

Mapping Displacement in Delhi



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INTRODUCTION

Overview

This report presents data visualizations as well as data collection and analysis strategies for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) advocating against the displacement of *jbuggi jhopri* clusters (informal settlements) in Delhi, India. **An estimated 1-3 million people live in *jbuggi jhopri* (JJ) clusters in Delhi.** Because of Delhi's unique land tenure system, the majority of all residents live on public lands. However, for JJ residents in particular, many of whom are poor and/or recent migrants to the city, the government often uses the frame of illegality to delegitimize their tenure. Especially during periods of development or speculation, the government's policy has often been to either forcibly displace or relocate residents to the outskirts of the city in order to redevelop the land beneath.

In August 2014, a research team of seven graduate students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning (MIT DUSP) traveled to Delhi to work with local NGOs that advocate with and for JJ cluster residents. During the one-month engagement, the research team conducted site visits and interviews to better understand the issue of displacement as well as the data challenges that slum dwellers and advocacy organizations face in their work. Through the visualizations and recommendations offered herein, the research team seeks to assist partner organizations in their advocacy efforts, build legitimacy for JJ cluster residents in the eyes of the government, and ultimately help prevent development-induced displacement and relocation of JJ clusters in Delhi.

Context

India has urbanized rapidly over the past several decades, as migrants (many of them from the so-called Scheduled Castes) have moved from rural areas in search of economic opportunity. Delhi, like other large cities across the subcontinent, has attracted many of these migrants. The administrative boundaries of the city (the National Capital Territory) have expanded to reflect this population growth. However, like other cities in India and around the world, the local government has struggled to provide adequate housing and social services for the entire population—now estimated at **27 million**.

At the same time, Delhi's unique land tenure system has created a situation in which local officials can legally displace and relocate residents at will. Though the Urban Land Act of 1976 provides governments across India increased oversight in land use decisions, the land tenure system in Delhi, the Indian capital, affords the

most extensive public ownership of land and land expropriation powers in the nation. The central, state, and local government own nearly 80 percent of all land, and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) prescribes all land uses in the Master Plan. Residents or structures that do not conform to prescribed uses can be forcibly removed or relocated to other areas. However, the government also has significant latitude in choosing when and where to enforce the Master Plan's land use prescriptions.

Communities of poor residents who do not have official land tenure are called *jbuggi jhopri* (JJ) clusters. Amid mounting real estate pressure and the desire to attract global investment, the government often deems JJ living conditions *untenable* and uses its powers to forcibly evict and relocate residents to state-built housing or serviced land on the outskirts of the city. However, many residents do not qualify for resettlement because of cutoff dates for eligibility, and **as few as 50 percent** of eligible families actually move to the resettlement site. Many cannot afford the payment needed to resettle. Others choose not to move because of the distance from work or social networks, or because of the changes apartment living would entail to their lifestyles. Many residents who do move to the resettlement site wind up selling their flats and returning to their original site or another nearby JJ clusters. Many communities thus face repeated evictions as residents return to and rebuild the original site.

Because JJ clusters are unauthorized and considered illegal—as is the majority of (even high- and middle-income) housing in Delhi—residents have little legal recourse. Increasingly, the courts have stepped in to mediate this process, increasing the degree of discretion the state has in determining the fate of communities. However, residents face discrimination because they are often low-income, have recently migrated to the city, and/or come from so-called Scheduled Castes (historically disadvantaged groups within India's caste system). Because of this, they frequently struggle to establish the legitimacy of their tenure in the eyes of the state and are subject to relocation and displacement.

Goals of the Practicum

As part of a practicum course in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning (MIT DUSP), seven graduate students are studying the impacts of *jbuggi jhopri* cluster (JJ cluster) evictions and relocations in Delhi. During a month-long engagement in Delhi, the team researched and created tools and visualizations to support the work of organizations preventing and responding to evictions and displacement in Delhi. Under the guidance of Professor Balakrishnan Rajagopal and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing Miloon Kothari, the MIT team conceptualized a collaborative online approach to both aggregate and disseminate information on JJ cluster evictions and resettlements,

including relevant news, statistics, maps, personal stories, and legal cases. This report outlines the products that students developed and suggests a path towards implementation. Through the MIT Displacement Research and Action Network (DRAN), Professor Rajagopal and Miloon Kothari will continue to work with Delhi-based NGOs in order to implement the strategies developed during the practicum.

METHODOLOGY

The MIT research team spent three weeks in Delhi and one week in Chennai during the month of August 2014 for field visits and research. The questions the team sought to address are:

- How can we help partners in collecting, aggregating and disseminating data related to marginalized communities in Delhi?
- How can the data-centered tools or strategies developed help them further their advocacy work and improve quality of life for residents of these communities?

To answer these questions, the team adopted the following methods:

1. Conducted literature review, stakeholder interviews, and site visits.

As outsiders of informal settlements in Delhi, the team reviewed relevant publications prior to the trip to get familiar with the context. The literature covers topics on 1) national policy and implementation of 'slum-free India'; 2) process, legal discourse of slum demolition in Delhi; 3) resettlement situations in Delhi and 4) broader issues such as migration and urbanization, poverty, caste influence and social movements in India.



The MIT team visited informal settlements that are facing the threat of eviction and that have been evicted. These field visits gave the team an overall understanding of the physical, social and economic fabrics of the informal settlements in Delhi and the living environment and quality of life of marginalized communities.



The team also conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with stakeholders related to slum displacement and resettlements in Delhi. Interviewees include partner organizations and individuals, government agencies related to slum displacement, and community members of the informal settlements visited by the team. A full list of participants can be found in the Appendix.

These interviews are designed for a better understanding on how the partners work in the field of anti-displacement and how their work fit in the bigger organizational frame. The questions prepared by the team for partner organizations cover the following topics:

- History, mission, audience of the organization
- Its theory of change
- Its data collection, modes of communication
- Current datasets, research, and reports
- Major partners
- In-house capacities
- Future plans

Major participating individuals or organizations include:

- Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)
- Indian Institute Human Settlements (IIHS)

- Liza Weinstein, Northeastern University (NEU)
- Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
- National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
- Indu Prakash Singh, National Forum for Housing Rights (NFHR)

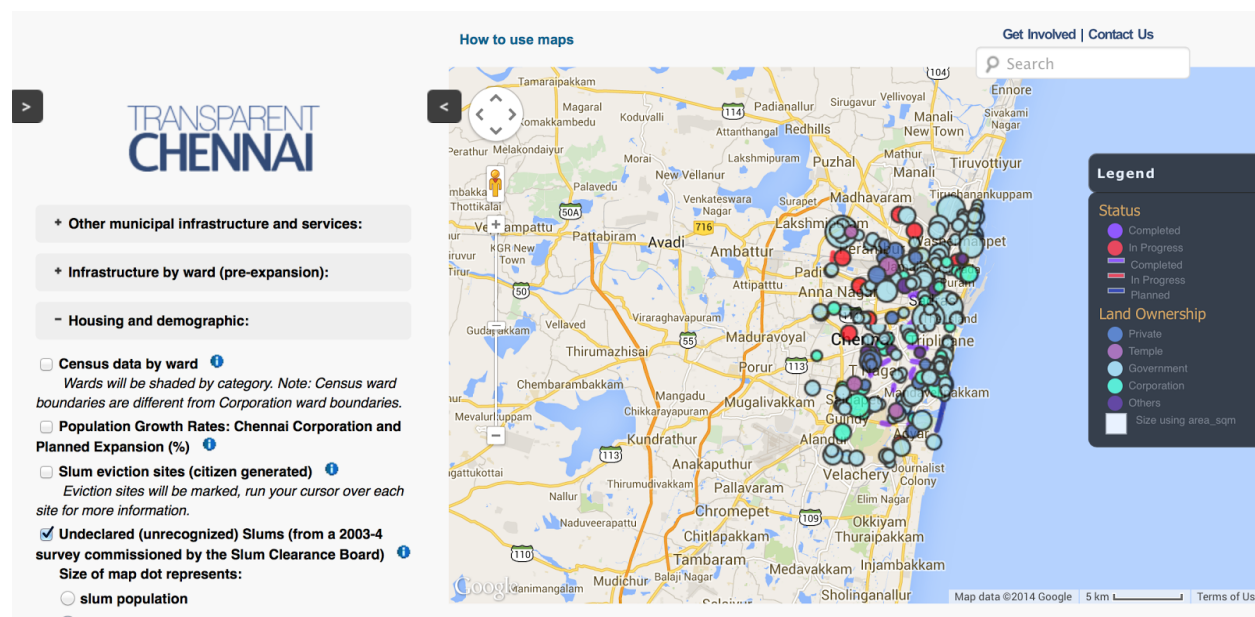
Based on the interviews, the team did a network analysis that traces the data collection, analysis and dissemination among different stakeholders to identify future improvement directions.

2. Reviewed comparisons and existing spatial data with special focus on Chennai.

The team also spent a week in Chennai, visiting informal settlements and resettlement sites, and active organizations and individuals in the field.



Transparent Chennai (TC), an organization that “aggregates, creates and disseminates data and research about important civic issues facing Chennai, including issues facing the poor”¹, serves as a model for our work in Delhi. Through close communication, the team learned that TC started as a data portal and has expanded to work directly with communities and with government. They have effectively deployed participatory mapping as a way to gather data and empower slum dwellers. TC also maintains a critical perspective about the role of mapping in addressing these issues.



3. Identified key themes and gaps.

Based on the understanding of informal settlement and displacement issue, the team tried to identify overarching themes that can help frame the scopes of displacement research and advocacy. The five key themes include the following levels:

- **People: Who are slum dwellers?**
How large and growing is the slum population? What is the narrative of slum dwellers? What jobs are people currently employed in? How long have people lived in slum?
- **Place: What are the locations and conditions of the slums?**
What are the challenges that slum dwellers face?
- **Process: What happens when slum dwellers are evicted?**
What does displacement mean? Who has the right to displace? Who displaces? Where do people go? What happens to those left out of resettlement sites? Where do they go? What

¹ Transparent Chennai, <http://www.transparentchennai.com/about/>

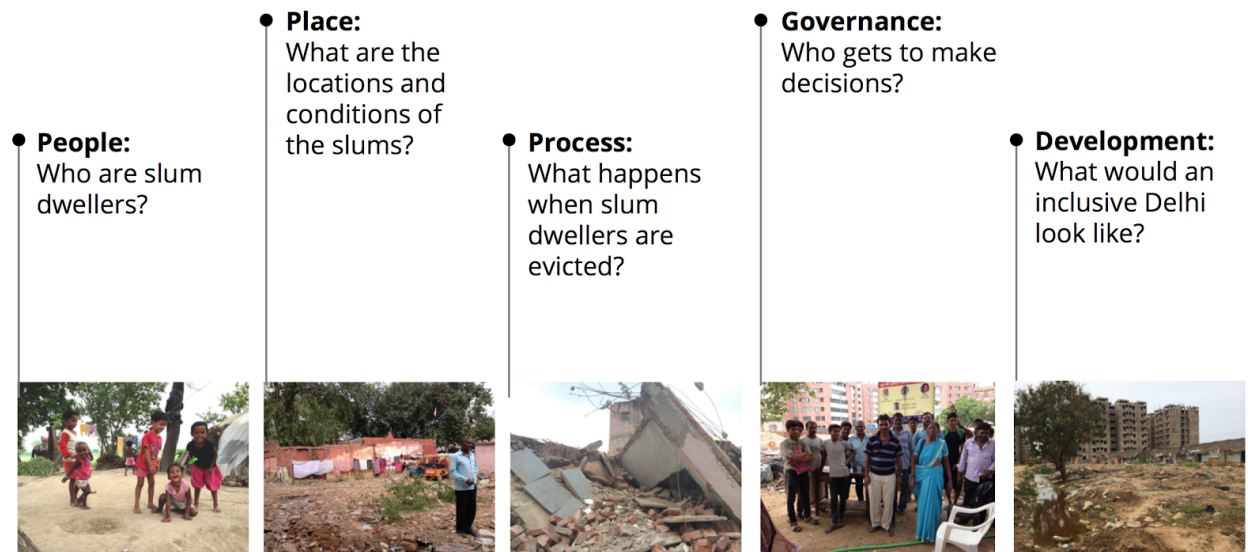
are the conditions of relocation sites (geographic location, infrastructure and access)? Why are there varied outcomes of resettlement sites? How are resettlement sites constrained by the availability of land?

- **Governance: Who gets to make decisions?**

How can government processes be improved? Are there inefficiencies? What are examples of good governance from other cities? What is the process of in situ development?

- **Development: What would an inclusive Delhi look like?**

How can development be re-organized to be more inclusive of the poor?



The team compared the existing efforts in data collection, analysis and dissemination to the key themes listed above and then identified gaps in current work and potential future data visualization and communications directions.

4. Created visualizations and communications strategies to address gaps.

According to the gaps identified from the methods above, we have created a series of maps and proposed future mapping projects organized around the five themes of people, place, process, governance, and development that highlight key trends and issues for marginalized communities in Delhi. The team also did self-critiques on the risks and limitation of mapping.

Furthermore, based on the network analysis, we proposed a research partnership and integrated data portal that will allow partners to set common research goals, jointly collect data, share resources, and combine their advocacy efforts to improve quality of life for marginalized communities.

NETWORK ANALYSIS

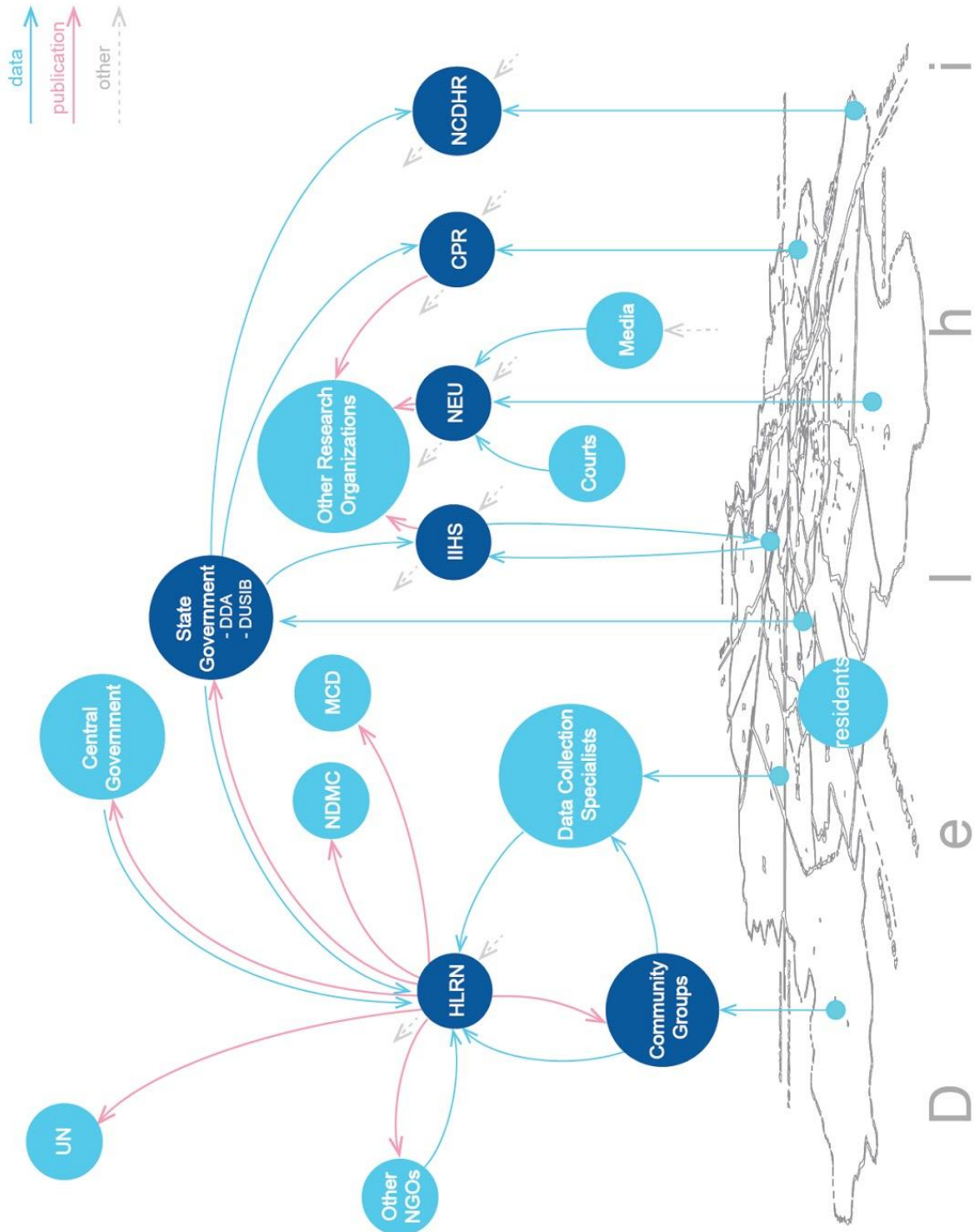
According to the interviews with the partner organizations, the MIT team visualized the data flow - collection, aggregation and dissemination into a network diagram. This diagram does not thoroughly and accurately capture all aspects of data collection and publication, but aims to illustrate an overall picture of the research and advocacy efforts that utilize data, based on information collected from interviews.

Major data generators are HLRN, IIHS, NEU, CPR, NCDHR and state governments. The blue arrow shows how data is collected through community groups, data collection specialists, courts, media or released census data. The red arrow shows how data results are published towards non-profits, research organizations, UN, central government, state government, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). The grey arrow represents other channels that we did not capture from the interviews.

There are both grassroots activism that works closely with the community, and policy analysis and advocacy that tries to outreach to different actors. From this



visualization, we can see that there are a lot of research and data collection efforts by partners respectively and the data is processed and sent to many other actors for advocacy or academic purpose. Compared to many other cities facing displacement around the world, Delhi groups are fairly outstanding in data related efforts in response to displacement.



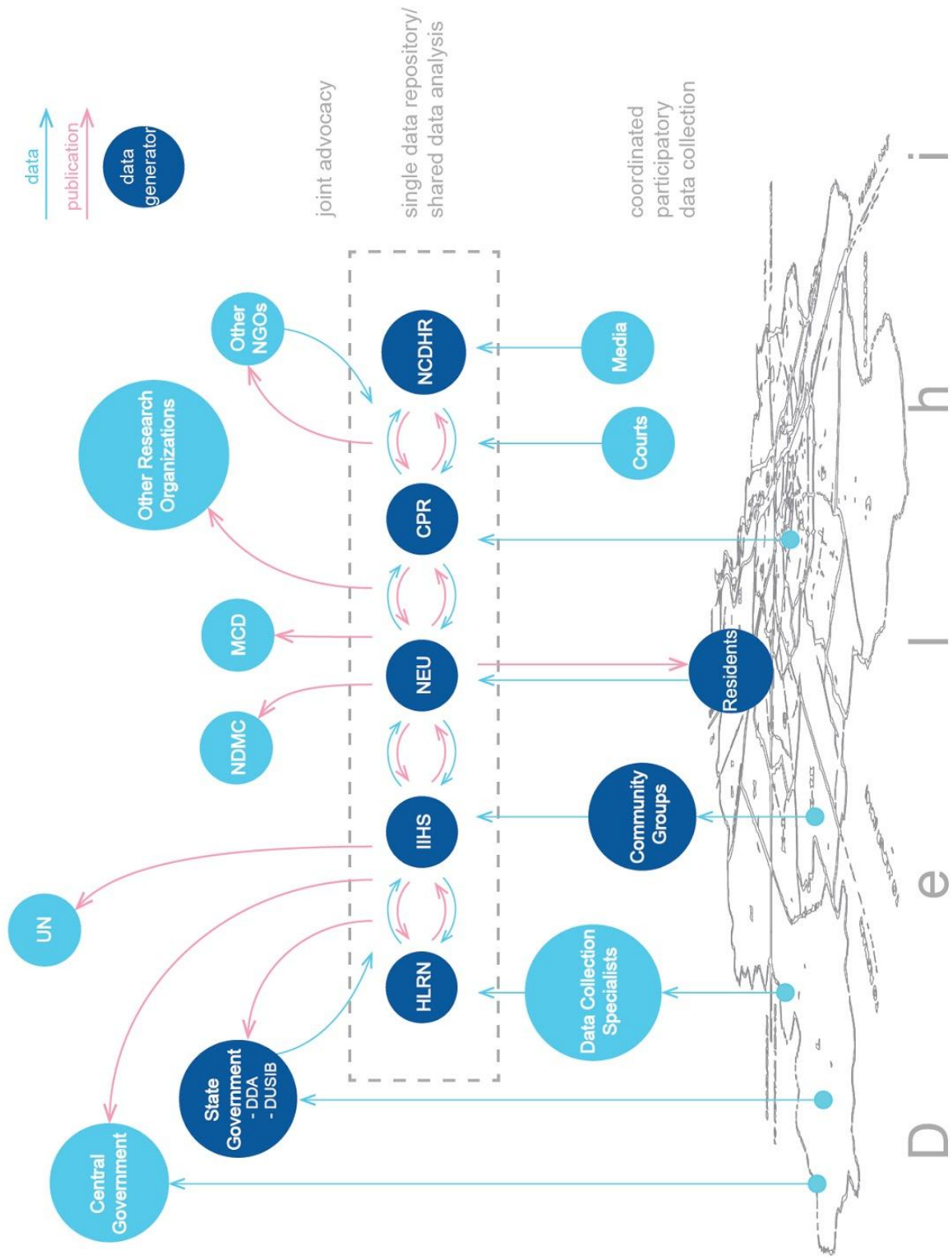
Based on the diagram, the team analyzed potential improvement in the data network:

1. Coordinated data collection to avoid overlapping and to be more strategic in advocacy for greater policy impact;
2. More participation in data collecting from the general public and information can be more easily accessed by the general public.

We are proposing a research partnership and integrated data portal that will allow partners to set common research goals, jointly collect data, share resources, and combine their advocacy efforts to improve quality of life for marginalized communities.



In this proposed model, community groups and citizens join the previous data generator groups. Data are collected and shared among different partners. The partners will analyze and utilize the data for joint effort in advocating for the marginal community in the issues of displacement and resettlement. The rectangle in this visualization represents a coalition of partners, also as the infrastructure—a web portal—to support such collaboration. How the coalition can be formed and function will be at the Delhi groups' discretion. Our role was to share our ideas and convene these groups to discuss the potential design of the web portal.



WORK PRODUCTS: VISUALIZATIONS AND MAPS

People

According to the Planning Commission, 60 million people have been displaced in India since independence for development-related reasons (HLRN, 'Forced to the Fringes,' 2014). In the last 10 years, one million people have been displaced in Delhi for development related reasons (Asher Ghertner, 2008, EPW). If the poor continue to pay such a high price for development, the questions to be asked are: 1) whose development is it? 2) What purpose does it serve? and 3) What are the consequences? While part of our study maps the impact of displacement on the reconstitution of the city and its citizens—a view from above—it also highlights the city-making agenda that in itself is responsible for displacement. Within the larger context of this city study, we place the human impact as a central lens of analysis to understand the socioeconomic impact of displacement on affected people and their capacities—a view from below. While mapping may be limited in its ability to give a fine-grained understanding of this view from below, we also intend to understand this view through interviews, graphs, photo essays, and diagrams.

To understand the human story, we would like to understand:

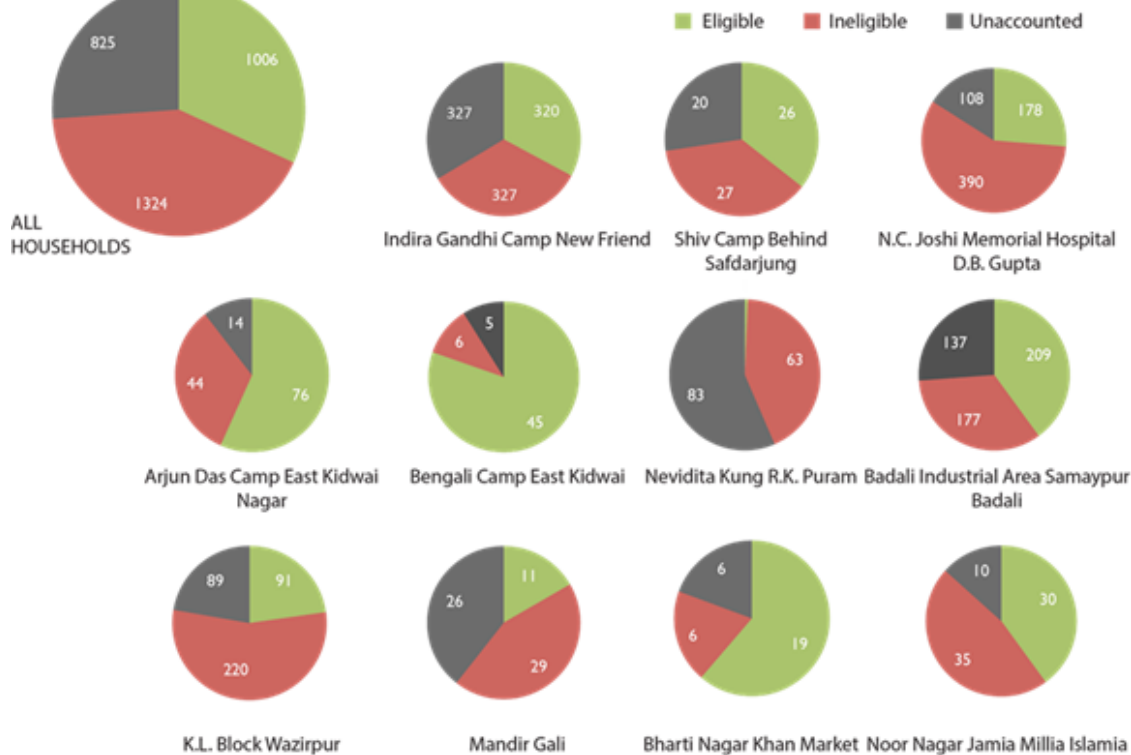
- Who are the urban poor?
- Where do they come from?
- How do they contribute to city-building?
- What are their family structures?
- What is their livelihood source?
- What access do they and their families have to the city's amenities and services (education, healthcare, PDS services, etc.)?
- What are the historic forces that have caused systemic marginalization?

In the Indian context it is important to note that **while Dalits constitute only 16% of India's population, they make up 75% of the poorest poor of India** (Gopal Guru & A. Chakravarty, 2005). So while the current policies of human classification pursued by the government in the allocation of housing benefits does not differentiate between Dalit and non-Dalit people, it is important to acknowledge that the negative impacts of these policies disproportionately impact those who have suffered historic marginalization and need to be protected with affirmative action. The HLRN report "Forced to the Fringes" (2014, Report-1) provides a detailed assessment of the socioeconomic impact of eviction on communities resettled in the urban fringes (Savda Gherva resettlement, Delhi). Savda Gherva is located on the outskirts of Delhi near the Tikri border, a resettlement site identified (in 2006) to relocate 20,000 families evicted from more than 25 different locations

in Central and South Delhi. It brings to light the precarious socioeconomic conditions in which the urban poor live and how displacement causes loss of livelihood, disruption in education of the young, increased security risks for women, loss of social support networks, and reduced access to healthcare, all of which leads to increased impoverishment. These practices of displacement by the Delhi government have repeatedly violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights and the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Eviction and Displacement. **200,000 households were evicted as a result of development related to the Commonwealth Games of 2010, and only 50% of them were resettled** (HLRN, 2011). It is the consequence of such policies that the homeless population in Delhi continues to grow.

One of the instruments of policy used by the government to determine eviction is the eligibility of households and settlements. The household eligibility criteria classify people into eligible and non-eligible lists. Below is a representation of the number of people classified into eligible, non-eligible, and unaccounted sections. For this representation we have used the eligibility survey data of 2012 from the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) website as the official data without secondary verification. The graphs below represent the eligibility data from DUSIB’s survey of 31 sites slated for eviction in the near future.

Household eligibility across 31 relocation sites

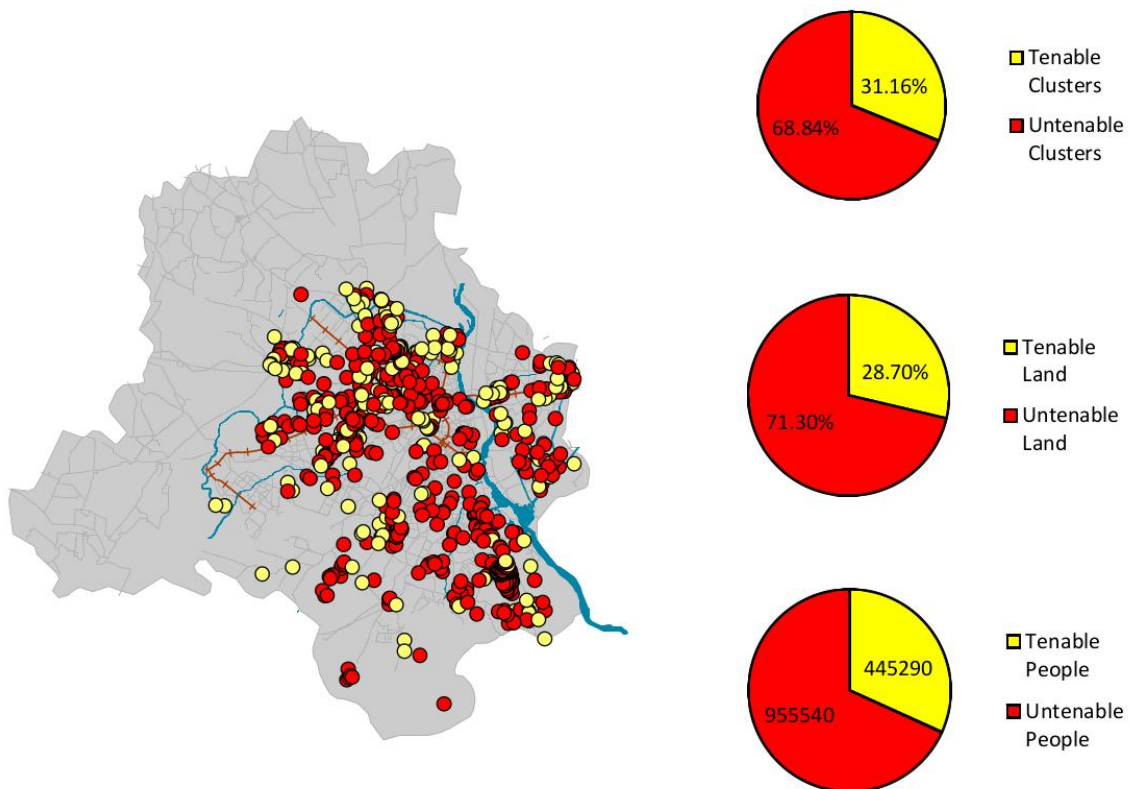


70% of households considered Ineligible for any housing benefits as per the current eviction and resettlement policy of the Delhi Government

The graphs illustrate the extent of marginalization the eligibility requirements impose, with **nearly 70% of the population being considered ineligible for any housing/relocation benefits** in this survey. Detailed assessments of the survey charts indicate the following as the primary reason for disqualification:

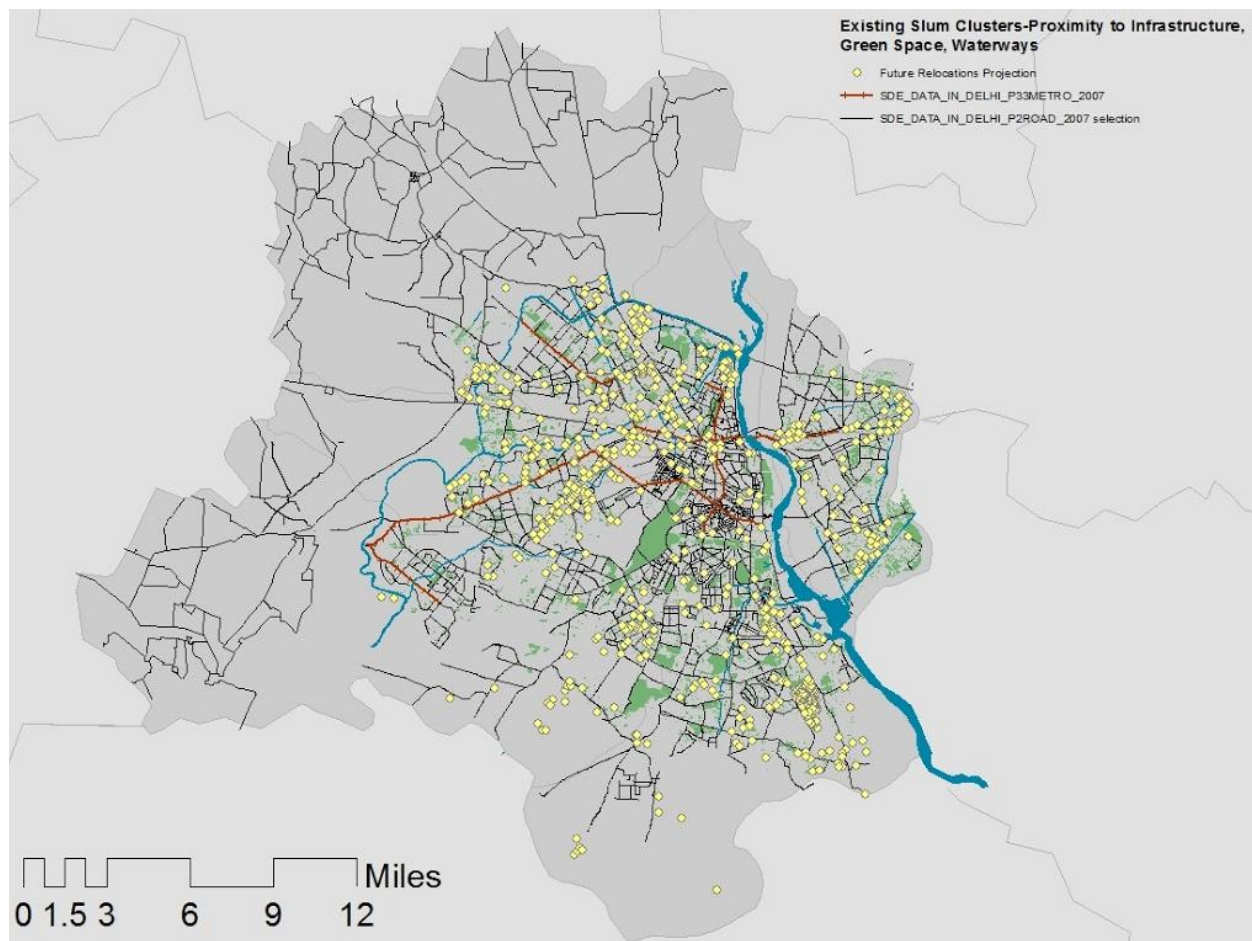
- lack of residency documents,
- no voter identification or inclusion in voter list for 2010
- lack of income statements
- outright disqualification of renters and upper floor residents

The focus on income verification and statements is quite curious when the government agencies know that most people in these settlements work in the informal sector and there is no possibility for them to get official income statements from their employers. Another key point to note is that the eligibility list does not carry any information or enumeration of the family size and members. The eligibility does not take into account any special considerations for the most vulnerable like the elderly, women, differently abled, and young children. These groups are especially impacted by displacement and eviction and need to be given due consideration on humanitarian grounds.



68.8% of the existing JJ clusters have been classified as untenable and therefore are at risk of displacement.

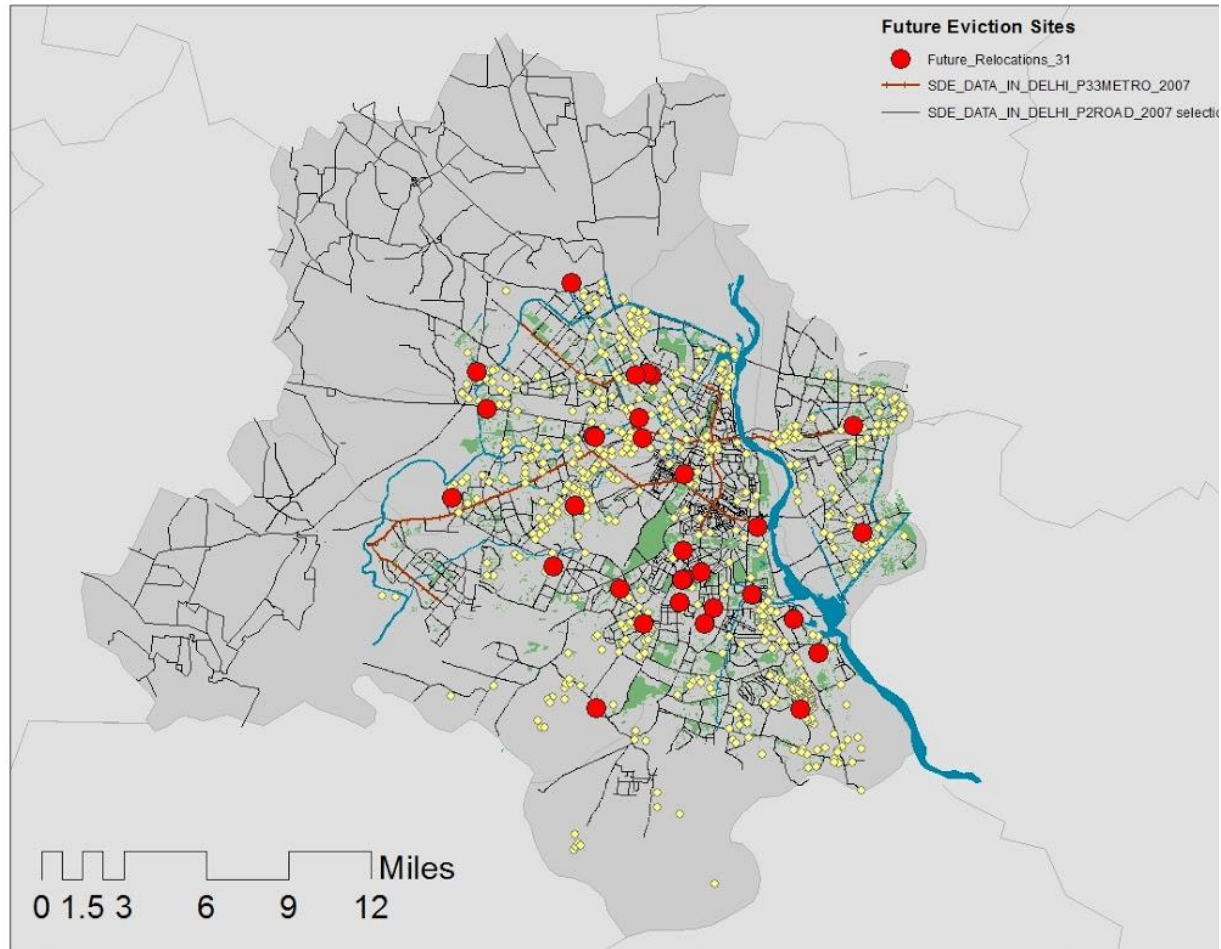
The maps above indicate that classification of tenements as untenable or tenable this map is based on the data published by DUSIB for the 685 identified JJ clusters in the city of Delhi as of 2012. The data indicates that 68.8% of the existing settlements have already been classified as untenable, which means they are at risk of displacement in the near future. This would mean that **955,000 people will be impacted** (as per the DUSIB survey numbers) if the current policies of forced eviction and displacement continue to be implemented. This is a human rights disaster waiting to happen unless all civil society groups and citizenry come together and mobilize against it. This will also likely cripple the city as these communities constitute a large part of the city's productive work force and will further increase the problem of homelessness which has already increased by 68% from 2000-2008.



Location of 685 existing JJ clusters overlaid on Delhi's urban grid. This data indicates a total of 294,955 households living on a land area of 2,294 acres in high density housing of 131 HH/acre and a total of about 1.4 million people.

There are 685 JJ Clusters that have been identified in the city as per a survey conducted by DUSIB. The above map overlaying the location of these clusters on the Delhi urban grid indicates that a majority of these clusters are within the second ring of Delhi's development (the outer ring road). Additionally, most clusters

are located on residual lands, unplanned or unmanaged urban spaces, adjacent to rail infrastructure, close to industries, below flyovers, near unmanaged rivers/streams and around unmanaged open spaces. In inner city areas close to jobs and with access to transport.



31 of the 685 existing JJ clusters have been identified as sites to be relocated in the near future as per the 2012 survey data available on DUSIB’s website. This relocation would impact a total of 16,198 households living on a land area of 81 acres in high density housing of 199 HH/acre

Our analysis of the survey chart for the 31 JJ clusters slated for relocation reveal that as per the scoring criteria indicated by DUSIB, **45% of clusters (14 JJ Clusters) are tenable according to the agency’s own classification and hence should be eligible for in-situ upgradation** as per the Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY), a National Scheme announced in 2009 by MHUPA and yet are being called out for relocation. The criteria identified for classification can be categorized into 5 main segments: *Temporary users* (On road berm as per DUSIB’s listing); *Environment category* (i.e., forest area, flood prone zones, steep slopes, designated garden or park areas); *Heritage factors* (i.e., Archeological Survey of India prohibited or regulated sites); *Infrastructure and*

utility needs (i.e., presence of HV lines, located on dumping grounds, at flyovers, bridges and railway zones); and ironically, those clusters *under 0.5 acres* in size (in terms of land area occupied) are considered by the agency as too small to be saved from relocation.

No. Criteria Used	Identified	Classified
1.0 Pavement Dwellers		2
2.0 Environment		2
Forest area	0	
Flood prone	0	
Steep Slope	0	
Garden/Park	4	
3.0 Heritage		1
ASI Prohibited	0	
ASI Regulated	1	
4.0 Infrastructure & Utility		7
HV Lines	1	
Dumping Ground	0	
Flyover	2	
Bridge	1	
Railway Zone	3	
5.0 Under 0.5 acres		7

Chart Identifying scoring criteria used by DUSIB for determining tenability of JJ Clusters. Total of 17 clusters identified as untenable and 14 as tenable out of the 31 JJ's slated for relocation.

Place: What are the locations and conditions of the JJ Clusters?

Three factors have played a significant role in shaping the historical spatial distribution of JJ clusters in the Delhi metropolitan area: 1) Lack of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) housing, 2) migration, and 3) the geography of employment.

Lack of EWS Housing

Delhi's 1962 Master Plan set targets for the construction of housing for "economically weaker sections" of the population. However, **construction of EWS housing has never approached the stated targets even as need has increased.** The result is a severe shortage of low-rent shelter options in the city which has

spurred the urban poor to seek informal solutions of their own in the form of jhuggis near sources of employment.

Migration

Since Independence the population of the Delhi metro area has ballooned as migrants from rural areas have come to seek the social and economic opportunities of urban living. Migration flows are dynamic, two-way processes in which individuals or families often come to the city only to return after months or years to their village of origin. Many migrants are Dalits who come to the city with little social capital and few assets. For many migrants, a number of factors have made informal living (housing and employment) in Delhi preferable to rural life. These include the scarcity of agricultural work, social exclusion, the commercialization of agriculture and the extremely low quality of village education and healthcare services. While migration to Delhi has slowed in recent years, JJ clusters are still largely populated by migrants from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and elsewhere.

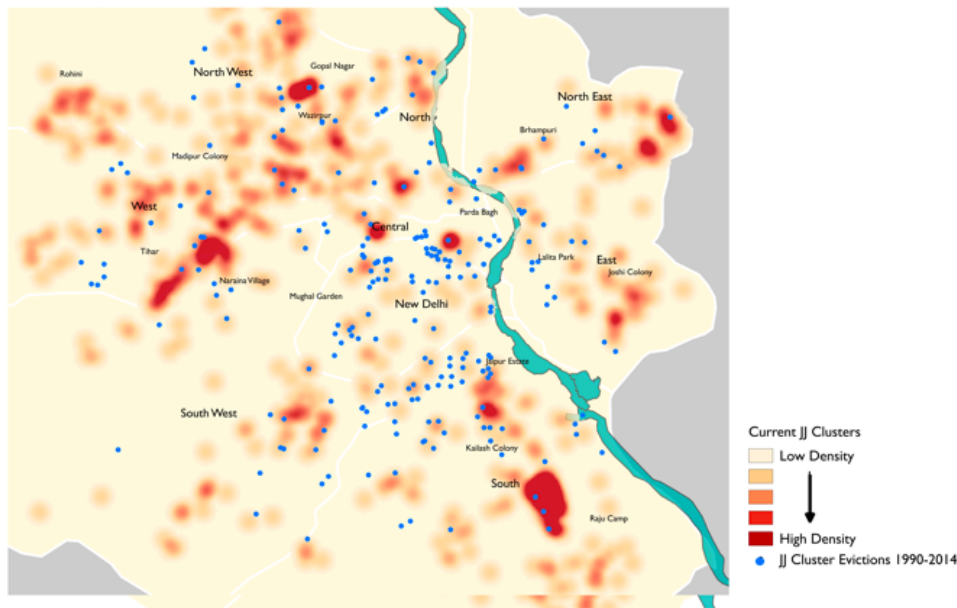
The Geography of Employment

The lack of affordable housing for the poor and the steady influx of migrants seeking work has placed a premium on proximity to employment for jhuggi inhabitants. With cars and public transportation beyond their means, the ability to walk to work – often in domestic and construction jobs – is crucial for many poor job-seekers in Delhi.

The map below combines current JJ Clusters with those evicted between 1990 and 2014 to give an indication of the spatial distribution of clusters in the last 25 years. The current clusters only include those officially recognized by DUSIB while excluding clusters of fewer than 50 jhuggis as well as those that have not been recognized for political reasons. The evicted sites are also incomplete. They are composed of evictions reported by Delhi agencies and those tracked by HLRN, but it is difficult to say how many more evictions are not represented. It should be noted that in addition to the factors laid out above, the distribution of JJ Clusters is also informed by the availability of land for squatting and the government’s willingness and capacity to prevent the urban poor from inhabiting out-of-bounds spaces. The map demonstrates a couple points about the distribution of JJ Clusters in Delhi:

1. The past and present clusters are arranged in an arcing area centered at the heart of New Delhi, the most urban, most dense area of the greater Delhi urban area.
2. There is a significant concentration of evictions in an area with comparatively fewer current clusters: the area of the NDMC.

Past Evictions and Current JJ Cluster Locations

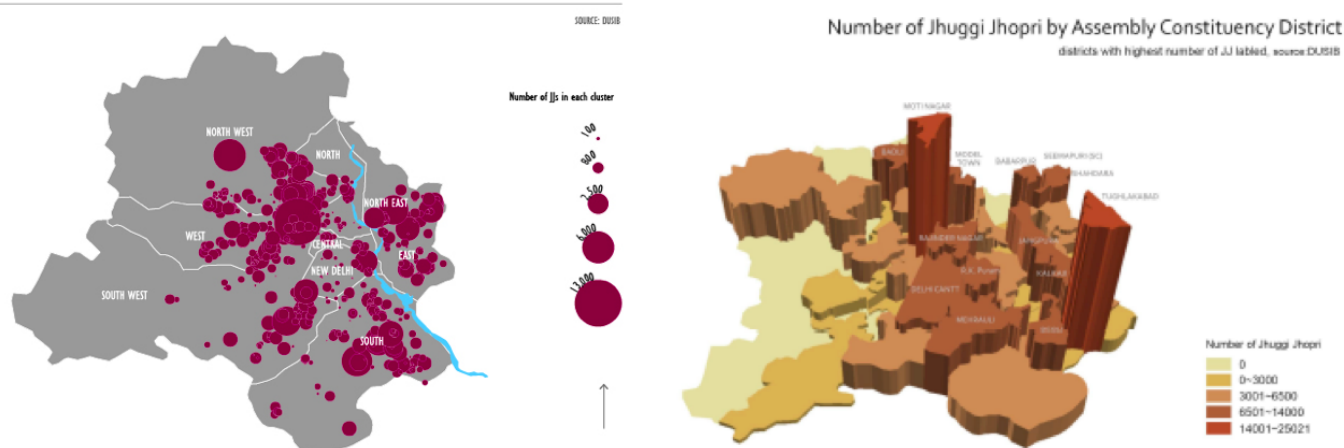


The map at left does not account for the population of each cluster, which varies from dozens of people to thousands. The map below uses DUSIB’s list of current JJ Clusters (an incomplete picture for the reasons given above) to map the distribution of JJ

households across Delhi. Here we can perceive dense agglomerations spreading out from the NDMC core of the city. This distribution is dictated by the availability of land, proximity to upper-income households that offer domestic employment, and proximity to manufacturing centers. For example, the dense group of JJ clusters in the southeast is anchored by the Okhla industrial zone where many JJ residents find work.

Plotting by constituency district and extruding the map offers another perspective on the spatial distribution of the JJ population. The visualization highlights the concentrations of JJs on either bank of the Yamuna, which carves a valley in the eastern portion of the map.

Location and size of jhuggi jhopri clusters, 2014



Process: What Happens When JJ Clusters are Evicted?

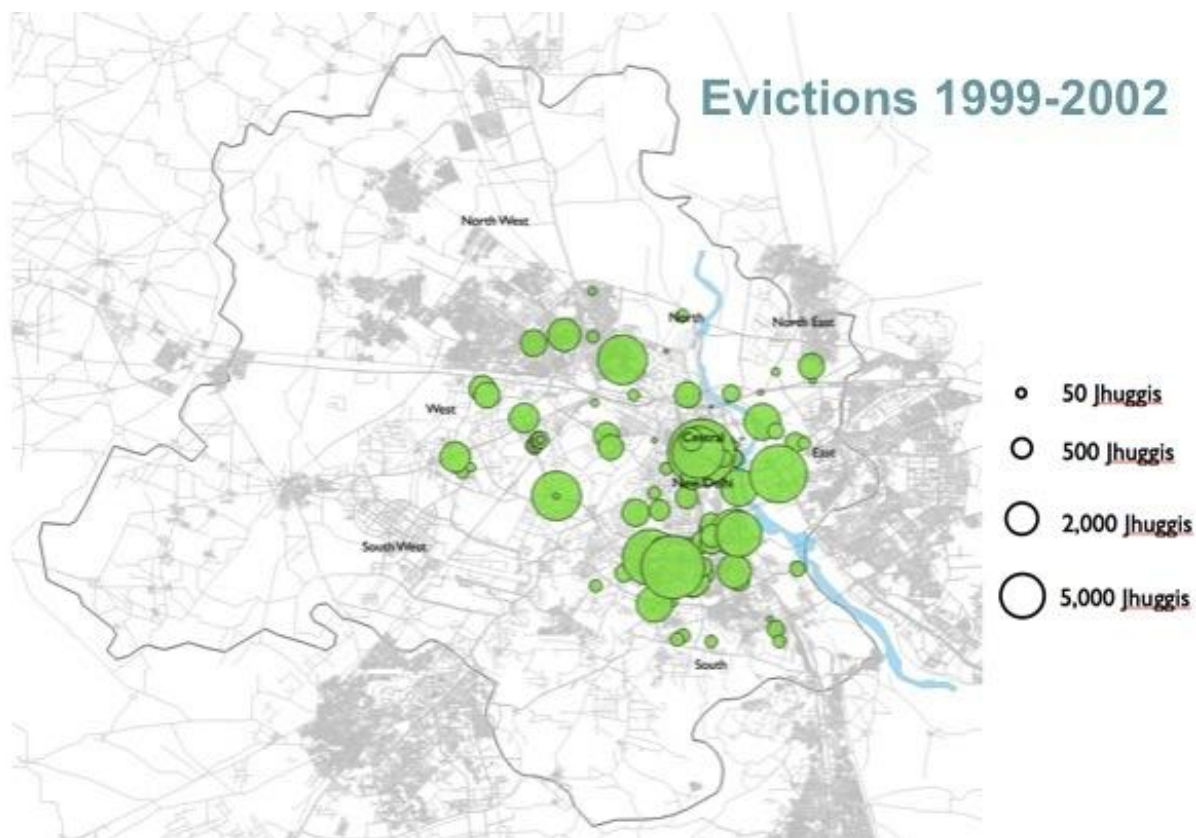
City policies directed specifically towards JJ Clusters originated in the late 1950's and have changed over the course of several phases. The initial policies sought to evict centrally located JJ clusters and relocate them – without housing – to resettlement colonies. Although the 1962 Master Plan explicitly called for resettlement colonies to be centrally located so as to avoid the marginalization of the poor, from the beginning, relocations were directed towards the periphery of the urban area. **Just during the emergency of 1975-6, 150,000 were displaced to camps at the urban periphery.** Through 1990, resettlement sites were treated as temporary encampments and the city did not invest in permanent infrastructure unless they were pressured to do so (Dupont).

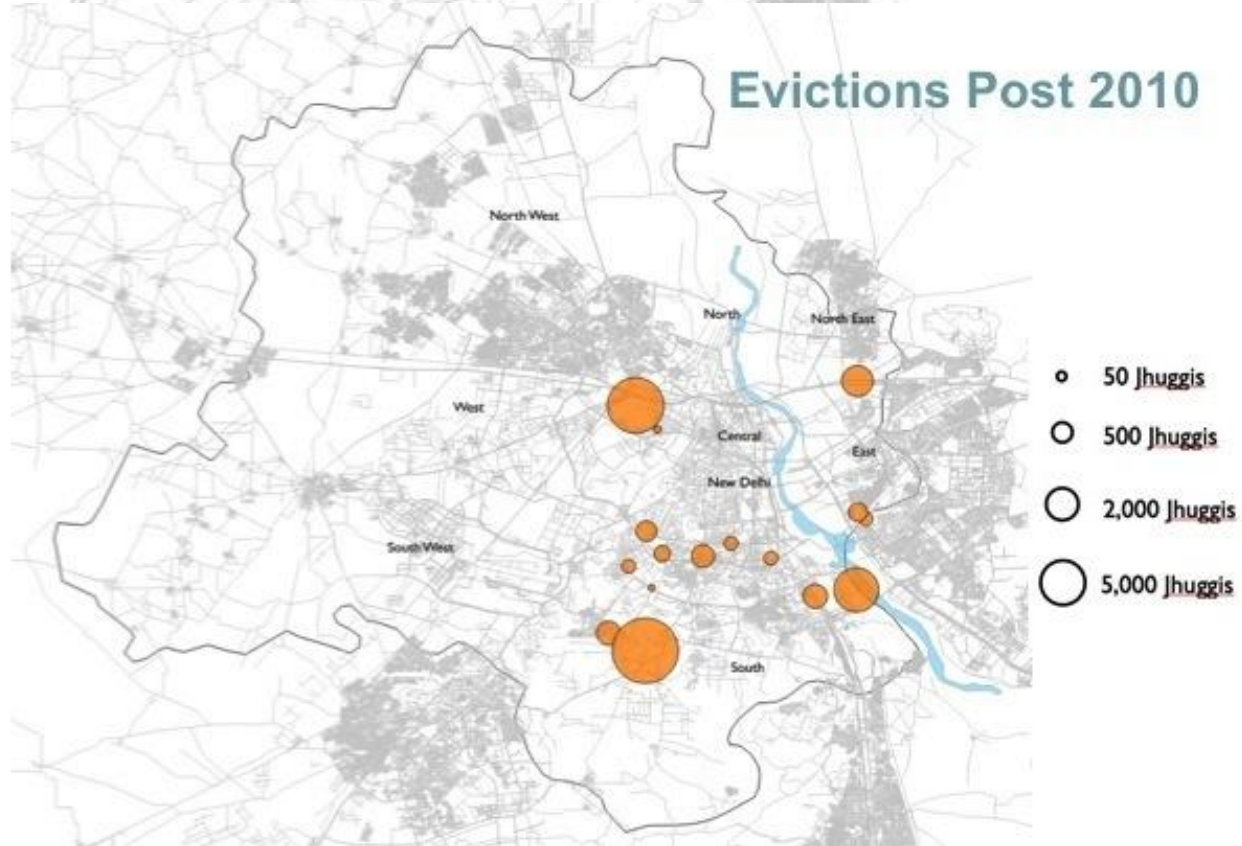
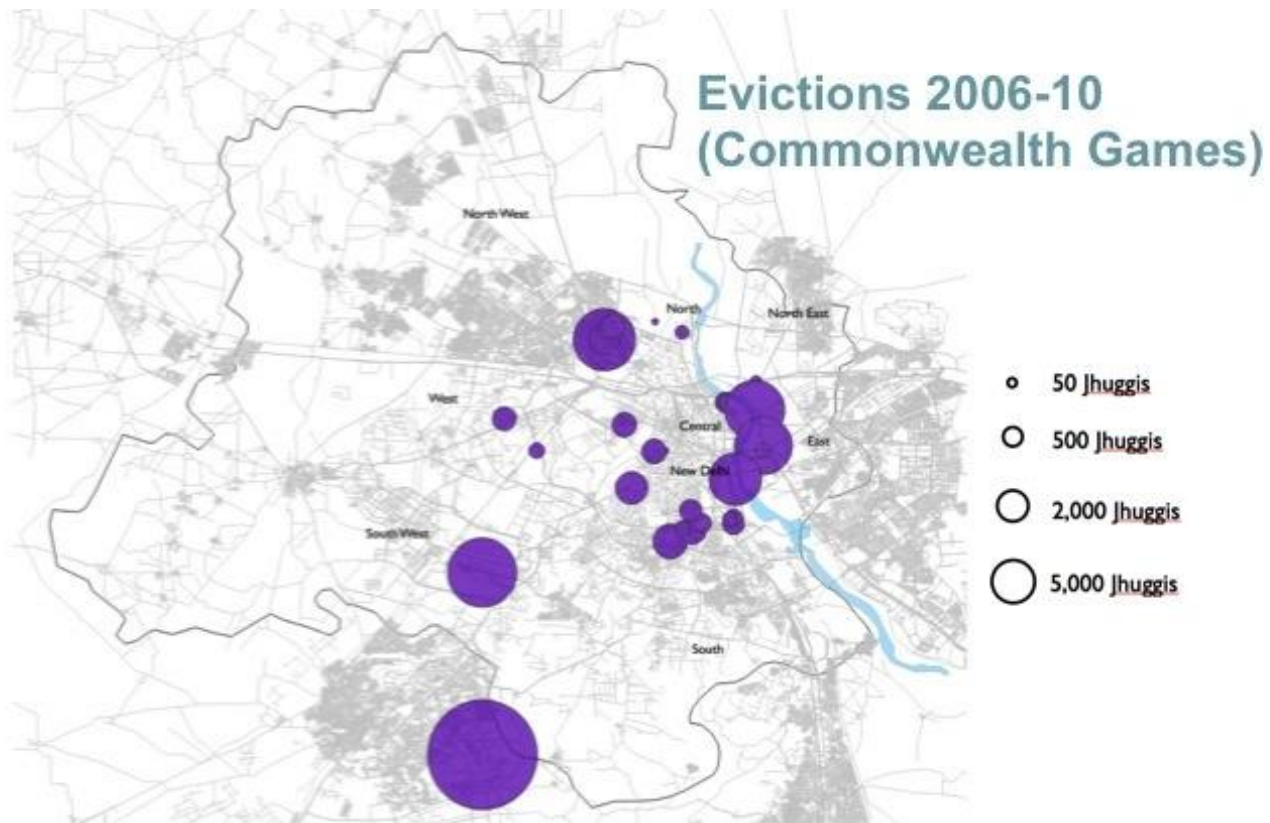
In 1990, the city adopted in-situ upgradation as official policy and introduced a cut-off date as the main vehicle for determining eligibility for relocation. Other standards created by the 1990 policy still govern resettlements: the necessity of a vaguely defined 'public interest' justification for evictions and requirement of monetary contribution from families being relocated. Together these policies have contributed to the exclusion of a great many JJ households from relocation. Scholars have estimated that since 1990 about half of evicted households have not been offered relocation. (Bhan and Shivanand, 2013) DUSIB estimates that **for current evictions 45% of evicted households do not gain access to relocation rights** (from conversation with DUSIB officials, August 2014). What happens to the families that are not relocated is difficult to analyze because this population generally disperses. Veronique Dupont has done the most extensive study of the topic to date.

Mapping Evictions Since 1990

Eviction data going back to 1990 was compiled for this project from the Slum Wing of the Delhi Development Authority (predecessor to DUSIB) via Veronique Dupont and from HLRN's under-development Eviction Database which covers evictions between 2008 and 2014 absent from the government data. Combining sources offers a more complete picture but still a flawed one. Most evictions that DUSIB and the Slum Wing have not tracked in official records – particularly demolitions of small JJ clusters – are not represented in our data except for those that HLRN has documented.

The visualizations below depict three notable periods of eviction activity. From 1999-2002 our data shows a surge in evictions. Bhan and Shivanand have speculated the uptick in evictions during this period was due to the involvement of the influential government operative Jagmohan. Leading up to the 2010 Commonwealth games, evictions were carried out for “beautification” projects and infrastructure. JJ clusters on the banks of the Yamuna were particularly targeted during this period. HLRN has extensively documented the scale of the evictions in their 2011 fact finding report, “Planned Dispossession: Forced Evictions and the 2010 Commonwealth Games”. Finally, the visualization of evictions since 2010 is based solely on HLRN data since no government data is available for this period. The incomplete data shows a slow-down in eviction activity which may be due to international attention on displacement in Delhi brought on by the Commonwealth Games evictions and political fluctuations in local governance over the past three years.

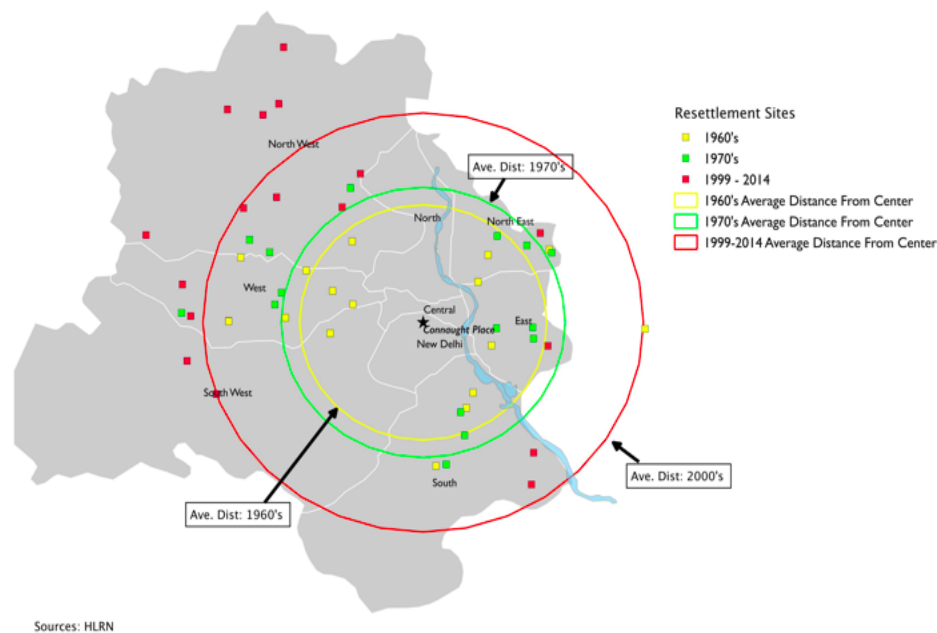




Resettlement Site Locations

The visualization below demonstrates the strong trend of outward expansion in which resettlement sites are constructed further and further from the core of the city over time. Using Connaught Place as a proxy for the center of the urban area, we can perceive the outward growth of relocation sites from the 1960's to the 70's to the current wave of evictions that started in 1999. Our data does not have relocation sites associated with any In the most recent period of evictions, JJ residents have been displaced from central locations to sites 3-4 hours away, necessitating long, expensive bus rides to reach employment opportunities and urban amenities. On average, resettlements done in the 1960's were 10.3 Km from the center of the city. In the 1970's the average distance rose to 11.9 KM and for evictions since 1999, the average relocation distance is 18.3 Km.

Delhi's Resettlement Sites: Moving Towards the Periphery



Evictions are generally paired with an official justification citing the public interest. In reality many eviction sites sit empty for many years or are redeveloped with a different use than that stated at the time of eviction. Dupont and Gautam Bhan have found that the primary land uses of former JJ cluster sites are vacant land, parks and transportation infrastructure. In his study of evictions prior to 2007, Bhan found that **25% of the cleared land had remained vacant.**

Governance

Delhi suffers from the center state governance overlap. While DUSIB is a state agency in charge of all rehabilitation work in the city-state, a large part of the land holding in the state and the planning policies are developed by DDA (Delhi Development Authority), which is a central government agency. This has led to creation of policies that are unresponsive to the people as the powers to be in policy making are immune and distant from the political repercussions of the negative impacts of their policies. Delhi 's fragmented urban government has led to an extreme lapse in land management and property rights enforcement. While the poor are being made scapegoats in the name of illegality it is important to note that **70% of Delhi's housing stock is illegal and the "illegal rich" enjoy complete immunity from any state action.** The impossibility of legal housing in Delhi impacts people from all income classes and this is a larger agenda of governance that needs broader advocacy and participation of all citizens. This is also an opportunity for venue & audience

Types of habitation in the NCT of Delhi

Type of settlement	Total Pop.	% of Total	Informal
JJ clusters(a)	20.72	14.8	14.8
Slum-designated areas	26.64	19.1	19.1
Unauthorized colonies	7.4	5.3	
JJ resettlement colonies	17.76	12.7	12.7
Rural villages	7.4	5.3	
Regularized-unauthorized colonies	17.76	12.7	
Urban villages	8.88	6.4	6.4
Planned Colonies	33.08	23.7	
	139.64	100	53

Population in (000,000's)

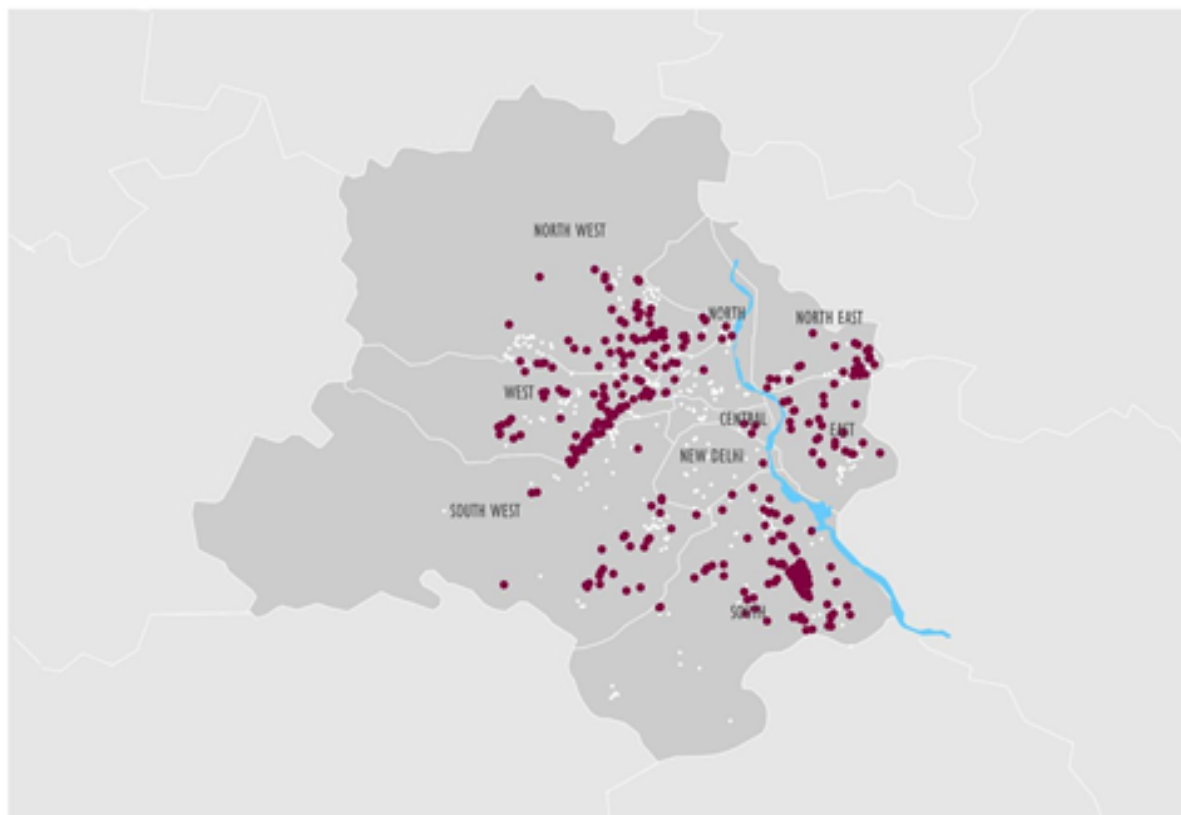
Source- Government of Delhi (2004), Economic Survey of Delhi 2002-2003,

expansion by policy advocates working for the housing rights of the poor in the city.

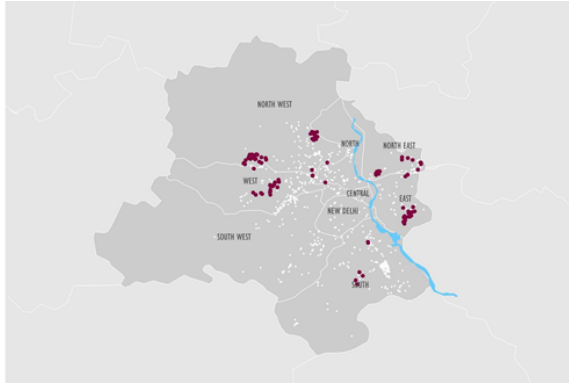
Delhi's majority public land holding rests with central government agencies this further complicates the institutional mechanism of implementing any state level urban development or public

housing program in the city. Organizations like DUSIB (Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board) have to deal with a multiple agency interests and competing development agendas. This also impacts the work of NGO's, CBO's, Policy advocacy groups, civil agencies and Institutions who are working to stop evictions and advocate for policy reforms, as it requires them to invest in advocacy to multiple public institutions and agencies.

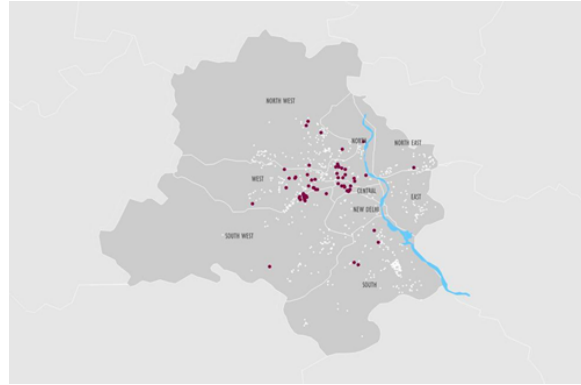
In the absence of good governance and enforcement capacity activist judiciary is filling the governance gap and in doing so are often performing a legislative role (Rajagopal, 2007). This has played both ways sometimes rulings have reinforced existing laws reinstating the “illegality” of informal settlements as per stated government policy and at other times stopped evictions as a violation of Human rights. While in the recent decades Nuisance laws have been used successfully in the courts by Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) to protect private property rights and evict the poor through court orders (Ghertner, 2008), there have also been numerous successful stay orders obtained by communities with NGO support against forced government evictions. The Delhi High Court recently ordered the formation of a Standing Committee mandated to develop a comprehensive resettlement policy to ensure that basic amenities are available to inhabitants of resettlement sites without delay (HLRN, 2002).



363 JJ clusters on Delhi Development Authority Land (DDA)- 51%



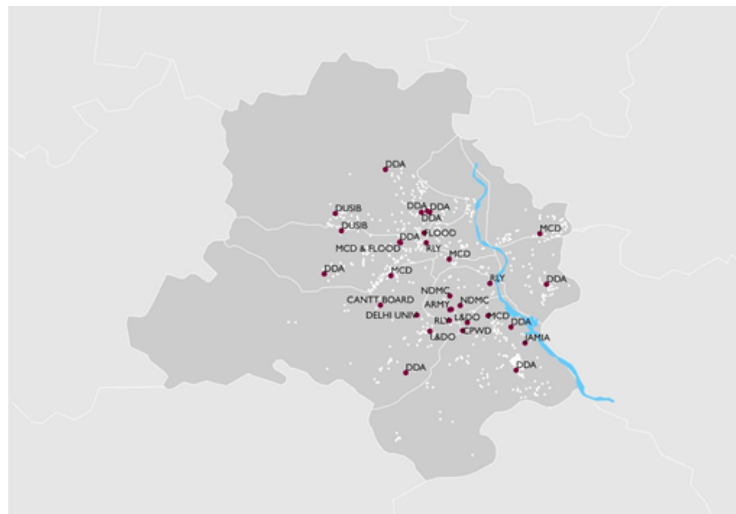
96 JJ Clusters on DUSIB Land (13.5%)



Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)- 9.1%

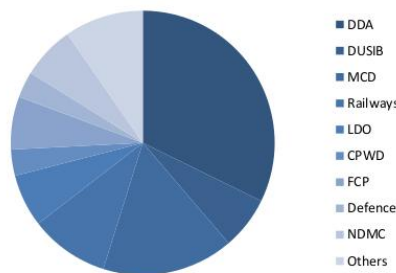
Nearly 51% of the existing JJ Clusters are on DDA land, a Central Government agency, while DUSIB the state government agency is in charge of upgradation of all JJ clusters

Out of a total of 685 identified JJ clusters in Delhi nearly 52.9% (363) are located on land belonging to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). Only 96 parcels of land belong to DUSIB the agency in charge of implementing redevelopment and improvement initiatives in these settlements. The remaining land ownership is with: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (65), Railways (57), Land & Development Organization (26), Forest Department (19), Central Public Works Department (16), Flood Control Department (13), Public Works Department (11), Gram Sabha Urban Village (10), Cantonment Board (7), Delhi Jal Board (5) and other owners (23).



Land ownership for the 31 clusters slated for relocation in the near future indicates a wide distribution of ownership across different local, state and central government agencies

No's	Land Owning Agency
10	Delhi Development Authority
2	Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board
5	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
3	Indian Railways
2	Land & Development Organization
1	Central Public Works Department
2	Flood Control Department
1	Cantonment Board
2	New Delhi Municipal Corporation
3	Other owner(s)



Distribution of Land ownership for 31 relocation sites

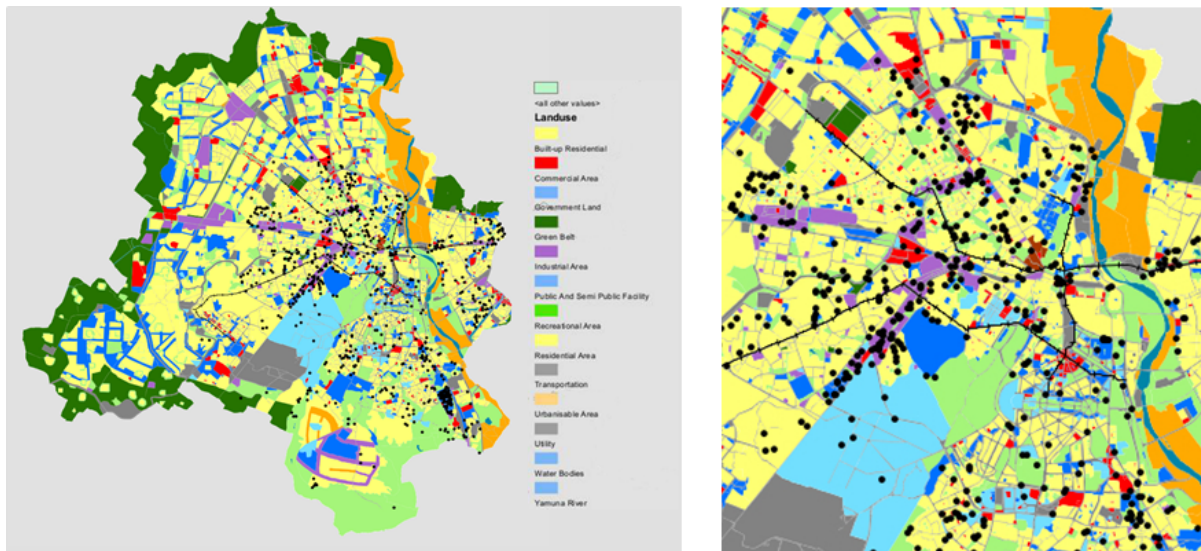
Development

The 11th Five Year Plan outlines that India has a large demand supply gap in the housing sector and that there is a **need to build 26.53 million new homes to meet this gap**. It further identifies that 99% of this shortage is in meeting the needs of the EWS (economically weaker section) and LIG (lower income group) segments of the population (88% and 11% respectively). The magnitude of this problem is especially evident in the big urban centers in India. Cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad have had high decadal population growth since the 1960's due to high rates of urbanization, greater urban economic activity and increasing rural urban migration. Most urban migrant workers are employed in low income jobs in the informal or formal sector or as self-employed small business operators. Unregulated labor markets have encouraged exploitation of these workers a majority being paid below minimum wages standards, with no health, vacation, social security benefits or job security. With mounting real estate prices living costs have continued to outpace paying capacity of these low income workers. Unable to meet the costs of city living these families are forced to squat on public land in self-built housing to meet their housing needs. On the other hand increased land prices, shortage of new land and continued pressure for growth have led governments and vested real estate interests to lobby for new policies targeting redevelopment of these centrally located informal settlements.

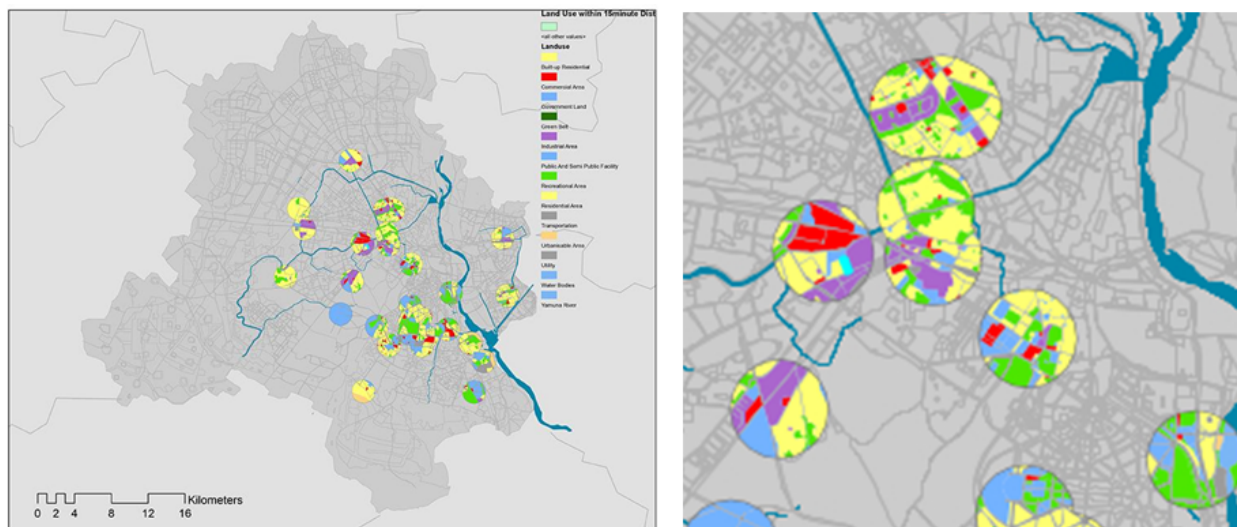
As cities are competing for global business and investment city and central governments are successfully promoting aspirations for “clean”, “slum free India” (RAY, JNNURM) and “world class cities” as a development agenda to its middle class and elite citizens. The buy in of the middle class and elite in this pro-growth development agenda has led to widespread apathy towards the poor. The government's eviction policies are blatantly violating international norms of appropriate compensation, benefits, protection of social, economic and cultural rights and yet the civil society and citizenry at large are not engaged in opposing such violations.

This is further complicated by a technocratic approach to development of plans and policies. In spite of the devolution of powers to local agencies as per the 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution (1994), Delhi has claimed an exception under Jagmohan in 1998 and planning power continue to remain with DDA. Though local area plans have been notified they are only now being opened to the public for objections. This method of limited engagement reduces the public participation to a reactionary process and not an informative or constructive engagement. Planning agendas are therefore driven by intellectuals and professionals sitting in government bureaucracies or elite private consultancies rarely informed by ground realities. Delhi has a large vacant housing stock and yet the affordable housing policy does not target

strategies for its efficient allocation to low income communities. Though DDA successfully acquired a large pool of land through the public land acquisition and development policies recommended in the 1962 Delhi Master Plan, it has lagged behind in providing cross-subsidized housing on this land.



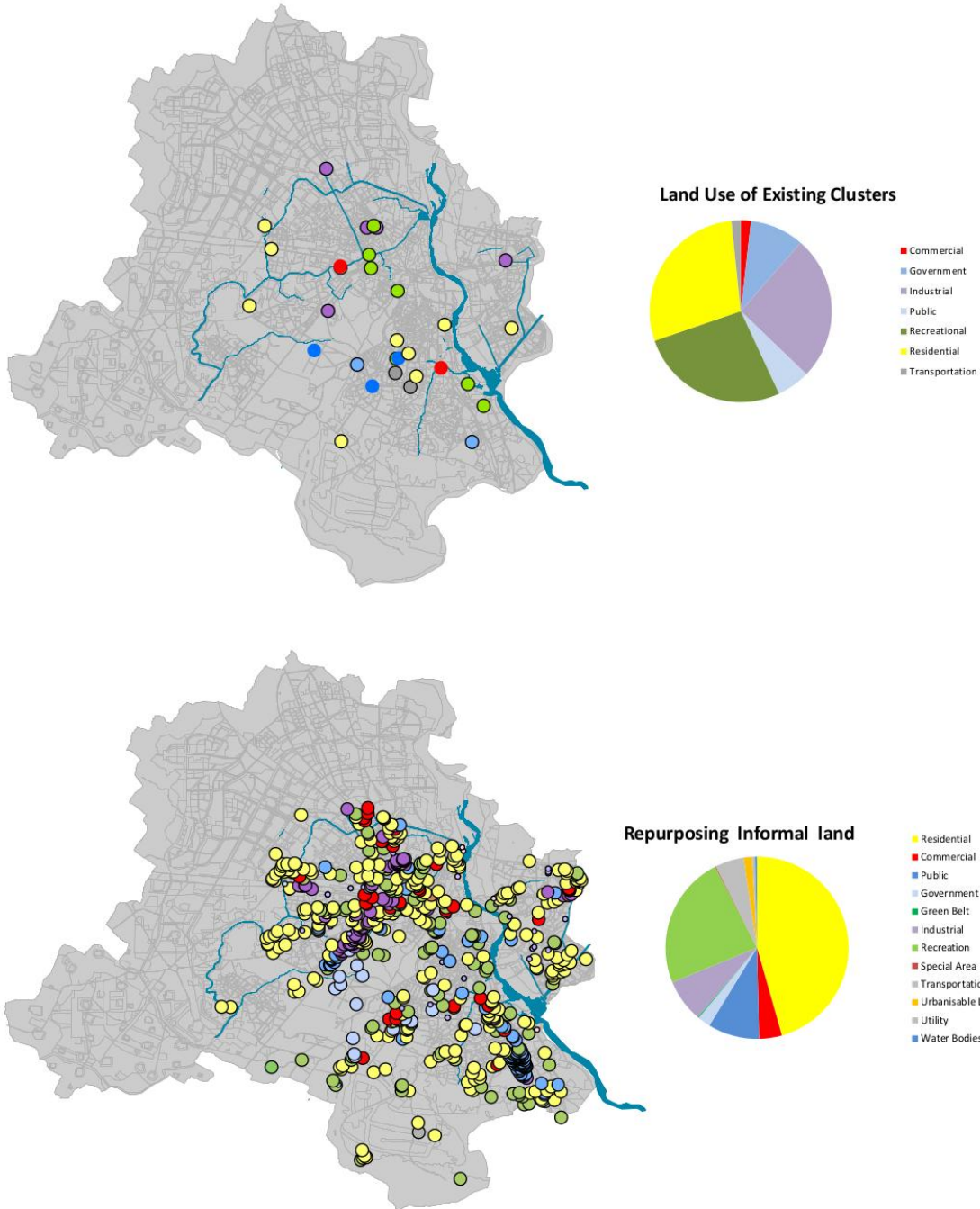
Map showing an overlay of the 685 identified JJ clusters of the Delhi Land Use Plan 2021



Delhi Master plan showing mixed land use pattern in 15 minute walking distance of existing JJ clusters locations.

The map highlights the ecosystem of existence of informal settlements in urban centers. The land use map overlaid onto the existing informal settlement locations indicates to the mix-use nature of the surroundings. The proximity to work, access to cheap city services and amenities illustrated in this map are indicative of the essential pre-requisites for survival of these communities. When such communities are displaced to the urban

peripheries as consolidated poor ghettos they lose the very fabric and surroundings that are essential for their survival. The added costs of long commutes from the fringes, lack of access of jobs, inadequate healthcare and educational facilities have devastating impacts on families already surviving at the margins.



These maps overlay the 2021 Delhi master plan on the existing JJ clusters to extract the land use slated for these existing residential settlements. The first map is an overlay of the 33 JJ clusters that are slated for eviction in the near future and the second map shows the overlay for all the 685 JJ clusters identified by

DUSIB. The extracted charts indicate that about 45% of existing JJ Clusters are zoned for residential use under the Delhi Master Plan. An additional 25% are slated for green/open space. Among the 33 sites slated for relocation, there is a fairly even split between land slated for residential, industrial and green/open space.

Mapping Constraints and Methodological Challenges

Mapping JJ clusters and evictions in Delhi is complicated by the limitations of available, difficulties in measuring informal activities, and the political nature of the data.

Past Evictions

A significant amount of our data was provided to researchers via the Slum and JJ Department of the Municipal Corporation which only tracked evictions where there relocations. Evictions that did not involve relocation would not be included in the dataset. An HLRN study (HLRN 2011) found that hastily executed evictions leading up to the commonwealth games were carried out without relocations and did not enter the official MCD data. Fortunately, we are able to complement government data on past evictions with a list of 38 evictions from HLRN. Some of these evictions, which occurred between 2004 and 2013, also appear in the MCD dataset but many do not. The list reflects the evictions that HLRN has been able to verify rather than every eviction, but nevertheless it is a valuable resource and the most up to date available to us (running up to December 2013). HLRN has compiled this data as part of their “Database on Forced Evictions in Delhi” and they represent a work in progress.

Current JJ Clusters

Though the India Census tracks statistics for Delhi’s “Identified Slums”, their data is not relevant to our analysis because they use a broad definition of slum that includes old neighborhoods with dense but formal construction. The most comprehensive and accessible database of JJ Clusters is maintained by DUSIB which makes it public via their website. This list reflects a 2010 survey of JJ Clusters. Its geographic specificity and citywide scale make it a useful tool in understanding the location of JJ Clusters but DUSIB’s dataset has a number of serious limitations. First, it only counts Clusters of 50 or more households, thus neglecting the smaller encampments. Additionally, it is not updated on a regular basis. Finally, in conversation, DUSIB officials noted that clusters may be left off the official list at the request of the landowning agency which has implications for the relocation opportunities and eviction due process afforded to the residents. Nevertheless, lacking a dataset of rival scope, we have relied on DUSIB’s list of JJ Cluster sites in our analysis. The 685 Clusters it lists should be understood as minimum. The 33 JJ Clusters slated for eviction were reported the Minutes of the Seventh Board Meeting of DUSIB, held on 4th July 2013.

We have drawn on Swathi Shivanand and Gautam Bhan's analysis of government data limitations in "(Un)Settling the City Analyzing Displacement in Delhi from 1990 to 2007". Shahana Sheikh from CPR and Veronique Dupont helped to clarify how DUSIB classifies JJ Cluster populations.

Eviction and Relocation in Chennai and Delhi

Like Delhi, Chennai has hundreds of thousands of residents living in informal shelters and the attitude towards those resident by the government has largely resembled that of Delhi. However, the two cities differ in their governance structures, political cultures and natural environments producing differing technical approaches to evictions and relocations.

In Chennai, evictions and relocations are carried out by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB). Many informal settlements in Chennai are located on the embankments of rivers and canals while others are close to the coast. Many of these communities have been deemed to reside on "objectionable land" by TNSCB which cites environmental and beautification justifications in ordering evictions. "Objectionable land" includes government land, canals, waterways and footpaths.

The primary relocation strategy has been to place households in dense high-rise blocks located at the far north and south of the city. The vast Semmenchery site is made up of tightly packed two story buildings, but the newer generation of relocation sites – Kannagi Nagar and Perumbakkam in particular – are long arrays of high rise structures. Unit sizes range from 150 to 310 square feet for families that are estimated to average 5 members each. Beyond the bare shell of the residential structures, very little infrastructure and services have been developed. Additionally, these settlements lack mixed uses and employment opportunities, reinforcing and concentrating poverty. Chennai's resettlement sites have been faulted for lacking sufficient school facilities, transportation infrastructure and healthcare facilities as well as creating an unsafe environment for women and children. Many families were moved into the resettlement sites before water and electricity connections had been made.

For most of Chennai's resettlement units, families are offered a "hire purchase" arrangement in which they pay monthly for twenty years at which point they are granted a sale deed. Prior to receiving the sale deed, the families live with insecure tenure as their inability to pay or changes in TNSCB policy can render their claim to their unit void. In Delhi, following the completion of a ten-year lease, relocated households lose any legal claim to their lot.

The high-rise approach taken to relocation in Chennai contrasts with the sites and services strategy employed in Delhi. The majority of relocations in Delhi have offered displaced families (who are found eligible and can pay a fee) a plot of land with 10 years of tenure and connections to sewage, electricity and water. The families are expected to develop permanent structures on their own. In conversation with our class, DUSIB described their changing thinking on this strategy and indicated that they are more interested in providing built-structures for relocation along the lines of the Chennai model. This shift is being spurred by DUSIB's recognition of the degree to which their peripheral resettlement sites are marginalizing Delhi's poor socially and economically.

Portal design

A web portal might serve as an effective tool for communicating the mission of a collaborative of multiple agencies, prioritizing an agenda to end evictions and displacement, and communicating news and events to a broad and targeted audience. Bringing together actors might help leverage work of individuals, elevate the public's awareness and interest, and increase awareness of politicians and the judiciary. In addition the portal might serve as a one-stop-shop for data related to evictions and displacement. By bringing together data related to this subject area, the portal aims to democratize information, bring to light priorities for future research, and expose inconsistencies in data collection or definitions that hinder data-driven decision-making.

In designing a portal mock-up, we thought explicitly about the audience and goals for the collaboration. In regards to the former, we envisioned the audience to include researchers looking to establish new or build upon existing research in this field, judiciary officials looking for information on legal precedent, and activists seeking to mobilize or leverage information to prevent evictions.

The group drew heavily from conversations with Transparent Chennai and the example of <http://www.transparentchennai.com/>. Transparent Chennai is a non-profit organization operating in Chennai that distributes data and conducts research about low-income areas and slums, public amenities and services near these areas, and other geographic features such as municipal infrastructure.

Front page

The following are features that might be considered for the front-page view of a web portal. In general, items that appear on the front page should articulate the essence of what the website is about and provide the most relevant information to casual viewers (those who are unlikely to click through to secondary pages for further information).

Translation: The website might be translated to English, Hindi, and other local dialects in order to be inclusive of all audiences.

Coalition name: brands the group of activists, non-profits, academics, and others working on this issue area under a common umbrella. The name might describe the geographic scope and scope of the collaboration.



Logos: Logos of key participants with space to add partners and/or invite potential partners might be listed high on the page in order to demonstrate that this is a credible, broad, and inclusive group with a legitimate agenda.

Social presence: A social media presence might be established in order to distribute information across modern distribution mediums including: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, and Youtube.

Newsletter: In addition to a social media presence, a newsletter might assist in distributing news, advertising events, and posting announcements for a listserve of interested parties. A newsletter will also serve to consolidate information in a single outlet for legislators, judiciary officials, and others with limited attention or interest in seeking out multiple sources for information on evictions and displacement.

News scroll: A scrolling news bar is one way to communicate more than one message with limited space. The coalition might consider posting news, events, and other announcements in this space. For example, recent publications, judiciary actions, and images from recent events might be posted here.

About

The about page might have a vision statement that articulates the purpose, goals, and mission of a collaboration. This page view might also present the partner logos, a description of the partner's work, and hyperlinks to partners' webpages. Listing together all those working in this subject area on an about page,

brings publicity to each partner and also collectively demonstrates the scale of those interested in this subject area.



The Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) is a national education institution committed to the equitable, sustainable and efficient transformation of Indian settlements.



The Housing & Land Rights Network works for the recognition, defence, promotion, and realisation of the human rights to adequate housing and land, which involves securing a safe and secure place for all individuals and communities, especially marginalised communities, to live in peace and dignity.

Data

Compiling, aggregating, and distributing data regarding evictions and displacements can be a powerful tool to shed light on the magnitude, scope, and geography of the issue and to help identify future priorities in these communities.

In organizing a page view to distribute data, we explored two options; either present data by thematic content or by curated policy questions. The site mockup demonstrates the latter option, as presenting information separated by content type (datasets, maps, judicial rulings) did not communicate the intent and help leverage the content to serve a purpose, as effectively.

The five questions we identified as key themes were:

- *Who are slum dwellers?*
- *Who gets to make decisions?*
- *What are the locations and conditions of slums?*
- *What is the role of government?*
- *What happens when slum dwellers are evicted?*

Embedded under each of these questions, a web portal might then categorize available information by type such as: data, maps, publications, and training materials. Within each type, further categorization might help to sort data by content such as demographics, news articles, images and videos, judicial decisions, etc.

(No content. Please, contribute)

When information about a specific low-income area, slum, or evictions site is known, one-page profiles containing a brief description of the location might be developed. One-page profiles synthesize and boil down relevant information and therefore might be useful mediums to engage judiciary actors and politicians.

Upload information

Content for the data portion of the website might be generated by partners of the collaboration, but also data might be accepted from outside researchers, individuals, and other interested parties. Content might include photographs, maps, databases, and other documentation of evictions and displacement.

When uploading information, a form to collect a standard set of metadata, to assist those without intimate knowledge of a dataset to get an overview of the content and details to contact those responsible for the data. The standard metadata might include a description of the data, geographic coverage, time period of the data, contact information of an individual or organization, and/or date the data was uploaded.



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INFORMATION UPLOAD

Don't have electronic copy or scanner?

DESCRIPTION	<i>(click to add text)</i>
TYPE	
GEOGRAPHY	
TIME PERIOD	
CONTACT INFORMATION	
ORGANIZATION	
NOTES	
UPLOAD	

Acceptable formats include:
.pdf, .jpg, .png, .kml, .kmz, .shp,
.xls, .xlsx, .dta, .dbase, .csv, and .txt

Partners mentioned that further iterations of the site might include an interactive portion meant to engage the communities living in low-income areas or slums. Eligibility documentation could be uploaded or collected and uploaded to catalog it safe from theft, loss, or fire and other disasters.

Contact us

The ‘contact us’ portion of the web portal might connect interested parties to partners’ webpages. In doing so, site visitors interested in the work of a specific partner could seek further information.

Rollout plan

When rolling out a web portal, administrators might discuss and review the following considerations:

- Avoid drawing attention that perpetuates evictions
- Avoid making communities more vulnerable
- Make sure enough resources are dedicated to roll out and maintenance
- Plan for updates and new data to be added to the site
- Who will be in charge of maintaining the site into perpetuity?
- Who will respond to inquiries about data?
- How will the site interact with DUSIB and other government actors?



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REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

By meeting partner organizations, experts, and government officials during our one-month in India, we were able to learn firsthand about the manner in which marginalized communities are being evicted and displaced, particularly in Delhi. By conducting site visits – areas where settlements had been demolished, areas that were under the threat of eviction, and areas where communities had been resettled – we were able to acquaint ourselves with the ground reality in a way that we could not have had we simply read about these communities. However, while we were able to develop this understanding and create tools to support our partner’s advocacy efforts, we remain aware that our analysis was limited by the short period of time – one month – we had available for research.

In light of this limitation, and based on the feedback provided by our partners, we identified topics that additional research is needed on (see **Table 1**) as well initiatives that our partners are interested in piloting in the city but do not have capacity for (see **Table 2**). We are hopeful that we will be able to contribute beyond the 2014 practicum if we continue to engage our partners in these identified areas in the future.

For this purpose, we recommend that the Displacement Research and Action Network (DRAN) at MIT carry out additional research in collaboration with our partner organizations, and also continue to work with the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board – a government agency that asked for MIT’s assistance in analyzing and verifying data they collected across all JJ clusters in Delhi. Similarly, we recommend that additional practicums be designed through the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT to assist our partners with the development of the initiatives they are interested in starting. It is only through such long-term engagement—the kind that DUSP is also known for—that we will be able to develop meaningful relationships with our partners and, in turn, impact the space in which marginalized communities are being displaced and resettled further and further away from the city center.

Table 1 – Topics requiring Additional Research – Delhi

Research Topics²
Drivers and determinants of land prices
The relationship between land values and displacement
Analysis of the tenability criteria used by government authorities to demolish settlements
Analysis of land use and land ownership prior to and after evictions
The rationale and need for an eligibility criteria for resettlement and compensation
The impact of displacement on homelessness
Opportunities for the development of mixed-income neighborhoods, infill development or incremental housing in Delhi
Public Private Partnerships and new zonal plans in Delhi – a study of accessibility to land as an economic and political issue
Analysis of the national government’s new ‘Housing for All’ initiative
Strategies used to prevent evictions – successes and failures – as a guide for future advocacy

Table 2 – New Initiatives Recommended by Partners in Delhi

New Initiatives
<p>Hotline and SMS alerts: A 24/7 hotline that those under threat of eviction can call on to report imminent evictions, and a SMS system that can alert advocacy groups and activists that the eviction is about to happen. This system can facilitate mobilization efforts against displacement of marginalized communities.</p>
<p>Upgrading of JJ clusters through Special Funds for Scheduled Castes: A program through which scheduled caste residents in JJ clusters can upgrade and improve their houses and settlements using special funds available for them at the national level.³</p>

² While the areas of research listed above specifically focus on Delhi, we find that it is essential to study similar processes in other cities –both in India and worldwide – to understand the structural causes of evictions and displacement globally, and to complement it with a study of successful urban upgrading and resettlement examples in cities around the world

³ A major percentage of residents living in JJ clusters belong to scheduled castes

Appendix

Full list of organizations and individuals participating in interviews

Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN)
Indian Institute Human Settlements (IIHS)
Liza Weinstein, Northeastern University (NEU)
Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)
Indu Prakash Singh, National Forum for Housing Rights (NFHR)
Transparent Chennai (TC)
Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board(DUSIB)
Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB)
T.K.Ramkumar, advocate and attorney in Chennai

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