

Two Kinds of Activism: Reflections on Citizenship in Globalizing Delhi

The paper examines two of the most pressing concerns in Delhi: housing and the environment. The paper reviews the activities of Resident Welfare Associations, Sajha Manch, and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, in order to analyze the effects of activism of two different kinds since 1990. It also explores the possibilities and limits of grassroots alternatives in times of globalization. The paper primarily draws on newspaper clippings, news magazines, Sajha Manch Samachar (bulletins of Sajha Manch) and various pamphlets published by Sajha Manch, Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch and other bodies in the wake of various events. Drawing on Tarlo's methodological precept of using government documents to demonstrate state practices, I argue that the bulletins and clippings can provide an ethnographic window into the larger picture of lived politics and the negotiations of citizenship in Delhi.

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Cities have become active sites of citizenship struggles in the era of globalization. The twin processes of urban restructuring and the consequent disenfranchisement of the poor have brought struggles around citizenship claims to the fore. Major city restructuring processes are underway that have facilitated market investments and real estate development along with displacements of the urban poor. Scholars have noted that the contradictions of wealth and poverty provide the context for “dramas of citizenship” in megacities.¹ The land acquired by the state is being used to further the neoliberal market economy: manufacturing industries are giving way to a service sector economy and the acquisition of public land has facilitated the construction of shopping malls, multiplexes, roadways and gated housing enclaves. The urban developmental rhetoric has allowed the state to forcefully acquire the land inhabited by the poor. The shrinking of space in cities has placed the poor in a precarious position with eviction looming large and against the backdrop of impending hazards. Arjun Appadurai following Jerome Binde's phrase, describes the above scenario as the “tyranny of emergency”, that

¹ James Holston and Arjun Appadurai “Cities and Citizenship,” *Public Culture*, no. 8 (1996), pp. 187-204. See (p. 200).

characterizes the everyday lives of the urban poor.”² Similarly, Chatterjee has described how a “post-industrial global image” of the city dominates the mindscapes of the urban middle classes.³ Thus, the middle classes have mobilized to further their access to the cityscape and for a right to a clean environment with the active support of the judiciary.⁴ Chatterjee argues that the poor are increasingly losing their right to the city whereas a managerial and technocratic elite with a sub-culture built around segregated residential areas, and easy access to airports, shopping malls and cinemas dominates the city spaces.⁵

In a different context, Caldeira argues on the basis of her analysis of real estate ads for fortified enclaves in São Paulo that we witness a “city of walls.”⁶ She argues that fortified enclaves are “privatized, enclosed, and monitored spaces for residence, consumption, leisure, and work”⁷ and elaborates on a new code of distance that treats “separation, isolation and protection as a matter of status.”⁸ Thus, drawing on Castells it can be argued that urban planning in today’s context cannot be “an instrument of social change, but only one of domination, integration and regulation of contradictions.”⁹ This is not to imply that urban spaces are restructured in inclusive ways that reflect an egalitarian ethos in general. Rather, as the critical urban theorists have argued, the logic of the ordering of urban spaces is the corollary of capital accumulation/production, the

² Arjun Appadurai, “Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics,” *Public Culture*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2002), pp. 21-47. See (p. 30).

³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 143.

⁴ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 144.

⁵ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 144.

⁶ Teresa Caldeira, “Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation,” *Public Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1996), pp. 303-328.

⁷ Caldeira, “Fortified Enclaves,” 303.

⁸ Caldeira, “Fortified Enclaves,” 309.

⁹ Cited in Chris Pickvance, “On the Study of Urban Social Movements,” in *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays* (London: Tavistock, 1976), 198-218. See (p. 203).

contradiction of use and exchange value and the exploitation of labour.¹⁰ The birth of nation-states and the ideal conceptions of modern cities had envisioned a departure from older systems of inequality, reinforced contradictions, and exclusions that were the guiding features of cities.¹¹ The capital cities that were built along the principles of egalitarianism to solve the unbridled domination of private interests proved to be utopian and brought to light major contradictions and confrontations between competing interest groups.¹² These contradictions have come to the fore and exacerbated the conditions of the poor and in turn lay the ground for activist interventions. In other words, the speedy transformations in cities have given a fillip to different modes and kinds of activism in cities. This is not to argue that activism in Delhi is severed off from the state. In fact, if state-initiated planning has brought about these contradictions, the state is also mobilized to negotiate these contradictions. In other words, if on the one hand the middle class mobilizes the state apparatus for a specific kind of cityscape, the state is also mobilized on behalf of the poor for numerous survival issues on the other. Despite the blatant violations of rights, there is a mobilization of the state for claims of entitlements in various respects. In this paper I elaborate two types of activism in Delhi. One is in consonance with what has been called a “post-industrial global image” of the city.¹³ The middle classes lead this activism, which in turn is largely informed by what Baviskar

¹⁰ Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978). See also David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1989).

¹¹ James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). See also Ravi Kalia, *Bhubaneswar: From a Temple Town to a Capital City* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹² Holston, *The Modernist City*. See also Kalia, *Bhubaneswar*.

¹³ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 143.

terms “bourgeois environmentalism.”¹⁴ It is semi-organized and has gained a wider support in the media. The primary mode of this type of activism is the mobilization of support on the part of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) by placing a flurry of public interest litigations (PILs) before the judiciary. As will be discussed later, fortunately for this activism there is an erosion of the progressive rationale and anti-poor bias in the judiciary’s verdicts as discussed by scholars like Chatterjee. In response, there is a staging of politics on behalf of the urban poor to subsist in the city. In this respect, Sajha Manch a coalition of 40 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch¹⁵ (DJAM) have been intervening actively in city politics by highlighting the exclusionary premises of current planning regimes. This forms the context to understand the nature and contents of two types of activism: 1) on the part of RWA/civil society¹⁶ bodies (middle-class activism), and 2) on the part of Sajha Manch

¹⁴ Amita Baviskar, “The Politics of the City,” *Seminar*, no. 516, month August (2002), pp. 40-42. Bourgeois environmentalism broadly refers to upper class environmental sensibilities around “aesthetics, leisure, safety and health,” which in turn is opposed to the livelihood and housing needs of poor. See (p. 41).

¹⁵ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City* (New Delhi, February/March, 1997a), 2-36. See also Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After: A follow-up report on the mass displacement of workers in Delhi: findings of a survey of 100 closed units* (New Delhi, July, 1997b), 1-13. The cover page of a Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch report describes that it “was formed on 16 December 1996, when various organizations came together to address issues arising from a series of Supreme Court orders relocating polluting industries and cleaning up Delhi.” See Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 1-13. The Manch has been campaigning against the dislocation of working class families as a consequence of industrial closures and demolition of Jhuggi-Jhonpuri settlements. It organizes protest *dharnas* (sit-ins) at the Supreme Court and Labour Ministry, holds public meetings in various industrial areas and campaigns against court orders by distributing leaflets and organizing cultural activities and rallies against demolitions and industrial closures. See Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 1-13.

¹⁶ See Partha Chatterjee, “Community in the East,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 6 (1998), pp. 277-282. Chatterjee’s formulation of civil society is very helpful here, as Chatterjee argues that ‘proper citizens’ with constitutionally protected rights

and DJAM. Thus, the paper examines conflicts over the cityscape and delves into the activities of RWAs in their attempt to perpetuate dominant interests as well as the challenges that have emerged from grassroots mobilization. These grassroots organizations focus on “planning and urban policies, which in the name of welfare and resettlements control and restrict the options for the poor, while the middle class is permitted to expand the business, market, recreation and trade, so that it promotes the globalization of economy.”¹⁷ My paper analyzes the effects of activism of the above types. In this light I also explore the possibilities and limits of these alternatives (Sajha Manch and DJAM) in the context of globalization.

The paper does not claim to provide an exhaustive analysis of activism in Delhi. Rather it focuses on two of the most pressing concerns, housing and the environment in Delhi, by reviewing the activities of RWAs, Sajha Manch, and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch (DJAM). I am aware that this kind of study would be limited in its understanding of the dynamics, nature, and the effects of activism in general. A more comprehensive study based primarily on ethnography of social movements and civil society bodies is necessary for a more complete exploration of these questions. The primary sources for this study are newspapers clippings, news magazines, Sajha Manch Samachar (a monthly bulletin of Sajha Manch) and various pamphlets published by Sajha Manch, Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch and other bodies in the wake of various events. It was difficult to select a timeframe as the question of housing and the environment recur time and again in the city. However the focus is on post-1990s developments in Delhi. Though, evictions

inhabit civil society, which in turn excludes a majority of the people and largely the poor. See (p. 279).

¹⁷ Sanjeev Routray, “Urban Planning and Public Health Consequences for Poor Migrants: A Study of Delhi,” (M.Phil thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2003), 123.

during Emergency period in mid 1970s had reached its peak, the sustained and continuing basis of evictions since 1990s remains unparalleled. The focus will be on the year 1996, which saw a renewed focus on environmental pollution, closure of industries, and evictions following the infamous verdict of the Supreme Court (to be discussed later). Hence, I draw on materials that reflect these events suggesting trends in activism in Delhi. Drawing on Tarlo's unconventional methodological precept of using government documents to demonstrate the "everyday technologies and mythologies of state practices,"¹⁸ I argue that these bulletins and clippings can provide an ethnographic window into the larger picture of lived politics, activism, and the negotiations of citizenship in Delhi.

At the outset it can be argued that housing and environment are the two most contentious issues that shape Delhi's politics today. The housing question concerns itself with the conflict between the use value and the exchange value of the city. To use Castells words, the resident's desire for "a city is organized around its use value, as against the notion of urban living and services as a commodity, the logic of exchange value."¹⁹ And in Delhi the concern with use value foregrounds the question of decent hospitable housing and basic services for over an estimated "30 lakh people in jhuggi (huts) clusters."²⁰ In other words, drawing on Castells the struggle for improved collective consumption, in contradiction to the notion of the city for profit has propelled

¹⁸ Emma Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of India's 'Emergency'* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 9.

¹⁹ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley, CA: University of Berkeley Press, 1983), 319.

²⁰ Dunu Roy, "Organizing for Safe Livelihood: Feasible Options," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 35, nos. 52 & 53 (2000), pp. 4603-4607. See (p. 4603).

contentious mediations in the city.²¹ These interventions employ strategies and confront power structures in a multitude of practices that constitute a formidable challenge to the state's exclusionary planning objectives. Nevertheless, the context of Delhi is different and unlike in Castells' argument there is an absence of working-class radicalism and significant left party mobilizations in Delhi.²²

Along with housing, contentions and judicial activism around environmental pollution, the closure of industries, and slum removal have witnessed a spurt in Delhi (to be discussed later).²³ The issue of beautification of the city and pollution stand opposed to the very survival and livelihood of the poor while the working class had to bear the brunt of the aftermath of industrial closures.²⁴ But the most interesting issue at this juncture is the articulation of what constitutes 'public' in the reordering of the city's topography. For instance, Sharan argues that the "law operates 'publicly' validating the point that issues of public health/public good receive their publicness only in conjunction with other aspects of the public, most notably public opinion."²⁵ This has necessitated a concerted effort to mobilize public opinion against pollution and for cleaning the city by various Resident Welfare Associations. Chatterjee following Marx reminds us that civil

²¹ Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*.

²² Discussed in Peter Saunders, *Urban Politics: A Sociological Interpretation* (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1979), 17.

²³ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 1-13.

²⁴ See Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City* and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*.

²⁵ Awadhendra Sharan, "Claims on Cleanliness: Environment and Justice in Contemporary Delhi," in *Sarai Reader 02: The Cities of Everyday Life*, eds. Ravi Vasudevan et. al. (Delhi: Sarai, CSDS + The Society for Old and New Media Publishers, 2002), 31-37. See (p. 34-35).

society is bourgeois society²⁶ and the RWAs and “green activists”²⁷ bourgeois impulse dictates environmental politics in Delhi. Armed with public interest litigations the RWAs have invoked a “bourgeois environmentalism”²⁸ to clean the city. Now I turn to a more detailed discussion of the activities of RWAs, Sajha Manch, and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch concerning housing and the environment.

Housing and Environment: Twin issues of conflict in Delhi

Housing activism has witnessed a frenzied spurt in Delhi since the 1990s. The Supreme Court of India, “in a public interest litigation (PIL) on garbage management in Indian cities had ordered slums and litter to be removed from the capital.”²⁹ The apex court based its argument on the health and wellbeing of the ‘public.’ The poorer residents were rendered culpable of polluting the Yamuna River with untreated garbage and domestic waste, which created a fear of impending epidemics and health hazards. The Supreme Court “observed that ‘creating of slums appears to be good business and that promise of free land in place of a Jhuggi attracts land grabbers.’”³⁰ The Supreme Court “remarked, (that) ‘rewarding an encroacher on public land with [a] free alternate site is like giving a reward to a pickpocket.’”³¹

²⁶ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 38.

²⁷ Jayati Ghosh, “Pollution and the Rights of Citizens,” *Frontline*, vol. 17, no. 25, 9-22 December 2000. Ghosh uses the phrase “green activism.”

²⁸ Baviskar, “The Politics of the City,” 41.

²⁹ Gita Devan Verma, *Slumming India: A Chronicle of Slums and their Saviors* (New Delhi: Penguin Publishers, 2002), 19.

³⁰ Verma, *Slumming India*, 20.

³¹ Verma, *Slumming India*, 20.

As Sharan points out, “urban health can not be imagined in the name of an abstract ‘public’ alone but needs to be refracted through the concerns of many specific publics that stand to lose (or gain) from environmental improvement.”³² There are many works that have established linkages between poverty and public health in urban settings. In fact urban planning in the name of resettlement has further impoverished and aggravated the public health hazards facing communities.³³ Organizations like Sajha Manch and DJAM have vociferously suggested that the poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and in turn have campaigned for better sanitation and basic facilities. Further, the verdict of Okhla Factory Owners’ Association vs. The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi criminalized the poor and labelled the policy of rehabilitation of the poor as illegal and arbitrary, seeking its removal.³⁴

Judicial activism is being supported by zealous RWAs who have proposed a flurry of PILs to discipline the urban landscape. The RWAs’ petitions have argued for better municipal solid waste management, management of air pollution, and removal of slums in the recent past. Following this, the state has used numerous technologies to reorder the urban landscape, which have revealed a governmental rationality, which in turn exercises coercive as well as subtler forms of power over the urban poor. This in turn has led to a classification and categorization of the so-called law-abiding citizens versus ‘encroachers’ inhabiting *jhuggi* settlements. Drawing on Foucault, it can be argued that these technologies in the garb of eviction/resettlement have proved potent enough to

³² Sharan, “Claims on Cleanliness,” 36.

³³ Routray, “Urban Planning and Public Health Consequences,” 78-114.

³⁴ Okhla Factory Owners’ Association vs. The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 108 (2002) DLT 517.

normalize, hierarchize and regulate the urban poor through various modes of classification, surveillance, and discipline.³⁵ The legal discursive formations have expedited the governmental rationality by sanctioning knowledge claims and practices and there is a “cross-fertilizing interplay”³⁶ among RWAs, the judiciary and the state to “conduct the conduct” of people.³⁷

The reordering of urban spaces and surveillance of the urban landscape in an attempt to discipline the poor has pushed the poor into segregated spaces and has protected the interests of the powerful. This has created apartheid cities, as suggested in a study led by the Habitat International coalition,³⁸ where the state has adopted exclusionary politics of erasing the poor out of sight. The activities of a multitude of state apparatuses in regulating urban spaces and imposing a particular urban order have strengthened the entire machinery of the state.³⁹

The flurry of petitions has been guided by a desire to clean the city and install surveillance of the city’s poor. Eminent lawyers like H.D. Shourie have argued that poor people should be resettled but in the surroundings of Delhi and the government should organize transport facilities to enable the workers to travel to the city.⁴⁰ This eminent lawyer emphasized the necessity of the poor in the city but denied them any right to live

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London: Penguin Publishers, 1975).

³⁶ Colin Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 1-52. See (p. 36).

³⁷ Gordon, “Governmental Rationality,” 2.

³⁸ See the details in *Restructuring New Delhi’s Urban Habitat: Building on Apartheid City?* (Pre-Publication Version, New Delhi, 2001). A Report prepared by Habitat International Coalition, Housing and Land Rights Committee and South Asia Regional Programme (HIC-HLRC-SARP).

³⁹ Gordon, “Governmental Rationality,” 1-52.

⁴⁰ Verma, *Slumming India*, 86.

there, arguing against the modicum of provisions for the poor. In return the metropolitan desire is to provide the city with modern parks that have “rainwater harvesting, meditation center, and jogging tracks.”⁴¹ In October 2000, Jagmohan had inaugurated such a park “previously under a slum and announced a similar park on another site from which slums had been shifted to Narela.”⁴² Verma notes that “in November, ‘to the relief of residents of about 150 group housing societies’ who had been ‘pressurizing the local administration,’ plans to shift four slum clusters on land meant for parks were announced.”⁴³

The distaste of working class shelters is nothing new and the current policy perpetuates pre-independence policies that regarded the working class shelters as “sore spots”, “blighted areas,”⁴⁴ and “plague spots”⁴⁵ waiting to be bulldozed out of sight. The city planning interventions today reflect the colonial policy of a war on “dirt, disease and disorder”⁴⁶ in Delhi. The colonial era attitude to the nature of the working class has not changed and the interventions reflect a vision of the poor as a “floating, footloose, rootless population living in penury,” disturbing “the stability of the ‘better class’ or ‘decent’ people” and “the social, moral, political fabric of the city.”⁴⁷ The focus today is on “drastic surgery” of the city to create an urban social geography based on class differentiation. This focus is opposed to “conservative surgery” in a Gedessian

⁴¹ Verma, *Slumming India*, 89.

⁴² Verma, *Slumming India*, 89.

⁴³ Verma, *Slumming India*, 89.

⁴⁴ Ritu Priya, “Town Planning, Public Health, and Urban Poor: Some Explorations from Delhi,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 28, no. 17 (1993), pp. 824-834. See (p. 829).

⁴⁵ Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor in Early 20th Century India* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 74.

⁴⁶ Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor*, 70.

⁴⁷ Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor*, 66.

framework of urban planning, which focused on an evolutionary strategy of gradual eradication of slums.⁴⁸ The middle-class has taken on the role of urban managers in disciplining and restoring the urban order⁴⁹ and they do so in partnership with the state in what has come to be regarded as the *bhagidari* (partnership) scheme. In fact, although housing bodies police neighbourhoods for lawlessness and encroachments through the *bhagidari* scheme, they ironically flout various municipal rules in collusion with politicians and real estate brokers.⁵⁰ In the name of greening and reforming the civic life of the city the RWAs dig illegal bore wells, withdraw excessive ground water from notified critical areas, demand hospitals, colleges and Delhi Haats and achieve this even though the Master Plan did not envisage them.⁵¹ Thus drawing on Berry, it can be argued that law constitutes a “social process, transactions as subject to multiple meaning, and exchange as open-ended and multi-dimensional rather than single-stranded and definitive.”⁵² This is richly illustrated by the nature of PILs and the verdicts that followed them. For instance, whereas the case of *Olga Tellis vs. Bombay Municipal Corporation* had assured pavement dwellers a right to livelihood, the recent PILs in Delhi have

⁴⁸ See Gooptu for an elaboration on the logic of urban planning to create an urban social geography through class differentiation in colonial times. Gooptu, *The Politics of Urban Poor*, 83-90.

⁴⁹ R. E. Pahl, *Whose City? And Other Essays on Sociology and Planning* (London: Longman Publishers, 1970), 215-224. Pahl discusses the role of urban managers in controlling scarce resources in cities of UK.

⁵⁰ See also Verma, *Slumming India*.

⁵¹ Verma, *Slumming India*, 117.

⁵² Cited in Ananya Roy, *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 137-138.

expedited slum clearings in the light of nuisance and garbage management as discussed above.⁵³

The law is used differentially by various social actors for their own purposes and as noted above, ironically the so-called law-abiding citizens of resident welfare associations have violated many legal provisions. The RWAs driven by funding options, self-enlightened interests, and populist interference⁵⁴ have forged alliances with the state, while bending many rules to further their interests. Sheila Dikshit, the chief minister of Delhi organizes frequent workshops with RWAs. Inaugurating one such workshop, “Sheila Dikshit reiterated that ‘without complaints and suggestions, participation and cooperation, government cannot move forward.’”⁵⁵ The chief minister once announced that around “1700 RWAs had attended workshops” and “not a single rupee had been given by her government to any RWA or market associations participating in the *bhagidari* scheme.”⁵⁶ However, she vaguely remarked, “only planned expenditure was going into the activities being performed.”⁵⁷ It should be noted that class interests underpin the *bhagidari* scheme while the poor lacking cultural and material capital have remained outside its ambit. Thus as Verma has shown, the RWAs have positioned themselves as efficient interlocutors in restoring order in the city by installing surveillance on encroachers and law-breakers while flouting municipal rules themselves. Indeed the RWAs also discussed the formation of an “anti-squatter forum” in Vasant

⁵³ For a discussion of various court judgments see HIC-HLRC-SARP, *Restructuring New Delhi's Urban Habitat*, 40-42.

⁵⁴ See also Verma, *Slumming India*.

⁵⁵ Verma, *Slumming India*, 115.

⁵⁶ *The Hindu*, “No Money given to RWAs, asserts Sheila,” 19 March 2005.

⁵⁷ *The Hindu*, “No Money given to RWAs.”

Kunj in July 2000.⁵⁸ Quite paradoxically all these discussions took place after the RWAs had haggled to get a “reprieve in the matter of illegal additions to their flats.”⁵⁹ In fact someone responding to these developments from a *jhuggi* near Vasant Kunj had remarked: “Will anyone let us form an anti-illegal additions forum’ against them?”⁶⁰

Now I turn my attention to the activities of Sajha Manch and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch (DJAM). Coalitions of slum-dwellers’ organizations, trade unions, and NGOs such as Sajha Manch and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, have highlighted the illegal constructions of the rich, master plan violations that amount to large-scale urban disorder, and disparities in the provision of basic amenities and consumption inequalities in Delhi.⁶¹ Their campaigns have critiqued the master plans and highlighted the non-participatory⁶² top-down approach of the planners. The organizations have argued for a change in the provision of land use for the poor and have highlighted how these provisions have already been changed before for other purposes. The “provision for changing the land use specified in the Master Plan has been invoked in 38 cases so far.”⁶³ The Delhi Science Forum report notes that “these cases include building places of worship, providing accommodation for government offices or employees including CRPF, building warehouses for international goods and even handing over land meant for

⁵⁸ Verma, *Slumming India*, 156.

⁵⁹ Verma, *Slumming India*, 156.

⁶⁰ Verma, *Slumming India*, 157.

⁶¹ Amita Baviskar, “Between Violence and Desire: Space, Power and Identity in the Making of Metropolitan Delhi,” *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 55, no. 175 (2003), pp. 89-98. See (p. 97). See also Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After* and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*.

⁶² See also Baviskar, “Between Violence and Desire,” 97.

⁶³ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi* (New Delhi, March, 2001), 1-38. See (p. 16).

a sewage treatment plant to a private, five-star hospital (Apollo) at throw away prices.”⁶⁴ In other words, the thrust of the argument was that “when the need arises, adjustment of the master plans is made for the privileged sections but never for the poor and needy.”⁶⁵ The organizations have also noted the unbridled construction of illegal farmhouses in the protected areas of Delhi. It should be pointed out that illegal constructions and quarrying remained conspicuous in Delhi. Soni has drawn attention to a “spurt in the proliferation of new farmhouses, boldly advancing into the (un) protected forest area on the Ridge and even into the outer zone of the Wild Life Sanctuary (created in 1986, out of the commons of Asola, Sahurpur, Maidan Garhi and Deoli Villages and extended in 1991 to cover the area of the Bhatti mines).”⁶⁶

One of the key members of Sajha Manch spearheading the campaign pointed out that “Delhi Development Authority itself has changed the land use category of roughly 5,000 hectares from green areas in the eight years from 1990 to 1998,”⁶⁷ which highlight the blatant land use violations. Similarly it is argued that “despite the projections for retaining the Ridge as a lung space, over 19 major institutional encroachments have been allowed and over 34% of the Ridge was lost in the process.”⁶⁸ The report goes on to indicate that as per the “National Institute of Urban Affairs, there were 27 known cases of land use violations by the DDA itself.”⁶⁹ All these pointers then become the basis for

⁶⁴ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 16.

⁶⁵ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 16.

⁶⁶ Anita Soni, “Urban Conquest of Outer Delhi: Beneficiaries, Intermediaries and Victims: The Case of the Mehrauli Countryside,” in *Urban Spaces and Human Destinies*, eds. Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo and Denis Vidal, (New Delhi: Manohar Publication, 2000), 75-94. See (p. 86).

⁶⁷ Roy, “Organizing for Safe Livelihood,” 4604.

⁶⁸ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 16.

⁶⁹ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 16.

waging a struggle for Delhi's 30 lakh people who live in *jhuggis* (almost all of it government land).⁷⁰ As discussed above, the legal definitions and struggles remain at the forefront of debates on citizenship in Delhi. Here Chatterjee's formulation of a distinction between 'population' just amenable to the developmental rhetoric of the state and 'citizens' that actually share the sovereignty of the state, throws light on the actual lived struggles in the city spaces.⁷¹ For instance, the beating to death of a boy and the infamous police firing that followed over the use of a park in Ashok Vihar had given rise to diametrically opposite claims.⁷² The sundry contentions that became apparent defined the park as belonging to the public and could only be used in particular ways. The residents of Sukhdev Nagar *jhuggi* cluster had claimed to use it for defecation and the residents of Ashok Vihar, a middle class neighbourhood, had guarded their parks zealously against this.⁷³ Thus the boy who was beaten to death because he was suspected of defecating in the park and the consequent police firing following the turmoil drove home the contentious issue of citizenship in urban Delhi. This draws our attention to the contentious nature of citizenship given the debates about commons, access to scarce urban resources and deep-seated inequalities. In other words, the above scenario forces one to rethink ideas about public, citizenship, and legality.

The organizations have responded to these issues by fighting out their battles over the various rights of the urban poor. The organizations have made a concerted effort to

⁷⁰ Roy, "Organizing for Safe Livelihood," 4603-4604.

⁷¹ Chatterjee, "Community in the East," 277-282.

⁷² See Sharan, "Claims on Cleanliness," 37. See also Baviskar, "The Politics of the City," and Baviskar, "Between Violence and Desire," 89.

⁷³ See Sharan, "Claims on Cleanliness," 37. See also Baviskar, "The Politics of the City," and Baviskar, "Between Violence and Desire," 89.

point out the disparities and lopsided provision and actualization of housing for the poor. It should be pointed out that urban Delhi housed over 6 lakh people in *jhuggi* clusters before January 2004.⁷⁴ However the massive eviction in Yamuna Pushta in January 2004 had rendered some hundred and fifty thousand people homeless.⁷⁵ A report prepared by Sajha Manch titled *A People's Housing Policy* pointed out the implementation lapses on the part of the state. It claims that despite allocating a measly "5% of the land for the poor, the deficit housing units for poor in 1981 stood at 3 lakhs further causing proliferation of slums."⁷⁶ It further claims that "out of the total 70% of the total housing to be built for the economically weaker sections and lower income groups only 58% had actually been achieved in the period of 1981-2001."⁷⁷ The report notes that the target for the rich and middle class had been overachieved by more than three times during the same period.⁷⁸ Drawing on various surveys of DDA flats occupancy the report concluded that it is only "the relatively better families who can afford DDA-built housing."⁷⁹ The state has carried out its unrestrained evictions, which have gained momentum since the 1990s, which is comparable to the evictions during emergency.⁸⁰ The MCD had claimed to have resettled some 47,366 "squatter" families since 1990 in far off places such as Dwarka, Narela, Holambi Kalan, Molarband, Bhalswa and Bakarwala until 2003.⁸¹ In

⁷⁴ Routray, "Urban Planning and Public Health Consequences."

⁷⁵ Exact data on this is unavailable. The estimates range between 100,000-1,50,000. The demolitions began in the beginning of 2004 and by June 2004 the entire stretch of Yamuna Pushta was cleared.

⁷⁶ Sajha Manch, *A People's Housing Policy* (New Delhi, 2003), 1-46. See (p. 39).

⁷⁷ Sajha Manch, *A People's Housing Policy*, 39.

⁷⁸ Sajha Manch, *A People's Housing Policy*, 39.

⁷⁹ Sajha Manch, *A People's Housing Policy*, 40.

⁸⁰ Routray, "Urban Planning and Public Health Consequences," 22.

⁸¹ Routray, "Urban Planning and Public Health Consequences," 74.

this light, the organizations have challenged summary evictions through demonstrations and have campaigned against policies of reduced land tenancy and plot size. They have also campaigned for a revision of resettlement eligibility, the right to information, affordable transportation, basic facilities and work opportunities in resettlement colonies. Furthermore they have also indicated the limits of other policies, i.e. environmental improvement in “squatter” settlements and in-situ upgrading carried out by the state along with evictions.⁸² For instance, one of the key activists pointed out that the available funds could only cover 50,000 *jhuggis* under the program of environmental improvement and that the infrastructural services were inadequate.⁸³ Moreover the policy of “privatization” wherein public amenities are transferred to NGOs and private parties for maintenance, which levy “user charges,” is critiqued vehemently.⁸⁴ These arguments gain importance in the light of the Delhi Government’s active pursuance of the corporate sector in reducing poverty. There has been a concerted effort to collaborate with various corporate forums and federations like the “Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Punjab, Haryana, Delhi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).”⁸⁵ In light of all of these developments, the organizations have drawn alternative land reform plans in Delhi in order to provide more land and permanent settlement in the poor’s places of residence. The organizations have argued that land reform for the benefit of the poor are in place as the housing scenario for the poor is abysmal and the land earmarked for the poor falls within the urbanizable limits.

⁸² Roy, “Organizing for Safe Livelihood,” 4604.

⁸³ Roy, “Organizing for Safe Livelihood,” 4604.

⁸⁴ Roy, “Organizing for Safe Livelihood,” 4604.

⁸⁵ Verma, *Slumming India*, 118.

Sajha Manch has been organizing conventions and hearings primarily to channel the experiences of people living in *jhuggi* clusters, resettlement colonies, and unauthorized colonies in the capital. For instance, a key activist notes that the Manch has been active to give “voice to the experiences and aspirations of those 80 lakh citizens living in an estimated 1200 slums, 50 resettlement colonies, and 1500 unauthorized colonies in the capital.”⁸⁶ The *jhuggi* residents affiliated with the Manch have diligently carried out surveys and enumerations. The Manch has questioned claims that an unproductive, criminal, and footloose population is floating around in the city through various documents, reports, and bulletins. Such methods of enumeration could be argued to constitute “countergovernmentality” as described by Appadurai, and forms the moral basis for claims of a rightful existence in the city.⁸⁷ One of the household surveys conducted in over twenty settlements revealed the following figures: “The average family size is of 5 with 75% below the age of 30 years. 41% were working in offices, 20% in factories and shops, and 29% as daily wagers. 36% of the families had two or more working members, while 44% of the workers were skilled. 75% were however temporary and the average monthly wage was less than Rs 2000.”⁸⁸

The bulletins, pamphlets, reports and statistics produced by Sajha Manch have documented the precariousness of the working population sharing similar experiences of poverty and struggling on an everyday basis to eke out a living in the city. This has

⁸⁶ Dunu Roy, “People and Planning,” *Seminar*, 491 (2000), pp. 73-74. Roy has also summarized the range of activities carried out by these organizations. See also various issues of Sajha Manch Samachar.

⁸⁷ Appadurai, “Deep Democracy,” 36.

⁸⁸ Sajha Manch, *Proceedings at Speakers Hall in New Delhi’s Constitution Club* (4 June, 2000). See also Roy, “People and Planning,” 74.

reaffirmed the plight of a “young, productive, working population”⁸⁹ as opposed to the negative portrayals of migrants in the city. The conventions organized by Sajha Manch are often attended by various high-profile ministers, MCD officials, activists, and funders.⁹⁰ The participants mostly from these settlements raise questions and point to the hulking threat to occupation and housing in the event of displacement, industrial closures and impoverishment.⁹¹ The Manch also organizes street theatre and the participants aim to empower people by enacting the corrupt practices of officials and informing the participants about their rightful dues.⁹² Thus it informs people about implementation lapses⁹³ and emphasizes speedy implementation. The Manch generates statistics on various issues related to housing and employment in order to present them to the state authorities for consideration. Thus, if statistics have been ably used to classify, hierarchize and discipline people by state authorities in colonial and post-colonial contexts,⁹⁴ here is then an instance where the disciplining logic of the state is reversed by producing counter statistics. In other words if the quest for normality has contributed to

⁸⁹ Roy, “People and Planning,” 74.

⁹⁰ *Sajha Manch Samachar*, February 2001, pp. 1-4.

⁹¹ See various issues of *Sajha Manch Samachar* between 2001-2005.

⁹² Kislay a constituent NGO has been very active through its weekly street theatres more generally to campaign for the right to information and organizes people around housing and livelihood issues. See also various issues of *Sajha Manch Samachar* between 2001-2005.

⁹³ Nirmaan, another constituent NGO has been campaigning for minimum wages, voting rights, ration cards, cooperative-housing societies etc.

⁹⁴ See for instance, Hacking, 1990; Foucault, 1975; and Cohn, 1987 for very well articulated arguments on statistics and their impelling disciplinary logic. Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, and Bernard Cohn, “The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia,” in *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, (Delhi and London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 224-254.

the emergence of statistics in “making up people,”⁹⁵ Sajha Manch’s statistics have entailed the unmaking of the same process. For instance, Sajha Manch data in the wake of industrial closures revealed that the number of workers in a factory averaged 40, as compared to the Delhi government’s official figure of nine, thereby arguing for a higher compensation figure.⁹⁶

The neo-liberal economy’s promotion of a service economy has foregrounded many contradictions around industrial closures and pollution, which in turn have laid the ground for activism of various kinds. This created a historic moment for the planners, the RWAs and the citizen groups in the city to debate industrial and urban air pollution and their linkage with the general deteriorating impact on the environment. A PIL was filed in the court by an “environmentalist lawyer, M.C. Mehta”⁹⁷ and “on July 8, 1996 in the matter of PIL number 4697/85, a supreme court order directed the relocation of 168 industries in consonance with the provisions of the Delhi master plan, according to which, industries categorized as “H” (i.e. “noxious and hazardous”) were to be relocated.”⁹⁸ The verdict had set a deadline of 30th November 1996 and vigorously condemned non-installation of common effluent treatment plants (CETPs).⁹⁹ Magsasay award winner activist M.C. Mehta expressed the views of a legal expert without taking into account issues of equity and justice. Delhi in the view of this lawyer activist has

⁹⁵ Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, 3.

⁹⁶ Sajha Manch, *Proceedings at Speakers Hall in New Delhi’s Constitution Club*. See also Roy, “People and Planning”, 74.

⁹⁷ Aditya Nigam, “Dislocating Delhi: A City in the 1990s,” in *Sarai Reader 01: The Public Domain*, eds. Raqs Media Collective (for Sarai) + Geert Lovink (for WAAG) (Delhi: Sarai, CSDS + The Society for Old and New Media Publishers, 2001), 40-46. See (p. 44).

⁹⁸ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 1.

⁹⁹ Nigam, “Dislocating Delhi,” 44.

become a fragile city and needs to be decongested,¹⁰⁰ thus securing it for the better-sanitized class. This line of argument belied the hope of the poor and the activists' argument that migration into cities must be encouraged to fight rural poverty.¹⁰¹

Saskia Sassen has argued that the transformations in major cities of the world lead to the emergence of global cities.¹⁰² In Delhi at the time when manufacturing units were closing down in a scurried fashion, it was international banks, food chains and multinationals like "Sony, Samsung, Daewoo, Motorola, and Nokia" that replaced them.¹⁰³ Bridge and Watson argue that there is "a range of measures to attract business to cities, from tax holidays and rent concessions on urban land."¹⁰⁴ In this light, it should be pointed out that some 50,000 industrial units were listed for relocation in a drive to clean the city.¹⁰⁵ Following all these developments a movement was launched that became known as Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch (DJAM) as discussed before. It comprised smaller trade unions, democratic rights and other activist groups.¹⁰⁶ The movement highlighted the contradiction between beautification and the livelihood issues of the poor

¹⁰⁰ V. Venkatesan, "In Defence of Judicial Activism," *Frontline*, vol. 17, no. 25, 9-22 December 2000. In an interview with V. Venkatesan for the news magazine *Frontline*.

¹⁰¹ See also bulletins of Sajha Manch for this point.

¹⁰² Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Sassen maintains that globalization has resulted in "privatization, deregulation, digitalization, the opening up of national economies" in global markets. The "geographical dispersal of economic activities along with the simultaneous integration of such geographically dispersed activities has initiated outsourcing of central corporate functions." Hence, "spaces are created and recreated for these central corporate functions or producer services i.e. law, management consulting, accounting, public relations, programming, telecommunications and advertising." See (p. xviii-xx).

¹⁰³ Nigam, "Dislocating Delhi," 41.

¹⁰⁴ Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, "City Interventions," in *A Companion to the City*, eds. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 505-516. See (p. 511).

¹⁰⁵ Roy, "Organizing for Safe Livelihood," 4606.

¹⁰⁶ Nigam, "Dislocating Delhi," 44.

in various forums. The movement pointed out gross violations of master plan specifications and the judiciary's indifference towards the needs of the city's workers. The movement followed up relocations arguing that the policies of industrial relocation remained outside the purview of the Master Plan of Delhi. For instance, a team was sent to visit "Tonk district in Rajasthan (relocation site for Swatantra Bharat Mills) and Baddi in Himachal Pradesh – relocation site for Birla Textile Mills."¹⁰⁷ They alleged that there was "no sign of relocation work in progress."¹⁰⁸ The movement argued that relocation of industries is "made a lucrative proposition by allowing the land vacated by industries to be sold at market prices."¹⁰⁹ Moreover, it expressed anxiety about the plight of a multitude of workers who worked in ancillary units that were indirectly under threat of closure.¹¹⁰ One report argued that the moving spirit that imbues this plan is a perceived need to control the growth of population in Delhi.¹¹¹ It alleged that the Master Plans of Delhi maliciously lowered the population projections and washed its hands off people in terms of providing housing.¹¹² The movement also provided statistics to illuminate the contribution of various sections of society to pollution. It argued that the "contribution of industries to the air pollution of the city is only 12%" and the air pollution is largely due to vehicles, the number of which had increased "51 times in between 1961-1991."¹¹³ Again, it was argued that 64 percent waste water flows from affluent households and 21

¹⁰⁷ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Day After*, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*, 6.

¹¹⁰ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*, 9.

¹¹¹ Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 13.

¹¹² Delhi Science Forum, *The Cleansing of Delhi*, 13.

¹¹³ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*, 11.

percent from the poor households.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Manch suggested that water availability for the poor is very small and never reaches them.¹¹⁵ All these figures were put forward to contest the misplaced argument that the poor pollute the city more than the rich do.

Possibilities and limits of grassroots alternatives:

The suggestion that these interventions can be regarded as urban social movements needs further exploration. Urban theorists like Castells have argued that the nomenclature of any intervention in urban politics should be derived from its effect.¹¹⁶ It can be argued that despite the absence of palpable effects, there are serendipitous advantages without manifest ‘effects.’ Castells’ study of urban social movements addressed a different context and juxtaposed the interests of the dominant classes, presumably comprising of the state, capitalists and real-estate sharks, with the interests of the city’s citizens.¹¹⁷ Thus it can be argued that interventions in the name of citizens, the public good, and the larger public do not constitute a monolithic and well-coordinated movement. It is futile to assume a coherent social movement being waged in Delhi. Moreover, as pointed out above, there are fundamental differences in defining ‘public’ claims. If public claims aimed at sanitizing the city for the putative law-abiding citizens, they also generated “‘quasi claims’ embodied in various informal practices” on behalf of the poor, similarly discussed by Kaviraj.¹¹⁸ Furthermore there are conflicts and confrontations even among NGOs that aim to represent the urban poor in Delhi. Some

¹¹⁴ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*, 12.

¹¹⁵ Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch, *The Order that Felled a City*, 12.

¹¹⁶ See for a discussion of this phenomenon. Pickvance, “On the Study of Urban Social Movements,” 200.

¹¹⁷ Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*.

¹¹⁸ See this discussion in Roy, *City Requiem, Calcutta*, 11.

voice radical interventions by proposing land reforms in the city, while others aim for reformist strategies and collaborate with the government. On one hand, one could speculate that well-intentioned activism may suffer from a fundamental dilemma like the one described by urban theorist Peter Saunders: “whether to act within the system but thereby fail to pose an effective challenge, or to mobilize from outside the system (i.e. through ‘direct action’) but thereby run the risk of failing to articulate with it.”¹¹⁹ On the other, it should be pointed out that RWAs through public interest litigations and *bhagidari* schemes represent a different set of interests. Hence, it is not safe to argue that NGOs, global civil society,¹²⁰ and various civil society bodies have replaced state bodies in handling the current predicament associated with globalization. Scholars and activists have made us aware of the lure of funds, embezzlement, clamour for media attention, celebrity status and travel opportunities by various NGOs that wish to represent the needs of the ‘public.’¹²¹ In fact an interim direction issued as the upshot of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) alleged that “more than 7500 crores released as government grants to over 30,000 NGOs had not been accounted for.”¹²² The PIL had “alleged that ten major

¹¹⁹ Saunders, *Urban Politics*, 19.

¹²⁰ See Sassen, *The Global City*. See also Saskia Sassen, “Global Cities and Diasporic Networks: Microsites in Global Civil Society” in *Global Civil Society*, eds. Marlies Glasius, Mary Kaldor and Helmut Anheier, (Oxford University Press, 2002), 217-238. Scholars akin to Saskia Sassen have argued that global civil society consists of cross-border networks of global cities beyond the nation-state as the site for new types of politics. Sassen argues that the new politics of global civil society involves contesting corporate globalization and articulating the rights of women, immigrants, and the poor.

¹²¹ See also Verma, *Slumming India*.

¹²² Verma, *Slumming India*, 120.

ministries and their departments had yet to receive certificates on utilization of funds from over 22,000 NGOs for the money advanced even before 1995.”¹²³

In their important study John Harriss and Neera Chandhoke argue that the poorer social groups organize political representation and solve collective problems through political parties.¹²⁴ Chandhoke argues that people continue to have confidence in the state rather than the activities of NGOs.¹²⁵ Other scholars have argued that “the vantage point of the nation-state can not be the ground for erecting any radical politics.”¹²⁶ All these arguments may indicate that the state and the non-state actors remain polar opposites but on closer examination these positions are not diametrically opposed to each other as the state continues to be an important actor in people’s lives. Harriss and Chandhoke have shown that people repose hope in the state. However, it is also true that the state protects the interests of the dominant class and violates the fundamental rights of the poor as evidenced in the case of Delhi. Scholars have critiqued the liberal notions of rights and entitlements by virtue of merely belonging to a nation-state and have highlighted the varied forms of exclusions built into the idea of nation-state.¹²⁷ Hence it could be argued that there is a disjuncture between formal and substantive aspects of citizenship and full

¹²³ The Indian Express, “HC restrains Government from giving grants to NGOs without UC,” 25 October 2000.

¹²⁴ John Harriss, “Political Participation, Representation and the Urban Poor: Findings from Research in Delhi” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 40, no. 11 (2005), pp. 1041-1054. See also Neera Chandhoke, “‘Seeing’ the State in India,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 40, no. 11 (2005), pp. 1033-1039.

¹²⁵ Chandhoke, “‘Seeing’ the State in India,” 1036.

¹²⁶ Aditya Nigam, “Radical Politics in the Times of Globalization,” in *Democratic Governance in India: challenges of poverty, development and identity*, eds. Niraja Gopal Jayal and Sudha Pai, (Delhi: Sage Publishers, 2001), 156.

¹²⁷ Holston and Appadurai “Cities and Citizenship.” See also Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.

membership and access to rights remain only in theory.¹²⁸ Chatterjee has shown how different groups are excluded from the normative notions of citizenship and charts the negotiated terrains of the excluded in real practice.¹²⁹ Does the disjuncture between formal and substantive rights necessitate an alternative space for rearticulating the interests of the disadvantaged? Does the space provided by the two organizations constitute the interstices where these politics have to be played out? It can be argued that modern technologies of power also create counter-politics.¹³⁰ Drawing on Foucault, can we argue that grassroots interventions envision “strategic reversibility of power relations, or the ways in which the terms of governmental practice can be turned around into focuses of resistance?”¹³¹ Do the above interventions inaugurate “dissenting ‘counter-conducts?’”¹³²

Despite some of the limitations,¹³³ Sajha Manch and Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch¹³⁴ have steadfastly crusaded against homelessness and joblessness in metropolitan

¹²⁸ Holston and Appadurai “Cities and Citizenship,” 190.

¹²⁹ Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.

¹³⁰ Gordon, “Governmental Rationality,” 1-52.

¹³¹ Gordon, “Governmental Rationality,” 5.

¹³² Gordon, “Governmental Rationality,” 5.

¹³³ See Verma, *Slumming India*. Geeta Dewan Verma has argued that there is a lack of monitoring of the implementation of the master plan and different welfare policies in Delhi. She argues that there is an obfuscation of implementation failures as planning failures. See (p. xx). As a result, she calls for greater involvement of NGOs in monitoring and implementing the statutory provisions.

¹³⁴ See Nigam, “Dislocating Delhi,” 40-46. Nigam holds that the movement initiated by DJAM “could only stall the second leg of displacements for a few years, in real tangible terms; it could not really prevent the relocation.” See (p. 45). And according to him, “a part of the problem was also because the major trade unions refused to take up the issue in anything but a ritual manner, and that too, only after the question became a matter of serious contention.” See (p. 45).

Delhi over the years. Hence, do these activities fall under the rubric of political society¹³⁵ as argued by Chatterjee? Or do they “deepen democracy”¹³⁶ to use Appadurai’s phrase? The answers to these questions are not anticipated here, as further research would be required to address these questions. Through ethnographic evidences scholars have pointed out that the state is not monolithic and is imbricated with society in various ways.¹³⁷ Fuller and Harriss argued that the “state is not a discreet, monolithic entity ‘acting’ impersonally above or outside society... rather, the sarkar... appears on many levels and in many centers.”¹³⁸ They argue that “the boundary between the state and society, therefore, is not only unclear; it is also fluid and negotiable according to social context and position.”¹³⁹ This does not mean that the poor have always resisted the state in handling their predicament. Tarlo for instance has demonstrated the urban poor’s negotiation with the state perpetuated violence during emergency in Delhi.¹⁴⁰ Tarlo illustrates how fertility was tied with the provision of housing plots.¹⁴¹ The poor deployed their bodies and underwent sterilizations or motivated others to undergo sterilization in

¹³⁵ See Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*. Chatterjee formulates political society as the terrain where the poor negotiate strategically (often using para-legal mechanisms) to avail of certain benefits of the welfare state. See (p. 136). He distinguishes ‘citizens’ who share the sovereignty of the state and ‘population’ comprising subalterns that are merely amenable to the developmental rhetoric of welfare measures. See (p. 136).

¹³⁶ See Appadurai, “Deep Democracy,” 21-47. Appadurai uses this phrase to refer to the Mumbai Alliance, which uses “the knowledge of the poor to leverage expert knowledge, and redeem humiliation through a politics of recognition.” See (p. 40).

¹³⁷ Chris Fuller and John Harriss, “For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State,” in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, eds. Chris Fuller and Veronique Benei, (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2000).

¹³⁸ Fuller and Harriss, “For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State,” 14-15.

¹³⁹ Fuller and Harriss, “For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State,” 15.

¹⁴⁰ Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories*.

¹⁴¹ Emma Tarlo, “Welcome to History: A Resettlement Colony in the Making,” in *Urban Spaces and Human Destinies*, eds. Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo and Denis Vidal, (New Delhi: Manohar Publication, 2000), 51-71.

order to acquire housing plots.¹⁴² All the above arguments suggest that an understanding of politics necessarily demands attention to practices beyond the domain of the state, which in turn is imbricated with society in multifarious ways. The dynamics of politics and solidarities beyond the nation-state offer better possibilities for realizing substantive aspects of citizenship. In this regard, one could argue that the progressive variety of activism and its associated interventions have reflected the aspirations and needs of people. The movements discussed in this paper have countered the state's legal and planning vocabulary, placed its demands before the state machinery, demonstrated against human rights violations, and debated urban issues in various forums and conventions. We may not have anything grand to say about the effect of these interventions. But using the analogy of the theory of urban social movement proposed by Castells, it can be argued that these interventions have interrogated prevailing ideas of urban planning, contested exclusionary spatial forms and segregations and demanded for basic services and the right to information.¹⁴³ In other words, drawing on Tilly's typology and Castells' theory of urban social movements, it can be argued that these movements champion against urban disentanglements and foreground the conflict over urban meaning between bourgeois aesthetic and the urban poor's defense of urban use value.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Tarlo, "Welcome to History," 51-71.

¹⁴³ See Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, xv.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Tilly, "Contentious Repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834," *Social Science History*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1993), pp. 253-280. See (p. 266). See also Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, 334.