poverty alleviation is not merely an issue of ameliorating vulnerability or improving the life standards of some low income households, it is also about how the land occupied by these dwellers, about minimising the resistances raised by these group for their survival in the changing city. It is also about enhancing the urban aesthetics of a

city through pushing for lesser slums or lesser informal settlements, smooth completion of large projects even if it involved displacements.

In the discussion of governance of poverty alleviation policies, it becomes certain that managing the poor or administering the slum redevelopment is itself part of larger issues of urban governance related to land control, or even administering environmental issues. Slums and squatter settlements which, according to the common notion houses the maximum urban poor need to be eradicated through redevelopment became one of the primary concern. But how far removal of informal settlements as well as shifting of slum households from horizontal structure to vertical multi-storeyed buildings would actually enable or even help in mitigating vulnerability has not been proved beyond doubt.

In fact accessibility to basic services, education, employment etc is more pertinent to the alleviating vulnerability along besides housing. Even security against eviction from settlement or a basic form of guarantee to safe access to the land occupying is more crucial to reduction in vulnerability in compared to the housing itself. The Thika Tenancy Act already provided this security and the recent clause of ninety nine years lease of land provides the necessary safeguard. But at the same time are slums as well as the informal settlements something which could be done away with totally?

The last two slum census have included both institutional as well as non-institutional slum households in the enumeration and made visible the population living in the various kinds of tenure, for the first time giving them the opportunity to be included within various schemes, which so long had been neglected. The 2011 census has further termed three types, namely, notified, recognised and identified sums where the last one includes the typical informal settlements.

Governing the poor, especially those residing in the informal settlements has been an important liability of the state, which it for so long tried to address through political settlements/patronage. This included provision of voter identity cards, ration cards etc without necessarily providing any form security against eviction or land titles. The proportion of these kinds of settlements had been quite high and they would negotiate to survive and struggle for city through political parties. The land so long occupied through encroachment with the patronisation of the parties now needed for the privatisation needed to be accessed back by the state to be further utilised at the market.

It is also interesting to note that post BSUP and KEIP, there is apparently a calm situation in these settlements, especially in the canal banks or on the eastern margin, where resistances were maximum. The silence does not necessarily guarantee that there would not be another in case the future the new projects. How the freshly launched project would impact on the city space is something to be witnessed in the near future. But what is important as of now that the right to the city has travelled much distance from being base of urban revolution to being part of policies based inclusive development. Despite this there has been implementation of many projects do illustrates exclusion in their implementation or even in design. This makes urban resistances even more inevitable. The recently formulated Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) of 2015 have a separate goal for making cities sustainable, inclusive and resilient (Goal 11 of SDG) along with the Goal 1 of ending poverty (it was also the goal 1 for Millennium Development Goals) and the goal of attaining peace justice and strong institutions (Goal 16) (UN, 2015) . This goal is directly integrated in to the vision of right to the city because without providing right to space to every urban inhabitant, achievement on inclusive city is not possible. All these goals are overlapping, inter-related; one cannot be attained without the other. In order to obtain inclusive city, strong institutions of governance, participatory planning is mandatory.

As already discussed in the beginning right to the city has travelled a long trajectory starting from being the base of urban resistance to being institutionalised. Similarly poverty reduction is now not merely ending hunger or could simply be defined in economic terms. It has wider implications and in the urban space it is even more complex. Simply replacing slums with some form of multi-storied housing does not necessarily mean poverty amelioration. Housing includes shelter along with basic services, minimum effect on the job due to displacement or employment security, security against eviction etc. It is the right of all the citizens irrespective of all their economic and social levels to avail these basic amenities and sustain in the city.

The right to the city now exists in both the sides of the urban development discourse that is the side of policy design and implementation as well as on the opposite wall characterised by resistances and conflicts. Where the purpose is stronger or which path would actually lead to building an inclusive city is unpredictable as of now in the backdrop of massive transformation taking place globally nationally and locally owing to urbanisation and its consequences. Every day in the present century is a day of significance for the urban process and more prominently to those who inhabit these spaces. Those who are residing on the lower side of socio-economic strata are more prone to be affected by this constant strife of who gets access to the city space. But it is equally crucial as to who is entrusted with the improvement, redevelopment and what kind of improvement, development is taken up or whose improvement, development is taken up.

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