Agency, Contestation and Subalternity: Re-imaging the Mahim Koliwada as a Disaster Resilient Urban Quarter

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Abstract

A city is a complex coalesce of social pluralities and multiple webs of activities that defines the very essence of it, The people, communities and the activities they perform creates a sense of identity for the city and eventually the morphological dialogue they set up forms the image of the city. Does the developing city with a financial polarization and significant allocation of conveniences considers the criticality, social need, and all the more the crumbling debacle to place the right of the working and the proletariat class in the society? How those situated on the other side of power and privilege do negotiates the conditions of existence of these communities within the same urban territory? What strategies of existence and act of resistance do those trapped and wrung by social, legal and financial orders posit?

This paper in the primary stage studies and presents an account on one such indigenous community and their informal dwelling area (Koli area) squeezed and barely marking its presence in the city of Mumbai. It poses an important question in front f us, how the planning and development framework for a hyper capitalistic city like Mumbai accommodates the agency and representation of these subaltern groups in the city of Mumbai? Do they have right and voice in the regeneration policies of the city? If so what are the important considerations and sensitive strategization needed for a holistic and inclusive urban re-development. These are not new communities and had been living here for a long time, more gentrification happened in these areas by accumulation of more people from outside and exhibits a robust and unique collage of urban informality.

The subsequent stage is to prognosticate and strategise aggregate procedures that would re-affirm the rights of the community and the local area legitimately, thereby

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rightfully placing these vulnerable grey spots in the growing city through a holistic urban renewal programme with a disaster resilient approach. It is imperative to arrive at a rational, humane in the wake of new urban challenges and making new feasible potential outcomes.

Keywords: *Community, Hypercapitalistic, Subaltern, Legitimacy, Gentrification, Disaster*

1. Introduction

"The question of the subject and subjectivity directly affects colonized peoples' perceptions of their identities and their capacities to resist subject/subjectivity the conditions of their domination, their 'subjection'." – Ashcroft, B., Griffiths G., Tiffin H., (2004). Key Concepts in Post Colonial Studies. New York: Routledge Publishing House.

Urban areas are not constant entities, like some other living creature, they evolve and physically enlarge. In older neighborhoods of the city, with time the conundrum of informality, subjectivity, and an unkempt order creates an imbalance leading to inefficient urbanism and environment, asset overutilization, and future sustenance is under question. The act of adding more dwelling units and creating more space within a finite boundary leads to unchecked morphological adjustments. The issue escalates to a detrimental level when it compromises with the environment. The evolving and planned city considers these areas black spots and very soon they become the backyard to the elite city, completely neglected and left to decay slowly. The 1901 evaluation says there were around 1830 metropolitan territories in India. This demonstrates in excess of 1800 urban areas in India are extremely old. This maturing of urban communities has lead to crippling morphological fabric, and contestation of land-use, environmental contamination, poor social infrastructure, and absence of character.

The ideological and interactional roles and links between the city and societies are always in a state of dynamism and change. Ideological ties (patterns of values) bind the society to the city and vice versa. It demonstrates the rules that compose the cultural roles of societies and the cities and tries to seek their diffusion from the urban sphere into the cultural setting. The interactional role of the city as a socio-economic and political factor in the organization of the entire society studies the actual behaviour lines that tie the physical rubriks to its social setting. It seeks to understand the city as a performer of cultural roles within the overall organization.

Because of the technological, physical changes, cities are in a continuous state of adjustment to the socio-cultural environment and overtime creates a complex pattern, it thus undergoes adaptations. The physical realm evolving is thus directly linked with the adaptive capacity of the children and their concept of play. Two adaptation scenarios thus manifest – The internal and external adaptation. Internal adaptation is the spatial arrangement and social life evolving in relation with or apart from the larger society. Family structure, social life, and community configurations are in a state of continuous evolution and they manifest through a series of social behaviours.

External adaptation is the external conditions, urban values, lifestyle changes that affect the social phenomenon. For example, the advent of gated communities, the Bombay kurla complex, modern societies, transportation systems and ways of urban life have altered the way the subalterns used to interact with city earlier. Physical interactions, exchange of ideas, notions, and the sense of collective identity get diluted somewhere in this process.

"In the global South, urban growth is a hybrid of both models, turning urban real estate into a high-profit sector where political corruption, capitalist development and international finance intersect..." – Keyder Caglar,(1999).The Housing Market from Informal to Global. Istanbul: Between the Global and Local.

With the unchecked growth and massive densification of urban communities, old-local quarters of the city and its immediate vicinities face massive physical pressure and somehow fail to maintain a balance between them and the need of resources to sustain the density. In case of Mahim Koliwada, the proximity of the sea presents an enormous threat to the growing shoreline and slowly encroaching the coastline, extending towards the sea. The high tide is an immediate threat to a cataclysmic event for these communities.

Few Slums recovery projects under SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority) in Maharashtra watched out to acquire developers on board the way toward creating new dwellings. The thought was in the event that they could work in-situ to concrete finished dwellings for the home of the slum like Dharavi slum they would build up the rest as they thought that it was appropriate. The 2004 DRP made a further footstep ahead in which they channelled in private designers/developers that would reconstruct three square feet condo/small house buildings.

This was an ineffective endeavour on account of insufficient information and absence of land inside the region combined with inability to accept slums spokesperson along these lines overlooking the casual financial organizations which is an essential part for the entire arranging measure.

2. Mahim Koliwada

Mahim area is one of the oldest area in Mumbai where we can find traces of old settlement pockets and British impact on surrounding architecture. Our study area is Mahim where we see immediate proximity around the Mahim fort (Figure 1). Mahim fort is right now lying in ruins and encroached by unauthorised slum dwellers. Mahim Koliwada or the Fishermans village is surrounded by all such conditions. at same time we found government housing and public structure is protecting this area's growth. Just across the main road which divide the site naturally for its identity, the development is quit planned and a good mix of housing and open spaces along with few public buildings.

Figure 1: Evolution of Site, Declination in Coastline and Change in Settlement Pattern

(Image Courtesy : Dhanashree Dhoke & Arti Phadtare, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio 2020
Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

Basic Infrastructure for any liveable condition is considered when there is regular supply of water, toilet facilities and electricity connection is provided by government. But this happens when every structure at any place is authorised by government. But in Mahim Koliwada we found that only few structures are in perfect shape and functional, 50% of it is not authorised by the local authority almost every second house was not having proper toilet facility. Some of the major landmarks of the site are represented in Figure 2.
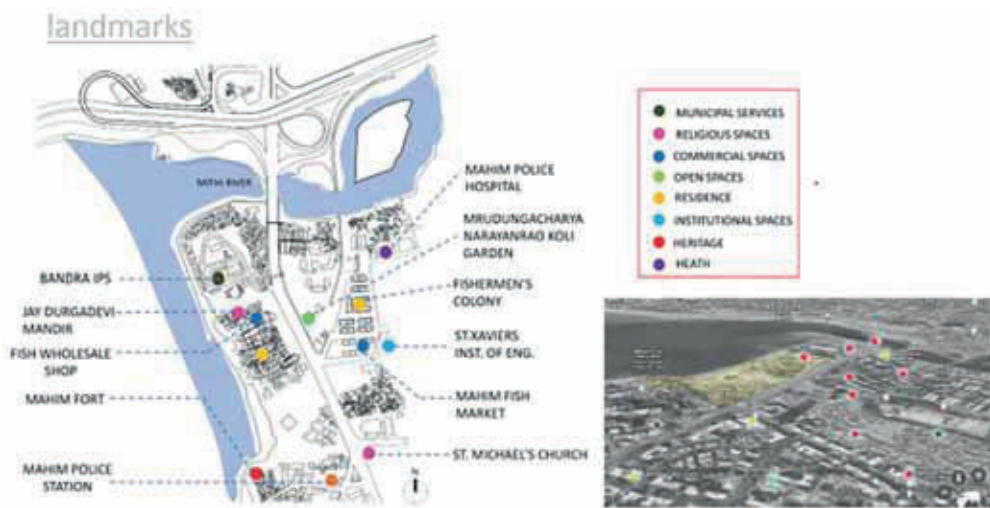

Figure 2: Major Landmarks of site

(Image Courtesy: Dhruv Parikh, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio 2020, Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

The fishing villages are the first inhabitant of any settlement near the sea. So we assume that the Kolis, who started fishing at the edge of sea in Mumbai are the first occupants of Mumbai City. They catch fish in the deep sea and sells fish and as one promenade around the near villages/gaothan. Mahim Koliwada is one of them and there is a solid sensorial feel of the presence of business fish-arranged society.

Boat is the primary source for fishing activities it is the only transport mode for local fisherman. The Kolis worship their boats and that is why it is prominent in any Koliwada. Mahim Koli's have defined the boat parking spaces for boat near to the ocean and there it is noticeable feature along with nets where usually fish drying activities

happens. Because fishing settlements are very close to sea and even fish drying spaces too anybody who passes from that locality can easily identify it due to strong smell of fish around the year.

The beauty of Mahim Kolwada is very natural, the grown of this area happened due to the sea frontage but at same time that frontage is becoming reason for negativity in that zone. Beautiful fort converted into ruins due to unauthorised development at sometime the land cost is drawing attention of local development authority at same time the private developers are also indulge into it. Every level of stakeholder really want to witness the vertical growth of these areas. Koliwada in western suburbs are prim and focus.

As shown in figure 1 we can identify that mangrove depletion is happening and the footprint of structures too. Unauthorised slums have housed near the mangrove area of Mahim Koliwada. It has become very noticeable in recent year. Mangroves are the main reason of city stability in terms of natural calamities near sea areas. City authority needs to attend this issue on priority basis. These are the natural protectors from flood and Tsunami. At same time mangrove are the house of many living organism like various verity of fishes, crabs and many more. Knowing the potential of this dense element it has been ignored for many years and that is why we see such built structures are there.

About history of Mahim Koliwada, the fishing community was nomad before twelfth century, when King Pratap bimb set up his Kingdom mahikawati he welcomed sixty six kulas or clans to be essential for his new kingdom, there community become locals of western sea shore of India. They setteled and at present we found the prominent impact of history in the present Mahim Koliwada.

Mahim is connected to areas of most prominent commercial areas in Mumbai in terms of economy and job opportunities (Figure 3). Proximity to these areas makes it one of the most sought-after land Patch in Mumbai from real estate perspective.

**Figure 3: Three most Prominent Commercial Areas in
Proximity to the Mahim Koliwada.**

(Image Courtesy: Pranjali Mali, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design
Studio 2020, Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

Being a linear city, Mumbai coastline became a prominent feature for the development, Mahim has one of the biggest coastline it covers roughly eight thousand six hundred meter. Mumbai has beautiful coastline in the country. major tourist visit few on regular basis, Mahim is one of them. Worli which is on south of Mahim is again important coastline for understanding the sea connecting channel from north to eastern corner of coastline. It was one of the important point in the history of Mumbai development.

This channel has very important natural feature which is Mangrove, which covers almost connecting spaces of Mithi River and sea. Mangrove are present at the starting tip of Mithi River and the reserve forest of mangrove is detoriating and due to contamination bought from near by changes in development. Change is unavoidable but authority can take incharge for such decisions where we can preserve the natural protectors of sea. Major Road connectivity and major junctions for activities at the Koliwada is represented in Figure 4 and 5. Figure 6 represents Cross Section, Topography of the Mahim Koliwada site.

**Figure 4 & 5: Major Road Connectivity and
Major Junctions for Activities at the Koliwada.**

(Image Courtesy: Joel Jutsna, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design
Studio 2020, Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

Figure 6: Cross Section, Topography of the Mahim Koliwada Site.

(Image: Joel Jutsna, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio
2020, Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

**Figure 7 & 8: Mapping of Land Use and existing basic
Infrastructure on the Mahim Koliwada Site and its Condition.**

(Image: Yash, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio 2020,
Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

Figure 8 showing housing condition like structure hight which is not beyond G+1 and unfishied structures around with narrow unpaved streets/lane connectivity, in this fig its is prominent that there is a big open ground which is used by community for social gathring and various festivals.
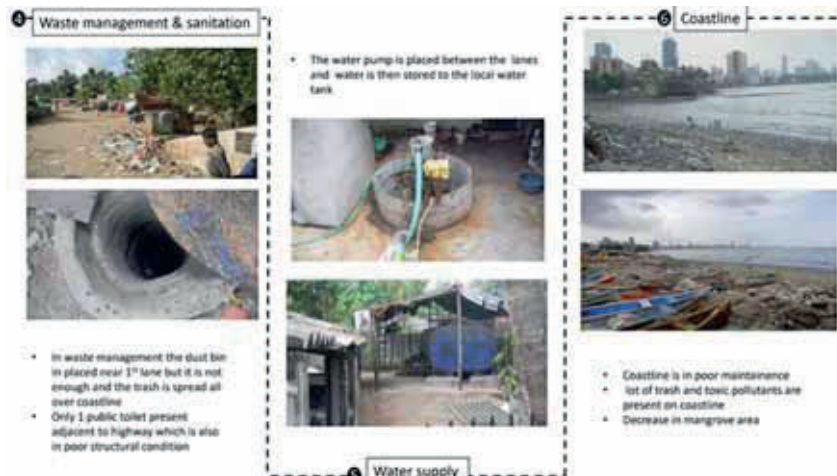

**Figure 9: Mapping of Waste Management, Sanitation and Water Supply along the
Coastline to understand overall conditions for Natural Disaster situation in Koliwada.**

(Image: Yash K, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio 2020,
Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

3. Mahim Koliwada Narrative - The Physical Setting and Future Aspirations.

3.1 Population and Household Data

As per primary source (Mr. Vaibhav Koli, 30, Mahim Koliwada) the total population is around 15000 and its spread around five major areas in the vicinity of Koliwada. Five hundred families stays in our selected site which is facing the ocean and Mangroves, they are housed here in recent years as unauthorised slums. More than two hundred families are staying here from British era and they have huge houses with all the amenities along with commercial spaces.

3.2 Significance of Woman in Koli Community

As per essential source (Ar. Sanman Koli, 30, Thane Koliwada, Mumbai) Women assumes critical part in fishing local area, they are the most dynamic part in the family for fish drying and selling. Roughly 20% of absolute population stays in joint family and 80% in nucleated families.

3.3 Limitations to 'Open Access' and Land Economics

As per essential source (Ar. Sanman Koli, 30, Thane Koliwada, Mumbai) Fishermen in Mumbai's various Koliwada voiced their anxiety over the limitations on open admittance to the ocean laid by the Marine Fishery Bill, 2009. According to 1771 paper warning during British period British has given free admittance to fisherman in the ocean to 5 nautical miles however according to new bill there are limitations. Since the proprietorship feeling to the ocean has disappeared and it is the fundamental concern raised by angler.

They have spoken about their emotion that they would be eliminated from the seaside towns for setting up new enterprises or new structure activities to profit manufacturer entryway and industrialist in different stages. The sea shore the travel industry on the shores are creating to profit encompassing region populace, they are major league salary gathering and it would transform into vacation destination point for outsider too Indian traveller, because of which anglers would become outcasts in their own territory. Aside from this the open space was initially mangrove cover however because of infringement on location now we can see just 20% of unique cover.

3.4 Local Area Housing and Public Participation

The vast majority of the Koliwada redevelopment projects in Mumbai are portrayed by high land worth of the settlement region, here land financial matters assumes a significant part to create uncommon ocean confronting private or business regions. These proposition were worked by stakeholders in not many Koliwadas like Sion, Mahul and Masjid Bandar. Specialists like Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Slum Rehabilitation Authority and similar authority can support the redevelopment of Koliwada, in the event that they own the rights over these terrains yet these grounds are claimed by Kolis and to build up that land specialists need assents from them. According to annexure II of DCR 33(10) of SRA arrangements, when assent from the major share (70% of complete existing apartments of that land package) is demonstrated by developers, at that point Slum Rehabilitation Authority plan can carry out on that specific land bundle.

Mumbai saw a sharp increment of more than 700% in land esteem between the times of 1966-1981. Post development during the 1990s, housing markets become more theoretical as land esteems shot up, inferable from the expanding request; hence, expanding land esteem multiple times somewhere in the range of 1998 and 2012.

As indicated by essential source (Mr. Girish Salgaonkar, Thane) Developers pulled in because of housing business sector of that land bundle and no center has been given to the local area necessities, which bobs back with the adverse consequence to the general development of that specific region and that is the reason Koliwadas/Gaothan/ Adiwasipadas are left lacking for such countless years.

4. Light on Natural Disaster Management aspect Environmental Impact and Coastal Zone Management Regulations

According to Maharashtra beach front Zone Management Authority this territory falls under CRZ-III, as Koliwada are viewed as uncommon arranging or special planning zone so they are not totally reliant upon CRZ standards for improvement.

According to Development Control and promotion Regulations 2034, Reconstruction/Redevelopment of Koliwada region Floor Space Index necessity for remaking/redevelopment of any property under Koliwada/adiwasipada so in our study

area DCPR 2034 gives freedom to add 0.5 additions FSI in permissible FSI of 1.5 that FSI will become 2.(MCGM. Development Control and Promotion Regulations 2034. Page 255)

Figure 10 &11: Costal Regulation Zone Mapping and all Mangrove Area Understanding in Mahim Koliwada.

(Figure 10: Siddhi Sanas & Mohit Shetty, Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, fourth year Housing Design Studio 2020, Studio Coordinators: Prof. Swapna Deshpande and Prof. Pritam Dey)

(Figure 11: source:https://mczma.gov.in/content/approved-czmp-greater-Mumbai)

Environmental law Considerations are really important to consider while planning for any site which are very close to CRZ that is why propose complete protection of mangroves in our site for considering criticality of site in disaster situations (Figure 10 and 11).

5. Why SRA Scheme only ?

SRA projects give wide scope of choices for any developers/designer to build up that land bundle at own expense however consequently it gives Transferable Development rights to the engineer. Essentially, Koliwada lands are not claimed by government neither one of them are totally individual Koli's inhabitants. As Koliwada is first and unique occupants of the city they request to the public authority to find way to save these networks.

(As indicated by essential source (Ar. Sanman Koli, 30, Thane) Koliwada people group is against Slum restoration plans since developers and builders alongside metro authorities have done a ton of harm to Koli local area in past, one of the model is mahul Koliwada and masjid bandar Koliwada. According to data, these settlements were moved under Slum Rehabilitation Authority plot long back and from ocean edge they have be moved to the city centre in chwal and Slum Rehab building which prompts word related misfortune to whole local area.)

5.1 Extract of Slum Rehabilitation Authority

1. Better arranging and Consideration close to mangrove territory for calamity the board. According to Slum Rehab guideline gives freedom to assemble any construction without taking conveniences and regular passageways in FSI estimation, which permits designer to fabricate more units around there. This will permit us to exhaust the plot close to mangrove inclusion and it will assist the improvement with battling against calamity like flood or tsunami a typical natural disaster circumstance close to the ocean.

2. Social foundation and conveniences like social gathering or skill development spaces Conveniences like Aaganwadi, wellbeing focus/station, local area lobby/gym/wellness focus, ability improvement focus, ladies business venture focus, yuvakendra/library society office, Balwadi/s and strict constructions, social framework like School, Dispensary and Gymnasium run by Public Authority or Charitable Trust in the recovery segment not count towards the Floor Space Index even while processing reasonable Floor Space Index on location.

5.2 Exchangeable Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is a big reason for implementation of SRA scheme and its making all the schemes successfully. as by this mechanism developers are getting benefitted and that is why they are venturing into this business. There are two different types of TDR in the market as below:

a. **Land TDR:** Land TDR will go to the owner which means the Koliwada for creation of revenue for maintenance of the proposed structures (Figure 12).
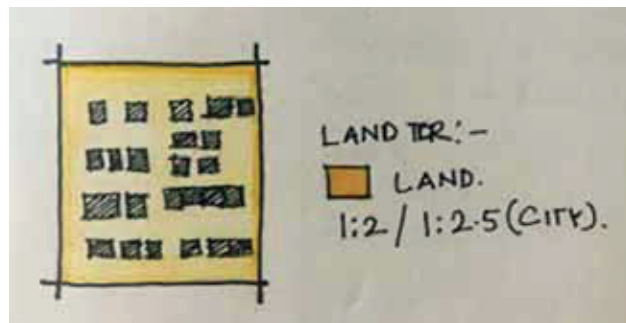

Figure 12 : Understanding Land TDR for Mumbai Slums.

(Image: Author Swapna Deshpande)

b. **Construction TDR:** Construction TDR usually goes with the developer who is developing the land parcel. the revenue will be generated for construction cost of the proposed area (Figure 13).
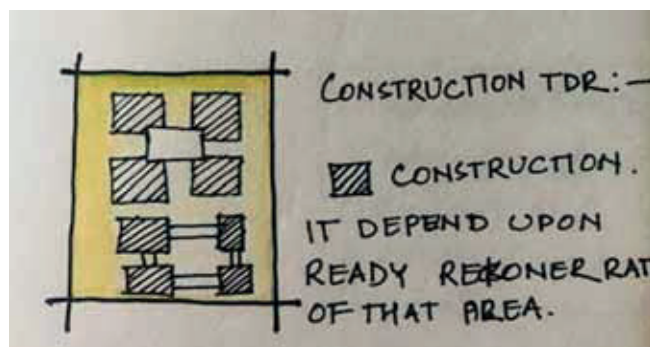

Figure 13 : Understanding Construction TDR for Mumbai Slums.

(Image: Author Swapna Deshpande)

6. Anticipated Model

We propose a participatory model where Government organizations alongside private land owner/Government land/Developer will build up a model which will profit Community more to be strength and which will protect the coastline mangrove. We are thinking about Slum Rehabilitation scheme arrangements for a similar where the thought has been given to conveniences simultaneously the various stakeholders who is giving prepared level/houses to the local area to our Koliwada will receive Transferable Development Rights consequently. We are attempting to approx same apartment size which is consistent, here we are discussing local area improvement and that will occur with suitable methodology.

The proposed model thinks about after as a the primary partners and attempt to set up an interrelationship between subject for a productive and versatile actual model of improvement:

1. Builder/Developer and Contractors
2. Fishing Community
3. Master Architects or Planner
4. Environmental Activist
5. Financial Support Agencies

6.1 Koliwada Redevelopment Representation

Stakeholder Map for Mahim Fishing Village Redevelopment Model (Figure 14)
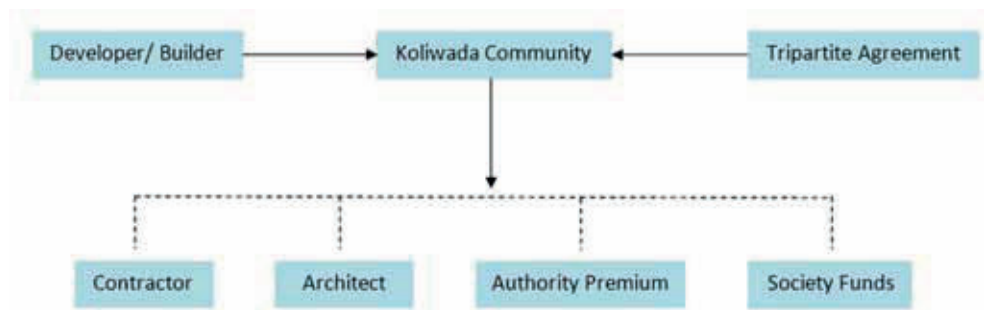

Figure 14: Participatory Model (Stakeholder Map for Mahim Koliwada Redevelopment) (Flow Chart: Author Swapna Deshpande)

- Preferences must to be considered for individuals of fishing local area.
- Sufficient society reserves.
- The habitable area to be larger or same.

Saleable component if any:

- To be chosen by the general public of Koliwada.
- Rate per sq. ft.
- Types of individuals.
- Size of flat.

In this model we examined the part of Koliwada local area as one of the partner and they will be one of the leader and will choose the prerequisite of local area around there.

Engineer will propel that land and would construct new structures for Koliwada according to standards, rules and guidelines yet they won't be proprietor of offer part. Consequently will get profited with TDR.

6.2 Highlights of Strategies

- Transferable Development Rights advantage will go to land developer, Land TDR and Construction TDR both.
- Half Sale component fund of Rehab Building would remain with Koliwada for local area improvement funds as society assets and half deal part will go to Developers.
- Take away from Slum Rehab Schemes would be social convenience spaces which are given in DCPR 2034 to generally speaking improvement of local area.
- Consideration to natural laws for catastrophe the executives of site.
- Open spaces plays important role during Natural Disaster on site as Koliwada is closely connected with sea and during rainy season it is necessary to provide solution for flood.
- Consideration for stilt design provision in over all site plan, stilt acts as parking space for many boat and it acts as water channel during flood, thus concept of floating village becomes impactful in our land use and structural plan.

Site is very versatile in summer it is a place for other commercial activities and winter is full of festive time where in rainy season fishing is prominent but same time safety of village houses and storage along with human. Floating village can become a village when we provide complete ground floor open, water can flow any way it want to and during normal days open ground can act as part space for boat and at some junctions community space too (Figure 15).
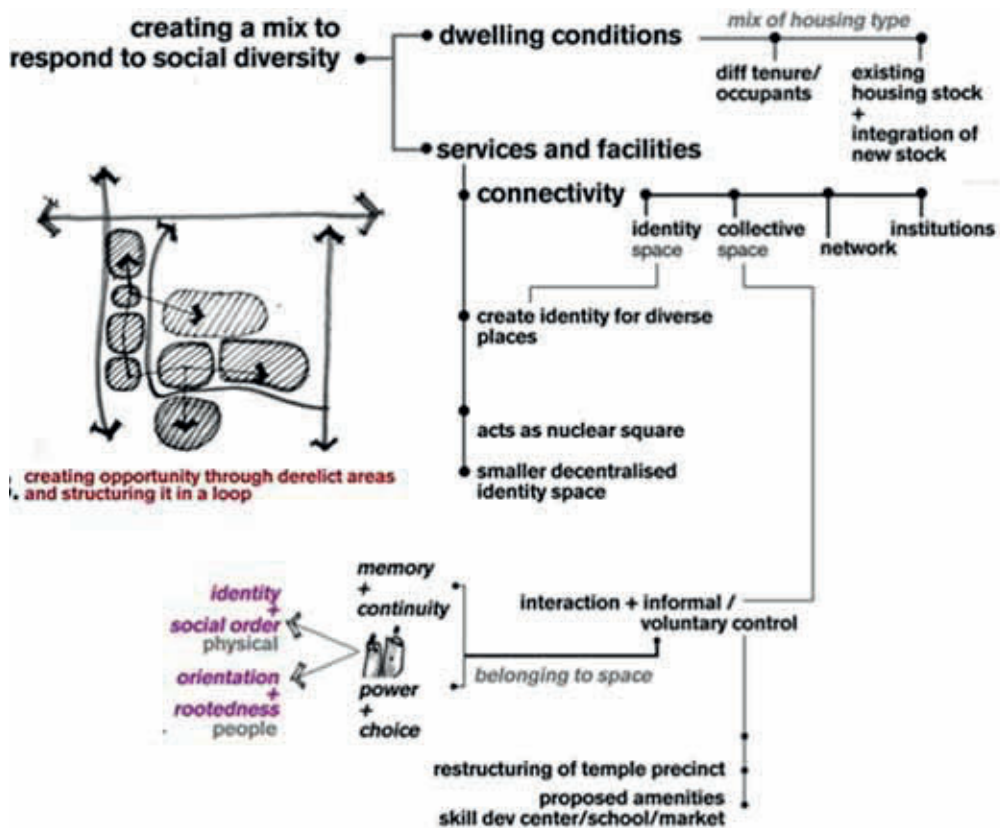

Figure 15: Understanding Community Network and its Dependency

(Images: Author Pritam Dey)

Figure 16: Creation of Informal Spaces for Gender Sensitive aspect.

(Images: Author Pritam Dey)

For the redevelopment of Mahim Koliwada its also important to consider:

a. Until collective cooperation between various stakeholders, re-development proposal is futile: There should be smooth co ordinations between various stakeholders as was evident from all the redevelopment attempts undertaken at Mahim. Until and unless every stakeholder arrives to a common conclusion and decide the course of the process it is practically impossible to achieve the common goal.

b. Reassert the important of bottom up approach of planning: Through the process of redevelopment of Mahim over 4 decades we have seen at every step there was a need of a bottom up approach of planning instead one size fits all concept of planning. The failure to realize all the schemes on ground was primarily because none of the developers and the government machinery thought about the context driven, community oriented redevelopment for MAHIM and it's a big lesson to be learnt from the process.

c. Until collective cooperation between various stakeholders, re-development proposal is futile: There should be a smooth co ordinations between various stakeholders as was evident from all the redevelopment attempts undertaken at Mahim. Until and unless every stakeholder arrives to a common conclusion and decide the course of the process it is practically impossible to achieve the common goal.

d. Need for consistent and real focus group discussions and consulting the community beyond just saying-thereby create an efficient local area planning framework: Though on the papers there was mentioned about community representation however on ground often the private developers who are appointed towards the redevelopment work never creates any direct engagement with community and also assess the land ownership records. This top down approach results in a poor understanding of the situation on the part of both developers and planners.

Figure 18: Infuse Social Dignity to Women and Create Choice

(Images: Author Pritam Dey)

space for ngo,vocational training center,community programmes

Figure 17: Creation of Spaces for NGO, Vocational Training Centre, Community Programmes

(Images: Author Pritam Dey)

7. Conclusion

Are the working subalterns taken for granted in this hypercapitalistic and neo liberal society? If no, then what justifies the staggering inequality in the quality of life within a mile of radius of another Urban dystopia, Dharavi? The study of dharavi and failed attempts to redevelop the urban quarter proves the fact that unless everyday life, socio cultural aspects and economic factors of the proletariats and the working class in the city are legitimised and taken into consideration by the state,no degree of law and city can be in conjunction with each other. Tokenism is an important process in a bottom up approach of urban regeneration. "The question of the subject and subjectivity directly affects colonized peoples' perceptions of their identities and their capacities to resist subject/subjectivity the conditions of their domination, their 'subjection'." – Bill A., Gareth G., Hellen T, Post Colonial Studies (7th Edition, Routledge, 2004).

In the declaration of Descartes "I think, therefore I am", the centrality of human individuality was confirmed. It is important here to uphold the legitimisation of the proletariat group of the society, their collective identity and the very essence of their existence as part of the city as an important aspect in envisaging an urban regeneration by the state. Law of the state should be more humane and people centric reflecting the aspiration of the community for a seamless conjunction of the various socio-economic and cultural forces converging within a particular area, in this case Mahim Koliwada in the context of Mumbai city. It is also important to create an ecological planning taking into account the traditional knowledge systems and educating the community in the planning process so they becomes aware citizens.

Acknowledgement

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