The Meaning, Experience, and Value of 'Common Space' for Women and Children in Urban Poor Settlements in India

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Abstract

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By
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Adviser: Professor Roger A. Hart

Housing and basic services in urban poor settlements have been the focus of bi-lateral agencies, national governments as well as NGOs and CBOs. However, little attention has been paid to understanding the value of “common spaces” in these settlements, or in the planning and design of “common spaces” in upgraded or redeveloped settlements. Common spaces include communal areas like childcare and play facilities, religious and cultural establishments, shops, physical infrastructure like roads and sanitation, and informal spaces like courtyards, steps, lanes, and corridors where women perform daily chores and interact and children play. This dissertation focuses on understanding the significance that families, particularly women and children, living in poor urban communities in India give to common space in their settlements.

This study was carried out in the Indian cities of Bangalore and Mumbai in partnership with an organization called "The Alliance", the largest and most successful NGO-CBO partnership in India for the organized participatory development of slums. Individual interviews, group tours, and focus groups with women and children were used to investigate the meaning, use, and value of common spaces in eight urban poor settlements at various stages of the redevelopment process. In addition, key stakeholders in the urban redevelopment process such as politicians, municipal officers, planning officials, and members of The Alliance were also interviewed to better understand how political and institutional forces shape common spaces.

The study finds that common spaces are recognized for their utilitarian value, but rarely for their ‘common’ or shared nature. In existing settlements, spaces adjoining homes, small shops, religious spaces, and community meeting rooms all support women and children in their work, play and socialization activities. However, poor access to basic
services such as water, sanitation and drainage, and unpaved streets render many of these spaces unusable, unhealthy, or conflict-laden. In extremely dense settlements very narrow streets do little to support daily activities and hinder the movement and gathering of people. Residents living in redeveloped housing value common spaces such as wide corridors, entrance-steps, terraces, community meeting rooms, and religious spaces as they provide opportunities for children’s play, social interaction, and special occasions such as weddings. However, resident aspirations to live like the middle-class often lead to self-imposed restrictions on the use of these common spaces for activities like informal socialization or for personal household chores. In both existing and redeveloped settlements children’s play tends to occur in the common spaces and is often the reason for tension and discord between residents.

Most participants in the study requested that common spaces like playground and parks, childcare centers, study rooms, libraries, training centers, community meeting rooms, shops, and religious spaces be included in current or new housing. A key finding was that upgrading moderately dense settlements in a holistic manner is a crucial step for preserving and encouraging time-tested spatialities of housing that support the diverse needs of poor people and resident participation in the process is crucial to achieve this. In addition, a number of key principals for the successful development of common spaces in urban poor settlements were identified: encouraging large tract redevelopments instead of pocket-sized efforts, recognizing existing common spaces at the start of the planning process, and aiming to preserve long-term relationships by more sensitive allocation of housing.
Acknowledgement

This dissertation has been a long and arduous journey. When I walked into Jude, our program assistant’s office on my first day of the program and declared with unshaking certainty that I would complete my degree in five years, she wisely said ‘life happens.’ And it certainly did, in more ways than I expected, and as a result I have worked on this dissertation in fits and starts for the last four years. Balancing family and my work proved tougher than I imagined; and bringing myself to work far away from the academic support of my program proved even tougher. It was only because of the tremendous support I had from my committee members, family and friends that I was able to finish this volume of work.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION, REVIEW OF LITERATURE, AND RESEARCH DESIGN
Chapter 1: Background and Review of Literature

Rapid urbanization funneled by rural masses moving to urban areas has led to the proliferation of self-organizing urban poor communities and settlements as migrants do not have the capacity to participate in the organized market that has been co-opted by the more powerful classes in conjunction with the State. While the State has criminalized these spaces of the urban poor as ‘illegal’ and ‘informal’ it has made legal the illegal land on which many representations (such as shopping malls, and farmhouses) of a ‘world class city’ are developed (Roy, 2011). Within the context of India, urban poor settlements vary greatly in size, demography, political power, socio-cultural practices, and self-organizing skills. No one settlement is like another. However, State-led policies dole out largely inflexible schemes that do not address this variability; they focus on delivering a house to a resident rather than addressing the needs of the community as a whole. In existing settlements the spaces between dwellings that are characterized by lack of basic services such as water, drainage, and sanitation but also allow for community gatherings, children’s play, and informal socialization are left out of the equation for many reasons. The poor seldom recognize these spaces as they are conflict-laden, and because these spaces have no formal terms of recognition within communities and within the State. Giving attention to such spaces can therefore be challenging; but they are at the same time vital to redevelopment processes as they allow for urban poor settlements to be understood in more holistic terms other than just a collection of houses. While addressing a very practical issue of slum improvement this dissertation also in the processes has to address some large theoretical issues such as participatory democracy at the community level, the meaning of public space in Indian urban society, and the place of women and children in the public sphere.

This dissertation focuses on understanding the significance that families, particularly women and children, living in poor urban communities in India give to “common space” in their settlements. A common space, for the purposes of this dissertation, is defined as a shared
indoor or outdoor location bundled with the supportive infrastructure, norms, and behaviors that shape its use. This includes communal areas like childcare and play facilities, religious and cultural establishments, shops, physical infrastructure like roads and sanitation, and informal spaces like courtyards, steps, lanes, and corridors where women perform daily chores and interact and children play.

This exploration of common space takes place in the context of widespread slum upgrading and redevelopment in India. Current government redevelopment schemes that aim at achieving ‘world class’ cities are driven by project funds and timelines and are quickly replacing incremental, innovative, and time-tested built-forms made by residents and supporting community-based organizations. The timing of my research allows for documenting and examining ways in which common spaces have been shaped through large-scale redevelopment efforts and smaller scale incremental upgrading efforts. The dissertation, furthermore, was carried out in partnership with The Alliance, the largest and most successful NGO- CBO partnership in India for the organized participatory development of slums. Partnering with the Alliance offered the potential for this research to be used to supplement their well-accepted model of slum redevelopment with a system for critically assessing opportunities for the development of common spaces in urban poor settlements.

**Structure of Dissertation**

I have organized the contents of this dissertation into four sections. In the first section I provide background to the research. I introduce the Alliance; present a brief history of government policies and programs that have shaped urban poor settlements over the past few decades; describe the initial exploratory research that I conducted in the summer of 2009; and review relevant literature on common spaces from both majority and minority\(^1\) world countries, and state the research questions that emerged from this preliminary body

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\(^1\) ‘Majority world’ include economically poorer countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa where most people in the world live. ‘Minority world’ refers to wealthier areas of the globe like Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, USA and Canada where a minority of the worlds population live.
of work. In the second section I describe the research design - a multiple case study approach - which I have employed to carry out the primary research. In the third section I summarize the eight case studies that were undertaken. These summaries situate ‘common space’ in settlements that are in various stages of the redevelopment process, and show how these spaces are used and valued by women and children in individual settlements. The fourth section consists of three thematic chapters where I discuss the conceptual nature of common space and the role of common space in the lives of women and children living in urban poor settlements. In the concluding chapter I outline some policy and planning guidelines for developing common spaces that have evolved from this body of work.

**Use of Terminology**

I use the terms ‘slum’ and ‘urban poor settlement’ to refer to similar environments in urban areas. My preference is to use the term ‘urban poor settlement’ as women I have spoken with in several settlements associated the term ‘slum’ as degrading and preferred to use just the names of their settlements while referring to them. However the term ‘slum’ is ubiquitous in development literature and has a place and meaning in policy and planning frameworks. I therefore use the term ‘slum’ while referring to policies, programs, schemes, or and other works of research that have used this term.

I. BACKGROUND

**Research Partner: The Alliance**

The work of the Alliance (a collaboration of three organizations - Mahila Milan, NSDF, SPARC) is well known both nationally and internationally in the arena of urban poor development. Mahila Milan (Women working together) is a women’s collective that runs the daily savings\(^2\) collection in communities and is the backbone for organizing communities to

\(^2\) Daily savings is a microcredit program managed by the Mahila Milan through which poor families pool together their meager financial resources to create a fund from which they can
work together. The NSDF (National Slum Dwellers Federation) is a network of slum dwellers collectively seeking basic services like water and sanitation, and organizing against evictions. SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers), the professional arm of the Alliance, communicates the needs of its partners to government agencies, takes care of administrative tasks, and secures funding. The Alliance started in Mumbai in 1984 and has now spread to over 70 cities in India. The Alliance supports the claim that the urban poor have both the right and the capacity to address their problems and find viable solutions. They have built their credibility over the past 25 years by engaging professionals, women in the community, critical masses of urban poor, and government agencies in dialogues concerning housing and sanitation. According to Appadurai (2001), the work of the Alliance is not a linear process where steps are followed, goals are set and results accomplished. Instead, it works in an organic manner where mistakes are made, there is backtracking, and progress is slow, but the results achieved are sustainable, replicable and embrace the poorest of the poor.

A Brief history of urban development plans, policies, and programs in India

Post independence, in the 1950s and 1960s as 85% of India’s population resided in rural areas, the country’s five-year development plans were focused on agriculture and rural development. Little focus was placed on urban areas (Burra, 2005). The few schemes that were executed in urban areas during this time were welfare driven and focused on evicting the poor from central urban areas by providing them with housing in the peripheries of cities. Pushing the urban poor to suburban areas further impoverished them as they had little infrastructure by way of water, sanitation, transport, and schools and few opportunities for livelihood. As a result the poor sold their suburban plots to higher-income groups and moved back to the city and remade their houses or rented homes close to their means of take low-interest loans in times of emergency, or to support their children’s education or to make home improvements.
livelihoods. As the states were unable to assemble adequate land for the poor, private and illegal housing that was more centrally-located grew in popularity.

In the early 1970s central and state governments realized that welfare-driven provision of housing for the poor was no longer an option as land and building costs had escalated in urban areas and the urban poor population had also increased significantly. As central and state governments were unwilling to make larger financial commitments towards housing for the urban poor they shifted their focus to ‘slum upgrading’ and ‘sites and services’ schemes that were gaining popularity in several countries of the majority world (Peru, Indonesia, Mexico to name a few) for improving the living conditions of the urban poor (Hingorani, 2011).

In the 1970s and 80s a number of schemes such as the Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (1972), Sites and Services Scheme (1980), and the Urban Basic Services Scheme (1986) were launched. It was during this period that ‘slums’ came to be recognized as potential housing solutions and the government shifted its role from being a provider to facilitator with regard to urban poor housing. The central government, state governments, and bilateral organizations like the World Bank and UNICEF funded these schemes, and state governments were encouraged to take on more financial responsibilities and work towards cost-recovery. To channel and mobilize investment for housing by public and private actors national level institutions such as the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), and the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) were established during this time. The schemes that were executed during this period (some of which continued into the 90s) were groundbreaking in that they had an implicit urban focus and integrated poverty-alleviation programs with urban poor housing programs. They focused on basic social services and physical infrastructure with special emphasis placed on women and children living in settlements. The schemes included providing pre-school programs, vocational training, and setting up community organizations. While these
schemes were well intentioned, their outreach was limited, and frequent changes in the structures of these schemes and change of government administrations led to poor outcomes. Even though community participation was a basic premise of many of these schemes it was rarely implemented. Program evaluation showed that the urban poor were rarely engaged in shaping their environments and this was stated as one of the main reasons for poor outcomes (Hingorani, 2011).

Until the 1990s urban poor housing was mainly addressed by central and state governments. It was only in the 1990’s that the central government realized that poverty alleviation and basic services measures would not be successful and sustainable unless urban local bodies (ULBs) were decentralized and people were involved as active agents of change. A constitutional amendment (the 74th Amendment Act) was passed in 1992 to democratize and decentralize local governments. This amendment recognized urban governments as the third-tier of the federal system and constituted the establishment of elected ULBs such as ward committees, zonal committees, and municipal corporations for large urban areas and municipal councils for smaller and transitional urban areas. This Act made ULBs responsible for 18 articles such as urban planning, land use, water supply, roads, bridges, health, sanitation, and slum improvement but failed to define the sources of finance for these local bodies. In addition, the proposed District Planning Committees (DPCs), and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs), designed to guide ULBs were never formed.

Urban governments were caught in the position of being held responsible for fixing their overflowing cities, already crippled with inadequate infrastructure, while social and economic inequities between the rich and the poor increased. As a result, most urban governments were overwhelmed with the tasks they were mandated to accomplish and their resources were inadequate. Insufficient administrative capability, inadequate finances, and unsuccessful governmental restructuring hindered progress (Hamid, 2004). A recent expert
committee on urban infrastructure stated that urban governments in India are among the weakest in the world in terms of their capacity to raise resources and achieve financial autonomy (HPEC, 2011).

Cities were changing at a rapid pace: a growing middle class had increasing access to housing, cars, and disposable incomes and more and more people migrated from rural areas in search of livelihoods. The top-down and heavily bureaucratic processes of city master plans, city development plans, and town planning schemes were used and manipulated for political and private gains and had little bearing on the actual growth and development of the city. Urban planners in India who were trained in the ‘rationalistic’ ideology of planning were ill equipped to respond in any meaningful way to the rapid changes occurring on the ground in urban areas. They also had little power and operated as technocrats, laying out the wishes of changing political forces or proposing visionary plans for the city based on western conceptions of the modern city (such as New York, Paris, or, more recently, Singapore and Shanghai) (Mahadevia and Joshi, 2009).

During the 1990s to invigorate the efforts of ULBs more schemes were rolled out by the central government (for example, the Scheme for Housing and Shelter Upgradation, the National Slum Development Program, and the Two Million Housing Program) but none were able to make a significant impact on the housing deficit within cities. Efforts were fragmented, overlapped in certain areas, and were riddled with politics (Hingorani, 2011).

Then, in 2004 a massive new scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Redevelopment Mission (JNNURM), was announced by the central government to address the failing infrastructure in urban areas and the incapacity of local governments in addressing urban poverty and slums. This broke away from past efforts that concentrated on upgrading efforts and were more participatory in nature. The JNNURM was launched to provide reform

3 The Ministry of Urban Development set up the High Powered Expert Committee (HPEC) in 2008 for estimating the investment required for urban infrastructure and services in Indian towns and cities.
guidance to local governments and to make Indian cities ‘world class’ (Hingorani, 2011).
The scheme had two components: 1) Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) to fast-track urban infrastructure development and assist in further devolution of urban governance to local governments, and 2) Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) to improve provision of basic services and affordable housing for the urban poor. Almost 100,000 cores of Rupees (USD 17 Billion) has been allocated towards this scheme. While urban infrastructure has improved in many urban areas, there has been limited improvement in shelter and basic services for the poor. The JNNURM mission has been criticized for being fragmented in its approach (unable to coordinate on related issues like land, health, and education; being project driven and not holistic), not investing in capacity building of ULBs, failing to implement community participation, inadequate land reforms, and not being able to make credit and lending facilities available for the urban poor. In addition, a changing urban demographic places most of the urban poor in small and medium-sized cities which are poorly addressed by the JNNURM scheme, which concentrates its efforts on larger cities.

A new scheme called the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) was launched in 2011 by the central government to focus on shelter and basic services for the urban poor with more emphasis on providing land tenure and basic services for the urban poor through settlement upgrading rather than settlement redevelopment (which had been the emphasis in JNNURM). As this scheme is still in its early stages there is little material available on how this scheme has benefited the urban poor.

There have been wide shifts in the ways urban poverty and shelter have been addressed post-independence: from welfare-driven approaches in the 50s and 60s, to self help and integrated approaches in the 70s and 80s, a return to welfare-driven approach in 2000, and then a revival of the self help approach with the RAY scheme. These shifts have been driven

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4 Settlement upgrading involves the betterment of basic services and infrastructure while maintaining individual plots whereas settlement redevelopment involves razing down existing settlements and replacing them with multi-storey housing.
by big muscled bilateral agencies like the World Bank, a growing neoliberal state as well as internal politics. Even though the schemes have been different, some of the reasons for their failure have remained the same – including a lack of community participation, lack of capacity at the municipal level, and a fragmented approach where related sectors such as housing, health, and education have never been able to work together to address urban poverty and shelter. There is a real need for future approaches to address these repeated failures through more inclusive and bottom-up approaches and less hegemonic schemes.

‘Slum’ typology in India

According to the 2011 Census of India data (GoI, 2011), the urban population of India is 377.1 Million (31.16% of the total population), of which 93 million reside in urban slum conditions. Slums, as per this census, are identified as:

_Notified slums_ – these are formally ‘notified’ or ‘declared’ as slums by the local municipal authorities under any legislative Act (the process of notification differs from state to state);

_Recognized slums_ – these are recognized as slums by the local municipal authorities but not formally ‘notified’ or ‘declared’;

_Identified slums_ – these are compact areas of about 60-70 households (approximately 300 residents) living in poor quality congested tenements with inadequate infrastructure (i.e. lacking water and sanitation facilities).

Some studies have shown dramatic differences in access to services and infrastructure between these three kinds of slums (Edelman and Mitra, 2006). Notified slums generally provide better conditions because they may have political affiliations and relationships with municipal officers that put them in a better position for securing basic services like water, electricity, and toilets (Subbaraman et. al, 2012). Recognized slums, also known as ‘non-notified’ or ‘undeclared’ slums may still receive some provisions from the municipality (for example, provision of public water taps and community toilets) through vote-bank politics.
or through the political affiliations of settlement leaders. Identified slums rarely receive provisions and residents of these slums are usually among the poorest and most vulnerable in urban areas. Some identified slums have Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) working with residents on issues around housing and infrastructure, childcare, healthcare, and education. A recent study comparing a non-notified slums with other notified slums in the same area in Mumbai showed that lack of access to basic services such as water and toilets leads to lower health and social outcomes (Subbaraman et. al, 2012), thus affecting the poorest residents the most. A report issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the condition of urban slums in 2002 also highlights the differences between notified and non-notified slums. National level survey results on slums showed that notified slums were relatively much better serviced, with 73% having access to motorable access roads, 80% having access to latrine facilities, and 79% having access to weekly garbage collection services. In comparison only 55% of non-notified slums were connected to motorable approach roads, 50% had access to latrine facilities, and 40% had access to garbage collection services. Provision of underground drainage and sewerage systems for both types of slums was poor (GoI, 2002).

Urban poor settlements usually occupy private, municipal, state, or central lands (belonging to the railways, military, reservation lands, etc). While there are some processes of negotiation that can be used to acquire and allot private, state, and municipal owned lands to slum dwellers, it is much more difficult to acquire lands owned by the central government. As a result, even though thousands of people reside on lands owned by central government agencies they do so with bare minimum access to services as these agencies do not allow state or municipal governments to provide basic services to these settlement dwellers (Burra, 2005). The most vulnerable settlements are located in areas prone to flooding, accidents, and disasters such as low lying marshy lands, near railway tracks, on steep slopes, on
pavements and under expressways. At present there is no process of prioritizing housing and infrastructure for people residing in the most vulnerable settlements. Instead urban redevelopment projects rely on the process of ‘notification’, which is highly political in nature. For example only ‘notified’ slums are eligible for JNNURM schemes. Urban poor settlements are upgraded or redeveloped in three ways:

*Slum up-gradation processes:* Settlement upgrading process are incremental ways through which residents, municipal agencies, or NGOs and CBOs improve infrastructure within the settlement- for example by installing public water taps, paving roads, building community toilets and so on.

*In-situ redevelopment:* There are two types of in-situ redevelopment. In settlements where houses are at least 150 to 200sft in area and where it is possible for land to be acquired, the existing infrastructure is upgraded and houses are rebuilt on existing sites. The second type of in-situ redevelopment is where settlements are of very high density (usually in centrally located settlements) and it is not possible to plan for individual houses; here housing is razed to the ground and three or four storied apartment-type buildings are constructed to provide housing for residents. In most cases residents are responsible for finding temporary accommodation while their houses are rebuilt.

*Relocation and resettlement:* In relocation and resettlement projects slum dwellers are moved from their current housing to new housing in another area. This is usually the least preferred option as it disrupts the lives of residents in terms of their access to jobs, schooling, and other services. Relocation and resettlement takes places when settlement dwellers reside in areas that are hazardous in nature (pavements, near railway lines, flood prone areas), occupy central government or private lands where it is not possible to acquire land, or in areas that need to be acquired for large infrastructure projects. In such projects residents are usually given temporary housing where they can reside before moving into new housing.
2. EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

In the winter of 2009, when I was exploring avenues for my dissertation topic, I was introduced to the Alliance by a common acquaintance, Dr. Sheridan Bartlett. She told me that the Alliance was interested in exploring how common spaces could better cater to children's needs and safety in urban poor settlements, and asked if I would be interested in pursuing this topic for my dissertation. I was extremely excited. I would not only have the opportunity to work in India, my home country, but also have the opportunity to research a relevant and little explored topic that overlapped with my research interests.

I exchanged a few emails with Sheela Patel, the founder/director of SPARC (part of the Alliance) to better understand the framework for the research and my involvement in it. It became evident to me early on, as I familiarized myself with the work of the Alliance and exchanged emails her, that the Alliance worked in a truly bottom up manner and therefore any research I undertook would have to be relevant to and supported by them and the urban poor communities they worked with. She made it clear to me that the interest in exploring ‘common spaces’ as safe spaces for children in poor settlements had mainly come from members of SPARC, and that it was up to me to pursue how their grassroots members (MM and NSDF) and residents in poor settlements perceived the importance of this issue. I decided to travel to India to explore a potential project and a partnership with the Alliance. This would give me an opportunity to understand firsthand how the Alliance operated and become acquainted with its members, and would also help me to better understand the context of urban poor settlements. From this exploratory phase of research I would be able to define a second phase of research that would satisfy institutional criteria for dissertation research and allow for a grounded research process.

I had the choice of conducting the exploratory research in Mumbai or Bangalore, and I chose Bangalore for two reasons. First, as I had lived in Bangalore previously I was familiar with the local languages and culture and had access to friends and family I could stay with.
Second, Bangalore, unlike Mumbai, still had manageable urban density levels where the possibilities of common space could be explored as part of incremental upgrading, ground plus one dwellings, or multi-storied buildings.

In 2009 I spent three and a half months with the Alliance in Bangalore conducting exploratory research. During this phase my aims were 1) to understand the Alliance - their work culture and the methods and strategies they successfully employed to empower the urban poor to find solutions to their problems; 2) to explore the nature of common spaces in settlements and how they could be developed to provide safe spaces for children living in slums from the perspective of urban poor residents and the Alliance; and 3) to better understand the context of urban poor settlements in India. As an advocate of and believer in children’s rights I also hoped to actively explore how children from poor settlements could be involved in the methods and strategies that the Alliance employed to upgrade and redevelop settlements.

The Alliance in Bangalore was made up of the Mahila Milan, the Karnataka\textsuperscript{5} Slum Dwellers Association (KSDF), and SPARC. Their office was a small room situated on the grounds of a centrally located government maternity hospital. The Mahila Milan in Bangalore was composed of two distinct groups: a group of five to six young women (aged 18 to 24) who stayed in the office and performed accounting tasks related to the daily savings program, and a group of older women (aged 40 to 60) who visited settlements on a daily basis to conduct daily savings. Members of the KSDF were located across the state of Karnataka and visited the office on a regular basis. SPARC was represented by one individual who oversaw the running of the Alliance in Karnataka, and networked with local municipal officials, politicians, NGOs and INGOs in the city. During my visit, I worked mainly with the older MM women and with the SPARC representative.

\textsuperscript{5} Bangalore is the capital city of the State of Karnataka
My initial days were spent speaking with the Mahila Milan women, observing their activities, and accompanying them to the various settlements they worked in. They accepted me as a ‘trainee’ and were quite willing to show and explain in detail their day-to-day activities.

During the first two months I visited seven settlements, spoke with women, children and area leaders, and observed the day-to-day activities of residents living in these settlements. I found that much of everyday life spilled over onto common spaces adjacent to dwellings in urban poor settlements. Children playing, going to school, hanging about, running errands for their mothers; women going about daily chores like sorting grain, washing clothes and utensils, bathing their young children, chatting with their neighbors; and men gathering near local shops and tea stalls were all common sights. This web of intensively used space included roads and alleyways—usually too narrow for cars—small shops, cottage industries and enterprises, child care centers, religious establishments, garbage, open drains, construction material, cycles, scooters, stray dogs and clothes lines. There were generally few trees or street lights, and little in the way of formally allocated open spaces such as parks, plazas or sidewalks that might be more commonly seen in more affluent urban settings. (See Fig 1 through 4)

Figure 1: Space between dwellings in an inner-city settlement is used for storing water, cooking, washing clothes, drying clothes, bathing, playing, chatting, and sleeping

Figure 2: In a relatively less dense settlement, the streets are wider and are used for washing and drying clothes, playing, selling wares on handcarts, parking vehicles, cooking, etc.
In my conversations with women regarding how they perceived their settlements as places for raising their family, I found that most women tended to focus on very immediate needs such as housing and water, and on longer term goals such as giving their children a good education so that they can lead more comfortable lives than themselves. They were not that interested in a conceptual way in the common spaces that they occupied. In the fight for secure individual dwellings for their families, parents perceived common space as a background as well as a container of several activities which, given more space, they might prefer to do inside the privacy of their homes. Children, however, were quick to bring up common spaces in their settlements and places where they played when talking about what they liked or did not like in their neighborhoods. Older children often reflected on how their previous open play spaces were now built up with more housing, and younger children

Figure 3 (left): Three of the settlements I visited had homes adjoining major open drains, which made daily living precarious.

Figure 4(above): Most young children ate, bathed and played outside their homes while caregivers performed other household chores and kept an eye on them.
spoke of having no place to play and complained of garbage and construction material that turned the little space they had left for play into an unpleasant mire.

Over these first couple of months I was also able to get better acquainted with the MM women. Long bus-rides, having meals together, and waiting to speak with settlement leaders gave us plenty of opportunities to exchange our life stories, and interests. I came to know of the formative role that the Alliance had played in the lives of these women. They shared with pride their experiences of dealing with government officials, taking part in international exchanges, and the fact that they were no longer just ‘house-bound’ women but had a greater purpose to their lives. For the most part, they saw me as a passerby. They were all well versed in the methods (settlement surveys, daily savings) of the Alliance and carried them out with ease.

When it came to incorporating new ideas into their work, however, they resisted – mainly with silence. As I started to speak with the MM women about my interests with regard to examining common spaces in settlements as safe spaces for children and children’s involvement in settlement upgrading and redevelopment, and how this might be incorporated into the Alliance’s work, I found them starting to distance themselves from me. This distancing, however, happened in such a subtle manner that it took me a while to recognize it. The women always heard me out and even seemed mildly interested, but at the same time I found my self waiting longer for them at sites or at the office, and sitting by myself on some of the bus rides we took together. I was at a loss and frustrated. I spoke with the SPARC representative about the situation I was in and he told me that the women were set in their ways and if they entertained my interests they would be stuck with more ‘work’ which they could avoid by stringing me along in a non-confrontational way until it was time for me to leave. He added if there was something I wanted to do in any of the settlements I needed to tell them to do it. I was disappointed. Telling the MM women what

6 The MM women were used to having design and planning students doing two to three summer internships with them and they slotted me into this category.
to do’ went against all the principles of ‘participation’ as I knew it and could not have any conceivable long term affect on the work that they did. For this effort to be sustainable, I felt that the initiative had to come from the women and the communities they worked with. I decided to confront my partners and ask them what they really thought. It was probably the longest two hours of my life. When I told them my concerns they just stared back in silence. I told them they had to tell me their reservations so I could understand their point of view, but that did not inspire much conversation either. Finally one of the women blurted out that children did not know anything (about redevelopment) and that their parents knew what was best for their children, so it did not make any sense to involve children in the work they did, and their place was in school and their job was to study well and not waste their time in this (settlement upgrading/redevelopment). I was relieved, as I felt we finally had a standpoint we could work from. With this breakthrough in communication we were able to discuss in detail our varying conceptions of ‘children’ and childhood. The consensus that emerged was that all children are considered ‘babies’ until they are two years of age. Girls are considered children until they are 13 years of age or when they reach physical maturation after which they are considered ‘grown up children’ until they reach the age of 18. Boys are considered children until they are 15 years old and ‘teenagers’ or ‘grown up children’ until they are 20 years of age. The women stated that both cultural and legal factors influenced their definitions of childhood. Their children’s busy schedules, their lack of knowledge, and their immaturity were some of the main reasons why the women did not want to involve them in redevelopment processes. They felt that children’s time and energy was better spent when they focused on their studies, and that they shouldn’t be burdened with issues that were their parents’ responsibility. As an individual who had been raised on similar values I acknowledged and showed empathy for their reasons, but as an advocate for children and for children’s
inclusion in decisions that affected their lives, I also gave them several examples of how and why children’s opinion and involvement could make a difference in the work they did. After much discussion, we decided to explore what children could tell us about their lives and their community in two settlements. We chose one inner city settlement (LC settlement) where houses were as small as 40sft and lanes as narrow as 2 feet where plans for in-situ redevelopment were underway. The second settlement (BAS settlement) was away from the city center, where homes were 100sft to 250sft in area and streets were almost 10 to 15ft wide and most residents possessed legal titles to the land they occupied. Both settlements had been declared, or “notified,” as slums by the urban local bodies and were slated for redevelopment. We spoke to the area leaders in both settlements who suggested places where we could carry out our participatory sessions with children, and in addition identified some young people who might be interested in facilitating the process. I was excited at the prospect of having someone from the community facilitate the process, and eagerly met with the youth who had been suggested by the area leaders. In both cases they were ‘grown up girls’ aged 17 years who had finished their secondary education and in the process of applying for college admissions. Together with the MM women working in each of the areas, we met to discuss how we could speak with the children and do certain activities with them with regard to what they liked and did not like in the area they lived in and what changes they would like to see in the future.

At this juncture, I made the mistake of letting my personal research interests dominate the research process. I was so carried away by the willingness of the youth facilitators in each of the sites, and by my own passion for doing research with children, that we chose a plethora of methods (such as mapping techniques, photography, drawing, and writing) to engage children in each of the settlements to talk about their environment. Instead of using simple methods such as conversing with different groups of children that could have engaged the MM women as equal participants I chose methods that alienated the women
from the process. They saw that children were capable of articulating ideas about their environment in meaningful ways and giving useful suggestions to improve their surroundings, but they saw this as bored bystanders, not participants themselves.

**Summary of Initial Findings**

What follows is a short summary of what 52 children, aged 5 to 17, said about what they liked and did not like about the common spaces in their settlements and what they would like to have in a new home (See Fig 5 through 7 for examples of this process).

**Common areas in settlements**- Most children said that they liked going to shops, temples/churches, and their school; they did not like the smell of drainage, garbage thrown on the streets, stray dogs, and people fighting, saying bad words, drinking, smoking, and stealing.

**Play Spaces** - Young children (0-6) and girls (6-13), predominantly said they played in or near their homes. They preferred places close to home for play, but they also complained about neighbors scolding them for making noise while playing, neighbors pouring water in front of their houses so that children could not play there, and the lack of space they had to play in. Adolescent girls said they never played outside their homes and mainly stayed in their homes or visited with their relatives living in the same settlement. Most said that they read books, looked after siblings, and did household chores like cooking and cleaning inside the house. Boys (7 and older) said they liked to play football, cricket, volleyball, etc at playgrounds. However, because these playgrounds were often at the schools they attended rather than in their settlements, they had limited access to them. Public playgrounds were far from where they lived and they could only go to them on weekends with their parents’ permission. In playgrounds, younger boys complained that they were bullied by older children.
New Housing: Children aged 6 to 10 were able to articulate what they would like to see in their new housing at a basic level – their suggestions mainly included a ‘nice house’, ‘garden’, and ‘playground’. The children aged 10 and older made more detailed suggestions like separate rooms for sleeping, cooking, and toileting/bathing; and places for cots and a TV. They also said they needed paved lanes in their settlements, places for play and sport, gardens, trees, a place for flag hoisting during national holidays, and a place for parking vehicles. These children also said that running water, good drainage, and electricity were very important. Some children said the quality of construction and building materials should be good. Two of the children suggested having alternate forms of energy like solar energy incorporated into the new housing.

Figure 5: Translated chart of children’s likes and dislikes with regard to their settlement
The SPARC representative was excited to see the participatory activities that the co-facilitators and I were able to do with the children and advised me to create a guidebook that the MM women could use to conduct similar processes in other settlements. I did create a guidebook, although I was skeptical that it would be used in the future. On my last day with the MM women, however, three of the older women came to say that they understood how children could bring a different perspective to the work they did and that they would be more attentive to them and their needs during their settlement visits.

As part of our plan, the MM women were supposed to continue the work with the children by presenting their views to other members of the settlement and the settlement leaders. This, however, did not take place as neither parents nor the area leaders were particularly interested in what children had to say with regard to their settlement. They saw the whole process as being mostly fun and educational for the children. This made me realize that just speaking to children is not an adequate solution, and that an understanding of where the parents/community members/leaders stand on this issue is essential to any meaningful and integrated action. This requires a focused effort to understand what common space means.
to both families and children living in urban poor settlements and to what extent they are willing and able to analyze and potentially change it.

Despite frustrations, this exploratory phase was critical for building a relationship with my research partners, mainly the MM women and for understanding the complex nature of urban redevelopment from the perspectives of residents, area leaders, members of the Alliance and city planners. It also gave me important insights for crafting my research design for the later phases of this research.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Migration to urban centers has been on the rise worldwide. Recent reports\(^7\) show that 3.2 billion people now live in cities. In many cities of the South, 30 to 60 percent of the population lives in informal settlements, which are characterized by inadequate access to water, inadequate access to sanitation facilities, insecure tenure, and inadequate housing. Hundreds of millions of children live in urban poor settlements and they are most susceptible to the health and social risks present in poor living conditions (UNICEF, 2012). India is one of several countries where these challenges abound and are compounded due to the unsustainable growth of major cities. Poor settlements are increasing in size and their populations are growing as more people move from the relative insecurity of farming life in villages to seek opportunities in the bigger cities.

In the Global South, local governments primarily viewed settlement dwellers as an invisible population with no rights and forcefully evicted them from their settlements. The past two decades have shown a gradual transformation of this attitude. The current approach towards slums is an acknowledgement of the importance of participatory upgrading (as opposed to razing and relocating and urban renewal). Urban poor federations in more than

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\(^7\) By the World Bank, UN Habitat and UNICEF
thirty\textsuperscript{8} countries of the \textquote{majority world}\textsuperscript{9} have been able to secure basic rights - in the form of secure tenure, adequate housing, sanitation, water provision - for hundreds of thousands of urban poor families through community driven processes (Patel et al., 2002; Burra et al., 2003; Boonyabancha, 2009). By comparison, the issue of common space in these settlements, which is also important but less tied to survival needs, has received little attention.

There is remarkably little research on the conditions of slums for children as perceived by the residents and even less on the question of common space (reviews by Bartlett et al., 1999; Chawla, 2001). The emphasis of much of the writing with regard to children in urban poor settlements has been upon land tenure, housing structures, and the infrastructure issues of water and sanitation (Satterthwaite et al, 1996; Blanc, 1994; Bartlett et al., 1999; Chawla, 2001). For children and parents however, common space is extremely important.

The private space of the home in urban slums is usually severely restricted (60sq ft -100sq ft), leaving little room for children’s play and social development. On the positive side, these communities commonly do not have motor vehicles and often have high levels of social interaction, reciprocity and trust. As a result, children are relatively free to use outdoor space if it is available. Sadly, the available outdoor space is often very hazardous and unwelcoming due to poor sanitation, drainage and waste removal (see reviews by Satterthwaite, Hart, et al, 1996; Bartlett, 2002). Because top-down slum clearance and redevelopment is generally financially unfeasible, socially and economically disruptive and ethically problematic, a bottom-up approach is more likely to have real impact on community redevelopment. Therefore it is important to learn how to engage people in the challenging issues of creating common spaces in very high-density areas where demands

\textsuperscript{8} According to Slack/Slum Dwellers International, an INGO that facilitates the networking of federations among majority world countries, there are 15 mature federations (federations able to achieve country-wide scale and influence governments on housing policies and programs for the poor) and a total of 34 federations.

\textsuperscript{9} \textquote{Majority world}’ include economically poorer countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa where most people in the world live.
for land and housing are extremely high, and where any empty space is subject to intensive pressure. Establishing a shared and explicit understanding of the meaning of ‘common space’ for families living in urban poor settlements and their aspirations for these spaces as they plan to upgrade their existing settlements or plan for new housing, are an important first step in the process.

In order to outline a context for this study, I will review literature on the importance of common space for children’s growth and development; theory and research on the planning of common space in minority and majority world countries; outdoor environmental hazards faced by children in urban poor communities; research on common space in urban poor settlements; the particular significance of common space in an Indian cultural context; and the role of community participation in the creation of common space.

3.1 The Importance of Common Space to the Growth and Development of Children

Common spaces at the home and neighborhood level, when planned properly, can contribute to the overall positive growth and development of children. Common spaces include neighborhood spaces such as streets, play areas, public spaces, and shops; transitional spaces such as steps, cul-de-sacs, and parking courts; and home spaces such as verandahs, corridors, and internal courtyards (Moore, 1986; Doxiadis, 1975). These spaces can be public, semi-private, or private. Common spaces at the neighborhood level provide children opportunities to play, socialize with peers and neighbors, gain practical skills, develop self-identity, and take an active part in community life.

The ways in which children perceive and interact with the environment around them changes as they grow from infancy to adolescence. James J. Gibson (1979) developed a theory of ‘affordances,’ in which he defines affordances as the functional properties of an object perceived by the person. Harry Heft (1988) has extended this work, creating a functional taxonomy of space intended to be more meaningful than conventional taxonomies. Conducting a secondary analysis of data from three books (Barker and Wright,
1951; Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986) that included detailed accounts of children’s use of outdoor environments, Heft created a matrix of environmental features and the activities they afforded. For example a bench affords climbing-on, jumping-off, sitting-on, and hiding under. Using the concept of ‘affordances’ to understand common spaces can be a useful way to understand how girls and boys of different ages perceive and interact with the environment around them.

Local streets, when safe, afford children the chance to explore their neighborhoods, run errands, and go to school by themselves or in company of their peers. In doing so children build self-confidence, learn practical life skills, get physical exercise, and become acculturated to their society (Bartlett et al., 1999). Street spaces have been found to be particularly important for playing and socializing with peers for children from less affluent households because they have access to less private space and fewer formally provided recreational activities (Skelton, 2000; Day and Wager, 2010). In her seminal work The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961), Jane Jacobs illustrates how city streets and sidewalks – from which most planners want to remove children, instead relocating them to parks and playgrounds – can be ideal places for children’s unspecialized play. Jacobs shows that when streets and sidewalks are planned to include a diversity of adults who have eyes on the street, like shopkeepers, passers-by, local residents and small business owners, they become spontaneous child minders for children playing on sidewalks. She stresses that in order for children to be raised in a civilized society, they need numerous child minders to help guide them in distinguishing what is safe and good from what is unsafe and wrong. The experiences young children have in their neighborhood can influence how they become integrated into the community as adolescents. Prezza and Pacilli (2007) demonstrated that Italian adolescents felt more part of the community, were less afraid of crime, and experienced fewer feelings of loneliness when they had experienced higher autonomous mobility and played more in public and semi public spaces as younger children.
Unfortunately, in most urban areas, children’s play has disappeared from the streets for numerous reasons. Increased traffic, a greater social fear of urban crime, less tolerance of children in public places, an insufficient number of outdoor play spaces, and the increasing popularity of indoor entertainment (video games, computer games, television) are some of the reasons children increasingly stay indoors or in private play spaces [need citations]. In high-density urban areas, parks and playgrounds are particularly sought-after spaces for children’s play. These spaces afford free play, exercise and gross motor development, and meeting and socializing with peers (Day and Wager, 2010; Min and Lee, 2006). Castonguay and Jutras (2009) argue that children living in urban poor neighborhoods prefer places that afford a large variety of play opportunities and have negative perceptions of places that are not safe. Taylor et al. (1998) demonstrate that the presence of green spaces in high-density low-income apartment blocks in New York City offer more affordances for children to play and socialize with their peers and adults than apartment blocks without such spaces.

While neighborhood spaces (streets, parks, playgrounds, etc.) are well-studied, semi-public spaces (cul-de-sacs, back alleys, parking lots, etc.) have received relatively little attention. An exception is Moore’s (1986) work Childhood’s Domain: Play and Place in Child Development, in which he identifies these ancillary spaces as “important transition zones….wedged between the private domestic indoors and the public domain beyond the homesite boundary” (p. 84). Children from three types of urban neighborhoods (a central London neighborhood, a new suburb 30 miles from London, and an old industrial town were interviewed about their favorite places. Moore’s findings show that playgrounds, parks, school yards and children’s homes were top choices for a majority of the children. Single trees, local parks, pavements, footpaths, fences, and streets followed next. Children took every opportunity to shape their play around the available streetscapes that were safe from traffic. They played traditional and creative games in back alleys, cul-de-sacs, parking courts, and street corners. Children found nooks and crannies in street architecture to sit
and talk with friends and watch the world go by. While speaking to children, Moore found that these spaces in relatively safe zones afforded children the chance to make a world for themselves away from the constant scrutiny of adults where they could play out cultural norms, test their physical limits, and develop close bonds with peers. Zerner (1977) found similar results from his anthropological work with children in San Francisco. He developed the concept of a “street hearth” of play, where homes are no more than three stories in height, traffic is low, and homes extend into the adjoining street creating visually, acoustically, and physically safe spaces for children to play and explore their surroundings. He states,

‘...it is on the ‘dead ends,’ the cul-de-sacs and within the narrowest lanes—the marginal streets, the forgotten, hidden streets out of the swirling mainstream of city life—that the life of children is to be found’ (p. 30).

City planner Doxiadis (1974) outlines an ideal framework for planning cities for the developmental needs of people at all stages of life. He suggests that children should be able to encounter the complexity of the city in a gradual manner so that they face more challenging environments as they grow. In other words, the experience of the scale of the home to the city should be gradual. Housing groups should be situated in small neighborhoods with common spaces and pedestrian-friendly walkways. The home, safe for infants and toddlers, should have a combination of indoor spaces, semi-open spaces (like courtyards) and open spaces (like gardens). Preschool-aged children should be able to safely explore small neighborhood spaces that are close to the house and free of traffic. Elementary school aged children should be able to safely move through the neighborhood. Finally adolescents should be able to safely explore the city. For example, Doxiadis describes small open spaces which have play areas and corner shops between a cluster of houses as important spaces for both mothers and young children. These spaces offer
mothers a place to socialize with neighbors, watch their children from their homes, and are optimum places for young children to play, meet other children and be around people of other age groups. Because land is scarce and highly contested in poor urban communities in India, designing spaces based on this model is unrealistic, however, his theory of laying out common spaces so that they gradually increase in complexity and public-ness can serve as a useful guide for analysis.

The majority of the studies described above have been conducted in ‘minority world’

countries. The Growing up in Cities project (GUIC) is a notable exception because it also includes urban neighborhoods from the majority world. The GUIC project, pioneered by Kevin Lynch in the 1970’s and revived by Louise Chawla in the mid-1990s offers insight into how children living in urban areas perceive their neighborhoods with regard to their self-development. GUIC projects reveal some common perceptions of urban children across the world. Children found satisfaction with communities where they could move about in the neighborhood freely and be part of community life. They valued places such as safe streets with low traffic, coffee shops, street corners, parks, and natural areas where they could meet with friends and play games. Children were dissatisfied with communities plagued by heavy traffic, lack of play spaces, uncollected garbage and litter, and where they experienced isolation from the rest of the community. A majority of the children associated their self-identity with the image of the neighborhood they lived in.

It is evident from this review that common spaces contribute to the growth and development of children in a number of ways. What is missing in the current literature is attention to common spaces at the housing level (corridors, stairways, internal courtyards etc) with regard to children’s development. We can expect these kinds of spaces to be most important to young children. It is particularly important to consider these kinds of spaces for children’s play and outdoor experiences in very high-density housing areas where larger

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10 ‘Minority world’ refers to wealthier areas of the globe like Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, USA and Canada where a minority of the world’s population live.
common spaces are scarce or do not exist at all. In addition, an integrated approach to common spaces is missing where all types of common spaces (public, semi-private, and private) are examined together with regard to children’s growth and development. Also, little research is available about these spaces in urban poor neighborhoods in poorer countries. As children in urban poor settlements are pressed to use the outdoor common spaces in their settlements because of restricted home spaces, it is important to know how these spaces are currently being used and perceived by settlement dwellers and planned for by city planning officials.

3.2 Theory and research on the planning and design of common spaces in minority world countries

Architect and city planner Oscar Newman outlined his theory of defensible space, describing residential neighborhoods and environments as having certain characteristics that allow residents to participate in ensuring their own security and well being (1996). Newman’s argument is that when residents feel a sense of ownership and community they tend to help make their neighborhoods safer by caring for where they live. His argues that good design enables the extension of peoples’ domestic space into the community, thereby allowing residents take a more active role in monitoring the safety of their neighborhood. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development used empirical examples of Newman’s work in three types of neighborhoods in a publication called Creating Defensible Space (1996). One example of his work is in the Five Oaks community of Dayton, Ohio. By converting a large neighborhood into ten mini-neighborhoods by breaking through streets, creating cul-de-sacs and gates, and changing the visual perception of the neighborhood, violent crime in the area was reduced by 50 percent and traffic accidents by 40 percent. He suggested the use of physical elements like street lights, hedges, cul-de-sacs, fencing, gateways, locks and walls in conjunction with symbolic elements like territorial markings
and signage to create ‘territoriality’ and reduce crime and fear of crime in a neighborhood. A study by Brunson et al (2001) shows that public housing residents living in moderately defensible spaces who implemented some of these practices experienced the neighborhood as a safer, more cohesive community than did residents who did not appropriate space in this way. However, Newman’s work has been criticized for being physically deterministic, not paying explicit attention to the social factors and processes that underlie his concepts (Merry 1981 as cited in Reynald and Elffers, 2009).

In his seminal work *A Pattern Language* (1977), Christopher Alexander draws from a broad literature to offer solutions to recurring design problems in our built environment. A number of his “patterns” concern common space. He calls for activity nodes, which are concentrations of common community facilities arranged around a small square that allows for people to mix. He notes that small public squares at busy neighborhood intersections can accommodate small crowds, festivities, bonfires, carnivals, speeches, dancing, shouting, and mourning. Alexander suggests that houses be grouped in clusters of ten to twelve around a small common space that is jointly owned and maintained by the homeowners. In his later, four-volume work *The Nature of Order* (2002-2005) he shows through various empirical examples (located in USA, Mexico, Japan, Colombia etc) how a “wholesomeness” in architecture and planning can be achieved by following a generative process (instead of that largely dominant pre-determined processes) of planning and design where both users and professionals are involved in all stages of the creation process, and where creation of space is incremental.

While both Newman’s and Alexander’s ideas have been successfully put into practice in some places in both the majority and minority worlds, little is known about how their theories will play out specifically in urban poor communities of the majority world. More research on residents’ attitudes and aspirations towards common spaces together with
cultural, political, and economic practices that underlie these spaces will be needed to see if these theories are relevant to poorer communities in the majority world.

The physical layout of neighborhoods affects the social relationships, trust, and reciprocity between neighbors that in turn influences the ‘social capital’ of residents at the level of the individual and the community. The concept of social capital, first termed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) is described as:

“the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words to membership of a group – which provides each of it’s members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.”

(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248).

According to Bourdieu social capital is linked to an individual’s economic, cultural and symbolic capital and plays a critical role in preserving and reproducing class structures within a society. More recently, Putnam (1993) describes it as “those features of social organizations such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (p. 167). He also gives us two ways of looking at social capital – bonding vs bridging. Bonding social capital is the shared norms and networks that build trust and bring like-minded groups together. Bonding social capital offers a cushion for like-minded people when they are threatened as a group or individually by other social groups or the State. Bridging social capital it the ability to develop relationships with diverse groups between like minded groups that allows for exchange of ideas, resources, innovation and consensus building amongst these socially heterogeneous groups.

Saegert and Winkel's (1998) work on housing and poor communities in the New York City area suggests that the accumulation of social capital is more visible at the home territory
level (as opposed to larger geographical units such as census tracts, zipcodes, etc.) because establishing control over the area they live in has emotional and behavioral significance to residents. At the neighborhood level there are several spaces which, when planned sensitively, allow for residents to meet, form relationships, and depend on each other. Walkable streets in mixed-use neighborhoods allow for residents to meet and socialize with neighbors at corner shops, laundromats and eating places. A recent study based in Ireland shows that people living in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods have higher levels of social capital compared with those living in car-oriented suburbs. They were found more likely to know their neighbors, participate politically, trust others, and be socially engaged (Leyden, 2003). Neighborhood streets when closed at one end or when closed off to traffic on certain occasions can be conducive to children's safe play, celebrating festivals, and holding block parties, all of which provide opportunities for residents to come together. The safety of streets is crucial to maintain a steady flow of pedestrian traffic. Streets that are planned such that buildings have windows facing the road allow for local residents to have their 'eyes on the street', which discourages and prevents antisocial behavior on the streets (Jacobs, 1961). A study that examined the influence of greenery in common areas around a low-income housing project in Chicago found that residents, especially women, tended to meet and socialize with neighbors in common areas that had more greenery (trees and grass) than areas that were barren or had minimal greenery (Sullivan et.al 2004). Another study that looked into the benefits of greenery close to homes shows that low-income urban children moving into homes that have more greenery in their vicinity than their previous homes tended to have high levels of cognitive functioning following the move (Wells, 2000). There is empirical research that also confirms that children play more and more creatively in spaces where there is more vegetation (Taylor, Wiley, Kuo, and Sullivan, 1998) and contact with nature improves the attentional capacity in children (Taylor, Kuo, and Sullivan, 2001).
Local stores have been found to be an important destination for neighborhood walks (Alexander, 1977). These stores draw residents who feel like taking a walk or need to purchase grocery items. These storefronts have also been found to be important social spaces where residents chit-chat, discuss local concerns, and where local job advertisements are posted (Hester, 2006). The community open space movement which flourished in the United States and several countries in Europe in the 1970’s and 80’s shows that small open spaces developed by local residents are more frequently used and appreciated than traditional parks provided by the city departments. Moreover, in developing these spaces, residents reported that apart from gaining skills and confidence and feeling a sense of satisfaction they were able to make friends who shared mutual interests and feel like they belonged to a group. These community owned open spaces, which range from community gardens, small playgrounds, urban farms, and parks have helped improve adjacent areas (streets, sidewalks, stoops) to be cleaned up and inspired other open-space projects in the neighborhood (Francis et al., 1984).

‘Woonerfs’ and ‘Home Zones’ are strategies used in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom respectively to make the streets more usable by children and families. A ‘woonerf’ is a street that is closed off on one end to through traffic, which allows families to take control of the street to make it more livable by making it usable for children’s play and other activities. Initially designed to reduce the frequency and speed of traffic, they also have the effect of discouraging the casual entrance into the street by strangers – helping to make the space a kind of semi-private space (Hart, 2002). Home Zones are a related concept to ‘woonerf’, used in the UK, where changes have been made to streets such as reducing the speed limit to 10 miles per hour, adding benches, flower beds, trees, and play areas so that the street can be safely used by residents, pedestrians, and cyclists.
3.3 Theory and Research on the Planning and Design of Common Spaces in Majority World Countries

Recently, planners, sociologists, and urban theorists have argued for a postmodern, postcolonial, and non-dichotomous understanding of urban poor settlements, cities, and the process of urbanization in general. These scholars argue the subject of ‘informality’ - under which slums or urban poor settlements are often framed – as reductive; and call for and propose other ways to understand and acknowledge the ways in which millions of families live in cities of the global south (Marcuse, 1993; AlSayyad and Roy, 2004; Roy, 2005; Rao, 2006; Pieterse, 2008)

Vyjayanthi Rao (2006), an urban scholar, says the dichotomy implied by the term ‘informal’ encourages an understanding of slums in relation to modernity; as either being not-yet-modern or not modern. The concepts of both formality and modernity encourage the framing of slums as non-normative spatialities that need to be fixed either within their existing spatial ecologies or completely transformed through redevelopment projects. In her article “Slum as Theory,” she describes the slum as a ‘foundational trope’ in urban history and suggests using it as a normative spatiality for reimagining the explosive cities of the global south instead of the grid-like structure that dominates the spatiality of what is urban in minority world countries. A call for understanding slums as a new spatial ecology is also evident in the works of Colin McFarlane (2011) and Roy (2009) one that requires a thick understanding of settlements and settlement dwellers as not ‘spaces of risk’ or ‘people at risk’ but as spatialities and people in their own right. In this light, understanding the varied connections between housing, people, and spaces in-between housing becomes extremely important as it gives us a way of knowing some of the attitudes, values, and aspirations that produce and reproduce urban poor settlements.

In some countries in the majority world, urban poor federations have been experimenting with community owned land, where residents jointly invest in securing land for themselves
and then work together in developing and maintaining it. The Baan Mankong program, a
Thai government program in Thailand is one such example. The Baan Mankong Program in
Thailand, which works to assist the poor in improving their living conditions, operates on the
premise that the social capital that communities build while collectively negotiating to
secure land and housing will be instrumental in enabling them to address other aspects of
their lives, their settlements, and to engage in collective developmental activities
(Boonyabancha, 2009). Thus far, the program has shown that once a community is
collectively and legally in possession of the land they live on, they treat it as a communal
asset and work towards community improvement.

Boonyabancha (2009) states that:

If the planning is undertaken collectively and properly, with some subtle design
support, the people can actually maximize the commonly used areas that belong to
everyone and reduce the individually owned parts to a workable minimum. In reality,
this is a way of expanding the limitations of each member’s small, private house or
plot: all members have a small private space of their own, but then they also own
the whole rest of the community and can use those common spaces as an extension
to their living room. In this way, even a very poor person can become rich in land
and amenities, even though his house might be very small. In many of the Baan
Mankong projects where house plots are small, people are proud to say: "We don’t
have any fences in our community (p 327).

Boonyabancha also asserts that some of the communities working with the Baan Mankong
program have decided to challenge the usual grid-like settlement structure preferred by
engineers as a means of minimizing costs and are exploring alternative plans. Some of
these plans include like-minded groups building houses in clusters surrounding common
areas where trees can be planted and common activities can take place, with roads only on
the periphery.
Mahila Milan, the grassroots organization in Mumbai described in the previous chapter, promotes and organizes daily savings plans in urban poor settlements through Area Resource Centers. An area resource center is a ‘common space’ that the area members and Mahila Milan decide upon as a place to carry out the daily savings and loans transactions. These spaces came about because:

The poor are often considered passive beneficiaries. But poor women know what changes they want. They may not have the resources or capacities to develop solutions, but they can judge whether a solution will work. To develop the experience and skills to reflect together on their situation, they need a safe, local space where they can gather. Being marginalized means being cut off from networks and spaces of information and communication. We became SPARC, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres, because we saw the need for a physical space to address this reality (Patel and Bartlett 2009, p. 5).

This space could start as someone’s house in the settlement area and depending on the strength of the collective, move on to a room that is specifically built for this purpose. This space allows women to come together in the course of meeting around daily savings and in the process share problems, engage in discussion, and become familiar with one another (Burra, 2005).

In her study examining the spatial needs of women living in slums in Calcutta in relation to their employment opportunities, Bose (1998) recommended establishing training facilities. She suggests that these facilities can provide women with the necessary space to discuss their problems, establish solidarity, and to organize themselves to find solutions to their problems.

Apart from these few examples, little is known about how common spaces help build community and support coordinated action. There is, however, a body of literature showing that social capital is gained and utilized in urban poor settlements. Research looking into the
social capital of urban poor communities has found that women rely on neighborhood social networks in times of crisis. Kebede and Butterfield’s (2009) study of a poor neighborhood in Addis Ababa, findings revealed that for poor women use social networks to form and run small cottage industries, find jobs, learn skills, and help each other. Similarly, Mitra (2004) demonstrates that women use these networks for support while facing difficulties with regard to income, consumption, illness, housing and other aspects of life. Several factors have been found to affect the level of social capital in urban poor communities. In Korea, a survey found that slum neighborhoods experienced much higher levels of social capital than middle and high-income neighborhoods. The study revealed that in neighborhoods where people have the choice and means to travel and meet with friends and relatives, they prefer to mix with their ‘community of interest’ rather than with their neighbors or ‘community of place’. But, in slums where people live close to each other they are more likely to form lasting social and emotional ties and form strong residents’ associations to deal with problems in their community and improve their neighborhood environment (Ha, 2007). In Peru, however, it was found that low-income neighborhoods suffer from low social capital and the main contributing factor was found to be the level of poverty found in these areas. Findings revealed that when people were unable to address their basic survival needs, it was difficult for them to address broader goals by taking part in federations or by forming tenant groups (Ríos Bernardini, 1997). Low social capital was also found in poor neighborhoods where residents were from mixed races and ethnicities, and where community members’ self-perceptions and identities of differed (Moffat and Finnis, 2005). These divergent findings suggest that more research is needed to better understand the relationships between poverty, social capital, and common space.

Caroline Moser’s (1998) asset vulnerability framework provides a dynamic way of measuring poverty and developing strategies to reduce poverty. ‘Assets’ can be physical (housing, infrastructure etc), human (labor, health resources, education resources), financial (income,
savings, access to credit), social (rules, norms, trust, and reciprocity embedded in social relations at the community and household level), and natural (land, vegetation). Moser’s study based in four urban poor communities in Lusaka (Zambia), Guayaquil (Ecuador), Metro Manila (the Philippines), and Budapest (Hungary) examines how asset portfolio management affects vulnerability. For example the study shows that at times of economic crisis the first response of the poor is to increase income by having more members (women and children) join the work force. Housing is physically altered to create spaces for home-based enterprises and extra space that can be rented out. Families increasingly rely on informal credit arrangements, there is an increase of informal networks among households where neighbors share childcare and space, and there is increased provision of urban services such as school repairs, more latrines, and preschool equipment through the interventions of local and international NGOs. Using this framework, more research exploring how common space as an urban poor asset might contribute to the human, social, physical, and financial capital of urban poor communities and households is warranted.

While a large body of the literature on the importance of common spaces for building social capital and civil society comes from minority world countries, some findings could be applied to poor communities in the majority world. Alexander’s housing cluster pattern, for example, is similar in its arrangement to the community housing developed by the urban poor communities working with the Baan Mankong program in Thailand. However, this does not mean that every finding in the minority world countries is necessarily applicable to those in the majority world. Local conditions, cultural variations and social political and economic conditions all play a role in how residents network with each other and take ownership of their home spaces. Furthermore, research conducted with communities in the majority world could be also be relevant to minority world communities.
3.4 Barriers to Children’s Use of Common Space in Urban Poor Communities - Outdoor Environmental Hazards

Because access to suitable land is difficult, the urban poor often end up living in areas that expose them to multiple hazards such as next to train tracks, open sewers, or landfills (Hardoy et al., 2001). In addition to occupying unsuitable land, the urban poor often lack formal tenure to the land, and are far less likely to be provided with basic infrastructure such as streetlights, drainage, water, and sanitation.

Children playing in narrow streets, balancing at the edge of open sewers, dodging traffic on peripheral streets, and rummaging through garbage heaps are all common sights in most urban poor communities across the world. As the private space of the home is restricted, children seek opportunities for play and socialization in the available outdoor environment. While this allows them to quickly develop independent mobility within a large spatial frame, they are simultaneously exposed to several environmental hazards that affect their health and development. Moreover, undeveloped hygiene and lower immunity levels further increases health risks (Bartlett et al., 1999). As soon as they are able to crawl, children begin to explore the immediate space outside the home where caregivers perform chores (washing, cooking, bathing). Lack of adequate toilets results in the likelihood of fecal matter contaminating the immediate space outside the home, and lack of water diminishes the capacity to maintain adequate hygiene. This in turn greatly increases the risk of young children ingesting fecal pathogens, resulting in illness (Satterthwaite et al., 1996). In urban poor areas caregivers are hard pressed for time and therefore unable to provide the constant supervision needed to protect their young children. This, coupled with an environment containing open fires (frequently used for outdoor cooking), open stairways, construction material, results in children being injured by burns, falls and cuts (Penden et al., 2008).
Children’s independent spatial mobility increases greatly when they are able to walk and extends into local streets and roads. In many countries children as young as two years of age are sent on errands to corner shops and most children go to school by themselves or in the company of siblings or peers. As children’s mobility increases, so do the risks they are exposed to. Traffic related accidents are the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in children aged 10 to 19 years (Penden et al., 2008). Research on communicable diseases shows that at least 100 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are infected with schistosomiasis, a debilitating waterborne parasite usually found in open ponds or canals. Children in this age group also form 74% of the population affected by helminth (worm) infections (Bartlett, 2002). Poor street lighting or absence of street lighting causes unsafe neighborhood conditions, especially for children who might have to negotiate these spaces to access public toilets and particularly for girls who risk harassment and sexual assault (Bartlett, 2002).

Apart from outdoor environmental hazards, some social factors are barriers to children’s use of common spaces. Swart-Kruger’s (2002) research about young children in a South African squatter camp, showed that children felt alienated from the rest of the community because they feared crime, traffic and harassment. They also suffered from social stigma that they were from a squatter camp, which prevented them from using common neighborhood facilities.

While the available literature comprehensively covers the environmental hazards that children face in urban poor communities in the South, we have limited evidence about how children themselves perceive these dangers and negotiate the space that contains them (Chawla, 2002). In addition, little research examines how both children and adults perceive, use, and negotiate the common spaces in the settlements within the realm of the family and the community. Having insights to this will be crucial for defining solutions for these environments at the grassroots level as well as the institutional level. The growing up in
cities (GUIC) projects that were conducted in urban poor neighborhoods revealed that children had a lot to say with regard to common spaces in their settlements. In the Johannesburg project, when asked about the neighborhoods they lived in, children complained about people throwing rubbish on the streets and corridors, unsafe streets they had to navigate to get to their homes or schools, and the lack of safe parks and open spaces to play (Swart Kruger, 2002). In another study, based in an urban settlement in Bangalore, India, children expressed unhappiness with the presence of open drains and sewers near their play places and described natural places such as ponds, grassy areas, and tree shaded areas as places that supported their play (Driskell et al., 2002).

3.5 Research on Common Space in Urban Poor Settlements

In the available literature, common spaces receive most attention in settlement upgrading processes, than in settlement relocation and redevelopment projects. This is because upgrading of settlements generally starts with attention to common spaces as a way of establishing, strengthening, and promoting collective solidarity in the community. Research in this area shows that settlement residents draw on upgrading of common spaces as an opportunity to form a collective, strengthen the organization of community groups, and to demonstrate to government and non-government agencies their capacity to take up and execute collective action in their settlements. Low-income residents of riverside settlements in Surabaya (Indonesia) were able to change the official decision from relocation to redevelopment of their settlements by coming up with a proposal that showed how flooding could be avoided and city development improved through settlement upgrading. Settlement upgrading involved cleaning up the streets of rubbish, sorting waste, and planting medicinal plants and herbs along the settlement pathways which resulted in improved access to houses, places for children to play and a more clean and green environment. Libraries and
meeting rooms were also built to show the community’s commitment towards their children’s education (Some, Hafidz, & Sauter, 2009). Squatter communities in Nepal were able to obtain subsidized access to the sewage system by installing water pipes and toilets, paving muddy roads, and managing their waste themselves (Tanaka, 2009). Somsook Boonyabancha states that settlement upgrading is the most sustainable way of improving poor settlements:

> I feel upgrading is important because it may not always be necessary to change the form or the location of the settlements too much. The more you change it, the more difficult it is for people to organize or control that process, as a community. When a settlement is radically re-designed or re-built elsewhere, it usually means that outsiders rather than community people end up handling the process and calling the shots. This is always the rule of the game. (Phanpakdee, Visal, & Sauter, 2009, p 573).

Incremental settlement upgrading, which is possible in low to medium density areas, is also less logistically and technically challenging than where ground level dwellings are converted to multi-storey buildings in high density locations. The latter requires better organization, the formation of cooperative societies, technical knowledge, and usually involves higher construction costs (D'Cruz et al., 2009).

The Urban Poor Development Fund in Cambodia has been supporting community upgrading projects for the last several years. Communities start with small-scale infrastructure projects such as repairing roads, improving toilet facilities, making basic house repairs and then once they gain confidence take on larger projects involving walkways, drainage channels, and bridges. Residents experience a sense of pride with their upgraded settlements, which are cleaner, greener, and have improved maintenance. From here on residents move on to make more lasting improvements to their individual dwellings (Phonphakdee, Visal, and Sauter, 2009).
In an impact assessment study of slum projects, findings showed that upgrading infrastructure and services in urban slums improved the ‘quality of life’ of residents (Amis, 2001). Improved roads, working drains and adequate access to water were very important in improving the ‘image’ of the slum. Residents felt that with these changes they could have family and friends visit with them. Improved roads also raised rents in certain slums. Increasing dry surfaces—through roads and pavements—allowed for an increase in social and economic activity. More usable open space outside the house allowed for sorting rubbish, children’s play, a location and depot for cycle taxis, a place for sleeping in hot weather, sleeping space for guests, putting up a tent for festivals, a site for hawkers to use, a dry place to sit in the cool breeze, a track for girls to learn how to cycle, a site for drying and washing clothes, spill over space during social functions such as marriages and festivals. Survey results of this study showed a 46% increase in the use of public space for social activities, 35% for household activities, and 18% for economic activities. These infrastructure improvements were especially appreciated by women as they reduced their work burden (increased water supply, less flooding), had more space for social, household and economic activities, and as they made the area more secure through street lighting and paved roads which allowed for women to go out after dark (Amis, 2001).

The above studies show that upgrading of common spaces results in a better living environment for all members of the community, particularly children. With upgrading, children have more places to play, more safe, hygienic, and green surroundings, and, in some cases, dedicated facilities for studying.

The studies in this section highlight the interweaving of common spaces and children’s lives in urban poor settlements. Further research would improve understanding of how they are embedded in the social practices of community life and how various members of the community value them.
While settlement upgrading is the preferred alternative to very challenging conditions, it is not viable in inner-city high-density locations (Mukhija, 2001). In such cases residents usually opt for multi-storey buildings rather than relocating to another area, because their livelihood, income, children’s education, is usually dependent on their current location. In settlement relocation or redevelopment projects where residents have to move to another location or opt for multi-storey buildings, the common spaces that residents subconsciously depend on for their daily needs are radically transformed. There is little research that shows how settlement dwellers adapt to living in multi-storey buildings. While most housing in redeveloped settlements tends to have more interior space than the original dwellings, space is still limited and lacks the informal spaces around the house usually present in ground level settlements. An in depth understanding of how common spaces are perceived, used, and valued by settlement dwellers in the processes of upgrading and redevelopment or relocation projects will allow for better planning and incorporation of these spaces leading to a more supportive living environment.

3.6 The Significance of Common Space in an Indian Cultural Context

Common spaces, as described earlier in this proposal, can be private, semi-private, or public spaces. In an Indian cultural context the notion of ‘public’ and ‘private’ can have very different connotations than in the west. Sudipta Kaviraj (1997) explores the concept of public in Calcutta through how people represent and act in spaces. He explains that ‘open spaces’ in rural India commonly meant space unoccupied by buildings or cultivation, which could be used for common group activities like children’s play, sites for worship, and seasonal fairs. These places lacked any formal delineation or structures that are present in city parks and open spaces managed by municipal authorities. Kaviraj traces the formalization of open spaces in urban areas (into manicured gardens, clubs, and sports complexes) to the British Raj. At the domestic level, he draws on the concepts of
inside/outside to draw a distinction on how the private domain of the house differs from the street in people’s realm. The inside of a home represents worship, wealth, and reflects on the women of the house who go through vigorous rituals to clean and maintain the house as a way of upholding social and cultural values. The outside of the house, however, is treated as the reverse of the inside. Rubbish and waste collected in the house are dumped right outside the house, as the outside holds no obligations for any one – is not one’s own, does not symbolize any significant principle not express any values. The outside space was not understood as a civic space governed by rules and norms, as was the inside of the house. An earlier study also found that the concept of civic mindedness – another vestige of colonial administration – is a bourgeois middle-class notion and something that does not in principle matter to lower income people. In fact they use un-civic strategies – like public urination - to express their irritation with the municipal authorities (usually represented by the middle class) and in small ways retaliate against the rules and norms set forth by them (Chakrabarty, 1991).

In response, the middle class seeks other means by which to control and manage the common spaces in the neighborhoods of low-income people. In Mumbai, the Advanced Locality Management (ALM) bodies initiated by the state government as a way to decentralize solid waste management now have become active voluntary groups which take up the causes of mainly middle class residents. Street beautification, greening, paving and removing hawkers from the neighborhood streets are set as priorities. ALMs have no formal representation from the low-income citizens in their neighborhoods as their practices (which include writing proposals) are set up to exclude this group. While slum residents take up individual grievances with the local councilors, councilors have limited power to address these concerns. In contrast ALMs have direct negotiating power with the executive wing of the local government, which enables them to achieve much of what they set out (Baud and Nainan, 2008).
Some scholars have drawn comparisons between vernacular architecture and urban poor settlements and suggested how the former can inform the upgrading of the latter (Rappaport, 1988; Goel, 2010; Desmarais, 2009). Both vernacular and traditional architecture are self-built, improvised and modified according to the needs of the users, and influenced by traditional and socio-cultural practices. Both vernacular and informal settlements make use of locally available material (like using bamboo, thatch, mud, etc in the case of vernacular settlements and using tin sheets, plastic sheeting, bricks etc in the case of informal settlements) and building practices.

Traditional housing in India is strikingly different both physically and socially from modern apartment complexes. There are also cultural and regional differences within India. “Pol” housing, meaning “gate” or “entry” in Gujarat consists of tall wooden houses, with streets too narrow for wheeled traffic, cul-de-sacs and intermittent open spaces. Houses are clustered according to caste, profession, or extended family. The number of houses in a pol can range from ten families to 2000 families, where the larger polys are organized into sub clusters. A spatial hierarchy consists of the main pol, streets, smaller lanes, sub-clusters of houses, joint-family courts or cul-de-sacs. This spatial arrangement isolates the neighborhood from the city at large, but within the neighborhood, space is open and accessible. Community squares or chowks, which usually house the community temple, further accentuate the openness within a pol. These, along with smaller chowks, wells, water tanks, and trees with plinths serve as spaces for socializing for members of the community. The houses follow a similar structure with an otias or wide verandah and internal courtyards that are open to the street. These elements afford enhanced social participation within the community (Doshi, 1995). This layering of spaces affords a gradual transition from the private domain to the public – resonating with the urban planning principles that Doxiadis (1974) lays out in his work (ref pg 9).
Many of the urban poor settlements in India have a demographic and spatial make-up similar to the traditional communities. They are home to migrants who have been settled in the area for several decades and have relatives living close by. Streets are narrow, houses are usually kept open and directly adjoin the street and allow for a constant flow of conversation, pockets of open spaces harbor religious shrines, and water taps become meeting places as women wait to fill water. In stark contrast, contemporary urban poor settlements feature much higher densities, severely limited space, with residents struggling to make a living while battling with poor quality basic services (water, sanitation, and housing). While the answer to in situ redevelopment has been to build sterile apartment blocks, drawing on some traditional housing concepts and experimenting with how like-minded groups could share common facilities could open up avenues for more responsive design solutions. This is possible only when professionals, municipal officials, and community based organizations work closely with the communities concerned as resident’s aspirations for housing and tolerances for each other are key considerations for coming up with viable and sustainable options.

### 3.7 Community Participation in the Creation of Common Space

Urban poor federations in several countries of the South along with supportive NGOs have worked in numerous poor settlements to start collective savings as a way of building the social and economic capital of the community. In many urban poor settlements these community savings groups have shown their capacity through carrying out successful upgrading and redevelopment projects. Communities have worked together and with technical experts and government officials to make their areas cleaner (street cleaning, sorting waste), greener (planting trees, shrubs and herbs), and more livable (basic road and sanitation repair works). In Nicaragua, the Local Development Program (PRODEL) worked in eight cities to fund participatory settlement upgrading initiatives. In these projects micro-
planning workshops were conducted involving people from the community, technical experts and municipal officials. These workshops enabled the community to work with the government to identify and prioritize problems in their area, discuss possible solutions and allocate finances to execute these solutions. Special attention was paid to involving women and children (Stein, 2001). In Rufisque, Senegal, upgrading issues were tackled mainly by community members in nine low-income communities. Community participation was possible through setting up an inspection and assessment committee involving women, children, elderly and local representatives, and through community meetings and discussions held in mosques (Gaye and Diallo, 1997).

Arguments have also been made in higher-income countries for the importance of addressing the topic of neighborhood site planning and design of small spaces close to home with the people who live in the neighborhoods (Francis et al., 1984; Iltus and Hart, 1994; Hester, 1984). Hester believes that while designers and architects are well qualified to make design and planning decisions, they are less familiar with the specific nuances of a given neighborhood that may impact the overall design. An iterative procedure to engage in neighborhood planning with the residents allows them to share relevant social patterns and idiosyncrasies specific to that neighborhood which can improve the outcome of the design. This process includes sharing a range of design options and criteria with the residents who are in the best position to make trade-offs between the cost of the design option and associated benefits.

Research conducted in the GUIC projects has been participatory in nature and most had a child-focused agenda, with the goal of enabling children to state their opinions and give recommendations about the environments they grow up in. While these efforts did a great deal to demonstrate that children have the ability to give meaningful recommendations to city and urban planning officials on the betterment of their neighborhoods, they rarely led to action and policy change. Instead, most of these projects remain singular efforts, with most
of the benefit relating to the self-esteem of the children through taking part in these projects (Swart Kruger 2002; Driskell et al. 2001). For a more integrated and sustainable change to happen in urban poor living conditions there needs to be a more inclusive effort involving children, adults, settlement leaders, professionals and government officials that looks into both indoor and outdoor spaces in neighborhoods (Bartlett 2005). A good example of this effort is the post-tsunami reconstruction project in the Cooks Nagar community in Tamil Nadu, India. The participatory processes utilized in this process made it possible for both adults and children to come together in planning and reconstructing their community in a genuine and lasting manner (Bartlett, 2008).

At the municipal level, Bartlett (1999) points out that children’s needs are routinely ignored or misunderstood by urban development, policy, and practice. She stresses that children’s needs should penetrate into overall planning and policy in community development and not just niche environments like schools and playgrounds. For example constructing roads for better traffic connectivity in a community might severely affect children’s open space to play, which in turn affects their development. Bartlett also stresses the seeking of local knowledge and the participation of children and their families in the planning of housing and community spaces and institutions.

In conclusion, there is a need to better understand the issue of common space and its use by families and their children in poor communities in the majority world. It is clear from the literature that outdoor space that is safe and viable for play and socializing is clearly important for all children, regardless of cultural or economic context. However, it is equally clear that there are many variables in poor urban settlements in the majority world countries that make the planning and design of common space a very different affair than in the advanced industrialized countries. Research is needed in these countries to help inform planners and housing providers think more fully about the needs of children and their
families so that they can provide the conditions that will enable community residents to create better conditions for their children to play and develop.

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
To address the gap in the literature on common spaces in urban poor settlements in India and the importance for communities, I proposed the following research questions:

What is the significance of common space to children and parents in urban poor settlements in India?

What are the possibilities for addressing issues around common space during the process of upgrading and redeveloping urban poor settlements from the perspective of:

- the residents?
- those who advocate for and plan with them?
- the officials in government agencies who fund and execute urban slum upgrading and redevelopment programs?

In order to answer these questions I have interviewed women and children living in eight urban poor settlements (which were at different stages of the redevelopment process) in Bangalore and Mumbai about how they use and value common spaces in their settlements in their day-to-day lives. In addition I have also interviewed key stakeholders in the Alliance, planning offices, and municipal offices to grasp more clearly how top down policies and bottom-up participatory processes shape common spaces in urban poor settlements. The research design and methods are further detailed in the following chapter.
Chapter 2: Research Design and Settings

Robert Yin (2009) in his work ‘Case Study Research: Design and Methods’ defines the ‘case study’ as a research methodology with a two-fold definition:

1) A case study is an empirical inquiry that
   - investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within it’s real-life context, especially when
   - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

2) The case study inquiry
   - copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
   - relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangular fashion, and as another result
   - benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

(Pg 623 and 648, emphasis added)

The phenomenon of ‘common space’, as revealed in the review of literature had been little explored in the context of urban poor settlements, particularly in relation to the Indian sub-continent. Furthermore, boundaries of ‘common space’ in settlements are ambiguous and are perceived differently by residents, planners, and politicians (Patel 2012). For example, the space immediately outside houses is considered private by women who use the space for a variety of household chores. Children consider the same space as semi-private and often play there with siblings and friends. Planners consider all space outside the four walls of a dwelling as public space, and base their redevelopment plans on this understanding. They seldom distinguish public spaces such as streets from common spaces that are more private in nature; such as spaces outside homes and small open pockets of spaces between dwellings. Politicians, like planners, ignore the subtle spatial and social demarcations of ‘common spaces’ within settlements. They perceive the space in settlements for the political
capital it affords – for example promising paved roads in return for votes (Edelman and Mitra, 2006; Subbaraman et. al, 2012).

In order to guide policy and design that could contribute to the shaping of common spaces in urban poor settlement upgrading and redevelopment projects, we need an in depth bottom-up knowledge of how common spaces are valued by residents and how they are perceived by planners and government officials. In order to understand the significance of common spaces in urban poor settlements and how they could be shaped in urban redevelopment processes I have employed a two-part research design.

The first and primary part of the research is a multiple case study research of eight urban poor settlements in Bangalore and Mumbai where I have used an ecological/ethnographic approach to come to a critical understanding of the physical, social, and cultural aspects of common spaces from the perspectives of caregivers and children living in these settlements. The second and supplementary part of the research involves interviewing key stakeholders in the urban redevelopment process (politicians, municipal officers, planning officials, and members of the Alliance) and conducting web-based archival research (of urban redevelopment schemes at national, state, and city levels) to better understand how common spaces are shaped by political and institutional forces.

**Part 1: Multiple Case Study Research**

The typology of urban poor settlements was extensive. Settlements in the heart of metropolitan areas tended to be very dense and congested with dwellings as small as 50sft and lanes as narrow as 4 feet in width. In contrast, settlements located away from the city center were relatively more spread out with dwellings ranging from 60sft to 120sft and internal lanes as wide as 10 to 12 ft. Settlements were also differentiated as being
‘declared’ or ‘undeclared’. Declared settlements were eligible for receiving basic infrastructure and services from the municipal authorities whereas undeclared settlements were considered ‘illegal’ and not entitled to such services from the State.

In addition, settlements could be differentiated by their position in the redevelopment process; not slated for redevelopment, in the process of planning redevelopment, recently redeveloped (occupied for less than 2 years), and redeveloped settlements (occupied for more than 5 years). In redevelopment projects, in situ redevelopment was the preferred option of both residents and the State. Where in situ redevelopment was not possible, because of not being able to acquire land from private landlords or government agencies or because they are located near hazardous areas such as open sewers, landfills, or near train tracks, settlements were relocated to another area. Redeveloped projects ranged from single storey houses to seven storey buildings.

Given this diversity, conducting an in depth study of just one or two settlements would not have allowed for a well-rounded understanding of the various types of common spaces present in settlements and how they are used and valued by residents. Therefore, I chose to undertake a multiple case approach as a methodological framework for conducting this research. Data has been collected from multiple sources using a variety of techniques to afford triangulation of data and ensure reliability. In order to gain insights from a diversity of types of poor housing areas/slums, the study was carried out in two cities in India: Bangalore and Mumbai and with neighborhoods in each of these cities that are in various stages of the redevelopment or upgrading process.

I chose Bangalore and Mumbai as the cities for carrying out the second phase of the research for three reasons. First, as I had already established a relationship with the Alliance in Bangalore and gained a fair amount of contextual knowledge on the issue of urban poor settlements, I decided to build on this relationship and knowledge in the second

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11 Settlements gain the status of being ‘declared’ slums through an administrative process handled by municipal bodies that is highly political in nature.
phase of the research. Second, as the Alliance was formed in Mumbai and was at its full strength there in terms of institutional capacity and carrying out participatory urban settlement redevelopment for a period of over 30 years, I would be able to document how common spaces have evolved over time in urban poor settlements and redeveloped settlements. And lastly, the contrasting identities, scales, and geographies of both cities offered a diverse range of settlements to be studied. Bangalore, once known as a ‘pensioners’ paradise’ and more recently as the ‘silicon valley of India’ is spread out over an area of 741 square kilometers with a population of 8.4 Million\(^{12}\) where locals have a reputation of being ‘laid back’. Mumbai, a megacity, is the financial capital of India, which has a population of 12.5 Million and a metropolitan area of 603 square kilometers. An estimated 20 to 30% and 50 to 60% of the urban population in Bangalore and Mumbai, respectively, live in poor settlements.

**Data Collection Techniques**

**Selection of Cases**

As studying common spaces in every combination of the above typology was beyond the scope of this research I selected those that were as a group most representative. Settlements were chosen such that all phases of the redevelopment process were represented. In doing so I had the opportunity to understand residents’ use of, and attitude and value towards common spaces as they aspired for new housing and settled in it. In addition, I also sought to have the various redeveloped building typologies represented in the selected sites.

Once I had presented the categories to members of the Alliance, they were able to suggest sites for the given categories. The table below lists the various types of settlements and the

\(^{12}\) Source: India census 2011
sites that were selected in each city representing each type. Apart from the settlements listed below, I also visited nine settlements in various stages of the redevelopment/upgrading process (five in Bangalore and 4 in Mumbai), where I spent an average of three to four hours speaking with settlement leaders, and residents and recording the types of common spaces in these areas through photographs and notes. I chose these settlements in particular as they were recommended by members of the Alliance or municipal officials for having well articulated common spaces.

Table 1: Selection of sites in Bangalore and Mumbai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Settlement</th>
<th>Bangalore</th>
<th>Mumbai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not slated for redevelopment</td>
<td>BE Settlement</td>
<td>ME Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing settlement</td>
<td>Existing settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for redevelopment</td>
<td>BEP Settlement</td>
<td>Byculla Pavement Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing settlement with plans for redevelopment</td>
<td>Existing settlement with plans for redevelopment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recently redeveloped (occupied by residents for two years or less)</td>
<td>BIR4 Settlement</td>
<td>Milan Nagar Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-situ Redeveloped settlement/ 4 stories high/ occupied less than two years ago</td>
<td>Relocated Redevelopment/ 4 stories high/ occupied less than five years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redveloped settlements (occupied by residents for over five years)</td>
<td>BIR3 Settlement</td>
<td>MRR2 Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-situ Redevelopment/ 3 stories high/ 4 blocks/ occupied more than 5 years ago</td>
<td>Relocated Redevelopment/ 2 stories high/ occupied more than 5 years ago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 All settlements have been given pseudonyms, with acronyms based on their status, with the exception of Byculla and Milan Nagar settlements. This is due to the fact that both these settlements have been widely publicized (through academic journals and popular media) and their identity, especially in association with the Alliance, is impossible to hide.
Settlement Mapping

After the sites had been identified by the Alliance I visited each site with the MM women operating in the respective settlements. The purpose of the first site visit was to meet with settlement leaders and describe the research process to them. After this I interviewed the settlement leaders using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A) to acquaint myself with the history of the settlement and get information about the demographics, status of land tenure, and basic infrastructure and services supporting the settlement. This information was compared with the settlement surveys conducted by the Alliance for each settlement to check for inconsistencies, which were later clarified in conversations with the settlement leaders and MM women. During the initial site visit common spaces identified by the settlement leaders and MM women were marked on a map of the settlement\textsuperscript{14}.

Selection of participants

After visiting each site and discussing with the MM women in detail about the specifics of the site, we decided on participant selection strategies for each site. For large settlements (more than 200 dwellings) we demarcated an area containing 50 or more families such that it was representative - in terms of caste, religion, profession, income, house-type - of the community living in the area and consisted of a majority of the types of common spaces present in the settlement. Twelve families were selected in each settlement. In multi-storied redevelopment projects, we selected equal numbers of participants from each block/floor of the development. Once the above criteria were decided for each site we selected families representing each criterion, depending on their willingness to participate in the study and by ensuring that children of all age groups and both sexes were well represented. For example in the BIR4 settlement in Bangalore, which is a four storied redeveloped building housing 32

\textsuperscript{14} Pre-existing maps in possession of the Alliance or settlement leaders were used where possible. In settlements where no existing maps were available rough maps were sketched out on site and later superimposed on Google Earth images of the settlement.
families, we selected three families on each floor. We first approached the ground floor residents and interviewed the first three families who were willing to participate. Then we approached the residents on the first, second and third floors consecutively filtering them with regard to their willingness to participate in the study and ensuring that children of all age groups and both sexes were being represented. In each site the 12 families were composed of:

- 4 families with children in the 0 to 5 age group
- 2 families with girls in the 6 to 12 age group
- 2 families with boys in the 6 to 12 age group
- 2 families with girls in the 13 to 18 age group
- 2 families with boys in the 13 to 18 age group

**Observations**

I spent an average of seven to eight days in each settlement. During this time I recorded informal observations of children’s informal play activities, patterns of informal socialization amongst residents, and my own perceptions and biases with regard to the spaces within the settlement. These observations were recorded in the form of photographs, quick sketches, and notes.

**Family interviews**

The proposed method was to conduct interviews with 12 families in their homes regarding their use of common spaces in the settlement, after which the participants would take us on a tour of common spaces identified in the in-home interviews and talk about these spaces in detail. We followed this method with the first four families in the first case study field work before concluding that the tour of common spaces added little value to the interview process. It was time consuming, and for the most part, participants repeated what they had already told us in the in-home interviews. In addition, children were easily distracted and disappeared to play with their peers in the process of these walking tours. After
discussions with my thesis advisers and some of the Mahila Milan women, I decided to do away with the individual family tours and replace them with two group-led tours – one with adults, and one with children - of the common areas used by settlement dwellers. I felt that by doing this, each group could prioritize the areas they wanted to show, and enable us to have a more critical understanding of each area through group discussions of each common space.

Once the families were identified in each settlement we interviewed the primary caregivers (mostly the mothers with the exception of a few grandmothers and two fathers) in each family and the target child inside the participants’ homes or just outside their homes depending on the participants’ preference. I conducted most of the interviews; in some cases they were conducted by MM women who showed interest in conducting the interviews. We used an interview guide to conduct the interviews (Appendix B), which was piloted and revised during the course of the first case study that was conducted (BES Settlement). During most of the interviews other family members were present, some of whom joined in the conversations spontaneously. The interviews were on average 35 minutes in length and included a three to four minute video of participants using common spaces immediately outside their homes. In families where the child participant appeared confident, I directed the questions to the child first and then to the caregiver, but questioned other family members first where the child appeared to be shy and less forthcoming.

**Group tours**

After each family interview, we asked the participants if they would like to take part in conducting a group tour of the settlement where they would show us around the settlement. Separate group tours were conducted with children and caregivers. On average there were three to four participants in the adult-led group tours and four to five participants in the children-led group tours. As older girls tended to not take part in these tours, boys
dominated most of the tours. An adult caregiver accompanied us on the children-led tours of the settlement. The tours lasted an average of 55 minutes.

**Follow up visits**

I revisited the settlements in Bangalore after a year and a half for a number of reasons. One was to clarify some discrepancies that arose from an initial data analysis; the second was to be able to speak with adolescent girls whose voices were barely evident in the family interviews and largely missing in the group tours. The third reason was to get a general sense of how residents’ priorities, values, and uses with regard to common spaces changed over time and to record any transformations in the common spaces themselves. And lastly I also wanted to share my initial findings with participants and members of the Alliance for their feedback. During the follow-up visits I interviewed the settlement leaders, and key adult and child informants in focus group sessions. In addition, I walked around the settlements with two or three key informants and the settlement leaders to record any change of space over time. The MM members accompanied me during all site visits.

**Part 2: Interviews with Key Stakeholders and Archival Research**

**Semi structured interviews**

A total of seven stakeholders were interviewed. Four of the stakeholders were key members of the Alliance. The other three stakeholders were municipal and planning officials in Bangalore and Mumbai, whom I was able to contact through members of the Alliance. I used semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) to speak with each of these stakeholders to better understand their perspectives of common spaces in the space and time of urban settlement redevelopment. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes and were recorded with a voice recorder.

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15 I was unable to revisit the BEP settlement as one of the settlement leaders was murdered and the site was deemed unsafe by the MM women for a site visit.
Archival Research

Online editions of local newspapers and publically available legal documents were reviewed to better understand the legal histories of the chosen sites. City, state, and national level redevelopment schemes were also reviewed to better understand their influence on how common spaces are included, excluded, and shaped in redevelopment projects.

Data Analysis

Case studies summaries were done for all of the eight sites. Each case study reveals the spatial and social aspects of each site highlighting the major issues/problems with regard to the site and in particular common spaces. Using a qualitative analysis software data was then coded, compiled, and analyzed for significant topics and insights for this research topic (See Appendix D for list to codes generated and a list of most frequently co-occurring codes). A detailed annotated map of each site indicating the homes of participants, and the common spaces in each settlement was created. These maps, visuals from each site as well as recurring themes were used to look across settlements for commonalities and contradictions with regard to the significance of common spaces for settlement dwellers. Data collected from members of the Alliance, planning officials, and government officials, was also coded and analyzed in depth together with settlement interviews to understand the scope for common spaces within the broad spectrum of urban slum redevelopment in India as well as to gauge how they shaped existing common spaces.
SECTION 2: CASE STUDIES
Chapter 3: BE Settlement

1. Profile of the settlement

Figure 8: View of a typical lane in the settlement

Located in the heart of the city of Bangalore, the BE settlement has been around since 1950. It is an existing ‘non-notified’ settlement not yet slated for redevelopment. It began as a small family group of 20 houses, and has since grown into a settlement of 200 houses, housing families related to the original family (96 houses) as well as migrants (104 houses) from nearby towns and states. The settlement, located in proximity to two leading hospitals, occupies one acre of land and is surrounded by six acres of open lands, either owned by the hospitals or under dispute.
The entrance to the settlement can be accessed from a service road connecting the adjoining hospital to the main neighborhood thoroughfare. The entrance is quite nondescript; a grey ten to twelve foot stone and metal boundary wall flanks both sides, two signposts of a local NGO stand on one side, and piles of garbage on both sides of the entrance. Inside, the settlement itself is characterized by closely packed single storey dwellings with asbestos roofing that are on average about 100-150sft in area. Some dwellings are freshly painted in bright colors, while others stand out as dilapidated, and the rest blend in with the general tone of the settlement. All lanes within the settlement are unpaved. A wide lane connects the entrance to a cemetery located at the far end of the settlement. Rows of houses fall on either side of the main street with narrow lanes in between them. Features common to most urban poor settlements such as clothes drying on myriad clotheslines, children running around, piles of litter, heaps of construction material, vegetable sellers with carts, are all visible here. What is striking is the large cemetery filled with large old shady trees and numerous gravestones, about 2200sft in area, located at the back of the settlement. The boundary wall that encloses the settlement is of varying height; it is higher in the front of the settlement (10ft to 12 ft) and lower at the back of the settlement (6ft to 8ft). There are three shops and one temple within the settlement. There is also a meeting room that is used regularly by the area leaders to hold community meetings.

**Population:** 1300 people live in this settlement, about 35% of which are children. There are on average 6-7 people living in a house. Around 20% of the population is Muslim and the remaining are Hindus. A majority of the men work in the construction sector and are employed on a day-to-day basis. Some work as office boys and auto drivers. Women mainly work as maidservants in nearby middleclass households. The average household income is Rs 3200. About 80% of the children attend school and 30% of these children continue on to secondary school.
Figure 9: Map of settlement and adjoining plots

Figure 10: Map of settlement showing common spaces and participant's houses
Land Tenure: Our conversation with the settlement leaders gave us insight into the complex story of land ownership in this settlement. In the 1920s the Maharaja of the State of Mysore is said to have awarded four acres of land – including the land currently occupied by the settlement - to the Bidangiri family, the original family that settled here. The settlement leaders showed us some historical documents suggesting this land entitlement. However, the Bidangiri family had failed to register the land, and therefore gained no legal rights or title. Over the years, the government took over three-fourths of this land for various city development projects. The land occupied by the settlement is now legally owned by the adjoining hospital.

Over time, as the price of real estate grew steadily, the family was eager to sell this plot of land and cash out. It is only in the last five years that members of the original family and other homeowners in the settlement decided to fight for this land, secure legal land entitlements (Hakku Patras) and develop it. There are many reasons for this change of heart, including convenience of location for work opportunities, children’s schools, hospitals, transport etc., and the fact that the cemetery in the settlement holds the family burial site. Some of the six acres of open lands surrounding the site belong to the adjoining hospitals. The hospital authorities see the settlement as a sore spot in their midst, and have been trying to convince the residents to move to another area and give up the land for developing other hospitals or hospital related facilities. The settlement leaders, however, have not been swayed by the hospital authorities and have indicated to them their unwillingness to relocate. In response, the hospital authorities constructed the boundary wall that surrounds the settlement.

The remaining plots that do not belong to the adjoining hospitals are under dispute, as indicated by the abandoned construction sites littered across these lands. Land grabbing is a growing problem in Bangalore City, as in any other city in India. What makes matters worse
here is the fact that the city municipality (BBMP\textsuperscript{16} - Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) has been implicated in aiding several land-grabbing deals - including the areas surrounding this settlement - by accepting hefty bribes. A 2007 report from the Joint Legislature Committee on Encroachments in Bangalore Urban District indicates that several BBMP officials have been charged with aiding a builder/land grabber in illegally possessing the sites surrounding the BE settlement. These disputed sites have been valued at Rs 127 Crores (approx USD 33 Million). This is no small amount. Such misdemeanors by the main municipal body pose a huge challenge for sustainable and equitable urban redevelopment in the city.

At present, the settlement leaders are working towards acquiring land title documents for residents of this settlement. However, little progress has been made in the last two years since I first visited the settlement. There is also confusion about whether the settlement had been ‘declared’ a slum by the KSCB (Karnataka State Slum Clearance Board) - which enables the settlement to qualify for redevelopment and upgrading schemes – or not. The settlement leaders believe that their settlement had been ‘declared’ a slum, and it is only a matter of time before they get their Hakku Patras. The MM members, however, have said that this is not the case.

**Infrastructure:**

Residents of the BE settlement have access to electricity. One water tap located in front of the cemetery serves the entire settlement. Water is available at the one tap once every two days from 3pm to 10am on the following day. Given the odd timings, most residents end up having to stay up late at night or wake up early in the morning to fill water. On average, a

\textsuperscript{16} Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) translates as Greater Bangalore Municipality Body and is responsible for the civic and infrastructural assets of the city. It is run by the city council comprising of elected ward officials called ‘corporators’.
A household uses seven pots (84 liters) of water per day.\textsuperscript{17} This amount is far less than the 20 to 40 liters per person that is considered the minimum for maintaining health and hygiene (WHO, 2005).

The settlement is not connected to the city sewerage system. Around 50\% of the residents have pit latrines next to their houses. However, not all of these are functional. Some latrines have been abandoned because of back up and overflow of waste. This is because most residents find the emptying of pits to be an insurmountable task and cannot afford to have the sludge removed professionally. As a result, more than 50\% of residents use the adjoining plots for their daily toileting. The settlement does not have any drainage facilities for removing storm water or grey water (from bathing, cleaning and washing). Grey water is either disposed off outside the settlement or left in small puddles near homes. The rainwater follows the natural gradient of the land and drains into the surrounding open lands through a small opening made by the residents in the boundary wall. During heavy rains, however, houses situated at the back end of the settlement tend to get flooded. There is also no municipal provision for garbage collection and removal within the settlement. As a result, waste, both wet and dry, is discarded on the internal lanes, at the back of the settlement, and in front of the settlement.

\textsuperscript{17} The average water consumption is based on the water consumption of the 12 families interviewed.
Engagement with SPARC and Mahila Milan: SPARC and Mahila Milan have been in conversation with the area leaders in BE settlement since 2008. A member of SPARC said that the settlement then consisted of 120 homes. In 2009, however, after the hospital authorities built the boundary wall, another 80 houses sprang up hugging the boundary wall within the course of a year. In January 2010, Mahila Milan (MM) started the daily savings program where 86 women enrolled. These savings groups are seen by SPARC and MM as being fundamental to the process of change in a community, since they form the backbone of the community’s organization and provide, over time, the foundation for tackling other concerns. Two issues that were being addressed (during my visits) by the MM in cooperation with the settlement residents were the lack of adequate water and the lack of an anganwadi\(^{18}\) within the settlement. On my first visit to the settlement there had been talks of installing additional water taps within the settlement and on my return visit I saw that three additional water taps had been installed within the settlement, where the costs had been borne equally by SPARC and the residents.

The lack of an anganwadi was also a major concern for women in the settlement. The closest anganwadi, they said, was a kilometer away, and it took too much of their time to walk children back and forth from school. Women with young children complained that if they were to send their children to the anganwadi, they would not be able to get any housework done, nor work part-time outside the settlement. As a result, parents preferred to keep their young children at home. If there was an anganwadi in their settlement, however, parents said they would certainly send their children to it. A member of SPARC said he had explained to the area leaders the official procedures for requesting the government to establish an anganwadi – which involves enumerating children in the zero to six age group, and obtaining signed letters from their parents saying they are in need of an anganwadi. When I asked him about the current status of this issue, he replied

\(^{18}\) An Anganwadi is an integrated child development center provided by the State.
...it has been more than 8 months now, and the settlement leaders have not been able to get these signatures. We can tell them what is required, and once they have all the documentation, help them put in the application with the state department. But, we cannot do everything for them. If they really require an anganwadi then they need to work together to get the signatures.’

This incident reflects one of the core principles that govern the Alliance, which is to empower people with resources, and information so that they can bring about change in their lives as opposed to giving it to them. This process, the Alliance believes, increases the skill base, knowledge, and overall capacity of individuals and the community as a whole. But, more importantly, they come to value the changes they have brought about in their lives. While this means, as in this case, change might happen at a slower pace or in some cases not at all, when it does happen their track record shows that it is more sustainable.

During my return visit the women we spoke with said that they still had no access to an anganwadi. The settlement leader said that there had still been no progress towards applying for an anganwadi center, as none of the women had shown any real interest in organizing themselves and collecting the required signatures, and because he had too many things on his plate. One of the MM women who accompanied me on the return visit, was a new member with 10 years of experience in early childhood education and teaching. She explained the benefits of ECD to the women present, and encouraged them to work together to collate the signatures needed to make a formal application with the education department. The settlement leader’s wife expressed her frustration saying

‘No we will certainly get together and put in an application... we know how it will benefit our children. At least if we start with 4 to 5 children then others will see and send theirs as well. At least this way small children will not get into bad habits like smoking bidis, saying dirty words, and all that. The problem is people here do not cooperate. Like when we are going to the MM office and we call the others they say...'}
things like – “you go ...you go...who is going to come, if you are jobless you go, we are not going to come there and waste our time”. It is so frustrating.’

We discussed the possibilities at length, and the women present promised to get their act together and have an anganwadi running within a year.

2. Methods

Multiple research methods were used to capture and understand the significance of common space for families living in the settlement. All methods were put to test in this site, and fine-tuned to better fit the needs of the project. As these methods have already been described in detail in chapter three I will be summarizing the methods used in tabular form for each case study. In addition, maps of the group tours with brief descriptions are also included. In both the children-led tour and the adult-led tour participants took us to places outside the settlement as well as inside the settlement. Figure 11 shows a map of the group tours outside the settlement and Figure 12 shows the tours within the settlement. Children spent a lot of time showing us places they frequented outside the settlement for play, toileting, or hanging about.
Figure 11: Map of participant group tours outside the settlement

Figure 12: Map of participant group tours inside the settlement
Table 2: Overview of methods used in BE settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with settlement leaders</td>
<td>The three area settlement leaders were interviewed in the common meeting room</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the history and growth of the settlement as well as the demographic details.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The area leaders did not want to be audio-taped or videotaped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual family interviews</td>
<td>12 families were interviewed inside or just outside their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged 3, 1.5, 8, 9, 13,18 and girls of ages 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, and 16.</td>
<td>Children and adults identified and spoke in detail about common spaces in their settlement. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the homes, cemetery/water point, shop, temples, and meeting room.</td>
<td>45 min to 1 hour</td>
<td>The interviews were audio-taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken, and sketches were made of common spaces outside the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-led group tour</td>
<td>8 children participated in the group tour. Five boys aged 8,9,13,16, and 18. Three girls aged 8,11, and 13.</td>
<td>Children showed us places they use outside and inside the settlement. The places outside included space in front of the settlement, adjoining plot with temple and water point, abandoned construction site, mined out quarry, well, and space behind settlement. Inside the settlement they spoke about streets, drainage, and the cemetery.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult-led group tour</td>
<td>4 adults participated in the group tour, one of the settlement leaders and three women.</td>
<td>Adults showed us places they use outside and inside the settlement. The places outside included the main road, meeting point outside, space in front of the settlement, adjoining plot with temple and water point, and abandoned construction site. Inside the settlement they spoke about streets, drainage, shop, temple, meeting room, and cemetery.</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the most part boys dominated the tour. This happened for two reasons: boys had a much larger range of individual mobility, and were therefore excited to take us to areas outside the settlement where girls were forbidden to go; also the older girls in the settlement were less keen to take part, so older boys tended to take charge of the group. In the adult-led group tour, participants spent less time outside the settlement in comparison, and more time showing us spaces and talking about issues within the settlement. Inside the settlement both groups of participants showed us most of the common spaces identified in the individual interviews and talked about sanitation and drainage related problems. The children-led tour was made thrilling with children pointing to places like the ‘snake house’ where they said a snake came regularly from the adjoining lands, and showing us how they climbed trees and jumped about the cemetery. The adult led tour was more somber as they focused on showing and telling us problems they faced due to the lack of infrastructure within their settlement.

In December 2011, 18 months after my initial visit to the BE community, I revisited the community to share my observations and to see what changes, if any, had taken place with regard to common spaces. In addition, I also hoped to speak with adolescent girls, as I felt they had not been fully represented during my first visit to the settlement. In the table below I have summarized the methods used during my return visit to the settlement.
I will now describe the common spaces in this settlement and how these spaces were used and valued by settlement dwellers. After this, I will discuss two of the main themes - water and sanitation, and children’s play and mobility - that were brought up by settlement dwellers with regard to common spaces in the settlement.
3. Common spaces

3.1 Space outside the house

There was some space adjoining every house in the settlement. As the settlement had developed organically over the years, these spaces were irregular in nature. For some residents, the space available was a small portion of the street in front of their house; some shared a semi-private strip of space between their houses (usually three to four houses); others had pockets of spaces adjacent to their house. In some cases where close relatives lived in adjoining houses, the semi private space between these houses was made more private with roofing material and a doorway. Ten of the twelve participants said that the space outside their house was indispensable to them as they used it to perform several chores that could not be performed inside their homes due to inadequate space, light and ventilation, and lack of drainage. These chores included washing clothes, cleaning utensils, sorting rice and pulses, cutting vegetables, bathing children, and heating water.

Figure 13: Shared spaces outside a participant's house
There are some patterns in how residents used the spaces outside their house. Cooking fuel (logs of wood, twigs, and coconut shells mostly collected from the adjoining sites) was usually stacked along the front or sides of the house. The outdoor stove was usually located near the cooking fuel, which residents used mainly for heating water or in some cases for cooking. Water was stored adjoining the houses close to the small paved area that most residents had in front of their homes. This paved area was mainly used to wash clothes and utensils. The participants said they used either a large barrel or an assortment of large plastic containers to store about 15 buckets of water for their daily chores and needs. Apart from this, they stored four to five pots of water inside their homes for drinking and cooking. A step at the doorway, the small paved area in front of the doorway, or a bench in front of the house afforded place for sitting. Both women and children said that they used these as places to sit and chat, play, and to study. Participants also mentioned that the space outside their homes acted as an extension to accommodate guests and visitors. During my return visit I found that some houses had started to build permanent structures around the paved spaces in front of their homes or adjoining their homes thereby extending their homes and as a result making the streets more narrow. At least eight new houses had been built on small pockets of empty land scattered throughout the settlement making the area denser. Residents who had had their homes around these empty plots and enjoyed the luxury of a little open space close to their homes sorely felt the loss of space.

3.2 Cemetery

The cemetery was about 80 years old and situated at the far end of the settlement. The extended Bidanigiri family still buried its family members in this space. The cemetery was 2200sft in area and filled with large shade giving trees that kept it cool even during hot and sunny afternoons. Both adults and children living in the settlement cherished this space.
Some of the participants who were descendents of the Bidangiri family held a deep regard for this space and said it was their main reason for not wanting to relocate to another area. In front of the cemetery was the water source serving the entire settlement. Women we spoke with said that they came to the cemetery mainly to fill water containers and while waiting they sat on the grave platforms to chat with one another. Some women, mostly elderly married women, sat in the shade during the afternoons and chatted with one another. Several men slept on the grave platforms, especially in the afternoons, as this space was cooler than their homes.

Figure 14: View of the cemetery showing the broken down boundary wall behind the cemetery

Residents had broken a part of the boundary wall adjoining the cemetery so that they could access the lands behind the settlement. Residents climbed up and down piles of garbage on
either side of the broken portion of the boundary wall to cross over from the cemetery to the lands behind the settlement.

The cemetery was cleaned twice a year during festivals, and *pujas* were performed. But, at other times, the residents complained that the space was dirty, and filled with litter and fallen leaves. Having the water source in front of the cemetery invariably made the ground of the cemetery boggy with water run off from the tap. However, these were minor peeves about the space, and for the most part all the residents, especially children, were happy that they had the cemetery space in their settlement. One exception was a participant living next to the cemetery. She said that if the decision were hers, she would not live in this settlement, as she found it embarrassing to live right next to a cemetery. The reason they still lived there, she said, was because the settlement meant a lot to her husband. She said ‘**People coming to visit our house see the cemetery next to our house and look at us in a strange way, and sometimes will not touch the water or food in our house!**’

**3.3 Shops**

The main shop was located in the centre of the settlement, just off the main street. One of the settlement leaders owned this shop, and he said it had been around for seven years. Nine of the twelve women we interviewed said that the shop was a valuable place for them, as it was close by, reasonably well stocked, and stayed open from 7:30am to 11:30pm. The families we spoke with used the shop several times a day (ranging from 2 to 6 times). Women said that they went, or more often sent their children, to buy perishables like milk and vegetables, and other sundries like toothpaste, items for worship, and snacks for children. They said that having the shop in the settlement made life easier for them. If not for the shop, they said, they would have to go to the local market half a kilometer away, or depend on their husbands to make daily purchases.
Having the shop within the settlement allowed them to safely send their children, as young as two years of age, to make purchases. The children we spoke with said that they enjoyed going to the shop for various reasons; the sheer act of going and buying, to chat and play with friends living close to the shop, and buying and eating snacks. For the most part, the residents used the shop for transactional purposes, with the exception of one of the participants who lived close to the shop. She said that she went to the shop to chat with other people and play with the shop-owner’s baby.

There were two other shops in the settlement, but these were small in comparison with the main shop. The shop owners operated them out of their homes, and displayed their wares on small counters in front of their homes. These shops mainly sold candies, snacks and homemade food.

During my return visit I found that the main shop was the same in terms of location, clientele, and contents. One of the smaller shops, however, had closed down and another
one had cropped up in a different location. The settlement leader told me that the smaller
shops were more transient in nature (compared to the main shop) and settlement residents
were less dependent on them.

3.4 Meeting Room

The meeting room was a small 10ft by 15ft room located near the entrance of the
settlement. It could be easily mistaken for another house, if not for the small awning in
front and a painted sign on the front wall. Seven of the twelve women we interviewed
mentioned it to be a significant space in their settlement. The participants felt that the
meeting room gave them a space for expressing and discussing community related issues,
meeting with visitors, and conducting collective work such as daily savings. Residents were
free to use the meeting room for holding functions, such as pujas and weddings, at no cost.
The main problem the residents had with the meeting room was that it was too small. One
participant said that when meetings were well attended ‘there (was) no air to breathe’.
When I asked the participants of the adult tour what sort of meeting room would better
serve the needs of their community, the settlement leader and some participants said that a
larger space would be more useful, and expressed that ‘...something that has a shape to it
and looks like a function hall will be good.’ Children did not mention the meeting room as an
important place; perhaps because they were not actively included in activities that took place
there.

During my return visit I found that nothing had changed with regard to the meeting room in
terms of space and function.

3.5 Streets

The main neighborhood thoroughfare near the settlement was a busy road with no traffic
slowing interventions at the junction that tertiary roads leading to the settlement connected
to the main street. Here, the women complained that because of heavy traffic and lack of a
traffic signal or speed bumps, they had no choice but to help their children cross the busy road on their way to school. They said that, over the years, at least five to six children from the settlement had suffered from traffic-related injuries (some superficial, some more serious involving broken bones) while crossing the street. The mud roads within the settlement were uneven, dusty and often cluttered with construction material or odds and ends from residents’ houses. Several residents also parked two and three wheelers and handcarts on these streets that made the streets more congested. Children played along these streets throughout the day; they played marbles, running games, and enjoyed clambering onto the parked vehicles and pretending to ride/drive them. Women also paused along street corners for quick chats with their acquaintances as they went about their daily routines. Adolescent boys and young men tended to hang around in groups on certain areas of the main streets – mainly near the entrance and opposite the main shop. Several participants complained about the internal streets. Some said that their uneven surfaces often caused them to trip and fall especially as they lugged water to their homes. Others complained that during the monsoons the streets became boggy and difficult to use. Nine of the participants complained that everything in their homes was perpetually covered with dust as a result of the unpaved roads.

3.6 Spaces outside the settlement

Settlement residents used adjoining plots of land for various purposes. As mentioned earlier these lands are disputed lands that have abandoned buildings in various stages of the construction process. The plot of land to the left of the settlement (around 15000 sft) had two abandoned building frames, a temple that was used only by the owner or caretaker, a water point used by settlement residents, and a small open area shaded by trees behind the temple where children from the settlement often played. The open plots of land behind the settlement totaled almost five acres. These lands
Figure 16: View of open lands behind the settlement

contained large construction projects that had been abandoned at the foundation or basement stages, two mined out quarries that had become garbage dumps, a small well close to the hospital boundary wall, and plenty of open lands covered with shrubs and small trees. Residents used these open lands mainly for toileting. Men from the settlement frequented the open lands to play cards and gamble. Some of the older boys from the settlement said they swam in the well on the sly as it was guarded by the hospital watchman from the boundary wall of the hospital.

The open land in front of the settlement, about 20,000 sft in area, was used by children from the settlement to play cricket. Children and adults living close to the settlement entrance and passersby also toileted along the boundary wall outside the settlement.
During my return visit I saw that a large construction project had started in the lands behind the settlement and residents told me that the dispute had been settled and the land now belonged to the hospital authorities. The rest of the open lands were green - covered with overgrown creepers and shrubs displaying a seasonal change in the landscape. The plots of land to the left of the settlement and in front of the settlement had not changed from my first visit.

3.7 Temple

A small temple was located along one of the inner lanes inside the settlement. A stone statue of a local deity resided within the temple. While most residents said they visited the temple on a weekly basis only three residents said it was an important common space for them. Other residents said they also visited other temples in the vicinity of the settlement and would not particularly miss the temple within their settlement if it were not there. In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 4 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 4: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like about your settlement</td>
<td>Nothing (8)</td>
<td>Cemetery (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support (3)</td>
<td>Home and family (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central location and proximity to a number of large hospitals (4)</td>
<td>Everything (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nothing (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not like about your settlement</td>
<td>Inadequate access to sanitation (11)</td>
<td>Inadequate access to sanitation (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate access to water (10)</td>
<td>Garbage (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of drainage (8)</td>
<td>Inadequate access to water (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mud roads (9)</td>
<td>Lack of anganwadi (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of anganwadi (4)</td>
<td>Mud roads (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garbage (5)</td>
<td>No place to play (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of clean space for play (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important common spaces used within</td>
<td>Space outside house (10)</td>
<td>Space outside house (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settlement</td>
<td>Main shop (9)</td>
<td>Main shop (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cemetery and water point (7)</td>
<td>Cemetery and water point (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting room (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temple (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the settlement over the</td>
<td>No significant improvements (6)</td>
<td>Nothing (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last 10 years</td>
<td>Access to electricity (6)</td>
<td>More houses and less space to play (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM and daily savings program (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of money for new water taps (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleaning of the cemetery during festival time (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become a safer area more conducive to the activities of families (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and aspirations of residents</td>
<td>Better access to water, sanitation, and drainage facilities (10)</td>
<td>Clean play space (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hakku Patras (9)</td>
<td>Better access to water, sanitation and drainage facilities (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean play space (7)</td>
<td>Anganwadi (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paved lanes (6)</td>
<td>Paved lanes (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anganwadi (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking space for vehicles (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home based work opportunities for women (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Core Issues

4.1 Problems with access to water, sanitation and waste removal

Inadequate water and sanitation facilities were among the top reasons why participants were unhappy with their settlement. While we walked around the settlement the participants – both adults and children - repeatedly expressed their frustration with the lack of infrastructure within the settlement.

**Water provision:** All of the participants we interviewed spoke unendingly about their struggles to provide water for their families. The one water tap with irregular water supply serving 200 families was a main subject in most of our conversations with the women. In general, women we spoke with complained that waiting in queues, filling water, and carrying it to their homes was a drain on their time and energy. The mounting pressure on this single resource also led to many fights between the residents. While the women said they had a queuing system for filling water, they explained that it was often manipulated or blatantly disregarded by some residents leading to shouting matches, fist fights, hair pulling, and the abusing of each other’s families.

Women with young children complained that it was particularly difficult for them, as there was no place for them to leave their children and as they had to make several trips to fill water with their children in tow. Some women mentioned that they had tripped and fallen and suffered minor injuries while carrying water to their homes because of uneven roads.

Apart from the water tap in the settlement women also filled water from a water tap in the adjoining site. Women and children from the settlement frequented the tap in the adjoining site for bathing (mainly children), washing clothes and utensils. When I asked some of the women if the owner of the adjoining site knew that settlement residents used his water tap, they said that the caretaker of the plot had on occasion chased them away, but had never taken any serious action to prevent them from using the tap.
On my return visit to the settlement I saw that the settlement had three additional water taps within its premises. These had been installed about six months after my initial visit to the settlement with the help of SPARC and MM. Water was available at these taps on a daily basis for most of the day. The expenses had been borne equally by the settlement residents and SPARC. Residents said that they were now satisfied with the availability of water in their settlement. When we asked the women whether their water consumption had increased, they laughed saying that they did not keep count and used as much water as needed. After further enquiries, we found that an average sized family (6-7 members) used 10 to 12 pots of water per day and a large family (8-12 members) used 15 to 20 pots per day. In comparison to the previous visit, the water consumption had almost doubled but was still significantly below the per capita national standard of 150 to 200 liters a day. The women we spoke with during our return visit said that there were no more fights over water in their community. They also said they no longer used the water tap in the adjoining plot as they now had sufficient water within their settlement.

**Toilets:** About half the residents, who were financially more secure, had built toilets adjacent to their homes. These were pit latrines, located in front of the house, or on the side in cases where households had the luxury of not sharing two walls with another dwelling. A pit varied from 3’ to 9’ in depth (depending on the financial capacity of the family) and was lined with cement rings. The pits were topped by large stones, cement covers, or in some cases paved over. The waste collected in these pits had to be emptied regularly to avoid overflow and back up. The depth of the pit and frequency of use determined how often these pits had to be emptied: some pits had to be emptied as often as every six months whereas others lasted for eighteen months. Residents who had pits in front of their homes either avoided using the space in front of their homes or paved over the pit with cement and stones. They said that they preferred to spend money and pave the
area, even if it had to be broken every six to eight months to empty the pit, as they used the area in front of their homes for many activities. One participant said

`..we try and use as little water as possible, so it does not fill up quickly. But we have to cover it (pave over it) otherwise how will we do all our work here...there will be bad smell coming from the pit if it is not closed fully and worms and flies will be everywhere. My children play here and I do house work here, so it is better if it is fully closed like this.'

Most homes had individual pits, but some houses – mostly tenanted - shared their pit with their neighbors. Some pits, therefore, had one latrine connected to them, while others had two or three latrines connected to them. The reason tenanted houses had shared pits was because the landlord -to save costs- put in a single pit for the two or three houses (usually adjacent to each other) he or she owned. The shared drainage pits were most problematic as people tended to fight over emptying of the pit. Variables such as family size, and frequency of use, lead to quarrels between families sharing pits. As a result these pits were often neglected and left to overflow and abandoned.

Women described the manual emptying of waste from the pits as a laborious and filthy task, and said that they usually hired people to do the job. One resident said

`...see our street has so many pits...(points to the pits and counts them) there are at least six of them. Now look, people don’t empty their pits when they should have and

Figure 17: Internal lanes made slushy with overflowing waste from pits
the pit overflows and the whole street smells foul. We cannot eat or sleep or anything because of the bad smell! Then they have to call somebody to empty the pit, and it costs a lot of money..Rs1500! Now we are poor people where will we get such money? ...so sometimes people just abandon their pits....and go to the back...’.

It is evident from these examples that residents had to expend a significant amount of time, money, and energy in maintaining their toilets.

Children we spoke with also recognized the lack of adequate sanitation to be a serious problem in their settlement. In the child-led tour, they spent considerable time taking us down one of the streets and explaining in detail the positioning of the pits, how they were shared, and the problems residents faced when these pits overflowed. The problems described included young children falling ill as a result of playing near overflowing pits, foul odor, breeding of mosquitoes, children falling into open pits, and accidents where residents had slipped and fallen due to overflowing pits.

**Toileting on adjoining land:** About 50% of the residents used the adjoining lands for their daily toileting. In the participant-led tours, separate areas used by men and women were pointed out by both women and children. Women used the plot of land immediately behind the settlement, and men used open lands further away from the settlement. Women and adolescent girls usually waited till nightfall, or woke up early in the morning to do their toileting. Several parents and adolescent girls we spoke with said that they found it embarrassing to relieve themselves in the outdoors. They said they always had to be on the lookout, because there could be men from outside loitering about, and because they did not trust the men from their own settlement. A mother of three girls, close to tears, said ‘..the younger one is okay she can go close by... but with the older girls we are always scared that something will happen to them. I go with them sometimes, but sometimes they have to go by themselves. Who knows who will be hanging around outside. Till now nothing has
happened, but these are bad times, and if something happens these girls’ lives will be ruined forever!’ It is a known fact that poor urban women have little time to spare; the daily demands of securing food, water, and caring for their family takes up most of their day and night leaving little time and energy for them to chaperone their daughters.

When I revisited the settlement I was able to talk in depth with some of the adolescent girls about their worries and fears regarding toileting in the outdoors. These girls said they usually went in groups of three or four to use the area behind the settlement for toileting purposes. These trips were made mostly at dawn, or before sunset. They complained of snakes, men loitering around, and expressed feelings of shame and embarrassment. They also narrated an incident where a pregnant woman from their settlement, while squatting, had been snatched dragged by a couple of men, but had luckily managed to escape. The girls said they feared going to the area behind their settlement, and therefore, as much as possible, used the toilets in their respective schools.

In the winter months, the women said that the overgrown bushes and creepers gave them more cover while squatting, but it also increased their risk of being bitten by snakes and harassed by men. Women most often went in pairs, so one of them could keep watch while the other squatted. They said that they tried to control their bowel movements and seldom went out after dark. When I asked them if they suffered from any health problems as a result, one resident replied

‘We all have problems sometime or the other like stomach ache, cramping, and bleeding, and we go to the clinic or the hospital and get a check up and medicines. It might be because of this but we do not know…. we feel embarrassed to tell anybody about the toilet situation here so we do not tell anyone. It might be because of this, but nobody has talked openly about it till now.’

The boys we spoke with said that they stood on the boundary wall and urinated into the adjoining empty plots, and used open lands further away from the settlement for
defecation. They spoke about this quite jovially— for example how they had competitions on who could urinate the furtherest from on top of the wall – and did not seem to be too bothered with having to use the open lands for toileting.

**Unfinished toilet block:** An unfinished toilet block was located near the entrance, immediately inside the settlement. In the adult-led group tour, participants explained that after repeated pleas to address the lack of sanitation facilities in their settlement, a local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) had sanctioned money for a common toilet block. This job was executed by the BBMP. The municipality engineers, however, had built the structure such that it was unfeasible to enable a water supply connection. ‘Now they say if we can give them Rs40000 they will finish the job! Where can we get so much money!’ an exasperated participant had complained. The settlements leaders were at a loss when I asked them how exactly this had happened and whether they had demanded an explanation from the municipality authorities. They said that they had approached the BBMP official who was assigned to the task, but he had said that the job had been contracted out to an outside agency, and therefore he could not do anything about it. The residents did not seem too bothered – perhaps because they had invested nothing in the process of creating this toilet block. For them it was yet just another failing of the municipality, in whom they had little faith to begin with. It is ironic and tragic that residents who have to urinate and defecate in the open have in their settlement a community toilet with shiny tiles, doors, and WCs – except that it does not function. The area leaders had locked the toilet block so that residents did not misuse the place and steal sanitary fittings.

On my return visit to the settlement I found that nothing had changed with regard to the toilet block. The settlement leader said he had approached the local municipality official for assistance in fixing the toilet block and the paving of roads in their settlement. He said that Rs 4,00,000/- had been sanctioned, but work was yet to begin as the approved contractor
was unavailable. The settlement leader, however, seemed positive about the outlook and assured us that work towards these improvements would commence within the next two months.

**Drainage:** One topic, which came up throughout the adult-led tour, was the flooding that happened during the monsoons. The participants explained that while this had always been a problem in their settlement, it had been exacerbated with the building of the boundary wall. Earlier, the water had drained to the lower lying empty plots behind the settlement, but with the building of the boundary wall the water was channeled through the main street of the settlement and flooded four or five houses in the lowest point of the settlement. As a temporary solution, residents had removed a stone from that base of the boundary wall at the lowermost point of the settlement to drain the excess water. In addition, some house owners have built a small wall raising the threshold of their doorways. While this helped to a certain extent, residents complained that heavy rains still caused flooding. The participants added that the floods brought garbage and waste from adjoining areas into their settlement and exposed residents to diseases such as Dengue and Chicken Guinea.

During my return visit, we spoke in-depth about the boundary wall surrounding the settlement. Their strategy to lessen the impact of flooding had not changed; they removed some stones from the base of the boundary wall to let water drain into adjoining lands. Every time these stones were removed, the women pointed out, the landowners of adjacent lands again blocked the openings with cement bags. This went on throughout the monsoon. They said this was the work of the hospital authorities, who did not want water from the settlement to drain into the gardens they had created on hospital grounds. When I asked the residents if there was anything positive that had resulted from the wall being built, one of the key informants said
'It is not like we do not like the wall – after the wall has been built we have a feeling of safety and security – one is that okay we feel that they have said (by building the wall) that this much area belongs to us, and two, now there is only one entrance so we know who is coming and going. Before, people used to come from any street and disappear from another. There used to be 10 ways for people to come and go. Now we can identify a new person in the area easily, and ask him what is he doing here – before we had no way of knowing. There used to be many robberies before because there was no boundary wall.’

During my follow-up visit to the settlement the settlement leader stressed that the lack of infrastructure for wastewater and rainwater drainage was one of their biggest concerns, particularly after the new water taps had been installed. As the settlement lies on a natural slope surrounded by private lands, the possibilities for drainage would involve negotiations with adjoining landowners. The women and the settlement leader said that the landowners they approached had refused to acknowledge their requests saying 'you do whatever you want in your compound but we do not want to have anything to do with you people in our area.’ They were at a loss as to what could be done and therefore the settlement was still prone to flooding during the monsoons with no long-term solution in the near future. In addition, the new water taps had resulted in excessive water run-off leading to slushy streets and numerous stagnant puddles of water. In the tour of the settlement, women and children said the slushy streets and water puddles increased falls, led to more mosquitoes in their settlement, and left little place for children

Figure 18: Stagnant grey water outside a participant’s house
to play. Women added that increased availability of water had also resulted in people using more water in toilets, causing drainage pits to fill up and overflow on a more frequent basis.

**Garbage disposal:** Residents discarded all wet and dry waste in front of the entrance to the settlement or behind the cemetery. The garbage behind the cemetery had piled up to the top of the boundary wall\(^{19}\) and become a pathway for residents going to the adjoining plots for toileting.

![](image)

**Figure 19:** Piles of garbage near the broken down portion of the boundary wall adjoining the cemetery

In the tours, both women and children pointed to several places where garbage had been dumped on the streets, as well as near the entrance and reasoned that this caused young children to fall ill and gave their settlement a negative image. Residents living close to the entrance complained that they constantly had to put up with foul odors emanating from the garbage piles.

One of the women participants explained that shortly after the wall had been built the municipality vehicle had come regularly for three months to remove the garbage. Since

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\(^{19}\) The height of the boundary wall behind the cemetery was about five feet - relatively lower than the 10 to 12 ft high boundary wall in front of the settlement.
then, however, she said ‘...they only sweep the rubbish on the road leading up to the hospital and this road leading to our area, once they are done they just throw the rubbish into these heaps or sometimes make a pile and burn it here.’. The tour participants were unable to give any explanations as to why the municipality had stopped removing garbage. In the child-led tour, children pointed to the garbage heap behind the cemetery and said that young boys from their settlement often scavenged there for saleable items like slippers, bottles and plastic items.

On my return visit the adolescent girls I spoke with also expressed disgust on how garbage was disposed of in their neighborhood. They said people threw rubbish outside their homes, on internal streets or in the cemetery, according to their convenience. The girls said that the excess water run off coupled with rubbish created slippery conditions that led to falls and that most of them had suffered sprains, bruises and cuts from these falls. The girls going behind the settlement for toileting said they had to walk carefully across the cemetery, as it was filled with piles of garbage and muck, to reach the area behind their settlement. While on the subject of menstruation, the girls spoke about how they disposed sanitary napkins in the trash pile in front of their settlement or behind their settlement. They said that they usually wrapped the used napkin in a newspaper, put it in a plastic bag, and waited for a time when there were no boys and/or men present to quickly dispose the napkin. The girls said, with mixed feelings of anger, shame, and frustration, that boys often teased them if they were caught in the act. Vinita, a 16 year old girl, said

‘It is really difficult for us during that time. We will be having pains and so much bleeding and then we have to keep changing the napkin and throwing it. (To throw the napkin) We first have to hide it in a cover and then go quickly when there is nobody looking and throw it. To throw the cover in front of the boys and all is shaming for us.’
It is clear from this section that the poor infrastructure within the settlement affected women and children physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Women and girls were most affected; not only did they have to bear the burden of providing water for their families but they also had to deal with the ordeal of having to toilet in the open on a day to day basis. It is also clear that infrastructure, lack of it, or improvements towards it routinely affected common spaces within the settlement. For example additional water taps combined with poor drainage led to slushy streets, increased stagnant grey water, and more pits to overflow onto lanes. Participants in the adult-led tour expressed that for change to be lasting it needs to be driven by residents. They complained that none of the local politicians they voted to power had done anything for their area, and what had been done was temporary or unusable.

4.2 Children’s Play and Mobility

All children, with the exception of older 20 girls, moved about freely within the settlement by themselves, with friends, or with their younger siblings in tow. Children, as young as 2 years of age, went to the shops within the settlement by themselves. Although younger girls (up to 13 years) were allowed to roam around the settlement freely, they did not have the freedom the boys had to go to the adjoining areas on their own. They occasionally went to the adjoining plots, in the company of their mothers, to help with washing clothes and utensils, or to play.

Older girls stayed mainly within the confines of their homes. They were allowed to visit with their friends and close relatives living within the settlement, help with fetching water, and occasionally went out (to parks or shopping malls) with friends accompanied by a chaperone. The limited independent mobility of adolescent girls was imposed by cultural

20 Girls who had attained puberty
beliefs and parental fears such as girls ‘getting into trouble with boys’, ‘falling in love’, and girls being leered at or harassed by men in the settlement. One parent of a 14 year old girl said ‘...it is for their own good they do not roam outside, they will get into all kinds of trouble and then nobody can do anything. We will be disgraced, and their life will be ruined. It is better they stay at home and help with the housework or study till they are married.’

The older girls we spoke with in the individual family interviews said they preferred to stay indoors and did not go to other areas within the settlement as ‘there (was) nothing to do outside anyway’ and as ‘the place (was) all very dirty.’

During my return visit to the settlement, however, the older girls had a lot more to say with regard to their mobility and use of spaces within the settlement. They said that their parents forbade them from going out of their homes by themselves. At most, they accompanied their mothers or fathers to help fill water or buy supplies from shops within the settlement. One of the reasons for their restricted mobility, the girls said, were the groups of boys and men who hung about the settlement. Anjali, a 16 yr old, said

‘– it is very difficult for us girls here... they (parents) do not let us out of the house only. We can only step out if we have our parents or aunts or grandparents or someone is with us. The boys here are not good, they tease us for no reason, and they are playing rough games all the time, and hanging around outside all the time – that is why they (parents) do not let us out of the house at all! We step out of the house to go to school and come back home. That is it!’

The girls said that as a result, they could not play freely, consult with friends on homework, nor visit the park in the adjacent hospital. For the most part, they played indoor games with sibling and cousins, helped with housework, and studied. As there was no opportunity for them to play within their settlement, they said that they played volleyball, kabaddi, and other games in their respective schools. These girls reminisced about how, just three or four years ago, they had had plenty of place and freedom to play in their settlement. Of late,
they said, houses had come up in most open spaces within the settlement leaving no place for children to play. Kamala a 14 yr old said ‘When we were small, we used to play fully all the time. There used to be lots of empty space then, now they have built so many houses everywhere that there is no place left to play. Before we used to play skipping, hopscotch, stones, kabaddi, police robber, and all that!’

Young children (both boys and girls aged 0 to 6) and girls (till 13/14 years of age) preferred to play near their homes. They played in front of their homes or in small pockets of spaces close to their homes where caregivers were able to keep an eye on them.

Young children played with mud, stones and sticks, cooking fuel, and odds and ends lying around. Girls and boys played hide and seek, hopscotch, skipping, carom board, and card games, with their siblings or friends. Where there was an empty plot or a larger pocket of space available, the children living close to it used the space for playing more robust games like lagori, cricket, volleyball, hide and seek, and kabbadi. Children also often used the space in front of their homes for quiet play where they played board games, narrated and/or listened to stories, read books, or chatted with each other.

The women in the settlement said that for the most part children could play freely in the settlement. If the children were noisy, however, they were told to play elsewhere, and even beaten at times if they did not listen. The women explained that as people lived in such small houses, small irritants like this (children making noise) got amplified and upset the residents, particularly the elderly.
Children, both boys and girls (with the exception of older girls), of all ages played in the cemetery on a daily basis. They played organized games like Kabbadi, galli goli (street marbles), gilli danda (stick and stone), hide and seek, blind man bluff, hopscotch, and bat and ball. Children also went to the cemetery simply to hang out, climb trees, swing (by tying a saree to the tree), eat snacks, pluck and eat seasonal berries from the trees, or just argue with each other and play fighting games. The children we spoke with said that they all loved the cemetery very much because it provided them with several opportunities for play.

The cemetery had trees with low branches they could climb, gravestones and grave platforms that enabled physical and dramatic play. Loose parts like leaves, stones, twigs, added to the possibilities. It was located centrally within the view of at least a few adults, at any point in time, that parents didn’t mind sending their children to play there. When we walked around the settlement we often heard adults shouting out to children to not play in the garbage, or to ‘..be careful’ or ‘..come down you’ll hurt yourself’ as they climbed trees and jumped across gravestones.

During my follow-up visit to the settlement, however, I found that the cemetery was no longer used for play. It was littered with piles of rubbish and made slushy and slippery with water run off from the common water taps within the settlement. When I enquired if the children still played in the cemetery one participant from the group tour said

‘Now children do not play here anymore. There is lots of garbage here and smell and all that – the water also stays here in some places – so no, nobody plays here now. Otherwise, they will fall sick. When summer comes then the children only all get together and clean this place up so they can play here. The adults do not do anything. Only if there is an important festival then they (adults) get this place cleaned.’
While some children said they missed playing in the cemetery, most did not seem to care too much about the loss of their favorite play space. They said they had little time to play now, as they were busy with school and homework, and helping their mothers at home. On several occasions, we found boys and girls playing together. ‘Cooking food’ was a favorite play routine, where children balanced a six-inch aluminum pot on a small stove made from stones or bricks. Cooking fuel was comprised of dry twigs and pieces of cardboard and paper. One child would light a fire and another would stir the contents of the pot, while the rest would help to keep the fire going by fanning or blowing the flame. Once the food was cooked, everyone relished a mouthful with enormous satisfaction. It was clear that children developed essential skills, and the ability to work as a team through these play routines.

![Children playing 'cooking food' in a small paved area outside a participant's house](image)

The older boys from the settlement showed us several places they frequented outside the settlement. These included much-cherished places in the open lands behind the settlement like the mined out quarry and the abandoned construction site where the boys used to swim.
both of which had become garbage dumps. Over the past two years, the owners of the adjoining lands, in compliance with the hospital administration, had used both direct and indirect means to make these spaces unavailable/unusable for children and adults in the settlement. For example, the children said that in the land behind their settlement, the owner had planted many bushes so that children could not play cricket. They spoke with nostalgia about how they used to enjoy swimming in the mined out quarry and playing cricket in areas behind their settlement. The boys said that a municipality garbage truck came regularly to dump garbage in the mined out quarry and near the abandoned construction. One of these boys, Karthik, had confronted the truck driver and asked why garbage was being dumped in these areas. The truck driver had shoved him and told him to mind his own business. Karthik complained that ‘there are no rules about dumping garbage! The municipality people just dump it wherever they want.’

Listening to these boys, I got the feeling that these open lands behind the settlement had once afforded various types of play for children living in the settlement, such as swimming, running, playing cricket, climbing, and jumping, a place where they could get away from the narrow confines of their settlement, play freely, roam, think, and expend their energy. A woman from the settlement who accompanied us on the children’s tour said ‘before the children used to play happily here, there were no walls and all that, they would come and go as they pleased, and swim here and play cricket there. But now, they have nowhere to go, so they are getting into all these terrible habits like drinking and smoking’. She explained that activities like gambling, drinking, smoking, and doing drugs had increased significantly since garbage began to be dumped in the areas behind the settlement and after the boundary wall was built around the settlement. The settlement leader and two of the women from the adult group tour echoed this concern.

The building of the boundary wall had also made the space in front of the settlement unsanitary. Many passersby and residents from the settlement commonly urinated and
defecated along the wall in front of the settlement - making this an unhygienic and unpleasant place for children. In addition, the watchman from the adjoining hospital screamed at the children if they happened to be playing in this area, complaining that they were disturbing the patients in the hospital. The women from the adult-led tour also complained that the area in front of their settlement had become a ‘big toilet’ since the boundary wall had been built. They said

‘…..now children come here and play cricket in this filth, the ball falls down they pick it up and play with it and they come home and eat with the same dirty hands. Because of this a lot of children have had lots of problems with their health...so now we tell them not to come here...but they are children and sometimes don’t listen. They come sneakily and play then what can we do...we cannot be watching them all the time.’

During my return visit some of the boys who had taken me on a tour of the settlement had accompanied me to the area behind the settlement. They told me that the transformation in landscape (from a dry open land to a dense green space) occurred after each monsoon. With the start of summer, however, the green cover started to dry up and was then cleared by the people in the settlement. These boys also said that they did not venture as far as the mined out quarries anymore as a dead body had been found by the police in one of the quarries. When I asked the boys if they still frequented the areas behind the settlement, Shakut, a 17 year old, said

‘Yes we do! This is our hadda (den/hang out place). We come here to play and hang out. (Me – But even now... with all these bushes here?) yes, yes, we come now also. We come here to have a smoke and hang out that is all. We only smoke cigarettes here that is all we do not do anything else.’

The children we spoke with during the return visit said that they now played mainly in the space in front of their settlement, and near the temple in the land adjacent to their
settlement. They also still played on streets and in small open spaces within the settlement. After speaking to the children and adults and walking around the settlement, it was evident that children had less play opportunities now, than they did when I first visited the settlement. The cemetery was taken over by water runoff and garbage, the area behind the settlement was covered with dense greenery, and the few open spaces between houses were taken up by new homes. Some of these changes were seasonal and temporary – for example during the hot summer months the children would once again have access to the cemetery and the lands behind the settlement for play – while others were more permanent – for example the loss of small open spaces within the settlement.

5. Summary
Most participants saw some common spaces available within the settlement as an asset. The spaces outside homes allowed for residents to do chores like washing, cleaning, and bathing that were not possible to do inside their cramped homes that had little ventilation and were lacking basic infrastructure like piped water and connection to sewerage facilities. The cemetery offered the residents a space to ‘get away’ from the cramped and often hot spaces of their homes to an open shaded area that afforded sitting, chatting, sleeping, and playing. The main shop in the settlement made life more convenient for residents, and the meeting room supported the social and organizational capacities of the community. Residents spent more time, energy, and money in caring for the space immediately outside their homes than other areas in the settlement that were often littered with garbage. The lack of supportive infrastructure (unpaved streets, lack of drainage,) encouraged residents to disown the streets, which in turn made them more neglected and unsanitary. This lack of ownership or rules about using this space caused more friction among residents. Residents routinely got into fights over garbage lying on the street, overflowing chambers, parked vehicles, children playing on the street, and spilt water.
Common spaces shared between three to four families, such as shared semi-private spaces for bathing, washing clothes, and cleaning utensils between houses, were usually governed by clear rules and functioned smoothly. Places like the water point in spite of rules ended up causing friction among residents because of inadequate water supply and the sheer number of people sharing this space.

The interviews and group tours revealed that parents do have their children’s interests in their mind when they think of change with regard to their settlement; having an anganwadi (daycare center) for their young children, a place where children could play safely, and a settlement that was cleaner were among some of the top priorities of residents. When asked if neighbors would help their children when they were in trouble 11 out of 12 participants responded positively.

When I asked the settlement leader what the most positive feature was with regard to the settlement, he thought for a while and replied ‘if someone has lost everything, their means to live etc, they can come here and start again and survive. We stick together, help each other out, and if there is trouble from outside we all come together.’
Chapter 4: BEP Settlement

1. Profile of Settlement

The BEP settlement is a ‘notified slum’ slated for redevelopment. It is located in a high-density neighborhood in the midst of Bangalore city and occupies 1.5 acres of land. This settlement is 65 years old; it started as a small group of ten houses and grew to 460 houses over the years. In the immediate vicinity of the settlement are a three-storey multi-purpose function hall, shops, a private college, and low to middle-income housing. The settlement is well connected with tertiary roads to the main neighborhood thoroughfares.
The settlement is bounded by a ten-foot high boundary wall, and a prominent statue of Dr BR Ambedkar\textsuperscript{21} flanks the gateway leading into the settlement. Inside, the settlement is packed with rows of wall-to-wall and back-to-back dwellings. These dwellings are about 50sft to 200sft in area. Most are single storied and some (about 20%) are two stories high. Narrow paved lanes, four to six feet in width, run between these dwellings. As these lanes were paved after most houses were built, a majority of dwellings are one to two feet below the street level. A six inch raised step has been built at the doorway of each of these houses to prevent rainwater and wastewater from entering homes. Pots and drums of water, small cooking stoves, firewood, and odds and ends are stacked along the walls of the houses making the narrow lanes further congested. Clothes are dried on strings strung on the walls or on poles that go across houses over the lanes.

A large empty plot of land, about 9000sft in area and belonging to a private owner, is located within the settlement near the entrance. The owner raises livestock (a few cows, goats, and buffaloes) on part of this land, and the remaining space has become a garbage dump. Apart from a few trees at the entrance of the settlement, the settlement is devoid of greenery. The settlement is located in proximity to the city market, several commercial enterprises and schools. This has enabled residents to find jobs with decent pay, and send their children to schools. Settlement dwellers placed a high value on the location of the settlement, and said they preferred to continue living in the cramped quarters of their settlement than move to other areas where they could afford better housing.

**Population:** The settlement is home to approximately 3000 people. There are on average six to seven people living in a house. About 75% of the population is Hindu and 25% Muslim. There is no spatial segregation within the settlement based on religion; Hindu and Muslim families live side by side. A majority of the men work in the construction sector as

\textsuperscript{21} Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a learned scholar and an eminent jurist who confronted social problems like untouchability and the caste system. He was also instrumental in the formation of the Indian Constitution.
daily laborers, some work in the bar-bending industry, and some own auto rickshaws. Most women work in the garments industry, and a few women run their own businesses (like tailoring shops, selling fruit and vegetables and selling food). Women also try to supplement their family income by taking on home-based jobs, like stringing flower garlands, and rolling incense sticks. The average family income is Rs 4200.

All children living in the settlement go to school and 75% of these children continue on to secondary school. All schools are within walking distance from the settlement; parents accompany younger children to school whereas the older ones go by themselves. Children who discontinue their studies either help their parents or enter the labor market.

**Land Tenure:** None of the residents have legal land entitlement documents to the houses they own. More than 75% of these residents have been living in this area for 25 to 30 years. The remaining 25% are renters who stay for a maximum of two to three years. The residents have been working with SPARC and Mahila Milan (MM) to redevelop their area through the JNNURM urban redevelopment scheme. Given the high density of dwellings, the area leaders have come to realize that the only option for reasonable sized dwellings is to opt for apartment type housing. A majority of the residents are agreeable to giving up their dwellings to make way for ground plus three apartment buildings. Some residents, mainly those living in two-storey houses, are still not convinced. At present negotiations are underway for a common consensus, so that the redevelopment process can begin. The area leaders are also in conversation with the private landowner (whose land lies in the midst of the settlement), to see if they can purchase his land at a reasonable price or have it in exchange for an equivalent amount of land towards the edge of the settlement.

**Infrastructure and Services:** As the settlement is located in a dense and well-serviced neighborhood, the settlement leaders have over the years been able to bring in services through legal and illegal means. The settlement enjoys paved roads, laid by the KSCB (Karnataka State Corporation Board) 10 years ago. Residents have had access to electricity
since 1989; there are four power lines serving the settlement. The settlement has public water taps located at the beginning or end of a lane. Water is available at these taps once every two days, from 6 pm to 5 am. Only 15% of the residents have toilets within their homes. The majority of residents use two public pay-and-use toilets located within the settlement. There is no door-to-door garbage collection by the municipality in this area. People living here dispose their garbage in the large empty plot within the settlement. The settlement has three convenience shops, four commercial/small industrial enterprises, and one anganwadi\(^\text{22}\) (childcare center). There are also two small temples located within the settlement that are used regularly by the settlement dwellers.

**Engagement with SPARC and Mahila Milan:** SPARC and Mahila Milan (MM) have been working in the BEP settlement for the last two years. The daily savings program is now comprised of 175 members. The settlement leaders together with women from MM and members of SPARC have held several community meetings to discuss the daily savings program as well as the possibilities for redevelopment. Some of the women interviewed talked about the daily savings program started by MM and said that it had a positive influence on settlement dwellers. Meena, a mother of three children, said

> ‘...now we waste less money...we are more careful with it. Now we feel we have something to depend on when there is a sudden need for money – like medical expenses, school fees, uniforms for children, or books for them. They also spoke to us about new houses for our area and new buildings. So we feel if we keep saving then when the time comes we will have some money to make our houses nicely.’

\(^{22}\) An *Anganwadi* is an integrated child development center provided by the State.
Unfortunately, I was unable to visit the BEP settlement during my return visit to Bangalore in December 2011. This was because one of the area leaders was murdered by a rival gang member, and the settlement was prone to unrest and instability.

I did, however, speak with the MM members who worked in the BEP settlement as well as members of SPARC. They said the redevelopment plans for this settlement had stalled: the two reasons given were 1) the area leaders had split ways and now supported opposing political parties and 2) the landowner of the large empty plot within the settlement was now claiming ownership of a large part of the land occupied by the settlement. I was told that until these issues were resolved the settlement would not be eligible for any of the slum redevelopment schemes. The daily savings program was still active in the BEP settlement, but the MM members I spoke with said that membership had dropped significantly. They associated this drop in membership to the current uncertainty with regard to new housing for the settlement.

2. Methods

**Individual interviews:** As the settlement spanned a large area, a section of the settlement to the right of the entrance (See Figure 23) was demarcated for conducting this research. This section was representative of all housing types, and common spaces existing within the community. 12 families were selected from this section such that we were able to speak with children from different age groups and both sexes. We spoke with participants either inside their homes, just outside their home, or in some cases where space was inadequate, participants were interviewed in small open spaces close to their homes.
Figure 23: BEP Settlement Map Showing Participants Houses and Common Spaces

*Group tours:* The adult-led group tour comprised of three women who had also taken part in the individual home interviews. The tour started at the entrance to the settlement, and ended at the large empty plot within the settlement. Narrow lanes, cramped housing, and inadequate water and sanitation facilities were most discussed. Six children conducted the child-led group tour of the settlement. This tour started outside the settlement with children showing us their play places just outside the settlement, and ended in front of the temple near the entrance. The subject of play was most discussed in this tour. While the tour started with six children, we had several other children from the settlement join us along the way. Finally, this tour culminated in a group discussion, where 22 children from the settlement spoke about what they liked and did not like with regard to their settlement.
Figure 24: BEP Settlement Group Tours Map
Table 5: Overview of methods used in BEP settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview with settlement leaders</strong></td>
<td>Two settlement leaders were interviewed in the empty plot within the settlement</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the history and growth of the settlement as well as the demographic details.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The area leaders did not want to be audio-taped or videotaped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual family interviews</strong></td>
<td>12 families were interviewed inside their homes, just outside, or in an open area near their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15 and girls of ages 1, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 15.</td>
<td>Children and adults identified and spoke in detail about common spaces in their settlement. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the homes, temples, community toilet, anganwadi, and shops.</td>
<td>45 min to 1 hour</td>
<td>The interviews were audio-taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken, and sketches were made of common spaces outside the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child-led group tour</strong></td>
<td>Six children participated in the group tour. Three boys aged 9, 13, 16, and three girls aged 8, 11, and 12.</td>
<td>Children showed us places they use outside and inside the settlement. Inside the settlement they showed us the temples, roads, empty plot, shops, community toilet, and anganwadi. Outside the settlement they showed us the area in front of the settlement where they played.</td>
<td>1 hour and 20 minutes</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-led group tour</strong></td>
<td>Three women participated in the group tour.</td>
<td>Adults showed us places they use inside the settlement. These included the community toilet, the anganwadi, temples, water taps, empty plot, and roads.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I will now describe the common spaces in this settlement and how these spaces were used and valued by settlement dwellers. After which, I discuss two of the main themes – problems with water and sanitation, and children’s play and mobility - that were brought up by settlement dwellers with regard to common spaces in the settlement.

3. Common Spaces

3.1 Space outside the house

Paved lanes between the houses act as crucial spillover spaces for families to do various household chores, such as cleaning utensils, cooking, washing and drying clothes, and bathing. As the majority of residents live in homes that are barely 80sft in area, a large part of their daily living happens outside - in the lanes between the houses. This space between homes has therefore become a heavily contested space. Usually, families from four houses share the space between their homes for carrying out daily chores. Some families have been able to work out organized systems for sharing this space, in accordance to each family’s needs. Where possible, this included joint families building a roof over the space between their homes and making it more private. These systems regulate the use of this space to a certain extent, and decrease friction between families. Most families, however, use this space on an ad hoc basis, which results in petty quarrels between families. These quarrels, however, are quickly resolved; as women

Figure 25: Congested lanes between houses are used for cooking, cleaning, washing, and bathing
said they could not afford to hold long grudges with neighbors they needed to interact with on a day-to-day basis. Shyamala, a mother of four children said

‘This place outside is where we do everything because we have so little place inside our house! Mainly our neighbors and we use this place. I use it several times a day. I clean vessels and wash clothes here. I sit here and chat with my neighbor across the street and also do cooking outside. Children have bath here, and we adults also have bath here late at night or very early in the morning. Usually we all take turns to use the place or we share at the same time. But sometimes two of us will need to use the place at the same time and then we will get into a fight. But next day we will be friends again because we live close by na, how can we fight and stay angry with each other. Sometimes I will be washing clothes, and if there is lots of water, it goes into my neighbor’s house and she will come out screaming at me. But these things happen, what to do our places are so small, so we adjust somehow. We have fights, but then we also settle our fights quickly.’

In large households, men and young children use the lanes for sleeping at nighttime. A thin mat is rolled out on any available space in front of the house, and used for sleeping. Young children and girls also use the space between homes for play. Children often complained that adults, who felt children’s play further cramped an already crowded space, often scolded them.

Most of the residents bathe on the lane outside their homes. While men, boys, and young children bathe at anytime that is convenient, women and girls only bathe in the cover of darkness. Young girls and women complained that they found it embarrassing to bathe in the open. They resorted to bathing half-clothed or in the partial privacy of temporary screens made from sarees. Some residents, especially families with adolescent girls, transform their homes into makeshift bathrooms so they can bathe in privacy. They have done this by putting in a drain in their homes that connects to the sewage chamber or
simply by drilling a hole in the wall so that the water drains out on to the lane outside their home.

While the narrow lanes provide residents with some additional space for their daily chores there is little space for anything else. All of the activities described above – cooking washing, bathing, playing, and sleeping – further congest an already narrow space. Most women we interviewed complained bitterly about the lack of space outside their homes. They said the lanes were so narrow and congested that they barely had any place to walk. Women also said that the space outside their homes was too narrow to hold family functions or even place the bodies of their family members when they passed away. Shanti, a resident of 15 years, lamented the death of her husband saying

‘when my husband died, there was no place to keep him outside our house and perform the rituals before we took him for cremation. We had to do it on the main road in the settlement. This is how we live, we cannot even pay our respects to the dead. I still feel very sad that we could not do things properly when my husband died.’

3.2 Temples

There are two small temples within the settlement. One is a Ganesha temple located just inside the entrance to the settlement, and the second is a Devi temple located towards the inner right corner of the settlement (refer to Figure 23 for location). Both of these temples have some open space in front of them. They are open from 6am to 8am in the morning and from 5pm to 7:30 pm in the evening. Residents use these temples on a regular basis. They visit the temple one or two times a week according to their religious beliefs. Women valued having these temples within their settlement, as they did not have to go far to do their weekly prayers and pujas.

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23 Religious rituals performed by Hindus, both in temples and at home.
Young girls, particularly, were excited to talk about the temples in their area and describe what they did within their vicinity. They said that they loved the Devi temple as it was ‘very famous’ and because, ‘...whenever there is a festival or anything they do it very grandly here! We like that very much.’ The girls explained that during festivals the adults from the settlement organized *rangoli*\(^{24}\) competitions and played loud music. They said they enjoyed taking part in these competitions and singing along and dancing to the music.

Young children and women living close to the temples frequently use the small open spaces outside the temples. These spaces are in use mainly when the temples are closed. The Devi temple has a small open paved space in front of it. Residents living next to this temple take advantage of this space to do some of their household chores like sorting grain, tying flowers, and drying chilies and rice crackers. Women use this place to socialize with their friends and relatives while children use this space to play a variety of games.

The Ganesha temple is surrounded by a raised plinth that is sheltered by a large shade-giving tree. In the evening, the elderly folk from the settlement sit here to chat and discuss local politics. This space is also used to hold general area meetings. Elderly women, boys, and men from the settlement also nap here on warm days. Adolescent girls also use this place to chat with their friends.

\(^{24}\) *Rangoli* is a traditional art form from India. A rangoli is a decorative design, usually made with rice flour, which adorns the entryway of homes. It is considered auspicious and believed to bring good luck.
3.3 Shops

All participants we spoke with said that the shops were important to them as it made it convenient for them to purchase items they needed on a daily basis like rice, pulses, salt, sugar, milk, oil, vegetables, and things for their children like stationary, note books, and sweets. Women, on average, used the shops three to four times a day. Children we interviewed also said that they felt the shops were important as they provided them and their families with things they needed. Children visited the shops more frequently; on average five to six times a day, with some children going as often as seven to ten times a day. Children said they enjoyed going to the shops as it was ‘fun to buy many things’, and ‘to buy and eat snacks and sweets.’ The main problem residents had with the shops was that goods were sold at prices well above the local market rates, but they were willing to pay these prices because of the convenience of location.

3.4 Anganwadi

The anganwadi is located next to one of the common toilets in the settlement. It is a 10’ x 12’ room with two small windows. The room has cement flooring, which is covered by rubber mats. There are two chairs that are used by the teachers, and one metal cupboard, which is used for storing teaching material. At the time of our visit there were 14 children in the two to five year age group, who were sitting on the floor and engaged in writing on small slates. The teacher present at the time of our visit explained that the anganwadi was
open from 8:30 am to 11:30 am. She said that, usually, 12 to 15 children showed up at the center in the morning, and that more children came by towards the end of the session when free food was distributed to the children. She said she had no problems with the space as such, except that it was located next to the toilet and they had to put up with the foul smells.

Only four of the parents we spoke with mentioned the anganwadi to be an important common space in their settlement. Two of these women had young children who were attending the anganwadi. They said it was important to them because they could send their young children for 3 to 4 hours in the morning, while they finished their housework or worked part-time outside the settlement. Residents can rent the anganwadi space for a nominal fee to hold family functions.

A few participants had some misgivings with regard to the anganwadi. One of the parents we spoke with complained that the anganwadi was mismanaged, and that teachers sold the food that came for the children to other people in the settlement. In the child-led group tour, children told us that the anganwadi was too small and had too many children.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 6 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 6: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Like about your settlement</strong></td>
<td>Central location and proximity to work opportunities, schools, and markets (9) Nothing (7)</td>
<td>Home and family (7) Temples (5) Road outside settlement (4) Everything (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do not like about your settlement</strong></td>
<td>Narrow streets – not enough space for household chores (10) Small houses (7) Toilets (7) Lack of adequate drainage (6) Lack of space for children’s play (7) No space for socializing (5) Anganwadi (3)</td>
<td>No place to play (9) Garbage (8) Toilets (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important common spaces used within settlement</strong></td>
<td>Shops (9) Temples (5)</td>
<td>Shops (6) Temples (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in the settlement over the last 10 years</strong></td>
<td>No significant improvements (7) I don’t know (3) Improved roads, access to electricity, and better water supply (3) MM and daily savings program (3)</td>
<td>Nothing (8) I don’t know (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs and aspirations of residents</strong></td>
<td>Bigger homes with piped water and running water (10) Park/playground (8) Shop (7) Space outside house (4) Library (3) Tuition facility (3) Anganwadi (3) Function hall (1)</td>
<td>Park/playground (12) Bigger homes with piped water and running water (5) Tuition facility (5) Library (4) Anganwadi (2) Temple (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Core issues

4.1 Water and Sanitation

Water: Lack of adequate water was a significant problem for every family we interviewed. There is a public water tap on every lane in the settlement; this means that anywhere between 16 and 40 households share one water tap. Water is available at these taps from 6 pm to 5 am once every two days. The participants (mainly women) said that, due to the odd timings, they were awake most of the night securing water for their households. They added that low light and narrow congested lanes filled with obstacles, further complicated their task. Many of these women complained that they, or their children, had tripped while carrying water and suffered bruises.

Water is mainly stored along the walls of the houses in large plastic bins and drums. Residents on average use 13 pots (156 liters or 20 to 25 liters per person) of water per day. Depending on the location of the house and size of the family, households used as many as 25 pots and as little as 7 pots; large families living closer to the water tap tend to use the most amount of water and smaller families living further away from the water tap use the least amount of water.

Sanitation

Common toilets: Most Residents use two public toilets for their daily toileting. One common toilet is located towards the extreme right of the settlement, and is a pay and use toilet. Here, residents have to pay Rs 1/- or Rs 2/-, depending on usage. This toilet is one of the many public toilets built by the BBMP (Greater Bangalore Municipality) where maintenance of the toilet is contracted out to a private company. This strategy does not seem to be working well, as several residents have complained about the poor maintenance of this toilet. Furthermore, MM members have said that this was the case in most other settlements where the BBMP has a similar facility.
The second toilet block is located on the left side of the settlement, and unlike the other toilet block is not a pay per use toilet. This toilet is managed by local residents and requires that families using the toilet pay Rs 10/- per week. Relative to the other toilet block, this one is poorly maintained and lacks water. Residents have to carry their own water to use the facilities in this toilet block.

Families with sufficient financial resources prefer to use the pay-per-use toilet. Women using this toilet said they frequent it one or two times a day, whereas their children used it as often as four to five times a day. Poorer families use the second toilet block. Most parents, however, encouraged their children to squat near the drains outside the settlement. Both children and women complained that both toilets were 'dirty', 'smell bad', and poorly maintained. Long queues in these toilets forced children to chose more public and unsanitary ways to urinate and defecate so they would not be late for school.

Children living near the pay-per-use toilet complained that foul smells emanated from the toilet making it difficult for them to eat or sleep in their house. Women complained that the pay per use toilet was expensive and a drain on their meager resources.

Young girls said that they did not like walking to the toilets because they feared being ogled at and teased by the local men and youth. Two of the adolescent girls we interviewed said that stray dogs had chased them for three nights in a row while going to the toilet. They said they were now scared to go to the toilet at night.

**Drainage:** The lanes in the settlement are constantly wet and slippery with wastewater from bathing and various household chores. Many residents said they had slipped and fallen on these lanes, while carrying water, running behind their children, or doing other tasks like hanging clothes. While nobody complained of a major injury, they did say that it made their already difficult lives more challenging, and led to fights with neighbors. Women also said

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25 There are more references to this toilet as it is part of the area demarcated for conducting research in this settlement (refer to Pic 1).
that the water run-off from their chores sometimes went into their neighbor’s houses leading to more quarrels.

Another major complaint from participants was the overflow of murky water from sewage chambers that run beneath the settlement. Residents said that they suffered the worst during the monsoons, when the drains overflowed and sewage water flooded into their homes. They also complained that very often their water supply was contaminated by sewage water, as both lines were laid close to each other and leakages and broken pipes often let to water contamination. They said that several people from their settlement, especially children, had fallen ill as a result of contaminated water.

**Garbage disposal:** There is no municipal provision for garbage removal in this settlement and residents do not have any organized way of disposing their waste. As a result, there are small piles of garbage lying around on internal streets, as well as litter strewn around. A majority of the garbage is disposed off in the empty plot within the settlement. We interviewed one of the women living next to the empty plot and she said that the foul smell, and flies from the empty plot were constant irritants, but that there was nothing they could do about it as there was no other place for people to throw their garbage. We spoke with one of the settlement leaders about the garbage situation in the settlement and his response was

‘yes! I have been trying to convince the area people to come together and clean out the garbage from this area (the empty plot) so that at least the children will have some good area to play, but they were not interested. They tell me “the plot owner doesn’t have a problem with the garbage so what is your problem?”’
When I asked him about where the residents would dispose their garbage, if the empty plot were to become a play area, he replied ‘oh we’ll figure something out! We’ll take a procession out to the local MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and demand for the corporation to provide garbage removal services for our area.’ While his intentions seem noble, the solution he offers for an alternative garbage disposal scheme seems hardly realistic. When I discussed this matter with the MM women, they said the area leaders were in cahoots with the plot owner, and that it was the plot owner who actually wanted the garbage to be cleared from the plot. When I asked them why the area leaders did not convey the same to the settlement dwellers, one MM member replied

‘oh because the people will not listen anyway. These leaders thought if they put it this way (providing a play area for your children) the people would listen. But the people did not agree – where will they throw the rubbish otherwise? This is most convenient for them so they will continue to use it like this.’
In general settlement dwellers seemed to rely on the settlement leaders to fix problems with regard to common areas, they seldom took initiative to form groups to address common problems. One participant said

‘we have to complain at least five or six times to the settlement leaders before they fix it (overflow of sewage water). They go to the corporation or the local MLA depending on what the problem is..and they have it taken care of.’

4.2 Children’s play and mobility

Congested lanes filled with clotheslines, water drums, and people doing their washing and cooking, offer little place for children’s play. Still, as children have a natural propensity for play, they play amidst these congested lanes at the risk of being scolded and chased away by adults. Mostly, young children and girls in the 8 to 12 year age group use the space

Figure 29: Siblings playing a board game outside their home
outside their homes to play. Young children play with toys, and explore small odds and ends lying around while their mothers do their chores and keep an eye on them. Girls indulge in games that require less space—such as five stones, carom board, board games, skipping, and doll play. They also sit outside their homes and tell stories to each other, sing songs, and chat with one another. Children, both boys and girls, living in homes facing the boundary wall have the luxury of playing more robust games like badminton, cricket, kabbadi, and kho-Kho. This is possible because there are houses on only one side of the street and the street itself is wider.

Both the temples, and the anganwadi, have a fair amount of open space in front of them. Children living close to these places use these open areas on a daily basis to play a variety of games. Children (girls and boys aged 5 to 12) play here in the evenings when they are back from school, and all day during holidays. The games range from quiet games like hopscotch, five stones, and carom board to more noisy and physically active games like running and catching, hide and seek, and bat and ball.

The children we spoke with described some rules and strategies they use while playing in these spaces. For example, while playing hide and seek, an imaginary boundary line is agreed upon, beyond which players cannot hide. They also have a dismantle-able base for the carom board constructed out of odds and ends; this enables them to set-up quickly and play a few games before nightfall. Children said they loved these spaces because they could play all kinds of games, and stay close to their homes. They said that being close to their homes was important because they could quickly get a drink of water, something to eat, and run errands for their mothers. Aditi, a 10 year old girl added

‘..when we play here (open space close to home) and get into fights and start shouting and hitting each other, the adults come and talk to us and solve out problems before anybody gets seriously hurt. If we play far away, like on the road then our parents cannot come to help us!’

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Adolescent girls mainly stay inside their homes. At times they sit just outside the threshold of their homes, to chat with their parents or siblings, or occasionally, their friends. Some girls, who have relatives in the settlement, visit with them. Two girls we interviewed with lived close to the entrance of the settlement; these girls said they chatted with their friends under the tree in front of the Ganesha temple in the late afternoons. Most of the older girls we spoke with were of the opinion that their area was a dirty place with rubbish thrown everywhere and said that they preferred not to venture outside of their homes. Some of the girls said they went to Lalbagh or Cubbon Park (large parks in central Bangalore) to play and enjoy the outdoors.

The boys (8 to 16) in the settlement play on the road just outside their settlement, in the empty plot within the settlement, and in the open area in front of the big tree at the beginning of the settlement. A majority of the boys said their favorite place to play was the road. Here, they played games such as cricket, football, kabbaddi, kho kho, running race, cock bat, and volleyball. They said they loved the road because they could play all kinds of games, and also because of the choultry26 just across the street from the settlement.

Ramanna, a 12 year old boy said

‘They have many wedding functions here at the choultry. It’s great fun to see people coming all dressed up, the horses, and the dancing. They play good loud music and all of us also dance. We like to watch all that. We don’t play then because so many people will be on the road.’

While the boys enjoyed playing on the road they also had a few complaints regarding traffic on the road. They said that traffic frequently got in the way of their games. A few of them had suffered minor injuries from colliding with small vehicles like cycles and scooters, or while trying to escape from them. The boys said that adults often yelled at them or even smacked them for playing on the road, saying they were blocking traffic and could get

26 In South India, particularly in Karnataka, a choultry is a place where ceremonies like weddings, engagements, and birth ceremonies are performed.
severely injured. On Sundays, the boys told us, the road was the best place for playing games. This was because on Sundays there was scarce traffic and few adults on the road. This gave them the freedom to play all they wanted, without any being bothered by adults. The boys we spoke with also mentioned that they sometimes play cricket or hide and seek in the small open space near the entrance, and in the empty plot. According to them neither of these spaces were ideal for playing. Near the entrance, they said that their games were often interrupted by people passing through, and adults shouting at them to play elsewhere as someone could get hurt. The boys said that while the empty plot had ample open space, the odor from the garbage and livestock put them off. Due to lack of adequate space within their settlement most boys said they went to a ground nearby to play cricket.

5. Needs in New Housing

When we asked the participants what kind of common spaces they need in their new housing, most replied ‘the house is most important, we need to have a good house first!’ On further prompting, parents suggested these as some valuable common spaces; a place for children to study, a park or some place where children could play, a place to hold functions such as weddings, a shop, a temple, an anganwadi, and a place where residents could sit and chat. Both women and children said that if individual toilets were not possible, a good well maintained community toilet was an absolute necessity. Children had similar needs as their parents; they too felt the need for a place to study, a place where they could play, shops, a temple, and an anganwadi. While they joked about wanting air conditioning and a swimming pool, they also gave careful consideration to what they needed most. The two most sought after spaces were a place to play, and a quiet place ‘like a library’ where they could study by themselves or with friends. Children said it was important that there be enough space to walk freely – unlike in their current settlement. Two of the children we spoke with said that they would like to have the Dr Ambedkar statue – that currently stands outside the settlement - in their new building. Older girls emphasized that it was important
to have a toilet inside their homes. Both older boys and girls said they would benefit from a place where they could have computer classes and tuition facilities.

When we asked residents whether they would be willing to contribute towards developing these spaces in terms of money and their time all participants responded positively, saying ‘yes! This if for our good we will do whatever we can.’ However, when we asked them whether they would be willing to sacrifice some space from their future houses towards common areas, they were more hesitant. Most responded with reasoning such as ‘but we need to have enough space inside the house so all of us can live comfortably’ or ‘but we must have a hall, kitchen, and a room in the house.’ It was difficult to have a meaningful discussion without concrete details at hand – like a proposed plan. When we tried to probe the matter further by asking the residents if they would conceptually be open to letting go of some private space towards developing common spaces that all residents could potentially benefit from, participants were still unsure and said ‘...but we don’t know what we will be giving up for what!’

One of our concluding questions to participants was how they saw their life changing once they moved into their new housing. A majority of participants replied that they would be ‘happy’ and ‘proud’ to be living in ‘good houses in apartment buildings.’ Both parents and children had positive outlooks towards their new housing. One mother said

‘Yes we will be very happy when we move. There will be more rooms. It will be more comfortable. I will be happy and proud to say I am living in a apartment, We will not have all these problems there. It will be clean, not like here. My daughter got married recently and when she and my son-in-law came there was no place for them to stay and sleep, I felt very sad that I could not host them properly. But with the new house there will be place for them to stay when they come to visit.’ Another parent added ‘.....it will be more comfortable, the area will be clean and not so
dirty….when they build houses like apartments then it will be free to walk not like now.’

Most adults we spoke with thought that their new housing would be ‘cleaner’ and ‘bigger’, where they could do most of their daily activities within the privacy of their homes. Children felt their new housing would be cleaner, with ample space to walk, sit and chat, and play with their friends. They also felt that there would be more place inside their new homes to study, sleep, and host their friends.
Chapter 5: BIR4 Settlement

1. Profile of Settlement

The BIR4 settlement is a newly redeveloped settlement under the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission\textsuperscript{27}) scheme. This settlement was one of five pilot projects taken on by the BBMP (Greater Bangalore Municipal Corporation). The

\textsuperscript{27} The JNNURM is a massive project launched by the central government in 2005, spanning seven years. The two main components of this project are urban infrastructure and basic services to the urban poor, with governance reform as an overarching third component. (Source: http://jnnurm.nic.in/about-us.html)
redevelopment process spanned a total of three years, from 2007-2010. The settlement is about 40 years old, located in prime real estate area, and comprises 32 houses - almost all of which have been around from the beginning.

In this redevelopment project, ground level dwellings (ranging from 60sft to 100sft in area) were razed to the ground and replaced with a four-storey building. This building has eight apartments (270 sft each) per floor, a total of 32 homes. The total cost of the project was Rupees 1.38Cr (USD 300,000). The new building has a beige and white exterior, and blends in with other buildings in the neighborhood. The apartments are well finished, and have piped water and toilets. Each home consists of a living space, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. Homes were allotted to families using a lottery system. The stairwell, corridors, and homes have adequate light and ventilation. The residents have been living in their new accommodations for seven months and are extremely happy with their new housing; their only major complaint is inadequate access to water during the summer season.

**Population:** This settlement is home to 190 people. All residents are Hindus. All men and most women living in this settlement work for a living. Men are mostly employed in the carpentry trade and building industry; a few men also work as auto rickshaw drivers, car drivers, and metro drivers. Women mostly work in the garment industry or as domestic help. The average household income is Rs3800. All children attend school, with most going on to complete 10\textsuperscript{th} grade and attending pre-university college. Young children stay at home and are cared for by their mothers or grandmothers, as residents do not have easy access to an anganwadi\textsuperscript{28}.

**Land Tenure:** The land occupied by the settlement dwellers was owned by the BBMP. At present, residents do not hold legal title deeds (hakku patras) to their houses. The BBMP have instead issued 'Possession Certificates', and promised the residents that they would be given hakku patras after they had lived in their homes for a period of five years.

\textsuperscript{28} An Anganwadi is an integrated child development center provided by the State.
Infrastructure and Services: Residents have adequate access to water and sanitation facilities. During the summer months, however, the residents have faced severe water shortages; they had no drinking water supply within their homes and borewell\textsuperscript{29} water was available for only half an hour in the mornings. They, therefore, had to resort to fetching water from public taps on adjoining streets, and carrying it up to their homes. Residents disposed of their waste in a municipality garbage collection cart that came by the housing every morning. They have easy access to shops, and are located close to a private hospital. The common spaces in the new building include a large terrace, wide steps at the entrance, and small open spaces in the front, back, and to the right of the building. Also, a temple, which was part of the old settlement, has been partially moved to a space adjoining the boundary wall of the new housing.

Engagement with SPARC and Mahila Milan: The Alliance made its initial contact with the settlement back in 1980 as part of surveying slums in the area. Almost 30 years later, the Alliance in Bangalore approached the BIR4 settlement again to survey the possibility of the settlement being part of the pilot phase of the JNNURM-BSUP (Basic services for the urban Poor) scheme. The proposed redevelopment scheme involved breaking down existing dwellings and building a four-storey apartment building in its place. Several meetings were held with settlement dwellers, BBMP officials, and members of the Alliance to explain the details of the scheme to the residents. As residents lived in extremely cramped quarters with limited infrastructure, and none had invested in significant upgrading on their individual dwellings, the decision to opt for the redevelopment scheme was reached quickly and unanimously. Residents felt that opting for an apartment-type building would give them more space as well as better infrastructure. The total cost of the project was estimated at Rupees 1 Cr (USD 210,000), and residents were told that a 10 percent (of total estimated

\textsuperscript{29}A borewell is a type of drilled well coupled with an electrical pump that is commonly used to extract ground water in rural and urban areas in India.
The resident contribution to cost of new housing

30 The resident contribution to cost of new housing

31 A MM area leader is responsible for the daily savings collections, keeping abreast of what is happening in the area, and maintaining relations with residents and settlement leaders. An ‘area’ or settlement can have many leaders depending on the size of the settlement.
about five years ago and that the person associated with the misdemeanor was no longer working with MM. He said that they had tried to explain this to the BIR4 settlement dwellers, but were shunned. As a result the Alliance had withdrawn their presence from the BIR4 settlement.

I was able to visit the settlement because Kanthamma, the settlement resident who was once the area leader, still worked with the MM. She said that once they had moved into their new housing the settlement dwellers were more accepting of her. Still, as I visited the settlement under the umbrella of the Alliance, I was only able to speak with residents who were accepting of the Alliance. During the interviews, it also came to light that some of the residents had not been pleased with the Alliance receiving credit for the redevelopment process and had wanted their own names associated for the success of the new housing. These residents had therefore spread slandering rumors about the Alliance amongst other residents. This incident was instrumental in creating some deep fractures to the social fabric of the community. It split the residents into three groups; those who were against the alliance, those who supported the alliance, and others who went both ways. Even to this date the differences between these groups prevail, and were voiced in the interviews with families. Some of the residents we spoke with said that they had requested the Alliance to return to their settlement but the Alliance had not accepted. When I asked a member of SPARC about this, he said that the same people who had requested them to come back had once been part of the group that had publically dismissed the Alliance from their settlement. He said that, as an organization, they were not comfortable with being further associated with the BIR4 settlement.

2. Methods

Individual interviews: Ten families were selected for the individual in-home interviews. As there was still some friction between some of the families and Mahila Milan, I was advised to not approach these families for interviews. We selected four families from the ground floor,
and two families each from the first, second, and third floors. Families were selected such that both boys and girls from different age groups were well represented. All the interviews took place inside the interviewee’s homes.

Group Tours: Six children participated in the child-led group tour of the building. The tour started at the steps in front of the building and ended in a small open space behind the building. We spent a lot of time on the terrace, as this was their favorite place in the building. From the terrace they pointed to places outside the building that they visited on a daily basis – these were the shop, temple, and the water point. Both boys and girls were excited to show us where and how they played inside and outside the building. The adult led tour, in comparison, was brief. Three women (including, Kanthamma, the MM leader who lived in the building) showed us around the new housing. The tour started on the terrace and ended in front of the building.

Table 7: Overview of methods used in BIR4 settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with settlement leaders</td>
<td>We spoke with three women who had been most active in the redevelopment process.</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to history of the area, life in the old settlement, the redevelopment process, and current conditions.</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The interview was also audio-taped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual family interviews</td>
<td>10 families were interviewed inside their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged 1,6,11,12, and 14, and girls of ages 2,5,8,10.</td>
<td>Children and adults spoke in detail about their new homes and the issues with access to water in their present building. The common spaces identified were spaces outside their homes, the terrace, and the space in front of the building.</td>
<td>30min to 45 min</td>
<td>These interviews were audio-taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken of common spaces outside the house.</td>
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Six children participated in the group tour. Three boys aged 6, 11, 14, and three girls aged 8, 10, and 15. Children showed us places they used within the building – the terrace, the steps in front of the building, small open space behind the building, and the main stairway. The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.

Three women participated in the group tour. Adults showed us places that were used by both adults and children – the terrace, and steps in front of the building. The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.

I returned to the BIR4 settlement in December 2011, a year and a half after my first visit to the settlement. As Kanthamma (the MM member living in this housing) was no longer working with the MM, I was accompanied by two of her friends who still worked part of the MM. Kanthamma and a few of the participants we had spoken with in-depth during our last visit, received us with warmth. While I was there I spoke with three key informants and also walked around the building premises with both adults and children.

I will now describe the common spaces in this settlement and how these spaces were used and valued by settlement dwellers, after which, I discuss three of the main themes - water and sanitation, children’s play and mobility, and social fragmentation during the building process - that were brought up by settlement dwellers with regard to common spaces in the settlement.

3. Common Spaces

3.1 Space outside the house

The layout of the home was the same for all apartments, but the spaces outside the homes differed by location. Houses on the ground floor had the most amount of space adjoining
their homes. Houses on the upper floors had very small spaces adjoining their homes. These homes had either a 3’ x 3’ space or a 3’ wide corridor in front of their homes. When we asked families if they used the space outside their homes, the standard response was that they used only the space that was given to them – their home- and that they did not use any other space in the building. For example, Radha a mother of three children said

‘No, we do not sit outside and talk or do any housework or anything. I just stay inside the house. If anyone talks to me in the corridor I speak with them. But I mainly mind my own business and stay at home and do whatever work I have to do at home.’

On further probing, however, some women revealed that they did, in fact, use the space outside their home, while others maintained that they did not. Data collected reveals that women and children living on the ground floor make the most use of the space outside their homes. Women use it for cleaning grain, chopping vegetables, drying clothes, relaxing and socializing with neighbors. Where space permits, some of these families have a cot or a bench in this area, which are used for sleeping, relaxing, playing, and socializing.

Two of the women living on the ground floor complained about residents from upper floors parking their vehicles in the space in front of their homes. They said the vehicles made the area in front of their homes ‘dirty’ and ‘messy’. Upon further discussion, both women agreed that they would have to accommodate the vehicles, as residents had no other options to park them safely. Both women also stated that the space in front of their homes did not really belong to them, but to everybody living in the building.

Women living in the upper floors seldom used the space outside their house as the spaces were small and mostly circulation spaces. With the exception of one participant, who said she sits outside to chop vegetables and sort grains, all other women said that they only dried clothes on the railings outside their homes. All participants said that they cleaned the space outside their homes on a regular basis- one or two times a day. Two of the women
said that they occasionally sat outside to chat with their neighbors, but the majority of women said that they mingled with other women through brief conversations in the corridors, or while sitting on the steps in front of the building.

Young children and girls use the space outside their homes to play. Girls said that they use the space to chat with their friends and play quiet games like five stones, board games, and playing with small utensils.

Parents said that they let their young children play outside the house so they could keep an eye on them. Parents with young children living on upper floors complained that they were worried their children might get their heads stuck in the balcony railing when they looked down to see passing vehicles. They were also concerned about the stairways. These women said that they keep a close watch on the children when they were outside their homes as they were afraid their children might wander close to the stairways and fall down the stairs. One of the participants we spoke with narrated a story that had recently made the newspapers –

‘...a few days back only there was this incident – it was reported in the newspaper and TV also. A mother was feeding her eight month old baby, leaning on the balcony railing outside her house, while chatting with her neighbor. Then something happened inside her house and she moved hurriedly and the baby slipped and fell down three floor! That child died immediately. I am very scared after hearing that. I don’t go close to the railing when I am carrying my girl. They should make these (railings) higher.’
Some of the women we spoke with wished they had more space outside their homes to store water. They felt this need particularly during the summer months as lack of space outside their homes meant they could not store water in big containers (like they used to in their old settlement). Women said they had to go down several times during the day to fetch water.

3.2 Terrace, Stairway, and Open Space in front of the building

**Terrace:** The terrace in the new building is a large rooftop space (2820 sft) with few obstructions. There is a water tank raised on four columns on one side of the terrace, plumbing pipes run alongside the walls and on the floor across the terrace, and a few clotheslines are strung for drying clothes. During the women’s tour we were told that all residents had unrestricted access to the terrace, and that it was never locked. But in the children’s tour we were told that the terrace was locked most times and that it was open mainly in the evenings. On further enquiries, we found the latter to be true. Women and children living in the building used the terrace frequently. Occasionally some of the men used the terrace to play carom board. Women used the terrace for drying and cleaning.
grains like rice, millets, and wheat. The children used the terrace to play, socialize with friends, and to study. Seven of the children we spoke with said that the terrace was their most favorite place in the building, after their home. Sunita, a 12 year old girl living on the second floor said

‘I love the terrace! It’s nice to climb up and down the stairs to go to the terrace and to play there. It’s a good place to study and a nice place to sit and chat with our friends also. We go there to study sometimes – mainly when we have exams. It’s a good place to do homework also. During exams when we study there, there is no disturbance for us. The terrace is the only place I like a lot – everything else is okay.’

Children and families also occasionally brought their dinner up to the terrace, so they could have a picnic under the starry night sky and enjoy the cool breeze.

Resident meetings concerning the building were held on the terrace. Mats are laid out in the shade of the water tank and residents met there to talk about general maintenance issues with regard to the building. The women we spoke with in the adult tour said that they currently did not use the terrace space for any purpose. They said they were in the process of deciding how they could utilize the terrace space for holding family functions and festival celebrations. One of the participants, with regard to this decision making process, said that they were finding it difficult to reach a common consensus, as some of the residents were not on talking terms with others. Kanthamma, the MM leader living in the building said ‘..we are talking about how we can use the terrace for functions, but we are not all together now ..na,.. in the building, so it is hard to talk about common issues like this.’

**Stairway:** The stairway was popular with the children. In the children’s tour they said that they loved going up and down the steps and sliding down the railing as it was ‘lots of fun’. Children said that they mostly used the stairway to go to different floors. They seldom played on the steps as they would be blocking the way for others, and because adults often
scolded them for playing on the stairs. Some girls said that they sat on the steps and read books or played quiet games in the afternoons, when there was little movement on the stairway.

Women with young children living on upper floors expressed concern with regard to their children’s safety around balcony railings and the stairway. Sujatha, a mother of a two-year-old boy, living on the second floor said ‘The young children play here only – inside the house, and in the little space outside, and sometimes near the steps. I am scared about the railing because they look down by putting their heads in between the bars – what if they get stuck or hurt themselves...so I don’t let them play near there. And, I am always scared they will fall down the stairs...so I will be behind them always when they are outside here. The railing only is a big problem. When the cars go by, the children run and go to look at them and they stick their head through the railing, I’m very scared they will get stuck. Unless we are around we do not let them play near the railing or the steps. They should have put some other type of railing, with smaller gaps.’

Open Space in front of the building: The new building has three steps flanking the main entrance to the building. These steps, the space between the steps and the boundary wall, and a bench under a Neem tree just outside the boundary wall, are where most women and
men from the building meet to chat and watch their children play. Young children and girls
play in the open space in front of the building - between the steps and the boundary wall.
They play a variety of games like ‘bat and ball’, hide and seek, running and catching, and
spinning tops. Adolescent girls use this space to play badminton and volleyball.
The residents we spoke with said that they used steps in front of the building to chat with
neighbors or other friends or relatives living in the building. Typically, in the afternoons, two
or three women from the building would meet on these steps to chat with one another.
Then, women entering or leaving the building would stop by to have a few words with them
or sit down to join the group if they had the time.
Men from the building usually sat on the bench outside the boundary wall and chatted with
each other while they drank tea. One of the women we interviewed said that in the past,
she had sat on the bench - under the shade of the Neem tree - and chatted with an elderly
woman who used to sit there at all hours of the
day. But, she added ‘...she is no more now...she
passed away two months ago...so now I don’t really
sit there. I sit mainly on the steps in front of the
building

3.3 Pockets of residual space
The plot of land previously occupied by the old
settlement, and on which the new housing has
come up, is irregular in shape. As a result, there
are triangular pockets of residual spaces to the left
of the building and behind the building. The space
to the left of the building abuts four houses on the
ground floor, and is used mainly by these four
families. They treat this open space as an extension to their homes and use it for daily chores, drying clothes and food items, heating water, and storing firewood and coconut shells. Residents who own two-wheelers park their vehicles in this space.

There is another triangular pocket of open space behind the building. We discovered this space during the child led tour. The children showed us a small temple they had made for themselves in this space and told us that it was strictly for children in their building and not for adults. They said that they sometimes played badminton in this area. We noticed that residents also used this space to dry clothes. There were also some odds and ends that were stored in this space, which the children said belonged to the families living closest to this open space.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 8 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.

Table 8: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like about your new housing</td>
<td>House/building (12)</td>
<td>House/building (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Terrace (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Everything (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not like about your new housing</td>
<td>Lack of adequate water (10)</td>
<td>Lack of adequate water (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No place to play (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open garbage (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important common spaces used within</td>
<td>Space in front of home (2)</td>
<td>Space in front of building (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrace (5)</td>
<td>Terrace (8)</td>
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</table>
4. Core Issues

4.1 Problems with Access to Water

All the participants we spoke with said that the main issue they had with their new housing was inadequate access to water. Given that our interviews took place in peak summer, by which time residents had already faced two months of water shortage, this issue came to the forefront in all interviews. Residents explained that at the time they had moved into their new building they had had adequate access to water (both drinking water, and borewell water), but with the onset of summer, their access to both drinking water and borewell water had reduced to a bare minimum. Participants we spoke with said that they now had running water every morning from 6am to 6:30am, and no access to drinking water. They walked to the 5th cross or 11th cross (7 to 10 minutes) for securing drinking water, but had access to non-drinking water from a public standpipe—just outside their building. On average residents used 12 pots (144 liters) of water per day apart from the piped water they got every morning for half an hour. Participants said that they had had
better access to water in their old settlement, where each home had had an individual metered water connection. Residents living on the upper floors bore the brunt of the burden, as they had to haul water up the stairs. Some of them said that they washed their dirty clothes down at the public standpipe so as to avoid carrying water up to their homes. Three of the residents we spoke with said they used the public toilets near the standpipe – particularly when they had no water in their homes and they needed to use the toilet urgently.

In the majority of families (7) we interviewed, the responsibility of fetching water fell on women and girls. Rajamma, a mother of four children, living on the first floor explained how she manages providing water for her family

'(Rajamma) I go to the next road – 5th cross- to get drinking water. If I get 4 pots it is enough for us for two days. But, for the other water we use I have to keep going down. In the morning we get water for half an hour here (in the house) but we have no place to store water. We cannot keep drums here and then how many buckets can we keep – there is no place to store as much water as we need. They have given us bathroom inside right – so we need more water. Now the children bring water from down (the public standpipe). The drinking water only comes once every two days, and that too for just one hour. So I go and get 4 pots and that lasts us two days. For the other water (non-drinking water) – we get 10 pots of water in the morning, 5 pots in the afternoon and about another 5 pots of water in the evening. We use about 20 (240 Liters) pots in a day. There are six of us living here right so for bath, toilet, washing, cleaning we easily use up 20 pots. Sometimes we use more. We have to carry this water up everyday! The girls carry the water. (Me - do the boys help?) No No they are not used to doing this. The girls have always been helping with the water and doing this for a long time, so they get the water. My girls are very hardworking they help a lot. (Me - Why do the boys not help?) They have
become accustomed to not helping with this kind of thing. They expect us to do this. What to do... we have brought them up like this. It is the way it is here. (Daughter) they don’t like carrying water because they will get ‘shame’. They feel that everyone on the road will laugh at them because they are carrying water. (Rajamma)They(boys) are older now right so they cannot do these things. It’s not like they (her children) fight over the task – ”you go get water! No you go get water!” – everybody knows what has to be done and they do their work.’

While listening to the women talk about their troubles with regard to the water situation, I began to comprehend more fully how access to water could shape the lives of women and children and how residents experienced the built environment. If there had been community participation and architects had given more attention to detail, the new building could have been planned with spaces that might have eased some of the physical strain on residents at times of water shortage (a common occurrence in Bangalore). For example, a common facility on the ground floor where residents could wash and dry clothes and clean utensils would enable residents living on upper floors to avoid hauling water (for such chores) up to their homes. More provision of space for storing water within homes would also enable residents to fill water at one time of the day, giving them flexible work hours.

Women and children (particularly girls) are most affected by inadequate access to water. Women are acculturated into being water bearers. The interviews revealed that where there are able-bodied women and girls in the family the responsibility and burden of providing water for the entire household falls on them. It is only in families where there are no girls that the males help with water provision for the household. As most of the women we spoke with worked part-time or full-time, they said that they had had to take off several days from work in order to secure water for their homes. As a result, they had had to suffer the wrath of their employers and make do with decreased income.
Some of the girls we spoke with said that they had to put off their homework and studying for late hours at night as they spent much of their non-school time carrying water to their homes. Both women and girls complained of back and leg ailments as a result of having to carry water up to their homes.

When we asked the women from the adult-led tour what they were planning to do with regard to the water situation in their building, two of the women said they were all going to get all the residents together, march with their pots to the Cauvery Bhavan (this is where the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is located) and demand for water. When I asked them how they were going to organize themselves given the friction between some households. One woman responded

‘...well this is something that is a struggle for all of us so we have no choice but to get together and go. We have all talked about it in a meeting and everybody has agreed that they will come. We cannot keep living like this, especially us who live on the upper floors..if we have to keep on carrying water like this we will all end up in the hospital with some problem or the other.’

They also said that previously, all households had contributed Rs 500/- per family to get a new motor for the borewell when the old one stopped working. Sunita, one of the participants in the tour said

‘yes we are all not together...but when it comes to an issue like this – like water supply- that affects everybody then we don’t have a choice but to pitch in together...otherwise it does not work. We have to all work together to resolve these issues and people understand that’

On my return visit I found that residents’ access to water had improved significantly. While they still had to walk 5-10 minutes to fetch drinking water, a newly installed borewell within their premises gave them adequate supply of water for their daily chores like cooking,
cleaning, washing, and for bathing. The informants we spoke with said that they had approached the local councilor and explained their predicament to him; on listening to their troubles he had sanctioned a borewell for their settlement.

### 4.2 Children’s play and mobility

The children’s group tour was comprised of both boys and girls of different ages. They were most eager to show us the terrace, where both boys and girls said that they played a variety of games. As they ran around the terrace they told us that they played games like running and catching, hide and seek, Kho-Kho, volleyball, and hopscotch. Young children usually came with their older siblings and played with toys and small cooking utensils. The children in the tour said they liked the terrace because it was a big open space with cool breeze, where they could play freely without being bothered by adults. Apart from play, these children said they used the terrace for studying, and eating dinner. Santosh, a 10 year old boy, said

‘At night also we come up here. We put on all the lights and we come up here and have dinner. (ME – Do you come with your family?) No, no not with our parents, we come with our friends only. Sometimes our parents come up here too….everyone comes here to have dinner. It is very nice. It is nice and cool, and there will be a breeze. Sometimes you can see the stars. We like coming up here to eat at night....like a picnic.’

Children also said that they liked climbing up the stairs to go to the terrace and sliding down the railing on their way down. They also said they liked looking down onto the road from the terrace and watching the vehicles and people going by. Pramila, an eight year old girl, said she loved to come up to the terrace when it rained;
We love to come up here when it rains – it’s nice to get wet in the rain and play – we have a blast. Our parents scold us for getting wet but we come anyway. We really like playing here. The terrace is big – we like that.’

Boys played cricket and football on the road outside their building. Two of the older boys complained that the police often harassed them when they played cricket on the road, and took away their bats and ball. They said that this was not the case when they lived in their old settlement. Ravi, the older of the two boys, said that they had used to play on the same street earlier (when they lived in the old settlement), but women from their area (sitting close to the street under a large tree) had supported them and told the police to leave them alone. Once they moved into the new building, however, he said that nobody from their building supported them when the police came by, and in fact sided with the police. They said adults from the building echoed the police and told the boys to go play elsewhere, as they were blocking traffic and could hurt passersby. These boys said that they were very unhappy, as they had no other place close by where they could play. Both of them had also dropped out from school so they did not have access to a school ground either. When I asked some of the women why their support for the children playing cricket on the street had changed one woman said that earlier they had built a relationship with some of the police officers and had been able to convince them to let the children play on the street as ‘they lived in a slum and had nowhere else to play.’ She added that the police officers had changed and they had no relationship with the current officers. Another participant said that previously the children were smaller and their cricket games were less disturbing to the general public but now they were ‘grown boys’ who should be studying and not playing on the streets. She also said the police officers were right to harass the boys as they often stalled traffic and pedestrians.

The girls said they played badminton, skipping, hopscotch, and volleyball in the small open space between the front steps and the boundary wall. They said they did not play on the
road as it was dangerous and also because their elders discouraged them from playing on the road.

Apart from the road, the small open space in front, and the terrace, the children also took us to the triangular pocket of open space behind the building. Here, they showed us the ‘temple’, which was an existing niche in the boundary wall, where the children had places idols of several gods belonging to both Hinduism and Christianity. Gita, a 13 year old girl, said

‘this is children’s temple. We have put our gods here. We wanted to put some tiles around this and make it nice but we could not get any cement. We do puja here during amavasya, every Sunday, and during good Friday. Then we make some prasadam also and put for god, and then we all eat it. But this is for children only – not for adults.’

The children pointed to a temporary stove made from stones and said that they used it for cooking the prasadam. They said they took turns bringing rice and vegetables and other ingredients from their homes for making the food. The children said they cherished this space because it was ‘theirs’. In the same area, they also showed me a part of the boundary wall that was crumbling and said that this had been part of their old settlement. Santosh, one of the participants said

‘This wall used to belong to the old area, see we only broke this wall. This was part of the old housing. See this rock…this fell down from there (part of the wall). This used to be my house before – we never had any paint or anything in our house. I was very small.’

Young children and girls also played in the space just outside their homes. Some of the girls played games sitting on the stairs close to their home, mainly in the afternoons when there were not many people using the stairs. Parents we spoke with felt children had ample space

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32 A food offering to the gods.
to play in the new building as compared to their old settlement. Children said they had enjoyed playing in their old settlement as well, but that they liked the terrace in their new building the most for the purpose of play.

During my return visit to the building I came to know that children were no longer permitted to play on the terrace as people living below had complained of thumping sounds when children played there. Children we spoke with said that they had stopped playing in the back area, as the two families living closest to the area had forbidden them from playing there. Instead, these families were now using this area for drying clothes, heating water, and storing odds and ends. Children said they had abandoned their small temple as well. Surprisingly, these children did not seem to be too upset with regard to the loss of their play spaces. It might be that years of struggling to claim some place for their play in their old settlement had taught them not to take for granted a permanent setting for their play in their new housing. They said that during school days they seldom had time to play and that most of them played on the school grounds. Children said that they now mainly played in the open space in front of the building and on the road.

4.3 Social cohesion/fragmentation

Several participants, both children and women, stated that as a community they were better off before the redevelopment process. During the redevelopment process, they said that certain people from their area - who wanted to take credit for the building process - had polarized the residents by spreading various stories and promises and by pitting people against each other. Rahika, a mother of two adolescents, said

‘back then, all people were interested in was saying “we got this building built – no we got this building built.” Even now it is like that a little bit. The children are still all right - they do everything like they used to before. It is only the adults who are
always saying ‘we did this. No we did this!’ and fighting. Anyway now I don’t go anywhere I just stay in the house and don’t get involved with all of this.’

These fights and arguments were damaging to the social fabric of the community. People (like the MM leader) were outcast, fights broke out over small issues, and people stopped talking to each other. This together with having to live in low quality, rat-infested temporary housing left a bitterness amongst the residents – particularly with regard to the redevelopment process. They said that while they were grateful for the new housing they would never want to go through such a process again in their lifetimes.

As residents were not part of any network where they could share problems, access outside help, and help each other, each family felt isolated in the whole redevelopment process. Even though they had all been aware that they had to pay the beneficiary amount of Rs 32,000/- most had been helpless with regard to how they could amass such a huge sum of money. As their day-to-day living in the temporary housing left them fighting for survival on a daily basis, a majority of residents did not have the required amount when it was time to make the payment. As a result, even when the building was completed, residents had struggled to make ends meet and lived on in the temporary housing. It was only after their situation was televised on the local networks that some organizations stepped forward to give them access to credit.

During my return visit to the settlement the issue of hakku patras came up in our discussions. The women said they had been told to set aside Rs 8000/- for acquiring the legal titles to their homes. They said that they were barely managing to pay the interest for the earlier loan that they had taken (Rs 32000 towards the beneficiary payment\(^{33}\)). During this conversation one of the MM members present told them how in the other areas people had benefitted from low interest loans through MM, as they had trusted the MM and put away money conscientiously towards their daily savings. Residents in other redeveloped

\(^{33}\) The resident contribution to the cost of new housing
settlements (where MM was present) had access loans with 2% interest rates, whereas residents in the BIR4 settlement were paying interests rates as high as 10-15% for the loans they had taken. One of the participants present became very upset on hearing this and said

‘We only wanted what would help us in the end. Those people called us and we went with them, you called us and we came with you. In the end we just wanted to do what was right and something we could benefit from. We went because we wanted justice. What people’s intentions were we did not know very well then. From the face we all look okay – but do you know how we feel in our stomachs – the burden we carry – the problems we have – nobody knows that. They have to cut our stomachs to really know what we feel inside – and that is not possible.’

Parents we spoke with felt that children speaking with other children and visiting with neighbors invited trouble. They said that they wanted to avoid unnecessary fights and therefore forbade their children from visiting with neighbors or others residing in the building. Five of the children we spoke with said that they were not allowed to go to other people’s houses in the building. When we asked Gayatri, a 10 year old girl what she did not like about her new building, she replied

‘I don’t like not going to other peoples houses. I only go to my aunt’s house on the fourth floor and that is all. We are not supposed to go to other houses. I don’t like that. (ME - Why can you not go?)My mother has raised me like that. We are not supposed to go.’

Her mother who was also present during the interview, laughed and explained

‘you know what happens, these children go and talk or do something and then there is trouble or fights..really unnecessary...why should we deal with that when we can avoid it. This rule is not just for her it is for all the other children as well. Everybody
goes about their work, do what is necessary and that is it. Even before when we had small houses and house right next to each other we were the same. We never went to other peoples houses or chatted unnecessarily.’

A few of the children said they visited with their aunts or cousins who were living in the same building.

On my return visit the women and children proudly showed me a temple that had been built adjoining the boundary wall around the idol that had been moved from the old settlement. What had been a small stone idol under a Neem tree was now an enclosed temple. The women said that everybody from their building had contributed towards building the temple. They said it was managed by two of the women, who opened it twice a day in the mornings and evenings. These women said with pride that the temple was visited not just by residents from their building, but by several others from the neighborhood.

During the course of my return visit I also observed that residents seemed well settled in their new housing. The key informants we spoke with said that now people were also on friendlier terms with each other. They said that while there would always be small quarrels over petty issues, people no longer held onto old grudges. Kanthamma, the ex-MM member, said that all residents came together to address issues with regard to their housing. While I
was there, some of the women we spoke with also expressed an interest in re-starting the daily savings program and discussed the possibility with the MM members present during the visit.

5. Process of Redevelopment

Many participants we spoke with said that they had not been involved in the planning or construction process. Some participants said they remembered being shown the plan of the house and told that that was what they were going to receive. The MM member who had worked with the residents at the onset of the redevelopment process said that they had tried to involve the residents in the planning process and had asked them if they would want common spaces like a community meeting room or a small park, but the residents had shunned the idea and told the MM members that all they wanted were ‘good, spacious houses.’

All participants we spoke with said that the advice they would give to other settlement dwellers who were likely to opt for insitu redevelopment would be to ‘work together’, ‘not fight’, and ‘to become more involved in the process.’ Some residents said that they had been afraid to ask more details with regard to the project as they felt they might jeopardize their chances of receiving new homes. These residents and a few others said that they would have been willing to contribute their time and energy in the building process, as they were not doing much in their homes at that point in time. Rani, a mother of two school going children, said

‘Nobody asked us anything. They just broke our houses down and then built these houses and gave it to us. Nobody asked us for our opinions. If people had asked us we would have done something. We were anyway not doing anything – we would
have helped with the building work. They did not ask us anything and we did not want to ask anything either – for us if they built us the house that was more than enough. That was most important for us!’

What residents found most problematic about the redevelopment process was the temporary housing. The municipality (BBMP) after consulting the residents had constructed this temporary housing as close to the site as possible. It was built adjoining an open drain. Participants said they had suffered many problems over the two years they had lived in the temporary housing due to the quality of housing and the location. The roofs leaked, their homes were constantly flooded, and their most horrible of these problems was having to deal with rats. Participants said that the tin sheets that were used for their temporary homes as well as the location (next to a open drain) had made it easy for rats to enter the houses. Both children and adults complained that rats had eaten into everything they had possessed: food, clothing, shoes, books, electric wiring, and rice sacks. Two of the residents said that several of them had fallen ill and two people had even died in the temporary housing from being bitten by rats. Participants said that people should be mentally prepared for the type of temporary housing they would receive.

6. Now and Before

All the participants we spoke with said that they did not miss anything with regard to their old settlement. They said they were very grateful for their new houses and were very happy with them. The only positive statement participants made with regard to the old settlement was that residents were on friendlier terms with each other back then.

When we asked them in what ways their life had changed after moving to their new housing, participants spoke at length about the difficulties they had faced in their old settlement. All of the women we spoke with said their old settlement was a cramped space with narrow streets and small houses, where they were forced to do most of their daily
chores outside their homes. Most participants mentioned the narrow streets as being problematic. They said that they were so narrow that two people could not walk side-by-side, children sometimes got stuck with their big school bags, and neighbors invariably had numerous petty fights over sharing the street. Some participants said that the streets had been too narrow to lay out their deceased, and have four people carry them (a traditional ceremony) out of the settlement. One of the participants, in particular who had recently lost her husband while living in the old settlement, mentioned the above predicament three times during the course of the interview.

Participants also narrated the adverse effect the rains had had on their old settlement. Leaky roofs, flooded streets, and loss of belongings were some of the problems stated by the participants. They said that they did not have such worries in their new building. Women and children said that children had found it difficult to study in their old settlement due to lack of space, noise, and crowding. In contrast, they found the new building to be a safe and quiet place where children could study in comfort.

Women and children said that in the old settlement they had had to stand in long queues to use the public toilets and bathrooms. Sailaja, a mother of two children, said

‘Before I used to get scared of eating food – because I have to go stand in the long queue in the mornings, Sometimes I used to think it was better off not to eat than stand in that queue. Then if it was urgent I used to go to my relatives house who live on 11th cross to use their bathroom. I really did not like using the public bathroom because they were so dirty, so I used to go to the relatives house. Sometimes the girls would also go there and sometimes they would use the public bathroom.’

Participants, particularly women and adolescent girls, said they were very happy that they now had toilets within their homes that they could keep clean and use in privacy.

Some of the participants said that after having moved into their new housing, they were perceived differently by their neighbors as well as by themselves. Earlier they were called
‘hut people’ or ‘slum people’ by the local shop owners, and neighbors and looked down upon. But now they did not face such discrimination. One of the participants we spoke with said that she felt that she was more like her neighbors now, because she too lived in a building. Another participant, equated living on the second floor to moving up the social ladder and having a higher status in society. A few participants were ambiguous about how they were perceived by others. One participant said

‘Before everybody would look down on us, now they don’t. Like when we went to the shop to buy oil - kerosene, the person would say look the ‘hut people’ have come for oil. We used to feel insulted. Now they don’t call us that anymore, because we live in this building. Before people used to talk like that...but we could not do anything because it was the truth. But now nobody says anything. Who knows maybe behind us they might talk something but on our faces they don’t say anything like that now.’

Three of the participants described their new housing as a ‘dream come true’ and something they never imagined would happen in their lifetime. While interviewing a mother and her adolescent daughter, the mother said

‘she used to lie down at night and say to me ‘amma, will we ever see a bigger house in our lives?’ it was like a dream for her. Now, every now and then she looks around the house and says– ‘I cannot believe my eyes! Is this really true that we are living here in this house and in this building.’ Before all the houses were below the road level. One had to bend to enter the house. Now we can walk in standing straight.’

Another participant described how her father had been admonished by his family members for marrying her into a ‘filthy slum’. She recalled her father comforting her 15 years ago, saying that in time things would be better for her and that she would live in a proper house;

‘none of us believed we would ever live in a place like this’ she said ‘I wish my father was alive to have witnessed this.’
Children said that they did not have much place to play in their old settlement. They said that they used to play in the space outside their homes but were constantly scolded and chased away by adults and told to play elsewhere. The also used to play on the main road, but even there the residents of adjoining apartment buildings had yelled at them and chased them away. One of the parents we spoke with, said that she had been so fed up with having to listen to the neighbors complaints with regard to her children’s play that she had forbidden them from ever playing outside their house. She said

‘when they played outside the home the neighbors would yell, then when they played on the road the people in the opposite building used to shout at them not to make noise and pick fights with us. I did not have a choice but to keep calling them home and then finally forbidding them from playing outside – and with that they just forgot how to play...and then got used to not playing. And then they just got used to not going here and there and just staying at home.’

Overall, participants said they were much more comfortable, relaxed, and happier in their new housing. They said they had fewer worries, and that children had more place to play, study.

One of the questions we asked participants was whether they would benefit from any additional common spaces within their housing. Most participants said that there was no space for anything apart from their homes. When we pointed to the pockets of irregularly shaped open spaces and asked it they could have been better utilized, both parents and children came up with similar ideas – a small park where children could play, and a room like a library where tuition classes, tailoring classes or computer classes could be held and where children could study. Some residents said that a washing facility on the ground floor would be useful so that they did not have to carry water up to their homes
Chapter 6: BIR3 Settlement

1. Profile of settlement
The BIR3 settlement is located near the Yeshwanthpur railway station along the periphery of Bangalore city. In 1950, the settlement consisted of a handful of houses, that by 2002, rose to 160 dwellings. The BIR3 settlement has been redeveloped in collaboration with the Alliance in Bangalore and Mumbai between 1999 and 2006. The initial plan was to redevelop all 160 houses, but for various reasons only 72 families were in agreement with the proposed redevelopment plan, and therefore the redeveloped settlement consists of 72 dwellings. The redeveloped housing complex is comprised of four blocks of housing -each three stories high- arranged in a triangular site of land. Each apartment is 215 sft in area. The Alliance had brought in an experienced community architect to work on this project,
whose main goal had been to retain an essence of informality in the new housing and to avoid ‘box-type’ apartment buildings.

![Annotated map of redeveloped housing showing common spaces](image)

Figure 37: Annotated map of redeveloped housing showing common spaces

As a result, none of the blocks are identical. The spaces in between the apartments in each block, and between the blocks themselves are of varying sizes. The block facing the road has on the ground floor has nine shops, a meeting room/anganwadi\textsuperscript{34}, and an arched entryway leading into the settlement. Inside, the remaining three blocks are arranged along a wide horizontal lane and a narrow vertical lane. At the time of my visit, the redeveloped housing showed some signs of aging and disrepair like broken windows, faded and peeling paint, and chipped walls. Debris from recent sanitation repair work cluttered most internal lanes and open spaces.

**Population:** The BIR3 settlement is home to 455 people. The majority of the population is hindu, and almost all of them belong to scheduled castes. An average of six to seven people

\textsuperscript{34} An *Anganwadi* is an integrated child development center provided by the State.
live in each apartment. Both men and women work for a living. Men work as porters in the railway station, as skilled workers in the construction trade, and as bus and auto rickshaw drivers. Women are mostly employed as laborers in the building industry, and as factory workers in the plastic industry. The average family income is Rs 3700. About 75% of the children go to school, 50% continue on to high school and about 25% make it to college. All young children living in the settlement attend an anganwadi located within the settlement. **Land Tenure:** The land occupied by the settlement had been previously owned by three landlords. This land was purchased by the KSCB and the settlement was officially notified a slum. The redevelopment of the settlement was funded by the KSCB and SPARC. At present, settlement residents are in possession of 'possession certificates’ issued by the KSCB. The settlement leader said he is working with the ward councilor to obtain *hakku patras* (legal home ownership documents) for people living in the settlement. **Infrastructure and Services:** While the new housing is fitted with internal plumbing and water taps in every apartment, residents lack running water within their homes. Half of the residents depend on two common water taps in the housing complex, where water is available intermittently every other day. The remaining residents purchase water from water tankers. All residents have access to a shared toilet close to their home. In the F block, the first block to have been constructed, each toilet is shared by three or four households. In all other blocks each toilet is shared by two households. The waste from toilets is collected in an insitu septic tank. Recent repairs have been carried out by the local municipality to fix sewage overflow problems. Every house also has a small washing space, adjoining the kitchen, within their homes. Residents dispose of their garbage in a municipality garbage collection cart that passes by the housing complex two times a day.

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35 The Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB) was constituted in 1975 to identify, declare and redevelop slum areas, and provide basic services and improve socioeconomic conditions for slum dwellers. Source: [http://housing.kar.nic.in/DOH_KSCB_page.htm](http://housing.kar.nic.in/DOH_KSCB_page.htm)
A multipurpose room near the entrance of the housing complex doubles up as an anganwadi in the mornings and as a meeting room at other times. A small temple, constructed by one of the residents, is located inside the settlement to the left of the entrance. Residents have easy access to convenience stores that are located across the street, local markets and private hospitals are also located in close proximity to the settlement. Schools are located at a considerable distance from the settlement; children said it took them half an hour to forty five minutes to walk to school.

**Engagement with the Alliance:** The Alliance in Bangalore became associated with the BIR3 settlement in 1998. It was during this year that the area leader of the BIR3 settlement, who had heard about the work of Alliance in Bangalore and Mumbai, had approached the Alliance in Bangalore to get their assistance with housing and basic infrastructure for their settlement. The Alliance visited the settlement, agreed to work with the area leader, and after speaking with the residents, initiated the daily savings program. In the same year, several community meetings were also held to discuss the possibilities of upgrading/redeveloping the settlement. Members of the Alliance and the area leader also initiated talks with the KSCB commissioner to garner his support for the redevelopment project. In the following year the Alliance took several of the residents and the then KSCB commissioner to housing exhibitions in Hyderabad and Mumbai to reveal the possibilities of redeveloped housing. Both the commissioner and the leader of the BIR3 settlement were impressed with the housing they were shown – particularly the Rajiv Indira Housing in Mumbai. On returning to Bangalore the settlement dwellers made a unanimous decision to work with the Alliance. Members of the Alliance and settlement residents made several visits to the KSCB’s office to have the settlement notified as a slum. Once this was done the Alliance hired a community architect, who specialized in participatory planning, to work on the project. After several consultations with the residents a plan was developed: the decision was made to opt for G+2 housing so that people could have decent sized homes.
and wide streets. Residents were involved in the planning, design, and construction phases of the project. The housing took four years (2002-2006) to be completed, about two years longer than the estimated time. This was because there were several unanticipated setbacks, such as, half of the residents backing out in the last minute saying they wanted individual houses, change of building contractors, and difficulty in establishing power and water connections.

For the most part the residents and members of the Alliance maintained a good working relationship throughout this process. Most families we interviewed greeted the MM members with warm familiarity and said they owed their housing to the MM and others in the Alliance. However, the daily savings program came to a standstill in 2008. One reason was that the residents had expected the Alliance to address the post-occupancy problems (inadequate water supply, sanitation issues) they faced; their attitude was ‘you built this so you fix it.’ The Alliance, however, felt that the residents needed to stand on their own feet and address these problems. These differences caused friction between the settlement residents and members of the Alliance. Some of the members of the Alliance had stopped visiting the settlement, as they were tired of being harassed by the residents to address problems with regard to the new housing. While the MM continued to make their weekly visits to the settlement for the daily savings program, they found that people were losing interest in the program. As the MM travelled close to two hours to reach the settlement they too began to get frustrated when very few residents contributed towards the program. A community meeting was held in early 2008 with the area leader, residents, and members of the Alliance and a decision was reached to stop the savings program.

2. Methods
**Individual Interviews:** 12 families were interviewed inside their homes. Three families living on different floors were interviewed from each of the four blocks (D, F, E, and H). In this settlement, some of the younger children interviewed were shy and did not speak much.

**Group Tours:** The child-led tour of the settlement centered on the issue of play. Despite my efforts to get children’s opinion about other issues in their settlement, the focus remained on the subject of play. Children showed me areas they currently used for play, and places they had used to play in, in the past. These places included the main street outside the housing, internal open spaces, steps, and balconies. The adult led tour was comprehensive in covering all common areas used by residents within the settlement and immediately outside the settlement. The topics of discussion centered on water and sanitation related issues, safety and security, and future plans for the settlement.

**Interview with community architect:** A phone-interview was conducted with the community architect who had worked on the redevelopment project. The purpose of this interview was to gain more information on the process of redevelopment and understand the architects vision and conceptual framework for this project.

**Table 9: Overview of methods used in BIR3 settlement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview with settlement leader</strong></td>
<td>The area leader was interviewed in the meeting room</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to history of the area, life in the old settlement, the redevelopment process, current conditions, and future plans.</td>
<td>50 min</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The interview was also audio-taped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual family interviews</strong></td>
<td>12 families were interviewed inside their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged</td>
<td>For the most part residents were satisfied with their living conditions. Their main issue was inadequate access to water. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the settlement.</td>
<td>30min to 45min</td>
<td>These interviews were audio taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken of common spaces outside the settlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child-led group tour

10 children participated in the group tour. Five boys aged 7, 10, 11, 12, and 15, and five girls aged 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16.

Children showed us places they used outside and inside the housing complex—main street adjoining the housing, internal open spaces, steps and balconies, and spaces between apartments.

40 min

The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.

Adult-led group tour

Four women participated in the group tour.

This tour started at the entrance. Women showed us the temple, internal lanes, the empty plot, and the edges of the housing complex.

40 min

The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.

Interview with community architect

Community architect

The architect talked about his experience with regard to the redevelopment project as well as his experiences in addressing common spaces in other slum redevelopment projects around the world.

80 min

The phone conversation was audio taped.

Return Visit to the Settlement

During my return visit to the settlement in December 2011 I was able to speak and go on a short walking tour around the settlement with the area leader and three women who had participated in the individual home interviews during my initial visit to the settlement. The purpose of my visit was to share my understanding of how common areas were used in
their settlement and to see if there were any changes with regard to common spaces since my last visit.

3. Common Spaces

3.1 Space outside the home

The redeveloped housing, as mentioned earlier, is not the typical ‘box-type’ apartment construction. The community architect associated with this project has made a conscious effort to translate the horizontal informality that pervaded the old settlement into the vertical structures of the redeveloped housing complex. As a result, while the individual dwellings are each of the same approximate square footage, each block and the common spaces between the apartments and between the blocks differ to a certain degree. The architect has tried to provide, wherever possible, some space outside each apartment for residents to do household chores and socialize with their neighbors.

The types of spaces adjoining homes varies from broad internal streets, pockets of open space, long balconies, and very small spaces (3ft x 3ft) abutting stairways (For example see Figure 38 and 39).

Factors such as location, size, and amount of time spent at home play a crucial role in how residents use and value the space outside their home. Most residents said that they used the space in front of their apartment for storing water, heating water, drying clothes, and storing odds and ends.

Residents living on the ground floor have small open spaces adjoining the front as well as the back of their homes. These residents use the open space behind their apartment for washing clothes and utensils. Residents living on the upper floors in the same block also use this space to park their two-wheeler vehicles.
Almost all of the cooking and cooking related tasks are performed inside the home. Only a few of the residents we interviewed said that they used the space outside their apartment to cut vegetables. A common reason that interviewees gave for not using the space outside their apartment for cooking related purposes was the location of the shared toilet. Sujatha, a resident living on the second floor in H block said, ‘I do not use the front of the house to sit or anything because the toilet is there so it’s not nice. If the toilet was not there then maybe I would have used the place for doing some work, or cutting vegetables or sorting grain.’

When given a choice, residents said that they prefer to use the privacy of their homes for household chores. Many residents however, said that they use the space outside their homes on a regular basis to socialize with their neighbors, relatives, or friends.

Speaking with the women revealed that, those who stayed at home use and value the space outside their homes much more than women who go to work on a daily basis. For instance Muniamma, a mother of two young children, who lives on the ground floor of F block said, ‘Even though the house is small we have space on the outside and that is nice. We are comfortable with what we have now. In the evenings we can sit outside and feel the breeze..that is nice. After 7pm I sit outside my house and chat with my neighbors. Especially now.. the current (electricity) is a big problem! So we sit outside only most of the times because it is so hot inside the house. The children also play here sometimes and I can keep an eye on them.’

Figure 49: Long balcony-type spaces outside homes are larger in size and more viable for household chores and children's play.
In contrast, Radha a working mother with two school going children, also living on the ground floor said

‘I don’t really sit outside and talk with anybody or do anything outside. I go to work come home and do the house work ...that is all. I do everything inside the house. I have no problems with the area as such... I don’t really go out in the area that much... so what problems will I have. I go to work and then come back home.’

Young children who live in homes with safe uncluttered open space play in these spaces regularly (for example open space adjoining ground level homes or balcony space away from stairways on upper levels).

3.2 Toilets

In the redeveloped housing each toilet is shared by two, three, or four apartments. Each toilet was 10.5 Sft (3 ft x 3.5 ft) in area. The first two blocks (E and F blocks) that were constructed have one toilet for every three or four households. The residents, after seeing the finished block had told the MM and the architects that they preferred to have one toilet shared by a maximum of two households. The plan was modified to make this accommodation, and as a result the D and H blocks have toilets that are shared mostly by two households. In these blocks participants are satisfied with the shared toilet.

3.3 Street, stairways, and balconies

There are two main internal streets within the settlement. Residents living in apartments where the front door opens out onto these streets, use portions of the street in front of their homes to store water, heat water, store odds and ends, and for sitting and socializing with neighbors. Children from the settlement play in both these streets. Residents also use these spaces for celebrating functions, ceremonies, and festivals. Often, shamiyanas (colorful cloth tents) are erected across the street to house these ceremonies.
Participants living on the upper floors feel the wide streets are wasteful and not to their advantage. A few participants said that the main street within the settlement was unnecessarily wide and served no purpose. One of these women, Tejawati, said

‘This big road they have made below is useless to us. We are poor people – do we have a car, do we have a vehicle? No right. Even if the tempo comes, it stops on the main road outside... the vehicle does not come inside – so I do not know why they have made that space.’

When I asked if the space was used for celebrating festivals and functions, she replied

‘If there is a function then we mainly use the office room. Only if someone dies then we put them in the open space below. We actually do not need such wide open space for that. But even that we cannot do freely. You know the people who live downstairs – what they say is ‘they die in some other house and they come and put the body in front of our house’. They say things like ‘If you were living here and we put the dead body in front of your house – would you keep quiet?’ and like that start fights. They tell us to put them on the main road outside! How can we do that... We people living on top have no space in front of our house to do anything. They should have made that road smaller and given us more space in front of the house – then it would have been more useful.’

The stairways were used by children to play and by women to sit and chat with neighbors and friends. Residents used the space below the stairs to store odds and ends. Some women mentioned that soon after moving into their new housing there had been several accidents of children falling down the stairs. To make the stairways safer the metal railings were
replaced with brick walls. While this alteration reduced some of the risks, the fact that mothers and caregivers are often overburdened to keep a constant vigil over their children means that accidents are unavoidable. One of the participants said that her four-year-old son had fallen down the steps when she was in the kitchen and had had to get seven stitches on his forehead.

The balconies are mainly used for drying clothes and food items. Children living on upper floors play in the balconies, and socialize with their friends.

### 3.4 Meeting room/Anganwadi, Shops, and Temple

The meeting room is 364 Sft (14ft x 26 ft) in area and located in the H block. It opens out onto the main street outside the housing complex. On weekday mornings this meeting room doubles as an anganwadi center, which caters to young children from the settlement and neighboring areas. The material used by the anganwadi teachers is stored in two cupboards in the meeting room. The parents and children we spoke with said they were happy with the anganwadi. Parents who sent their children to the anganwadi said it was convenient to have it close to their homes as they could easily drop off and pick up their children. During the afternoons and evenings the area leader uses the space to meet people and hold community meetings. On my return visit I was told the anganwadi center had now been moved to another building down the road. The area leader said that they needed to use the meeting room in the mornings and had therefore relocated the anganwadi center. He said that all the children from their settlement still attended the anganwadi and were happy with it.

The H block faces the external road and has nine shops on the ground floor. All of these shops, however, are unoccupied. The participants in the adult-led tour said that the work on the shops has not been completed and so were not ready to be let out. When I asked these participants what was left to be done with regard to the shops they
were unable to give me any answers. The area leader later told me that the shops belonged to the Alliance and that it was up to them to decide how they would be used. He said that they had signed an agreement where the Alliance would rent/lease the shops for a period of 20 years after which they would belong to the settlement residents. When I asked some of the members of the Alliance about these shops I was told that they were in the process of sorting out some issues with regard to these shops and were not forthcoming with the details.

A small temple is located at the left corner of the settlement. This has been constructed by one of the residents. Participants from the adult-led tour as well as half of the caregivers we interviewed with said they visit the temple every Friday to perform puja. Some of the girls we spoke with said they played many group games sitting in the small open space in front of the temple.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 10 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 10: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Like about your new housing</strong></td>
<td>House/building (7)</td>
<td>Everything (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ventilation (5)</td>
<td>House (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy (4)</td>
<td>Balcony (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do not like about your new housing</strong></td>
<td>Lack of adequate water (10)</td>
<td>No place to play (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet (6)</td>
<td>Streets (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overflowing sewage (6)</td>
<td>Overflowing sewage (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stairs (5)</td>
<td>Toilets (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important common spaces used within settlement</strong></td>
<td>Space in front of home (4)</td>
<td>Main street outside the housing complex (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temple (7)</td>
<td>Temple (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Street (5)</td>
<td>Streets (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balcony (4)</td>
<td>Balcony (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miss about the old settlement</strong></td>
<td>Nothing (12)</td>
<td>Nothing (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space outside the house (8)</td>
<td>I don’t know (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space for children to play (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs and aspirations of residents</strong></td>
<td>Improved water supply (9)</td>
<td>Park/playground (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gate/boundary wall (6)</td>
<td>Tuition facility (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuition facility (5)</td>
<td>Improved water supply (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clothes washing area (4)</td>
<td>Computer class (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Park/playground (3)</td>
<td>Place to sit outside (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer class (3)</td>
<td>Clothes washing area (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function hall (2)</td>
<td>Gate/boundary wall (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place to sit outside (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tailoring class (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Core Issues

4.1 Problems with Access to Water

Every summer, residents of Bangalore city are hit with a water crisis, and inevitably the worst hit are the urban poor. The water shortage in Bangalore worsens every year with stagnant capacity, increased demand, and power cuts. For residents of the BIR3 settlement, inadequate access to water is the primary problem.
The municipality water supply in the neighborhood is intermittent. Most residents depend on individual bore wells or tanker water. In the BIR3 settlement each apartment has one water outlet, but the infrastructure for providing piped water to residents is still not in place. Residents depend on two water points within the settlement and tanker water. One of the taps is used exclusively by a group of 25 families who have each contributed monetarily towards its installation and maintenance. They each fill 10 pots of water every other day and purchase the remaining water required. Another 10 families have access to the second water tap, which these families have similarly jointly invested in and installed. These families fill 15 pots of water every other day from this tap. The rest of the families resort to purchasing water from tankers. On average residents consumed 8 to 9 pots (120 to 135 liters) of water daily.

As in most urban poor settlements, the burden of water provision falls on women and their lives revolve around securing water for their families. Interviews with the residents revealed that women took days off from work, spent part of their meager earnings, and expended large amounts of physical energy to secure water for their households. Devika, a mother of three adolescent boys, living on the ground floor said

‘I work with the paper wholesale shop. I go for work at 7am and come home at 9pm. Today I have put leave because we are facing a lot of water problems. So I have stayed at home to get water for the house. Water comes only on alternate days, then also we get only about 6-8 pots of water. The rest we have to buy. I work six days a week. One to two days a week I put leave when we have this water problem.’
Women living on upper floors face the added challenge of carrying the pots of water up one or two flights of stairs. These women resort to doing most of their washing on the ground level to lessen the amount of water they have to carry up to their homes. They do their washing on large stone slabs located at the base of stairways or close to inspection chambers. All of them complained that residents living on the ground floor or passers by screamed and picked fights with them as water from their washing activities made the fronts of other resident's apartments and the streets boggy. A few of the residents, women and children, complained of various back, stomach, and leg ailments from carrying water up to their homes.
Both women and children said that the water problem in their settlement had led to fights among residents. One resident we spoke with said

‘There are at least 20 houses that take water from this tap. Water comes only from 2pm to 4pm and everybody gets into fights saying ‘you have taken more no you have taken more water!’ then these fights get out of hand. Sometimes they will be hitting and pulling hair and talking bad about the other persons families and all that. Sometimes the water comes very slowly and everybody gets impatient.’

Most of the women we spoke with said they did not think the water situation would improve in the years to come, as they had witnessed the water situation worsen with every passing year.

During my return visit to the settlement I observed that steps had been taken over the last year to address the water situation. The area leader said that they had put in a new bore well and a pump and installed three new Syntex\textsuperscript{36} tanks on the roof of the F block. He said that at least 40% of the homes have access to piped water within their homes and in a few months he said that all homes will have access to piped water. The women we spoke with said that the piped water within homes is intermittent and unreliable. Radhika, one of the participants, said

‘...if people above get water then the people living below do not, if people in one building get water then people in the other building do not – we do not know when we will get water.’

When I asked the area leader about these issues he said that they are still sorting out some problems with the water pump and once that is resolved the water supply will be more reliable. He expressed his frustration over having to handle all the problems within the settlement. He said he has to be there, physically, to turn on the water pump for people to get water within their homes. He said that ideally the pump should be turned on three times

\textsuperscript{36} Molded polyethylene water tank
a day when people are at home and need water most. But, he added, he has other affairs to take care of including his personal business and so could not be in the settlement at all hours. Therefore, he said that he runs the pump once a day in the mornings when he is at home. When I asked him if he could delegate the job to another resident, he said that he has tried to do this but it has not worked. He said

‘See what we need is someone here who can maintain the water pump and put it on three times a day and turn it off. Now I am doing it and I cannot be here all the time as I have work to do outside as well. I cannot ask people here because they will use it like their personal pump and put it on whenever they want. That is what happened before. And then there will be fights.’

**Sanitation:** As mentioned earlier, residents sharing a toilet with more than one household have many complaints with regard to the maintenance of the toilet. These complaints are voiced mainly by women and girls. Nandini, living in the H block said ‘There are two houses sharing this toilet. We have no problems sharing it. We take turns to keep it clean and we use it.’

In the E and F blocks, where one toilet is shared between three or four homes, residents seem unhappy with the shared toilet. Shantamma, who lives on the second floor in the F block said

‘The toilet is a big problem! People from the other houses do not keep it clean. We are always fighting with them because of this. We clean up when we use ...they should also do that right? But they never do... always leave it dirty and smelly. The men drink and come at night and dirty up the toilet. Then in the morning all the women fight saying ‘your husband did this! Your husband did this!’ This is how the fights start..’
The toilet in most of the blocks is located adjoining the open area between the apartments. Participants said that the flow of people back and forth from the toilet, and the smells emanating from the toilet prevents them from using the space outside their homes. The most common complaint with regard to the toilets was the overflow of sewage caused by blocked drainage pipes. The residents explained that they had had to deal with this problem on a constant basis since occupying the new housing. They said that they had spoken to members of the Alliance several times about this problem. But, as they had not received any help from them, the area leader and some residents had taken their grievances to the ward councilor. After several meetings with the councilor, the situation was examined by the local municipality technicians. They found the drainage pipes were unable to handle the volume of sewage being disposed and recommended replacing the existing pipes with wider pipes. The municipality has carried out this work over the last six months and the residents said that since then they have not faced any problems. They are, however, uncertain about the future. Raja a resident of E block said ‘The chamber used to overflow all the time. Now they have changed the pipe so it does not happen but who knows how long it will last.’

Both adults and children brought up the issue of overflowing sewage water that they have now fixed through the local councillor. They said that in the past very often the chambers would overflow and result in their whole settlement smelling ‘bad and dirty’. Few of the children said they were embarrassed to invite any of their friends to their homes because of this issue. Vijay, a ten year old boy, said

‘we never know when the dirty water will overflow so I never call my friends who live outside to our house. If they see that then they will call me names and make fun of me and tell everyone in school.’

Some of the younger children complained that the constant digging that took place to fix the sanitation problems left stones and rubble all over the open areas in the settlement.
This debris caused them to trip and fall and get hurt and made it difficult to play ‘running games, hopscotch, and skipping’. On my return visit, I noticed that the sanitation repair work had been completed and residents said that they had not faced any problems since the drainage pipes had been replaced. The lanes within the housing complex were also re-paved and free of debris.

4.2 Children’s play and mobility

Young children play near their homes or inside their homes. Where parents have the availability of safe space outside their homes (space outside ground floor dwellings, and some balcony spaces on the first and second floors) children are allowed to play outside. In homes where the space outside the apartment is close to a stairway parents preferred to keep the children indoors. Both boys and girls play with toys, small cooking utensils, and indulge in pretend play routines like ‘god, god’ or ‘school, school’ while playing near their homes. They also play games like ‘hide and seek’, ‘Chungi’\(^\text{37}\), and ‘Lagori’\(^\text{38}\). Most boys between the ages of five and fourteen and girls between the ages of seven and twelve play on the internal streets and open spaces within the settlement. Girls mostly play in front of the temple or in the small empty plot on right side of the settlement. In these areas, they play games like shuttle, carom board, Kho-Kho, ‘team-team’\(^\text{39}\), and volleyball and also with toys. Some of the young children and girls prefer to play on the first floor balconies in the ‘H’ block as they are subjected to teasing and bullying by the older children when playing downstairs. Older girls mainly stay within their homes and invite friends to visit with them inside their homes. Boys mainly play robust games like cricket, football, running and catching, on the streets. Both young and older boys play on the street outside the settlement. On the main street,

\(^{37}\) A game played with a scrunched up bicycle tube
\(^{38}\) A two-team game played with seven stacked stones and a ball
\(^{39}\) A variation of tag
they play games like cricket, football, cock bat, and high jump. Some of the older boys mentioned that previously they used to play in an empty ground close to their settlement, but that they no longer had access to it as it had been gated by the landowners (railway department). Therefore they now go to grounds further away near the railway station to play cricket.

Children complained that adults in the settlement scolded and harassed them wherever and whenever they played; be it outside their homes, on internal streets, open spaces, or on the street outside the settlement. Most children we interviewed and all of the children in the child-led tour said that what they disliked most about their settlement was not having a place where they could play freely, without being screamed at and harassed. When asked what common spaces were lacking in their settlement all of the children we spoke with replied a ‘park’ or ‘play area’

4.3 Safety and Security

Some of the participants (women and adolescent girls) we spoke with felt a need for a boundary wall surrounding the housing complex. According to them this would prevent the people living behind their area – who had opted out of the redevelopment project – from using the streets within their housing complex to access the main road. At present they said they have strangers walking through their area at all hours, and this caused them to worry about the safety of children and adolescent girls in their area. They also felt that the people living behind their settlement were encroaching some of the open areas in their settlement.

Ratna, a mother of three children living in the G block said

‘We should have a compound wall and a gate. The people living on the other side use our area like a public street. We should have a wall and a gate or something. They disturb us a lot. Especially if there are any fights happening in their area then those people come running through our area without looking or anything. They just rush
through our area. It can be very dangerous for small children who are playing. They can get hurt. Those people are also putting some huts on some of our empty spaces. They keep their material there and all. We had kept some open space for ourselves so children could play or when there is a death then people can keep the body outside – now they have put all their material there. So if we need the place urgently it’s not possible for us to use it. These people never cooperated with us right from the beginning. Now they hold some grudge on us because their houses did not get done. But it’s their own fault they were not ready for this housing then and now they say they want it...They used to purposely create fights for no reason..... Even now they do that. They take their garbage through our area to throw it outside, sometimes they will purposely throw things in our area and when we tell them they will say it’s not theirs and then create a big fight.‘

All of the adolescent girls we spoke with felt that a compound wall would keep boys and men from loitering in their area. Two of them also said that they had been teased by boys who passed through their housing complex. Overall, participants feel that a compound wall with a gate would make their area more safe and secure and cleaner. When I discussed this issue with the area leader, he admitted to the problem but said there was no easy solution as the people living behind had no other way to access the main road. He said that they were having talks with the area leader of the area behind their settlement to come up with a viable solution.

On my return visit I learned from the area leader that he and other residents had got together and given an ultimatum to the people who had put up shacks abutting the boundary wall in certain spaces within the settlement. These people were not from the adjoining settlement as some of the women I interviewed earlier had suggested, but in fact relatives of some of the residents in the settlement. The area leader said that if they
allowed a few people to put up shacks they ran the risk of their settlement turning into a
slum again. He said

‘See now we are living in these buildings and we have all the services – water, electricity, good house. We had to do a lot to get from the slum we used to live in to here. Then some people had put sheds again – they were relatives of people living in our area. So we talked about it in a meeting and decided that we have to have them removed. We have to do that – even if people get angry and fight about it. Otherwise what guarantee is there for our area not becoming a slum again? We would have gone through all this for nothing. So we have to be strict. People had put up 4-5 shed and we had to force them to remove them.’

Residents also expressed that they felt insecure about their current housing as they were still not in possession of the hakku patras (legal house deeds) for their apartments. They said they have to pay Rs 10,000/- for securing these documents and many did not have access to these funds. A few participants mentioned that the previous land owners had come to their area and threatened to have them all removed as the land belonged to them. They said they had been assured by their area leader and members of the Alliance that this would never happen as all legal procedures had been followed to buy the land from the previous owners. These participants, however, feel that having hakku patras would give them a sense of security, and proof that they do indeed own their homes. During my return visit participants I spoke with repeated these complaints were still not in possession of hakku patras for their apartments.

5. Participation in the planning and building process and advice for people planning new housing

A few participants we spoke with said that they had been actively involved in the redevelopment processes. They said that they had been part of the process from the
beginning to the end, and that not only had they been able to contribute ideas and preferences but they had also learned valuable skills. Radhika, one of the participants, said

‘We were living in terrible conditions with no basic facilities. Then when all these people came and talked to us and showed us what is possible we were excited. They taught us the processes and we worked with them. Even though at times we had different opinions we listened to them because they had done this before. We were part of the construction and we were part of the planning so we knew what we were getting. We went to the slum board many times and we went to the SPARC office also many times.’

A majority of the participants, however, said that they had not taken part in the planning and building processes, as they had been busy with housework and looking after their children, or simply because they had not been aware of such processes. These women said that their husbands had been part of the process.

The advice most participants have for others embarking on a similar process is to get involved in the process as much as possible, ask questions, and to set aside individual differences and work together towards a common goal. Some advised that residents get as much information as possible on the technical specifications of the construction and verify them as a means to ensure the quality of the new housing. They said that had they been better informed they might have been able to tell the architects that the drainage pipes were too narrow and avoided the sanitation problem of overflowing toilets and chambers. Muniamma, one of the participants said

‘The main thing is they have to be cooperative and believe in them (the Alliance). They have to be open and find out details about the type of construction and all that they have to find out. They have to be strong, and involved, and give their time..’
5.1 Interview with Community Architect

During my conversations with the SPARC team and the area leader of the BIR3 settlement it was mentioned that there had been an ‘international architect’ who had worked on the redevelopment project. I was able to make contact with this architect and he was willing to speak with me and showed considerable interest in the research.

In our conversation, the architect said his main challenge had been to understand the context of the settlement in terms of people’s lives – how they lived, worked, used space, and built their environment. Once he had a good understanding of the context he worked with a committee comprised of settlement dwellers and members of the alliance to develop the plans for the project. He said there had been considerable consultation with the community and that the basic layouts had been revised at least four times to respond to the needs of the settlement dwellers.

One of the main challenges he had faced was in trying to develop a realistic program of requirements for the project. He said that in the BIR3 redevelopment project, and other projects he had worked on, residents always had a long list of requirements as they felt that this was their ‘once-in-a-lifetime-chance’ to get the house they had always dreamed about. He said that they had held several sessions to arrive at a set of program requirements that had the approval of all stakeholders.

Another challenge he mentioned was the quality of the site itself – he said that the settlement had been located on a filled up pond and that they had had to spend a lot of money and energy just to provide a strong foundation for the buildings. He generalized that in his experience most urban poor housing was located in low quality or high-risk sites that required some intervention to make the site more suitable for habitation.

The third challenge he spoke about was to do with communication. He said that in the BIR3 redevelopment project and others he has worked on, he often had to work with committees who had their own vested interests in the projects. As he is forced to communicate with the
community through such committees he feels that a lot of the project details are manipulated or not accurately communicated to suit the interests of various committee members.

The architect said that his main goal for the BIR3 redevelopment had been to translate the informality of the existing horizontal shacks to vertical buildings. As a result each block had a different configuration, as did the spaces between these blocks. The only constant was the size of each dwelling. He felt that he had been able to translate the highly used space outside homes in the old settlement into the vertical blocks through small open spaces, long balconies, and open to sky courtyards.

Another goal had been to provide adequate light and ventilation for all apartments. This had been achieved by spacing the buildings at a considerable distance from each other and providing moderate sized windows. Privacy for each dwelling was achieved by staggering the main doors- having them side-by-side, or facing opposite directions such that none of the apartments entrances faced one another. He said that he had hoped that people would further develop open spaces by planting trees, and building seating and play areas for children.

I was surprised that so much thought had gone into planning common areas, because none of the residents seemed to be taking any real advantage of these efforts. During both my visits I had not seen any committed efforts on behalf of the settlement dwellers to further develop common areas in their settlement. The only effort put in by residents was to pave all open areas with cement as they were concerned about the dust and water-logging that resulted from unpaved areas. No trees had been planted. None of the adults had mentioned the lack of trees, or the desire for general landscaping. Only a few of the children had suggested the need for trees in their new settlement. For the most part people used open spaces for storing household items and doing certain chores.
Some of the reasons for this lack of interest could be that 1) as the settlement leader had said residents were still struggling for basic services to think about common areas 2) people still saw parts of internal lanes and other open spaces as being attached to individual apartments and not as belonging to the community as a whole – perhaps a ‘common’ identity for common areas is an alien concept, or 3) as there was still a lot of digging due to infrastructure-related work people did not see the sense in making improvements to common areas that might have to be uprooted.

6. Old settlement vs. the new settlement

A majority of participants said they prefer their new housing to their old settlement. They said in the new housing they are better protected from the weather, have better access to toilets and electricity, and have more space within their homes, and have a ‘better future’ now that they live in ‘apartments.’ They also said they have more open space to celebrate festivals and family functions on a grand scale. These participants recalled that their old settlement was overcrowded and congested with narrow streets and small houses. They said their homes had often been flooded during the monsoons. When living in their old settlement they had to use pay-and-use public toilets or had to resort to using nearby fields for toileting and risk being harassed by the police. Radhika, a participant living on the ground floor, said

'No no we don’t miss anything about the old house. It was so small. Our family could barely fit inside the house. We were always sleeping inside and outside the house. 
There is nothing to miss about the old place. We are happy in this new house now.
Before the houses were small and so close to each other and facing the street.
Everybody’s houses were open we could always see into everybody’s house whether we wanted to or not. Now its not like that we have more privacy and we can go see people when we want to. Before the children used to go for toilet outside that was
very difficult for us and for them. They had to go at night also. The police people used to harass us simply and say we cannot use the areas. We never went by ourselves we would go in groups or two or three. Now it’s better. At least we have a toilet right here.’

While a majority of the participants value the privacy their new housing affords, a few remain ambivalent. Three of the participants expressed mixed feelings with regard to this issue, saying that while they enjoyed their privacy they also missed the openness and spontaneity of meeting and chatting with neighbors that they were able to do in their old settlement. Sumitra, a participant living on the second floor, said

‘That time it was different and now it is different. Before whatever happened in the house everyone will know, at least 4-5 people will come to know. That secrecy was not there that time. At anytime people will come and talk… at anytime! That was not nice. Now it is not like that anymore…people have more privacy. It’s good and not so good. It’s nice to have some privacy but we are not freely going to others houses like we used to before. Sometimes I feel we were happier then.’

Some participants said they prefer their old settlement to their current housing. They said they had more space outside their homes, a toilet close by, and better access to water in their old houses. These participants all live on the second or third floor and favor their old houses, as they did not have to haul water up the stairs as they currently do in their new housing. Parvathy, a resident living on the second floor, said

‘It was all better then. We had bore well water. We had a toilet right next door and I could easily do all my washing there outside the house. There, children also had more place to play there. Here everything is a problem. We had more place in front of the house and children used to play nicely there. There only if they had built a nice house it would have been good. Now I have to go down to get water, carry it up, go down to wash clothes and all that. Life is more difficult now. Even here it is
okay – but it would be good if there was place for children to play and space for washing clothes. Overall I preferred the old place.’

A majority of participants said that they miss the space they had outside their homes in the old settlement, as it had been useful for doing household chores, for children’s play, and for sitting and chatting. Some of these participants complained that the space outside their current apartments is of little use as it is too small, close to the toilet, and has to be shared with other families.

Most of the children we spoke with have little recollection of the old settlement, as they were quite young when they lived there. Some of the older children do remember it and said that they prefer the new housing as it has better amenities, but also added that they had more place to play in their old settlement. This sentiment with regard to play was echoed by many of the adult participants as well. Ratnamma, a mother of two children, said

’Now there are always stones and mud lying all over the place. There is no place for children to play. Children could play more easily before – there was more place for them to play. Now the children keep running here and there and bump into people and get into trouble. If there is a place where they can play then it will be good.’

7. Need for common spaces in current housing

When we asked the residents, both adults and children, if they felt the need for any particular common space within their housing complex, most participants said that a place where children could play like a park), and a facility like a ‘library’ where children could study, attend tuition classes and computer classes would be most useful. Radhika, a mother of three children, said

’There is a place in the corner that is just lying empty and is going for waste. It will be good if it can be made into a play area, or a park or something where the small kids can play, somewhere we can sit and talk. But everybody just talks about
this...there is no one who will take the responsibility to develop our area more and make it better. We will be happy to contribute towards these changes. We will contribute money, labor, and time.’

The empty land she spoke about is a small parcel of open land towards the right of the housing complex. It has been dug up recently for the sanitation work and is now filled with stones and debris. When I asked the settlement leader whether there were any plans for this particular space he said that he is going to propose for more housing in this area. This additional housing, he said, would be given to the offspring of three to four families who according to him had put in a lot of their time and energy towards the redevelopment process as a recognition of their contribution. When I asked if the other residents were in agreement with his proposal he said that they had talked about it with other residents and were still in the decision making process.

Some participants suggested having a common washing and drying area on the ground floor. Many children said that having more trees and plants around the settlement would make their settlement ‘beautiful’. A few participants suggested that having benches in some of the open areas would allow women to sit and chat with one another. Many participants said that a compound wall with a gate would make their settlement a safer place. Some of the other requests included a place where children could learn dance, and a place where women could learn tailoring.

One of my questions to the area leader, after speaking with the residents, was whether people will be interested in further developing the common areas in the settlement. He said that they are still in the process of securing basic services (access to adequate water and sanitation facilities) and the need to further develop common areas has not been raised by any of the residents. He feels that to develop common areas they will first need to establish a society and collect building maintenance fees from residents. The area leader said that
none of the residents are interested in forming a society and that can only come about through interactions with an outside organization, like the Mahila Milan. He said

‘There is no possibility of having a society here...no chance at all. The MM stopped savings here two years ago. We had something happening when MM was working here but people lost interest and then MM also lost interest so the savings stopped. So now we have no society. Here people care about their own problems – their work, their children and all that – that’s how it is here. If there was a society then things would be first class in our area – but we have not been able to form one. We do not collect any monthly maintenance – we were doing it before then people started saying things like you are taking more from of us you are taking less from them and all that and then we decided not to do it at all. If it is done it has to be done by somebody from outside and it had to be done correctly.’

During my return visit, the area leader said that the earlier plans for building more housing in the empty plot towards the right of the settlement had been abandoned as many of the residents were not in favor of the plan. He said that they now had two proposals for that space: one was to make it into a common washing area where residents could wash and dry clothes and utensils and the second was to make an entrance to the main road so that large vehicles could come into the settlement. When I asked him which proposal was more popular with the residents he replied that they were still having meetings with regard to this issue and nothing had been decided as yet. He added that personally, he preferred the second option. When I asked him why that was so, considering the first option would probably be more useful for residents given the difficulties they face hauling water up to their homes, he said that people had been provided with washing areas within their homes and soon there would be adequate piped water to enable residents to do all of their washing within their homes. He said that a large entrance would allow visitors to bring their vehicles inside the settlement instead of leaving them unattended on the road outside the
settlement. This way, he said, they would be able to be more hospitable to their visitors.

Two of the women who were participating in this meeting disagreed with the area leader and said that the first option would be more useful.

Figure 43: Annotated map of housing showing changes being proposed by the area leader
Chapter 7: ME Settlement

1. Profile of settlement

![ME settlement along the railway track](image)

The ME settlement is a narrow longitudinal settlement stretched out along the railway tracks in central Mumbai; it is bounded by railway tracks on one side and middle class housing societies and a municipality playground on the other side. The settlement is about 40 years old and occupies a low-lying area that has been filled up over the years. The settlement started out as a small unsafe area with high crime rates and over time has become a more safe area. In the last ten years the number of dwellings have doubled from 350 to 750. In 2001, as part of the Maharashtra Urban Transportation Project (MUTP), houses within thirty feet of the tracks were relocated and resettled to a suburban neighborhood. The houses that remain are closely packed and have narrow paved streets between them. Homes are built
with tin, brick, concrete, cement, and wood and range from 40 sft to 150 sft in area. Some houses are single level dwellings while most others are of two levels. The main problem residents face is the lack of adequate access to water and sanitation facilities. In addition, over the last four years influential residents in surrounding areas and the railway department have blocked access routes that connect the settlement to the surrounding areas, forcing children and adults to take circuitous routes to reach their destinations. This has left residents feeling increasingly frustrated and ‘locked’ in their settlement. The settlement has a small dispensary, six small convenience shops, and two anganwadis.

**Population:** There are around 2800 people living in ME settlement. Most families have been in this area for over 20 years. About 75% of the population is hindu, 27% muslim, and the rest christian. Most men and women work. While in the beginning most residents worked as rag pickers and scrap sellers they have now moved on to more respectable jobs. Women mostly work as maids or have their own business selling fruit or home cooked food. Men work as construction workers, taxi drivers, manual laborers, and as actors or support crew in the film industry. The average family income is Rs 5300. About 60 percent of the children attend schools. Parents send their children to government or to private schools, both of which are located close to the settlement. Around 20 percent of the children continue on to secondary schooling and college. Children who do not go to school help their mothers at home or take up small jobs in the neighborhood. Most children walk to school. Most of the older children walk to school by themselves but almost all young children are accompanied by their siblings, parents, or other family members. There are two anganwadis in the settlement that cater to some of the small children living in the settlement.

**Land Tenure:** The settlement is located on land belonging to the railway department. A majority of families own their home while a few are tenants. For the past ten years there have been no demolitions in the area. Rumors of new housing for families living in the area
have spurred more houses to be built. Participants I spoke with, however, have little hope that they will be allotted new housing. They said that while various politicians have made promises of new housing over the last six to seven years, little action has been taken in the direction. Older residents who have been living in the area for almost 40 years expressed concern that newer residents who have proof of residence and other documents might qualify for new housing while they (older residents) who have lost most of their paperwork in floods or fires will be left behind.

**Infrastructure:** The settlement is located close to markets, hospitals, schools, religious buildings, and public transportation. Residents have access to a range of work opportunities in the surrounding areas. There are six small convenience shops, two anganwadis and a small dispensary located within the settlement.

Residents secure water for their families through various sources. Some families have pooled their resources and laid water pipes near their homes. These families usually have access to water from 4:30 am to 8am. Some families cross the tracks and get water from a public water tap from the road across the railway tracks where water is available from 7pm to 11pm. A few families purchase water.

Residents have no access to toilets within the settlement. Most residents use the railway tracks and a mined out quarry located next to the settlement for their daily toileting. A few residents said they use the toilets in the railway station occasionally.

Grey water from washing clothes and utensils and bathing is removed from the narrow settlement lanes via narrow open gutters running adjacent to homes. The gutters are connected to a large open drain close to the settlement. During the monsoons heavy rains usually cause flooding in homes located close to the railway tracks. A municipality worker who also sweeps some of the internal streets removes garbage from the settlement. Garbage is usually disposed in the mined out quarry next to the settlement. Some residents dispose of their garbage in the space between houses and the railway tracks.
While residents are perturbed about lack of water and sanitation facilities within their settlement and to an extent flooding of homes during the monsoons, they are most concerned about the lack of physical access to areas outside the settlement.

**Engagement with Mahila Milan**

The Alliance has been working with residents in the ME settlement for the last 10 years. There are 150 families who are part of the daily savings program. The MM women have also carried out detailed household and settlement surveys of the settlement. They worked closely with residents during the MUTP to make the project possible, and ensured that residents were relocated and resettled in a safe and organized manner. A few years ago the MM worked with the remaining residents to build a community toilet block. As soon as the construction began, word about the toilet block got out as various local politicians from competing parties he used it as a means to popularize themselves. The railway authorities therefore heard about the project and stopped construction. The MM leader said that over the years they have been able to work with residents to make the area more safe by discouraging gambling, alcoholism, and selling of drugs. She said that while there is still some crime in the area it has reduced by a great extent and that families have started to live better lives and find better jobs.

**2. Methods**

Eleven families were interviewed in their homes. Caregivers, target children and other family members present at the time took part in the interview. In the adult led tour women showed us some space within the settlement whereas in the child-led tour children showed us spaces within and outside the settlement. Girls did not accompany us to places outside the settlement in the child-led tour.
### Table 11: Overview of methods used in ME settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with settlement leaders</td>
<td>One MM area leader was interviewed in a resident's home.</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the history and growth of the settlement as well as the demographic details.</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>The interview was audio-taped and detailed notes were taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual family interviews</td>
<td>11 families were interviewed inside their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 16 and girls of ages 6, 8, 10, 14, and 17.</td>
<td>Children and adults spoke about the problems they faced and identified some common spaces they use in the settlement. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the homes, shops, anganwadis, and lanes.</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>The interviews were audio-taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-led group tour</td>
<td>7 children participated in the group tour. Four boys aged 10, 12, 13 and 16, and three girls aged 8, 10 and 14.</td>
<td>Children showed us places they use outside and inside the settlement. Inside the settlement they showed us shops, the mined out quarry, play spaces, and railway tracks. Outside the settlement boys showed us play areas, tuition classes, shops, roads, and a video game parlor.</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult-led group tour</td>
<td>2 adults participated in the group tour.</td>
<td>Adults showed us places they use inside the settlement like shops, the mined out quarry, small temple, and lanes within the settlement.</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Common Spaces

Many participants I spoke with said they did not use any other spaces outside of their homes. It was only when they spoke of their daily activities that they mentioned other spaces they use within the settlement. They stressed that they use other common areas for specific daily activities such as washing and cleaning, buying daily supplies and toileting and not for socializing. One participant said
'I don’t talk to anyone sitting outside or anything. I just sit near the door by myself that is all. Yes I know the neighbors and all, but I keep to myself look after the house and the children and do my work. If I go to the bazaar and I bump into my friends then I speak with them and ask how they are...and that is all.’

3.1 Space outside homes

In the ME settlement spaces outside homes are of two types. Homes along the inner streets of the settlement open out to narrow lanes where many participants said they carry out household chores such as washing clothes and utensils and bathing. Houses facing the railway tracks have more open space in front of their homes but this space is more risk laden as it is close to the tracks and often littered with garbage. Residents living in homes facing the railway tracks said they too use the space outside their homes for daily chores. Children also play on the narrow streets and in the open space outside homes. Participants said the space outside their homes is important as it allows them to carry out tasks they are unable to do within the narrow confines of their homes. They also described these spaces as being narrow and congested or dirty and dangerous depending on where they lived. Some participants said they do not use the space outside their homes as it is ‘public’ space. They said they manage to perform all their daily chores within the confines of their homes. Most participants said the using space outside their homes often leads to conflict with neighbors. One participant said

Figure 45: Internal Lanes
'I do all my work inside, but there are a lot of others who do their washing outside, bathe their children outside ...there are fights inevitably because of that others will say your water is coming in front of my house and this and that. People who want to fight will fight. People here fight over children’s talk (conversations or verbal fights amongst children) as well...children are children you should let them be. What happens here is that they (children) cant go away from the houses and play because there is no place for them, so they play here and there and some adults will start fights over children’s talk and play...and children also learn from adults to fight…’

A few participant living in homes facing the railway tracks said they find it difficult to use the space outside their homes as it is often littered with garbage and also because several boys from the area tend to hang out and drink and gamble in a small open space close to these participants homes. One mother of two young children said

‘These boys who do drugs and drink hang out here only near the house. They gamble here, we tell them not to play here and come here – they stink – but they don’t listen to us. My husband yells at them – but they don’t listen to anyone. We just have to close our doors and stay inside. They are a bad example for all our children.’

Women said they usually sit across their doorway to chat with neighbors and do not meet in any common space within the settlement to socialize.

3.2 Shops

There are six small shops and a small dispensary in the settlement. The participants said the shops are invaluable as they buy their daily supplies from these shops. They find them to be particularly important as going to shops outside the settlement is tedious as most access point to areas outside the settlement have been blocked by boundary walls built by surrounding middle class housing societies.
The shops are dispersed within the settlement and usually owned by settlement residents. Women and children frequent the shops several times a day. Children I spoke with said they enjoy buying things from the small shops in the area.

### 3.3 Anganwadis

There are two anganwadis within the settlement. One is a government run center that has recently shut down due to problems with the shelter in which it is located. The MM leader said that they will reopen once the shelter has been fixed. The other anganwadi is run by a church based group from a small room within the settlement and is open from 10am to 2pm three days a week. This anganwadi has preschool-education supplies like flash cards and beads and a few slates and chalk for writing. The teacher said some parents send their children regularly while others send their children on a sporadic basis. Children are given a
hot meal for lunch. The teacher I spoke with said that the center is small and tends to get very crowded on some days. The few parents I spoke with who have children going to the anganwadi said they are happy with the program and had no complaints. A few mothers who stayed at home said they preferred not to send their children to the Anganwadi as they felt their children will be better cared for if they stayed at home.

3.4 Streets
The streets within the settlement are narrow; in some places they are barely 2’ wide. Participants said that earlier the streets were not paved and were a patchwork of cemented areas outside people’s homes and non-cemented areas. They said that the municipality came to their area six years ago leveled and paved the internal streets and installed gutters. Residents feel the streets have become more clean and useful after they have been paved. Participants said several political parties have claimed responsibility for the paving of the streets and they did not know whom to believe. While some participants said that doing chores on the narrow lanes outside their homes leads to conflict with other residents, others said that it was part of their daily lives and that residents were sympathetic to and accommodative of peoples needs. One participant said

‘People who live so close to each other have to understand – at the most they will say don’t wash so late and they will go back into their houses. There are no big fights or anything over this...’

3.5 Mined out quarry (Khada)
A large mined out quarry filled with waterweeds and a few trees is located at the tail end of the ME settlement. Residents use the quarry for toileting. The municipal garbage collector also disposes of garbage in this area. Both adults and children described the quarry as an unsafe area as it has snakes and because women using the quarry for toileting have experiences attempts of sexual harassment made by men hiding out in the quarry.
4. Core issues

4.1 Problems with lack of access to city roads

The biggest problem residents face is not having access to a road that connects the settlement to the areas outside of the settlement. Participants said they have always had a problem of not being well connected to city roads as the settlement is sandwiched between the railway tracks on one side and middle-income housing complexes on the other side. Lately, however they said it has become more difficult as the railway authorities have put up metal barricades in several areas along the tracks and between the tracks and the road outside. They added that the private housing societies adjoining their settlement have also put up boundary walls (thereby blocking some access routes used by residents to enter and leave the settlement) to separate their housing from the ME settlement. The only way out of

Figure 47: The mined out quarry (Khada)
the settlement is to go over a low boundary wall between the settlement and the municipal playground, which is also under threat of being closed. One participant said

‘For the past 15 years we have been fighting for a road – but politicians just say lots of stories during election time but nothing happens afterward. Now those colony people say they want to close the way through the garden because there a lot of robberies happening in there are and it is people from the zoppadpatti who are doing this. But what I am saying people who want to rob will do it whether there is a road from here or not – why should all of us suffer?

Where will we go if they close that path also (through the municipal playground)? We will have to go across the tracks and through the station – if we do that the ticket collector people catch us...they say we don’t know who you are and where you live but if you are on the station you need to have a ticket...and they threaten to take us to the police station..’

During the child-led tour when children took me through some of the housing societies outside their settlement we had an encounter with a woman living in one of the housing complexes that revealed the tension between these middleclass residents and the ME settlement residents. She approached us when we were walking on one of the ‘public’ streets between the housing complexes and asked us what we were doing, two of the children explained that they were giving me tour of the areas they used and she said rather rudely

‘why are you here then... go show her your area – ME settlement – that is where you all are from..you are not from here’

Participants said that not having proper access to the city affects them in multiple ways. Having to take circuitous routes to leave and enter the settlement increases travel time for
residents; particularly during the monsoons when certain areas tend to get flooded. Some residents said that having no proper road connection to the city roads makes it difficult for them to take the bodies of their deceased outside the settlement in a respectable manner. They said they felt deeply troubled they could not carry out a respectable procession and had to resort to awkward maneuvers to remove a dead body such as hauling it over a wall and tilting it sideways. Many residents said that not having a road connection to the city means that in times of emergencies like fires, floods, or accidents emergency response vehicles cannot come to the aid of residents. They also added they also lose precious time when they have to take people who are critically injured or ill out of the settlement. Most residents also said that securing water for their families has become more difficult after the metal railings have been propped up in several places along the railway tracks. Some participants said that the metal grills have reduced the number of accidents on railway tracks. One resident living in a house facing the tracks said

‘They have closed the way here no – in a way that is for the good only. There are less accidents now. Especially these drunkards they used to come and go on the tracks and get killed. Now that the way has been closed there are less accidents...’

4.2 Problems with water, sanitation, drainage, and garbage disposal

Water: Many participants said that access to water has improved over the years. One participant said that she and a few others from the settlement pay a monthly membership fee of Rs80 (USD2) per month at a private water tap and have access to water all times. Some residents said they have collaborated with other residents in their lane and invested money in laying illegal water pipes that draw water from municipal water pipes up to their streets. Most of these residents said that access to water is not a problem for them. A few of these families, however, said that water pressure is low, supply is intermittent and that it
is barely enough for four to five families. They also said that they have to wake up at 3am to get their queue number, as water is available only from 4am to 8am.

Many residents said they get water from a public standpipe located across the road from the station. Water is available at this pipe from 8pm to 4am. These residents said the process of transporting water to their homes has of late become very tedious and dangerous due to the metal fences put up by the railway authorities. They said before the fences were put up one person could go to fetch water but now at least three or four family members need to be involved. One participant said

‘All of us go there for water. For our house three of us go because there are 2 jalis (fences) – so one goes to get water and then gives it to the person on there side and then that person gives it to the third person and that person brings the water home. Per day we use about 15 buckets. We usually fill every other day. Sometimes once in two days. What happens is that at night the trains come very fast and it becomes dangerous – sometimes the pots just flyaway with the speed of the train. The trains go very fast at night, we have to be watchful and careful. We carry the water on our heads and then when we look at the train going that fast we get dizzy – it is like that...once I almost fell down on the tracks.’

Children (both boys and girls) often help their mothers in fetching water.

Toileting: One of the main problems residents face is not having access to toilets within their settlement. In the early morning and late evenings women use the tracks for toileting. During the day they use the mined out quarry or go behind some bushes along a narrow pathway adjoining the tracks beyond the quarry. When they have the time and can afford it some women use a pay and use public toilet that is located in a nearby area but takes them 15 minutes to reach because of the circuitous route they have to take.
Small children usually sit and defecate on a piece of paper on the narrow lanes outside their homes. The feces are wrapped and thrown in garbage piles in the quarry or along the tracks. Older children use the tracks or the quarry. Most participants complained about the quarry being an unsafe place for toileting. One participant said

Apart from the house, we go to the khadi (quarry) for bathroom. We get scared going there, there are trees, and long grass, men keep coming and going...

..sometimes men will be hiding there to watch – one time a man got a woman by her throat..but somehow she got away So we have to take the children and go – they cannot go alone. Then if we have the money we can go to the bathroom on the other side – have to cross the bridge and go , it is really far for going to the bathroom there.

Her 13 year old son added ‘I go to the khadi (quarry) for bathroom...there are lots of snakes there too. The grass is so high we are very scared to go there.’

Garbage: Participants living in homes facing the tracks had several complaints with regard to garbage being disposed of along the tracks in front of their homes. They said that while the municipal garbage collector went house to house to collect garbage, several residents living along the inner lanes of the settlement tended not to give their garbage to her but instead threw it in garbage piles along the tracks. One participant complained

We have told them (residents living along the inner lanes) many times not to do that (throw garbage near the tracks) – we ask them how they will feel if we throw rubbish in front of their houses and like that we have fights. Our children only fall ill because of all the garbage lying here...but who do we tell this to? There is nobody who will listen to us...The garbage lady goes inside but they still throw the garbage out here. I have told you know there zhoppadpatti people will never become better in their ways – they will be like this only... we will live and die here.
When I asked the participants where the garbage collector disposed of the garbage they said that sometimes she took it with her and sometimes she dumped it in the quarry area or somewhere further away from the settlement along the railway tracks.

Drainage: During the monsoons settlement residents face many problems as homes and lanes are flooded with rainwater. Lack of adequate storm water drainage infrastructure along railway tracks and the fact that the settlement is located in a low lying area with respect to surrounding areas are two of the main causes of flooding in the settlement during the monsoons. Participants said that when trains stop functioning it is a sign that their homes will be flooded with water and with it garbage and excreta. Houses closest to the railway tracks are most affected. During the monsoons, participants said that access to water and finding a place for toileting becomes even more difficult. One participant said

‘During the monsoons it becomes very difficult. Water comes in, and there is garbage and gutter water everywhere, we cant even go and fill water – cannot go to the bathroom. It is a big problem. that big khadi is there right so when it rains there are more mosquitoes, snakes, turtles everything…we get very scared to go there. If it rains heavily then all the water comes off into the house also…one time it rained so heavily we all had to move out of here for a few weeks. There was so much water you could barely see the station. The tracks here it was like a river.’

Many participants said they have lost a lot of belongings and important documents in floods and some participants said that they suffer from chronic toe infections because of having to wade in contaminated water for several days.

4.3 Children’s play and mobility
Children in the settlement play in places inside and outside their settlement. Small children play within their homes and just outside their homes where parents can keep an eye on them. They are sometimes cared for by their siblings near their homes. Parents to not allow older children to take their younger siblings to their play areas because parents fear that their children will wander onto the tracks and get killed or injured. Small children play with found objects, toys, and sometimes garbage lying close to homes. One mother of a six-year-old girl said

‘This younger one is a real ‘badmash’ (naughty one) she keeps running outside to play here and there and someone will be shouting at her to come back into the house. She says she wants to play... what can I say to her. She plays with other small children in the area. She will play with the mud outside, then with the garbage lying there and says she is cooking or making ‘paan’ for all of us. We shout at her, but she keeps playing like that only... what to do she is still a child. Her clothes get so dirty.
Young children said they play just outside their homes or in small open spaces close to the railway tracks. They play games like pakadam pakdi (tag), kabbadi, hide and seek, dabba tip tip tip (a made up game around a large metal box lying near the tracks), jumping, skipping, bat and ball, and cricket. Parents are worried when their children play near the railway tracks but they said they have no choice but to let them play there as there is no other place for them in the settlement where they can play. Parents said that adults living in homes facing the tracks usually keep an eye on the children and shout at them if they tend to wander onto the tracks. Some boys complained that they have been pushed around by older boys while playing near the tracks and gotten hurt. They also complained about the stones near the tracks and said they cause them to trip and fall. Some boys said they go to play in the municipal playground behind their settlements. Parents and young boys complained that the younger boys are pushed around by the older boys in the playground.

This is one of the main reasons why some caregivers do not allow their younger sons to play in the playground. One mother of 8 and 10 yr old boys said

‘The children play here only in front of the house. I don’t send them to the garden because they get beaten up by the other children there..they are small so they get pushed around by the older boys playing there’

These boys and a few others said they go early in the morning to jog in the park as there is nobody there at that time. Some children said they went to a neighborhood park they call the ‘samosa garden’. They said that the watchman in the park lets them play there between 4 and 6pm on some days but on other days chased them away saying it is a park only for ‘building’ people and not ‘zoppadpatti’ people.

Older boys said they played cricket in the municipal playground in the evenings. Older girls said they stayed at home and studied or helped their mothers with housework. Some young
boys and older boys said they went to places outside the settlement by themselves. In the child-led tour they showed us two small neighborhood parks, some shops, a video game parlor, a cycle rental shop, and a place where they go for tuition classes. Parents said they accompany girls to places outside the settlement as they feel it is unsafe for both young and adolescent girls to go by themselves.

Many participants said the settlement is not a good environment to raise children. There are two main reasons they gave to support their statement. One is the proximity of the settlement to the railway tracks and the other is that there are boys who drink and gamble and do drugs in a small covered open area facing the railway tracks. Some parents said they were ‘helpless’ as they had nowhere else to go and they do the best they can to keep their children safe. One participant said

‘No this area is not good for children. We are helpless so we stay here – we have nowhere else to go. We worry about the children. They cannot be free and play where and when they want to. We worry about them when they do go to play somewhere...We have to keep an eye on them. We cannot trust anybody here. The place in front of the tracks these boys hang out there all the time. They are dangerous and are up to all kinds of things....we don't let our children go there. We make them go this side only to the shops and all that..' 

Some participants said their area is not a bad environment for their children. They said overall their settlement has changed for the better as they have more durable housing and less crime in their area. They added that children have the opportunity to go to good schools and ‘become something’. One mother of an adolescent girl said that she has educated her daughter and enrolled her in computer classes so that she can have a better future and become something better than a housemaid as she(mother) has been one all her life. These participants felt enforcing parental restrictions on children’s mobility and
behavior are essential to counter physical and social risks that are still present in their settlement. One participant said

‘The environment is not bad, it is not like the girls get teased or anything. It really depends on the parents, if they have some control over their children then they will turn out all right – but if they let them go to do what they want then they get into bad habits and all that. It all depends on the parents.. I have been living here for 20 year so I can say this is a nice area.’

Another parent said

‘There are different types of situations in the area at all times...my children go to the shop quickly and come back quickly they don’t roam around and loiter. At the most they might speak to people in 3 to 4 houses who we know. That is all..We also go and look for them, if they take too long we question them about where they went, and why it took so long – we also tell them repeatedly to not stand around and chat outdoors..There are different types of people here and everybody is not nice so we have to be careful.’

4.4 Social support

The residents of ME settlement feel they cannot depend on others people in the settlement for childcare or other help. Most participants said they could not leave their children with neighbors, as they did not trust them to take good care of their children. They also said that residents would not come to the aid of children in trouble. One mother said ‘No nobody helps the children here – they watch but they will not help if they are in trouble.’, and added that people are too caught up in their own lives. Participants said they depend on ‘outside help’ like the mosque, local politicians, and other NGOs for assistance in times of hardships and emergencies (floods, fires).
Women said that they did not have the time to socialize with other women as they are too busy with working or looking after their families. One participant said it was better this was, as earlier

‘...people would fight over small issues or over children or anything- now it is not like that. People have changed and become more decent – they do not fight simply.

Before we used to sit here and there and talk and fights would break out. Now we all stay in our homes and do our work. There are no jobless people here anymore, everybody works.’

They said people came together only to celebrate festivals. Many participants also said that while there was a housing society it existed only in name and no work was done through the society to make the settlement a better place. Some said it was hard to get residents to attend meetings and agree on changes to be made in the settlement. One participant said

‘The problem is there is no one-ness here. No one comes for meetings – nothing. That is why this place is not going anywhere. In other areas people work together that is why they are getting better – but here nobody listens and nobody cares to do things together – that is why this is like this. Nobody supports a common cause. That is why our area is still like this, otherwise we would be much better off by now.’

Participants living on one particular lane felt differently from other participants with regard to social support. A woman who has been living on this lane for 40 years has taken it upon herself to sort problems of people living on the street and ensure that petty fights do not occur or are resolved swiftly. Residents living on this street said that their neighbors were supportive. One participant said

‘I don’t know about the whole area but in our lane people are quite helpful and they do look out for each other and help out when someone needs help. I don’t know so much if they help children but like when there is a death on street we all get together and contribute.’
She added at another point in our conversation ‘*Because of this aunty – this galli is good. Because everybody listens to her. If there is a problem then everybody tells her and she will take care of it.*’

A few participants said that ten years ago even though there was more crime in their area they were a more close-knit community and people had a sense of security as they could depend on neighbors for help. They said that in recent years speculation of new housing for people living in the ME settlement had attracted hundreds of outsiders to settle in the ME settlement. Old-time residents said these newcomers, were not interested in being part of the community and had to an extent diluted the strong sense of community that had existed previously. One participant said

‘*I don’t go out much anymore. Before I used to go see people and visit them but not anymore. The times have changed now it is not like before. Earlier there were fewer families, there used to be some love and friendship between families living here...now with more people coming here, we don’t know who they are, they create fights here, we stay away from all that.*’

5. **Needs in New Housing**

Residents of the ME settlement feel that when there are concrete plans for new housing they will most probably be in another area in Mumbai as their current area is close to the railway tracks and prone to flooding. They said most important is that housing should be located in an area where residents are able to find work and earn a living to support their families. It should also be close to shops, schools, a temple, a mosque, clinic, anganwadi, and public transportation. Participants also said it is very important children have a safe place to play close to the new housing. One resident said

‘*There should be a place for children to play – where will they go. At least adults can go far they can go 10-15 minutes for things – but where will children go? How long can they stay locked in their homes? They definitely need places where they can*
play... Especially for young children, a small garden where they can play on swings, run around.’
Chapter 8: Byculla Pavement Dwellers

1. Profile of Settlement

Figure 49: View of Byculla pavement settlement when pavement markets are open

This case study is based on pavement dwellers residing in a low-rise neighborhood called Byculla in South Mumbai. 'Pavement dwellers’ are people who have claimed certain pavements for living and making their livelihood. They are different from ‘slum dwellers’ in that they do not occupy any open land but rather take over public sidewalks. Pavement dwellers are considered to be the poorest and most vulnerable of slum populations as they face regular demolitions (of their homes and livelihoods) and have no legitimate access to
basic services such as water and sanitation. The pavement dwellers I interviewed have been living in Byculla since the 1970’s. This neighborhood still retains the character of an older Mumbai and consists of large trees, narrow streets, and low-rise buildings. Initially these families used the pavements for sleeping and storing their meager possessions but over time they established a more permanent presence by building dwellings on them. The material used for making the homes were at first less permanent (like plastic sheets and gunny sacks) and over time became more permanent (like bricks, wooden boards and tin sheets.) Most dwellings are 40 to 50 square feet in area with a small loft on top for sleeping. Residents as well as outsiders lay out a market in front of the houses during the morning and early afternoon. At this time the streets are bustling with sellers peddling their goods, customers haggling for the best price, and increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Once the markets close the streets are quieter and pavement dwellers resume their daily routines. The pavements are a collage of clothes hung out to dry, large and small water storage bins, charpoys, an assortment of possessions stored on ledges and shelving, and dwellings patched together with a range of materials. It is on these very pavements that SPARC and MM were conceptualized and realized, and where their relationship to the NSDF was established to create the Alliance.

Population: In 1986 a cooperative society called Milan Nagar was formed with 536 families living on the pavements of Byculla. In 2005, 80 families were allotted housing in the Milan Nagar Housing in Mankhurd. The remaining 456 families still live on the pavements with the hope of moving into new housing in the near future. The total population is around 2000 with an average of 4-5 individuals living in each house. Some homes have as many as 14

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40 A bed, commonly used in India, made of a light metal or wood frame strung with nylon tape or light rope
people living in them while others have as few as 1 or 2 members\textsuperscript{41}. Men work as drivers, casual laborers, factory workers, and in a range of micro industries that flourish in the neighborhood. Women work as maids for the middle class families in the neighborhood and also take on home based work like finishing garments, making buckles, coloring bangles, and so on. Some families also sell wares on the pavement/road in front of their homes. Most children attend school. The area leaders said that a majority of the children finish their primary schooling and a few go on to do their secondary education. Most children do not finish school and go on to college, as they are needed to help out at home or take on jobs to supplement meager family finances.

**Infrastructure and Services:** Over the years the pavement dwellers, with support from the Alliance, have been able to negotiate with the local municipality for access to electricity and water. Water is filled at public water taps in the neighborhood or purchased from water vendors. Residents perform many daily chores such as washing and bathing outside their homes and the grey water from these chores drains into narrow semi covered gutters running in front of the homes. Pay and use public toilets located close by are used for toileting. Garbage is disposed of in refuse bins located in the neighborhood or just added to open garbage piles along the streets. The residents have easy access to healthcare facilities, schools, play areas, employment opportunities, household supplies (food, clothing etc), and public transportation.

**Engagement with the Alliance:** In short, this is where it all started.

The founding members of SPARC worked with an urban community service provider between 1974 and 1984. During this time they worked with the pavement dwellers in Byculla on issues of income, health, and education. They soon came to realize that the ‘service delivery’ approach followed by the institution they worked with did little to address the root case of the problems faced by women and children living on pavements. The

\textsuperscript{41} This information is from the settlement and household surveys conducted by Mahila Milan and SPARC date?
founding members of SPARC found that what was most detrimental to the lives of pavement dwellers was the routine demolitions of their homes and possessions carried out by the municipality. They found that every fortnight the municipality would demolish the pavement dwellers homes who would then erect them again. They felt that these demolitions were the root cause of people’s poverty, insecurity, and ill-health and that they needed to be addressed. However, the organization they worked with was more conservative in their approach and did not support their views. As a result these few women left the NGO, and started their own fledgling organization called SPARC to work with the pavement dwellers. They decided to work with women as they found that it was women who faced the demolitions, managed family finances and looked after the well-being of the family.

From the very beginning the relationship between members of SPARC and the pavement dwellers has been based on empowerment and self-work. Members of SPARC over a period of a few years gained the trust of the pavement dwellers in Byculla and started to work with them in deeply participatory ways. They did not solve their problems but instead provided them with means (information, access to municipal officers, legal advice, and methods like enumerations, collective savings\textsuperscript{42}) with which to solve their own problems. The women pavement dwellers over time with support from SPARC formed their own collective called the Mahila Milan. Together they started their quest for legitimate housing for the pavement dwellers of Byculla. During this time they came across the NSDF (National Slum Dwellers Federation) a grassroots organization of slum dwellers that had been fighting for the rights of the urban poor for several years, and were invited to join hands with them. The Alliance was formed.

Over time many pavement dwellers have been able to acquire ration cards and legitimate access to basic services such as water, electricity, and housing. The area leaders of the MM

\textsuperscript{42} Please see introductory chapter for more information on these methods.
in this area are pioneers of the methods and systems that are now used by MM organizations across the country and by grassroots organizations in other parts of the world. The women from Byculla have travelled to several states in the country and across the world to share their experiences and train others in the techniques they use to organize themselves and build good working relationships with municipalities.

For the Byculla pavement dwellers, the search for land, planning and designing housing, and building it took over 20 years. But during this time all members of the Alliance learned valuable lessons and changed how government and municipal officials perceived pavement dwellers – from being seen as temporary populations having no right to the city to being acknowledged as citizens of the city with a right to secure shelter and basic services. In 2005, the first phase of housing was completed, and 77 of the 536 families were able to move into a new building called Milan Nagar in a suburb of Mumbai called Mankhurd. The remaining families at that time thought that it would be just a few more years before they too could move into their new housing. However, complications, like the occupation of their sanctioned land by other slum dwellers and requests for changes in building plans, have delayed the second phase of housing and new buildings are yet to materialize. This has left many of the residents and area leaders feeling frustrated and neglected.

From 1985 to 2005, this was where things happened: founding members of all three organizations used the Byculla area resource center as a base for all their activities – be it meeting with government officials or members of bilateral organizations, planning rallies, meeting with professionals, or holding housing exhibitions. It was always abuzz with activity. Since 2005, however, the base for the Alliance has shifted to Dharavi. This shift of base has added to the frustrations and sense of neglect faced by the remaining MM members in Byculla and in my conversations with them many expressed that they feel ‘abandoned’ by SPARC and NSDF members, and all their hard work has left them with nothing for themselves and their families.
2. Methods

*Individual Interviews:* Nine families were interviewed either inside or outside their homes depending on the space available. Four families from street A and 5 families from street B were interviewed. The primary caregivers and target children were present during the interviews along with other family members who were at home during the time of the interview.

*Group Tours:* The *child-led tour* of the neighborhood included play areas around their dwellings as well as those that were a few blocks away from where they lived. While children addressed issues of garbage, discussions of access to water, and sanitation did not arise in the tour. The *adult led tour* was cursory as participants felt they had discussed all concerns during the individual interviews.

![Diagram of tour route](image)

Figure 50: Child-led tour - The tour started at the dispensary, went on to Jhula Maidan, the YMCA ground, the Lal Maidan, the Baby Garden, and ended again at the settlement.
### Table 12: Overview of methods used in Byculla Pavement Settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview with settlement leaders</strong></td>
<td>The MM area leaders were interviewed in the SPARC and MM office located in close vicinity to the pavement dwellers.</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the origins of the Alliance, change over time with regard to tenure and access to basic services, planning process for new housing, and current issues faced by residents.</td>
<td>90 min</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The interview was also audio-taped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual family interviews</strong></td>
<td>9 families were interviewed. The target children in these families were: boys aged 7, 8, 10 and 14, and girls of ages 6, 8, 11, 13, and 17.</td>
<td>For the most part residents were satisfied with their living conditions. Their main issue was inadequate access to water. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the homes, streets, municipal toilet, meeting room, and dispensary compound.</td>
<td>30min to 45 min</td>
<td>These interviews were audio taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken of common spaces outside the homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child-led group tour</strong></td>
<td>6 children participated in the group tour. Three girls aged 8,11 and 13, and three boys aged 8,10, and 14.</td>
<td>Children took us to places where they play – Jhula maidan, the dispensary compound, Lal maidan, YMCA ground, and the Baby Garden</td>
<td>75 min</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of play areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-led group tour</strong></td>
<td>Three women participated in the group tour.</td>
<td>This tour started at the Byculla area resource center and went on to the public toilet and then back to where we started.</td>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Common Spaces

3.1 Space outside the house

The space outside homes during most part of the day is used for commercial and residential purposes. About two to four feet of the road immediately outside dwellings is paved with stone or cement. Most household chores like bathing, washing, and cleaning take place here. Usually all such chores are completed before nine in the morning – an hour before the pavement sellers lay out their goods and the vehicular and pedestrian traffic levels increase.

Women typically bathe inside their homes. In homes with large families, some residents (mostly men, boys, and elderly women) sleep in this space at night. Open or closed shelving packed with odds and ends abut the vertical surfaces of dwellings. Metal or wood ladders scale the vertical surfaces to provide access to the lofts. Water bins, clothes, and other household belongings are stored in this space as well.

Another three to four feet of space is encroached upon on a temporary basis. For example, most sellers use this space to sell wares that are displayed either on the ground, on handcarts, or on charpoys. Motorbikes are sometimes parked in this space. In the evenings women put out cots and sit on them and chat with relatives, friends, or neighbors. This additional three to four feet of space that is encroached upon seldom has any permanent use.

Figure 51: A young mother bathes her toddler outside her home while her four year old plays with a watering can.
structures or heavy storage items such as water bins. This space is kept in check by the municipality regularly - routine checks are made where people are instructed to remove all items placed in the additional three to four feet of space. On occasion, municipal staff remove and/or destroy items that are within this space with no prior warning to pavement sellers or residents. Residents also manage their belongings so as to not cause traffic holdups. Viren, a father of six children said

‘If there is traffic then we shift all our things to the side. We do not cause trouble for the people on the road. Like when the bus is going and all – we do not put anything in the way that will delay the bus.’

Residents use charpoys as vertical dividers by placing them on edge to create private and semi-private space outside the house and to differentiate the space outside their home from their neighbors. For example charpoys are placed in front of the paved space in front of homes to provide some privacy for children and men while they bathe. They are also used to separate personal space from space used by pavement sellers.

Children, mainly young children, play in the space outside the dwellings. The youngest play with found objects, or natural materials lying on the roadside, and with small toys. Girls often play with each other or their younger siblings. They play games like hide and

Figure 52: A resident sells clothes outside her home and uses a charpoy to separate the dwelling space from the commercial space
Sheetal, a 9 year old girl said

'I play on the road when the footpath has been cleared (after the pavement markets have closed for the day). I also play in front of the house. We play ‘pakadam pakadi’ (running and catching) we do funny things make everybody laugh. We play ‘chupam chupi’ (hide and seek). I usually play with my friends who live nearby.’

Most women we interviewed said they perform most cooking related activities inside their homes. Sometimes, like when they are sitting with friends and chatting outside their homes during the evenings, they combine cooking related tasks with socializing with relatives and neighbors. Samira, a mother of three boys, said

'We do not do any cooking outside. We do everything in our house – inside only. We do all the vegetable cutting, cooking and everything inside the house – nothing is done outside. See sometimes if we are sitting outside and chatting and there is some cutting to do then it gets done outside but otherwise everything is done inside the house. See what happens is we are sitting outside and the neighbors are also there and we are talking and chatting and then we also do such work and like that we finish our work easily and pass the time.’

The interviewees have two major complaints with regard to the space outside their homes. Most participants complained about the municipality vehicles that come to clear out objects (furniture, storage items, saleable items displayed on the road) that are occupying road space beyond two to three feet from homes. Participants said that municipal staff often come when the markets are in session and clear out the markets and at times confiscate the goods being sold. This is a turbulent affair, where several household belongings are also taken away if residents fail to remove them from the road. Shabina, a mother of five children said
'There is no breaking by the municipality anymore...but when they come they make us remove everything that is outside the house – dabbas, water bins etc – they say "ok hatao!(remove) – put these in your houses” now you have seen the size of our homes – where will we keep all these inside our home – and have place to sit? Sometimes everything happens in such a hurry that many of our things are taken away also...we have lost a lot of things this way!’

Another complaint made by participants was related to increasing levels of traffic. Families with young children said they fear for their children’s safety as vehicular traffic has increased over the years. A few participants said that traffic had increased after the pavement markets started. Most participants also complained about the high noise levels when the markets are open. One participant complained

‘The traffic has become much worse more...much worse than before. Especially when the market starts on the pavement then there is much more traffic. There is also so much more sound – very loud...we cannot rest then at all.’

3.2 Toilet

All participants we spoke with said their families use the municipal toilet located close to their dwellings. The municipal toilet abuts the playing field (Jhula Maidan). There are two sections: one for men, and another for women. Each section has eight toilet seats. There is no separate section for children; some mothers with young children said they encouraged their children to squat on paper for toileting which was then wrapped and thrown in the nearest rubbish bin or pile. Most interviewees have issues with regard to this municipal toilet. The first issue is that it is expensive to use and the second issue is that it is poorly maintained. Large families, in particular, find the municipal toilet to be a drain on their finances. Meera a mother of five children said
‘The bathroom is expensive – the prices keep increasing – before it used to be one rupee, then they made it two rupees and now they ask for 3 rupees. It becomes very difficult for us especially when there are so many of us.’

Both women and children complained that the toilet was poorly maintained and that there was often no soap/powder available to wash their hands. They added that they hated the fact that they had to pay to use a toilet that was kept badly and worried that they might fall ill as a result of using such ill-kept facilities. Noorani a mother of eight children said

‘….even after taking so much money they keep it so dirty that we are afraid we will fall sick and get disease by using the bathroom. After fighting for so long they have made it two rupees for women. Now these children do not work – they go to school. Even from them they take two rupees or one rupee. If we give them change like one or two rupees they take that – otherwise they take more. If I send them with a 10 rupees note they will cut three rupees. They do things like that. It’s not like they (children) earn money. From children also they take 3 rupees!? – they should be taking one or two rupees.’

Saira, her fourteen year old daughter added

‘See we keep the house and the area in front of our house clean. See they are showing all the time on TV how people can fall ill when things are dirty and not kept clean. But what to do – we do not have a choice so we use the bathroom – and pay for it.’

Women and adolescent girls also mentioned that there have been times when the toilet has closed for two to three days for repair works. At such times they said it is extremely difficult for them, as they and their older children have limited options for toileting. Women said they couldn’t use their homes as the houses are small and offer little privacy and it was impossible to find a secluded place for toileting in the open as the neighborhood is densely populated.
Having to walk to the toilet and wait in a queue takes about five to ten minutes and at times much longer. Some women, particularly older women, said they find it difficult to control their urge to urinate while waiting in queues. Participants said they have approached the caretaker of the public toilet several times with regard to the charges as well as maintenance issues but their complaints have seldom been addressed.

### 3.3 Market

All participants said they use the market. The market is a bustling vibrant place, located close to the pavement dwellers, where one can get almost everything one needs. Women go to the market everyday or once in two to three days to buy vegetables, household supplies, meat, snacks, and school supplies. Women said they often send their sons to the market if they are busy. They seldom send their daughters as they feel the environment is unsafe for girls. Some mothers mentioned that their younger daughters, on occasion, accompany them to the market. Both boys and young girls I spoke with said they frequent the market to buy things for themselves or for their parents. None seemed intimidated by the crowds or the traffic. They said they are used to going there and are aware of how to negotiate through the crowds and traffic and bargain with shopkeepers.

### 3.4 Dispensary Compound

The dispensary is a government run medical facility offering basic healthcare services. The building is located in a spacious compound. In the open space to the left of the dispensary building is an area resource center managed by SPARC.

After the dispensary is closes (4 pm), children living in the nearby pavement dwellings use the paved open space to the right of the dispensary building and the steps in front of the building for play. The dispensary compound is bounded by a fence made of vertical metal
bars, which allows parents to keep an eye on their children from across the street, while chatting with neighbors or performing household chores.

The younger girls use the steps in front of the dispensary to play all kinds of pretend games like teacher-teacher, house-house, and sister-sister. Young boys as well as adolescent boys use the open space to the side of the building to play more robust games like cricket, bat-ball, and football. They also use the space to play board games. Most children we interviewed said they use this space and are very fond of it.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 13 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 13: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Like about your settlement</strong></td>
<td>Location (9)</td>
<td>Employment opportunities (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment opportunities (7)</td>
<td>Market (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market (6)</td>
<td>Support from family and friends (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do not like about your settlement</strong></td>
<td>Flooding during monsoon (8)</td>
<td>House (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House (7)</td>
<td>Public toilet (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic (5)</td>
<td>Noise (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space outside house (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public toilet (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important common spaces used in the area</strong></td>
<td>Space outside house (7)</td>
<td>Space outside house (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public toilet (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes in the settlement over the last 10 years</strong></td>
<td>No significant improvements (6)</td>
<td>Nothing (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more demolitions (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased traffic (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved access to water (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved access to electricity (3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less safe (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased rents (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and aspirations of residents</td>
<td>Housing with all facilities (9)</td>
<td>Park/garden (7)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Core issues

4.1 Problems with Current Housing

Most participants, particularly MM area leaders, feel their area has changed for the better over the past many years. They said that demolitions of houses have stopped and people are more secure in their current housing. They also have improved access to electricity and water.

The main issues that residents have with regard to their current housing is lack of space, and flooding of homes during the monsoons. Large families, in particular, feel the effects of inadequate space. Participants with large families complained there is not enough room for their families to even sit together for a meal inside their homes. At night children are made to sleep indoors – but when that is not possible boys are made to sleep outside on the floor, on charpoys or underneath charpoys. Families with adolescent children also feel the pressures of inadequate space as they feel that growing children need some privacy and space of their own.

Participants said that ever since the pavement markets have started there is less space for them to do their chores and the area in general has become more crowded and noisy. They said that earlier children could easily play in front of the homes while they did household chores, but now there was no place for children to play when the markets were open. During the monsoons the lack of adequate shelter is further exacerbated by rainwater flooding homes. At such times, people move to higher ground, shift children to the loft...
space, and store whatever belongings they can salvage on open shelving abutting the houses at the loft level. Mumtaz, a mother of three children, said

‘During the monsoon all the water comes inside the house. Sometimes when the rains are heavy then we get like this much (1-2 ft) water inside the house. That is a big problem during the rains. Then children have no place to sit, study, or sleep, and then it becomes difficult to make food also. When the place is flooded then where will we cook. We cannot even buy (food) outside and bring here because everything closes down because of the rains. Every year we have to deal with this. Then when the vehicles go on the road then even more water comes into the houses. That is why we have made all these shelves – so when the water comes in then we put whatever we can up on the shelves.’

Women are particularly concerned for their children during the monsoons. They said the rainwater often destroys children’s books and clothing. In addition children find it difficult to study and sleep and therefore do poorly at school. Shafir, a father of eight children said

‘During the monsoons when it starts to rain heavily…we have to stay awake because the water might come in – then we put the cot outside and we all sit on it. We cannot sleep. Then if it gets too heavy then some of us go to higher ground over there and sit there. We try and get the children to go back to sleep on the loft. But we stay awake to make sure everyone is safe.’

Some other common concerns with housing are to do with increasing rents, increasing traffic, and verbal harassment from middle class neighbors. Some of the participants we interviewed are tenants who have been living in the same house for a long period of time. These women complained about how rental prices have increased in recent years. Savita, a mother of three children said
‘I have a big problem with the house. I pay rent, this is not our house. I have been living here 20 years and we are still renting. When we came first we used to pay 200 Rupees now it has become very costly – we pay almost 1000-1500 Rupees every month.’

The reasons they gave for not being able to buy a house are most commonly lack of financial resources and landlords who are unwilling to sell the property.

Participants with young children said that the increasing traffic causes them to worry about their children’s safety. They said that while they constantly warn their children about the dangers of road traffic they felt children did not understand the consequences and often disregard their concerns. Parents also said that it is difficult for them to keep an eye on their children at all times and their houses are too small and dark to tell them to stay inside.

Safina, a mother of five children – all barely a year apart, said

‘For children it is difficult to live here. The fear of vehicles is there all time. You never know when one of them will get hit by something. Two of my girls have been hurt by traffic. See this one here – she got hit by a scooter. Then this other girl also got hurt. We had to rush her to the hospital in a taxi. We have to be more careful with the kids. You see their brains are like animal brains – they don’t know much. There is always danger and we have to always look out for them. But we are also busy doing all the house work – so it is difficult.’

Participants living on street B complained that they constantly face verbally abuse from the residents of the apartment building across from their dwellings. They said that these apartment residents resented them (pavement dwellers) as they felt that they make the neighborhood ‘dirty and cheap’. Mustaf, a father of four children, said

‘The people living in the building opposite – they will come and tell us anything, anything they want and go away. We cannot do anything so we just take it. Sometimes when motorists hit our children, then people on the road do not side with
us. Especially people living opposite (in the building). They say "you leave your children on the road what do you expect will happen” they say things like that – whatever they want. They don’t care.’

4.2 Children’s Play and Mobility

Both the individual home interviews and the child-led tour provided rich data on children’s access to places in the neighborhood and their likes and dislikes with regard to these places. I observed all children who participated in the child-led tour to be fearless while navigating the streets and while playing in the playgrounds. They chased after small trucks, dodged cyclists and motorcyclists – who shouted at them – and seldom used the footpaths for walking. They paid no attention to my repeated words of caution to ‘be careful’, and to ‘walk on the side of the roads’. Instead, they laughed with good humor at my concern and said that they are used to the streets and that I should not worry about them but take care of myself! These children were full of spunk and energy. The girls were as fearless as the boys and sometimes even bullied the boys.

Young children play mostly near their homes. At times they accompany their older siblings to the dispensary compound and play under their watchful eyes.

Parents also said that when schools were in session children seldom had any time to play. They said their days are so packed with school, Arvi, and tuition classes that the only spare time children have is used for meals and sleeping. During holidays children have less busy schedules. Boys and girls said they play and watch TV in their homes when they have some free time on their hands. Most children have plenty of friends they can visit and play and study with in the neighborhood. Girls (7-12) play near their homes when the pavement

43 Most children go to ‘Arvi’ everyday, which is a place where Islamic teachings and culture are imparted.
markets had closed for the day, or go to the dispensary compound with friends. In both of these places they play games like, langdi (hopping game), chupa chupi (hide and seek), pakadam pakadi (running and catching), and skipping. They also play pretend games like ‘teacher-teacher’, and ‘sister-sister’. On occasion they go to a neighborhood park that residents refer to as the ‘baby garden’ with an adult chaperone. The baby garden, located about half a kilometer away from the pavement dwellers houses, is a park filled with greenery, small open spaces, benches, and some play equipment like swing sets and slides. It is open from 3pm to 6pm and access is restricted to women and young children. The children took me here in the course of the child-led tour. They said they enjoy playing on the play equipment, having picnics on the grass, and running about around the trees playing games. Children described the park as ‘beautiful’ and a place where they can ‘relax’ and ‘have fun’.

Figure 54: Children playing with plastic cooking toys in the dispensary compound
Older girls prefer to stay indoors. The adolescent girls I spoke with have no positive feelings for their area. They venture outside their homes to go to the market and toilet and to occasionally visit with friends or relatives. Sheetal, a 16 year old girl said she did not particularly like anything about the area they live in but as it is where her home is she has adjusted to living here. When I asked her if she played, she laughed in response saying she did not play anymore as she is ‘not a child’, but instead helps her mother with housework and focuses on her studies. She said

’My main dream is that I get a good job – that is my dream. Where I will get a salary of about 8000/-, That is my dream. I am educated – that is why.’

The other two girls I interviewed also said they did not like anything about the area in which they live and hoped that they would be able to move to a ‘proper’ house soon. Fatima, a 17 year old girl said

‘this whole area is a problem – what is there to tell. You can see it. The ‘mahoul’ (environment) here is not good. I have no problems here...as such. The house feels small – I just wish we lived somewhere else like in a building and not on the footpath...’

Participants with adolescent daughters said it is not safe for their daughters to go outside the house unaccompanied. One parent said

‘The environment/atmosphere is not so good right so we don’t let the children play outside that much. Especially the girl – we do not let her go anywhere by herself. See nowadays the men are not decent, you can’t trust them... they can do anything and she is a girl – if it’s the boys then it’s okay they can play anywhere. But with girls we are more worried and so we are more careful...so we don’t let her go outside the house much. (ME - has something happened in your area?) no, nothing like that has happened specifically, but you hear all these stories on the TV and in the news...’
so we don’t want to take a chance. Better to be careful. You know people get drunk they don’t know what they are doing they take advantage of girls and all that.’

Boys (8-18) play in the playgrounds close to the housing as well as further away. Some of the adolescent boys play carom in the dispensary compound; these games are usually intense and often have younger spectators. Boys said they play organized sports like cricket, football, and basketball in the Jhula Maida, YMCA, and Lal Maidan. When I asked the boys whether they faced any problems while playing in the playgrounds, all of them said they were happy playing on the grounds and have no problems. A couple of mothers, however, said that the boys are often harassed by older men playing in Jhula Maidan. The boys never tell their parents about these incidents as they might result in fights between their parents and the older men who also live in the area and because they might be forbidden to go to the playground. Their mothers said they find out about these issues through neighborhood gossip.

Figure 55: Jhula Maidan in the afternoon when it is too warm for children to play outdoors
As mentioned earlier, road traffic is a growing concern among parents. Most parents I spoke with said they fear their children will be hit by a moving vehicle and get injured. Three participants said their children have been victims of traffic accidents. Sabina, a mother of two young boys said,

‘There is no problem for the children here. Like that – the main problem is the traffic. When the pavement markets are open there is a lot of traffic and sometimes accidents happen when children are playing or crossing the road. See this boy – he has had two accidents – there is a hospital close by so we take them there.’

5. Moving to New Housing

In the following chapter the Milan Nagar housing is described in detail. All of the residents interviewed in Byculla had visited the Milan Nagar housing and they expressed concern with regard to moving to the relocated housing that is yet to be built. Lack of adequate access to water, good government schools, and work opportunities are among the top concerns of participants. Women said that while they have to suffer with inadequate space and traffic hazards they feel that these are known problems they have some expertise in dealing with as opposed to moving to a new environment with new problems that could have a truly debilitating affect on their lives. They often drew comparisons between the lives of their neighbors who have moved to the Milan Nagar housing and their own and stated that they are better off staying where they are. One participant said

‘Even the people who have moved from here – they all come back here to find work and do some type of work and earn money. There is nothing to do there. They leave their children there – the come here by 9/10 am they do all their work and then leave at night. Then they go back exhausted. The main problem for us moving from here is that we will not find work there and we will have to come back here – and
travel so much everyday – and like now the children and I will not be able to find this kind of work to do in the house there.’

Participants said that the families who have moved to Mankhurd are still sending their children to school in Byculla, as there are no good municipal schools in the new location.

Muskaan, a mother of three children, said

‘This coming back and forth for school is difficult for the children. Children who are smart are okay they can look after themselves and be careful. But still their parents worry about them. You know two of the children fell off the train while coming to the school – one of them died – thankfully the other one survived. So the school is a big worry for us if we move there.’

While parents debated the odds of where they would be better off, the children I spoke with were very clear that they did not want to move to the new area. They said they are happy in Byculla and have no problems living there. Children said they do not want to move as they did not want to change schools and because they have several friends and numerous opportunities for play near their current housing. They added that they have visited the new housing and spoken with other children living there and have found their current area to be a better place for them.

6. Common spaces in new housing

Residents in Byculla are very familiar with the new building and have strong feelings about it, some of which will be discussed in the next case study – but that the bottom line is that their familiarity has given them the chance to think through their own priorities for future housing, some of which are common facilities like a meeting room, an Anganwadi\textsuperscript{44}, a Madrasa\textsuperscript{45}, and wide airy corridors.

\textsuperscript{44} The anganwadi referred to is located in another building closeby and not in the new housing
\textsuperscript{45} A place where Islamic teachings and culture are imparted to children.
Both adults and children said there should be some type of garden or park like space where children can play and adults can relax and socialize. One parent said,

‘In the new building, if there is a garden close by, then for the children after school they will have someplace to play and will not have to go far. That will be good. For us also we will have place to sit and talk and meet with others if the garden is there. There will be benches so the elders can sit.’

The older boys I spoke with said it will be nice to have a cricket ground close by where they can play cricket after school or on Sundays. Many participants suggested that a boundary wall with a gate will make the complex safe and secure, and they will not have to worry too much about their children going off to play on the road. A few children suggested that a place where they can study will be useful. A couple of the adolescent girls I spoke with suggested a library space, one of them said ‘For me the most important thing would be a library. I love to read! And if there is one then I will just be there all the time reading books.’
Chapter 9: Milan Nagar Mumbai

1. Profile of Settlement

![Figure 56: View of Milan Nagar housing from the road](image)

The Milan Nagar housing society is a four-storey building housing 85 families from the pavements of Byculla. It is located in Mankhurd, a the western suburb of Mumbai. In close proximity to the housing are some shops and seven-storey buildings that house railway settlement dwellers. Residents have been living in the Milan Nagar building for five years. The building itself is unique in that it is designed and built (in part) by the residents and their former neighbors who are still living on the pavements in Byculla. Each apartment is 10’ x 18’ in area and 15’ high. There are 22 apartments on each floor; 10 on one side and 12 on the other, facing each other and separated by a 6’ wide corridor. Common toilets are located on both ends of the corridor on each floor. All apartments have more or less a
similar configuration; the main door opens into the living area and the kitchen and a small bathing space are located on the far end of the living space. A loft area above the kitchen and bath area provides additional space for sleeping. On some floors a level difference separates the living area from the kitchen and bathroom. A metal ladder connects the living space to the loft area. Doorways are mostly kept open and cloth screens hanging across the main doorway provide partial privacy.

Common facilities such as a common meeting room, and a madrasa are located on the ground floor. Four stairways connect the floors; two are located in the middle of the building and another two are located on either end of the building near the common toilets. The building shows some signs of wear and tear; walls are blackened, flooring in common areas is chipped, some of the common toilets are in a state of disrepair and not in use.

As part of this resettlement project, three more buildings are yet to be built on the remaining plot of land. Further construction, however, has been stalled as 90 shacks occupy the remaining plot area.

Figure 57: Layout of plot showing proposed buildings and existing building
**Population**

The building is home to approximately 460 people. Most of the men travel to their former work areas in Byculla in South Mumbai. A majority of women stay at home; some of these women have home based shops that sell a variety of home based products while others work on home based jobs (like finishing garments and bangles) in their homes. Children usually help their mothers in these home based enterprises. All children attend school. Some travel to their old schools in Byculla by train while others have joined schools closer to the new housing. As there is no anganwadi in the Milan Nagar building some of the young children attend anganwadis located close by in the railway resettlement buildings.

**Infrastructure and Services**

Residents have access to piped water in all of their homes, however water supply is intermittent and not sufficient. There are eight common toilets on each floor, each is shared by two or three families. The housing is close to a train station. Participants said there is a dire lack of employment opportunities and good government schools near their current housing. They also have to rely on private hospitals in times of emergency, as there are no government hospitals close to the new housing.

![Figure 58: Typical floor plan showing common toilets, stairways, and corridor](image-url)
Engagement with MM and SPARC

The Mahila Milan members now living in this new housing were part of the MM area leaders in Byculla. The three area leaders I was able to speak with in the new housing said that they missed the other leaders who were still living on the pavements. Their experiences are similar to those stated in the previous case study. The MM leaders described in detail the planning, building and relocation process that made the building of Milan Nagar possible. They gave credit to members of SPARC and NSDF for much of what they were able to accomplish. The area leader spoke with emotion when they described how uneducated pavement dwellers like themselves were able to plan, design, build models, and take part in the construction of their new housing. They said they were able to learn about units of measurement and conversion of units using everyday material like sarees. Using simple methods and taking into consideration large family sizes and home-based work the MM women were able to design and build model houses that would work for them. The MM leaders said the members of SPARC and NSDF were with them every step of the way. They held meetings to decide who would relocate from the pavement to the new housing, and how. Families living under constant threat were given preference. Steps were also taken to make the transition less difficult. For example, buses were organized so children could attend their old schools till they were placed in new ones. The MM area leaders said they have been able to address some problems with their current housing by holding meetings and establishing certain rules and regulations around the use of the building. They said they are happy and secure in their current housing and can live with dignity. The MM leaders also spoke with genuine fondness about SPARC members and the relationship they had them –

'We are so fortunate that we have this place. We are very thankful to Sheela didi. We have given so much love to them – the people in this building have given them so much love that they have gone very far and done well and we have also benefitted.
We were always running behind them like fans – saying didi do this/didi do that. We were crazy about them – we used to joke, sing, laugh dance – that is how SPARC worked with us’

2. Methods

Individual Interviews: Eight families were interviewed inside their homes. Two families were selected from each floor such that we were able to speak with children in all age groups. The primary caregivers and target children were present during the interviews along with other family members who were at home during the time of the interview.

Group Tours: The child-led tour of the building included the corridors and stairways within the building. The children also showed me some places outside their building that they used to play. The adult led tour covered all aspects of the building both inside and outside.

Table 14: Overview of methods used in Milan Nagar Settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with settlement leaders</td>
<td>The MM area leaders were interviewed in the common meeting room located on the ground floor.</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the processes behind the making of the building as well as their current thoughts with regard to the new building</td>
<td>60 min</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken to record the interview. The interview was also audio-taped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual family interviews</td>
<td>8 families were interviewed. The target children in these families were: boys aged 7, 9, 12 and 17, and girls of ages 5, 7, 11 and 16.</td>
<td>For the most part residents were satisfied with their living conditions. Their main issue was inadequate access to water. The common spaces identified were corridors, common toilets, and open space outside the building.</td>
<td>30min to 45 min</td>
<td>These interviews were audio taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken of common spaces outside the homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Common Spaces

### 3.1 Chalis (Corridors)

Residents refer to corridors as ‘chalis’ or ‘gallery’. In the Milan Nagar housing chalis are six feet in width and span the length of the building. Homes are located on either side of the chalis. The chalis lack natural light and are mainly lit up by fluorescent tube lights. All participants in the housing said they liked the chalis. There is an accepted and practiced code of conduct of not using the chalis for housework. When I asked participants what they used the chali for, most said they use it only as a passageway to come and go from their homes and that during the evenings children use the chalis for play. Many participants insisted that do not do any housework in the chali, and that all household chores are
performed within their respective homes.

Some participants said that they spoke with neighbors of friends in the chalis. One participant said

‘We do not use the gallery at all – we don’t keep anything there also. The place we have outside (corridor) is good – we should have that like that only. When we bump into the neighbors in the chali we talk to them..We do not do any work outside the house in the chali. This is mainly used for coming and going and in the evenings the children play and jump here.’

Most children we spoke with said they like the chali as it allows them to play near their homes. The area leaders said that children playing robust games (especially boys playing with a bat and ball) in the chalis often caused accidents or fights and therefore they have
made a rule that challis are to be used only by younger children and girls for play. Boys have been instructed to play in the open space in front of the building.

3.2 Open Space

There is a large of open space in front of the building. A part of this space is occupied by railway slum dwellers who settled here when they were evicted from their previous homes. The area leaders said that the plan had been to build three other buildings to house the rest of the pavement dwellers from the Byculla area but at present matters are at a standstill as the railway slum dwellers are not willing to move. One of the area leaders said

‘The area in front is for other buildings – three more have to be built still. But those zoppadpatti people do not want to move from there, so that is a problem now – we have held many meetings to discuss this but no decisions have been reached.’

The unoccupied open space is bare of trees or any shade giving elements and the ground is uneven with rubble. The children from the housing use this space to play.

Figure 60: Open space outside the building
Boys mainly use the space to play cricket. Sometimes, girls play games like running and catching and hide and seek in this space. Young children complained that they do not like to play in this space as they are often scolded and bullied by the older boys, and because the rubble causes them to trip and hurt themselves.

In addition to children's play, this open space is also used by the residents to celebrate functions and meetings. Many participants value the open space as it allows them to host wedding ceremonies, large community meetings, and festivals without incurring large costs. They said that big tents are put up, and food is cooked outside on these occasions.

### 3.3 Toilets

Common toilets are located on each floor of the building. There are three toilets on each end of the corridor with 20 families sharing six toilets on each floor. Most families share a toilet with two other families and a few share it with one other family. Each family has a key to their respective toilets. Most participants said they have no problems sharing the toilet with other families as they have worked out a system that works to keep the toilet clean and well maintained. Shazia, a mother of five children, said

>'The bathroom is shared by three families. We do not keep anyone from outside to do the cleaning, we do it ourselves. We have 3 families – so for 10 days one family cleans then the other for the next 10 days and then the other family for the other 10 days- that is how we do it....the cleaning and maintenance of the bathroom. If we have some problems with the bathroom then we get the work done through the society.’

A few participants said they often have fights with the other families mainly with regard to the cleaning of the toilet.

However, all of the families we spoke with said they would prefer to have toilets within their homes and said that this should definitely be taken into consideration for the buildings yet to be built. Even the participants who share their toilets amicably said that they witness
several families get into fights with regard to sharing toilets and feel these altercations can be avoided if toilets are located within individual homes. One of the participants said,

‘There are many fights that happen over the toilet, mainly about cleaning. The common toilet is a problem here. Some families don’t clean the toilet at all. We keep cleaning. People are like that here. With three families sharing there are a lot of fights, people say you have a bigger family so you have to clean more, and like that lots of fights happen. The toilets should be in each person’s home. That way people are responsible for their own toilets, and these fights wont happen over who has cleaned or not cleaned the toilet.’

The area leaders we spoke in Byculla with also expressed similar opinions. They said that they had agreed to common toilets under the impression that sharing of common facilities would encourage socializing amongst residents. This has not happened. One of the leaders said

‘We decided where the toilets should be – we had said they should be outside the house. That is what Jockin sir told us – he said “you women like to talk to each other right – if the toilet is inside the house how will you meet? If it is outside then three or four of you might meet and talk to each other and pass the time.” But after we made that decision and it was built like that we realized that this common bathroom does not encourage talking but more fighting with each other! Four people were sharing one bathroom and the key used to be with one person – that person used to do dadagiri (boss around). People would go to ask for the key and she would say why? What do you want it for? And such things- then people would break the lock damage the place take the light away and then when it came to fixing the place people would say the person who has the key should fix the place – now when we build we do not want to share the toilets – we do not want all this fighting – we want the toilets inside the house.’
All of the children interviewed said they do not have any problem with the toilets. A few mentioned that their parents got into fights with their neighbors over cleaning of the toilet.

3.4 Stairways
The building has four stairways. At present only two of the stairways, those located along the length of the building are being used. The other two stairways located on both ends of the building are not in use and kept barred by locked retractable grill gates. Some participants we spoke with mentioned the stairways to be a common space. They said they are mainly used by resident to go between floors and during the afternoons children play on the steps. Many participants are of the opinion that there are too many stairways in the building and that two stairways would have been more than sufficient. These participants and the area leaders said that the two stairways near the toilets have caused many problems and therefore been locked up. One of the participants during the adult-led tour said

‘the other thing is that there are four stairways here – if these (the stairways near the toilets) were not there then we would have two more rooms on each floor. We only use those two stairways (the ones along the length of the building), the other two we keep locked because people do all kinds of nonsense there as they are away in the corners. Who has the time to keep going there and checking…. Somebody is drinking there, or boys are teasing girls over there or doing this and that with each other – who knows what is happening so we keep them closed.’

A few participants also mentioned that when they had initially moved into the building they had experienced several thefts of bathroom doors and sanitation pipes and said that having multiple stairways made it impossible for them to catch the thieves.

3.5 Entrance area and other common spaces
Entrance area: The entrance to the building has three wide steps. Residents use this space to socialize and keep an eye on children playing in the open space in front of the building. Some participants mentioned the entrance area as a common space they use on a regular basis. One of them said, 'I go at anytime ... just for a little while...to chat with someone do ‘mazal and masti’ (have fun) and then I come back to the house to do my work...’ Observations also revealed that this space is often used by the elderly to sit, chat, and pass the time.

Figure 61: Steps at the entrance

Madrasa: The madrasa is located on the ground floor. A madrasa is a place where Islamic culture and the readings of the Quran are imparted to children. Children between the ages of 5 and 15 attend the madrasa and at present there are 100 to 150 children from the building who go to the madrasa. Younger children have classes for a couple of hours in the mornings and older children have classes in the evenings. Most of the children we spoke with said they like going to the madrasa. Adolescent girls who are usually confined to their homes said they enjoy going to the madrasa as this way they can meet and talk with their friends.
Meeting room: The meeting room is mainly used for the daily savings activities and occasionally for meeting with visitors who come through SPARC to see the building. MM area leaders also use this space for internal meetings.

Terrace: The terrace in the building is kept under lock and key, and none of the participants we spoke with said they used it. The terrace can be rented for Rs 2000 (USD 40) to host functions and ceremonies. Many participants feel the price is too high and said they prefer to use the open space below at no cost. In the past five years the terrace has been used twice for celebrating family functions. Participants also expressed concern over children falling from the terrace, as the parapet walls are not high enough, and said that it is one of the reasons they keep the terrace locked.

Homerun enterprises: Many residents use their homes to operate small services and businesses. Some use their living space to make bangles, while others have small shops set up close to the main door of their homes. Adolescent girls, or older girls who have completed their studies or are going to college provide tuition services for school going children within their homes. One of the homes is also used as a tailoring shop where some of the adolescent girls from the building learn tailoring. Caregivers of adolescent girls are in particular pleased with the fact that there are several opportunities for their daughters within the building. A mother of a 13-year-old girl said

‘It is good we have these opportunities in the building – like send my daughter to work here. Now that she is of age I can’t send her out anywhere, as the times are not good. So instead of her hanging here and there it is better she is in one place where we can an eye on her. And she learns something also – that is why we send her there...Otherwise you send her outside then you never know what might happen.’
Shops and Market: Residents purchase most of their daily supplies from shops that are located a few hundred meters away from the housing. All participants said they use these shops; six of them complained that goods are more expensive in these shops than those that were located near their previous housing. Only a few of the residents send their children to these shops on errands, others are concerned for their children’s safety. Every evening at around 6pm a market is laid out on the road adjoining the building. All of the participants said they go to the market to purchase vegetables, pulses, and other food related items.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 15 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 15: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like about your new housing</td>
<td>House/building (12)</td>
<td>House/building (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everything (3)</td>
<td>Everything (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madrasa (3)</td>
<td>Madrasa (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not like about your new housing</td>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities (8)</td>
<td>No place to play (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of good affordable schools (8)</td>
<td>Garbage (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of adequate water (7)</td>
<td>Location (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common toilet (4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Split levels (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and aspirations of residents</td>
<td>Improved water supply (8)</td>
<td>Park/playground (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Park/playground (7)</td>
<td>Computer class (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Street lights (5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Function hall (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic signals (3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Important common spaces used within settlement</td>
<td>Chali (Corridor) (6)</td>
<td>Chali (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common toilet (5)</td>
<td>Space in front of the building (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madrasa (3)</td>
<td>Madrasa (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting room (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss about the old settlement</td>
<td>Social support (8)</td>
<td>Play spaces (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work opportunities (8)</td>
<td>Friends (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Living together’ (5)</td>
<td>School (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play areas for children (5)</td>
<td>Nothing (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good municipal schools (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and aspirations of residents</td>
<td>Improved water supply (8)</td>
<td>Park/playground (7)</td>
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<td>Traffic signals (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anganwadi (2)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Core Issues

4.1 Location and housing related issues

When participants lived on the pavements of Byculla in South Mumbai they had access to varied work and business opportunities at their doorstep; home based work (that children could help with) like making buckles or zippers for small manufacturing industries located in close proximity, selling assorted wares on pavements, and working as housemaids for middleclass families. After moving to the Mankhurd suburb, however, access to work opportunities became severely limited. Most participants said their spouses have no choice but to travel back to their old location for work; a round trip journey of three to four hours by train. Women who had supplemented their family incomes by taking on home based jobs, or by working as housemaids no longer have these opportunities. The networks they had built and relied upon over several decades for finding work no longer exist in the new location. Nor do the municipal schools and neighborhood organizations that had supported their children’s education. After having everything at their doorstep the notion of having to travel (for work, school, etc) has come down as a hard reality. Even after five years the biggest challenge for participants lies in coming to grips with their new location. The most common complaint from participants was they have no access to work opportunities and good municipal schools near Milan Nagar. In addition, their expenses have increased with higher utility bills, building maintenance costs, and travel expenses. One participant, a mother of four children, said

‘See here there is no work. For work and all that we have to go to Mumbai. They give us Rupees 400/- to 500/, and we do work there and come back here. Then there are the children, taking care of their eating and drinking and all that takes time. We have to leave in the morning then come back and feed the children take care of their needs, it is difficult. This place is nice to live, but there is no work in this
place....there is no work in this whole area only! This is the main problem. This place itself is very nice, I have no problems except that to feed ourselves we have no work here.... that is all. Everybody has to go to Mumbai for work.’

A few residents said they are happy with their apartments the way they are and went on to explain how they are a vast improvement from what they used to live in on the pavements. They felt the loft and level changes allowed them to separate household functions and also allocate space to various members of the household. Many residents, however, had complaints with regard to the size and layout of the apartment. Most felt that the kitchen should be a separate space and the wash area should be larger. They also said a larger apartment with a separate living, bedroom, and toilet would be ideal, and they preferred such a layout to having an additional loft space. Several caregivers also said that the loft space had led to many accidents in the form of falls. One mother said

‘This ladder and loft is a problem – in every house someone or the other has fallen from the stair. Not just the younger children the older ones also fall. A 15 year old has fallen from top...another 10 year old boy has fallen from the stairs and another 12 year old also....like that...

You know children they are always up to something or the other – they will climb this and that and stand on top of the wall there – so they will fall right. That is what happened.’

Some Byculla residents who had visited the Milan Nagar housing also expressed their dislike for this layout, and said that they did not want level differences in the apartment nor the loft space and preferred to have everything on one level. The area leaders in Byculla were in unison.

Figure 62: Ladder leading to loft space
with regard to not wanting the loft space in the proposed buildings. They felt that the loft space is not very practical and said having the loft increases construction costs. They said that they would rather have a little more space on the same level and have more floors so that more families could be accommodated. One participant in Byculla said

‘On some floors they have that up and down (level difference separating living space from kitchen and bathroom) and that is not good. Because of that up and down there are lots of problems. The whole place becomes smaller when it becomes up and down. For example if in one house there are two brothers living – and they have their wives and their children - then how will they adjust... the house is very small. When they make that loft on top – that also is small in size. You have to put a grill and all that and becomes smaller in size. The place below also looks smaller. Then the wives get into fights about which family should sleep where... it is hard to adjust, and families get into fights – all that happens. And it also looks very strange – that up and down inside the house. It does not look nice – more space on the same level will be better. Right? It does not look right...it does not look like regular apartments.’

Despite the hardships they faced in the new location, most participants were happy that they finally have the security of a home and said they will never go back to live on the pavements. The main reason participants gave for not wanting to go back was associated to the constant fear they lived in while on the pavements: fear that somebody would eventually break their houses, fear that some drunk driver would run over their sleeping bodies at night, or with fear that their children would get hit by the cars while they crossed or played on the roads. This is how Sofia, one of the elderly participants described this fear

‘Before we used to live in the zhopadi – but we still had all the facilities. But even with the facilities we used to live with a certain fear in our hearts...we used to live on the footpaths and people passing by would say things to us as they went by. Otherwise a policeman will come and give us a shouting, otherwise the BMC person
will come and take away our things...like this we used to live with fear. We never knew what would happen next. Even though life there was more or less comfortable we used to always have fear in our hearts. At night some of us sleep on the footpath – we fear that people driving vehicles might be drunk and go over us. We used to always have these thoughts and fears in us...... Here we have some worries about water and finding work and earning money – but we don’t live with that fear anymore...so in that way this place is better.’

The move to the new housing for all the participants I interviewed was far from the perfect solution that they had dreamed of; their deep-seated fears for security and survival were now replaced by constant worries on having to make ends meet. Six of the participants recalled they had been promised jobs and good schools for their children along with their new housing, they said this has not materialized and are still waiting for these promises to be fulfilled.

‘Now we have to live here life long’ said one participant, ‘What we miss most is that over there at night we did not have to catch the train to go anywhere – the men or the children. We were worry-free there, we used to get work where we lived. We used to work hard come home and sleep. Because they used to work close by – in case we needed the help of my brothers they used to come and help. Now that we live so far away they will hardly come here to help us. We spend double of what we earn here.. everything is more expensive. The electricity... everything is more expensive. we always had a little more living there – there was always food to eat, some spare money at home, we were comfortable. After moving here we have lots of problems. We have to worry about food/money all the time. There we all used to work – and for food we used to buy something from the market and eat. Here if you cook you eat otherwise you do not eat. It is like that here.’
Participants I spoke with feel the Milan Nagar housing is the best form of housing they will have in their lifetimes and in my conversations with them they reminisced about the good parts of their lives on the pavements and wished that somehow they could combine both worlds.

4.2 Children’s mobility and play

Children living in Milan Nagar are more restricted in their mobility than children living in Byculla. The independent mobility of girls in particular is severely restricted. Many parents said they fear for their children’s safety as they have heard of girls being kidnapped in the neighborhood. News programs on the television that relay horror stories of young girls being raped, kidnapped, or being drugged and forced into prostitution further spur their fears. Parents of adolescent girls said they accompany them to school as girls are often teased and harassed by men and boys in the neighborhood, and because they fear that ‘something bad’ might happen to them. Even while at home parents ensure their adolescent girls are busy with housework or learning a skill (like embroidery, tailoring or using a computer) so they have spare time to wander out of the house and ‘get into trouble.’ The adolescent girls I interviewed said they are mostly at home, school, tuition, or at a tailoring or computer class. They said they like their homes and enjoyed going to tailoring and tuition classes as they could meet with friends.

Young children and girls play various games in the chalis (corridors), like chupa chupi (hide and seek), chor (robber robber), pakadam pakdi (running and catching), and ‘bat and ball.’ Children said they like playing in the corridors and for the most part are not bothered by adults. However, some of the caregivers I spoke with said there had been disputes between neighbors over children playing in the chalis and have therefore stopped their children from playing outside their homes.
Boys play ‘bat and ball’ or any other robust games in the open space in front of the housing. Some of the older boys complained about the sewage canal adjacent to their building and said it is smelly and their cricket balls fall into the canal when they play in the open space outside the housing. They showed me a contraption they have made using pipes and some netting material to fish out the balls from the canal. They also pointed to garbage strewn near their play areas and complained that people from their building repeatedly throw rubbish down from their homes. They said that they often cleaned it up before they played but it would appear again the next day. Boys also cycle in the neighborhood for fun or to run errands for their mothers. Most of the boys I spoke with and their caregivers said children had several opportunities for playing cricket and other organized games in Byculla. After relocating to Milan Nagar, caregivers said that older boys have nothing to engage them and therefore have started to drink, hang around the streets, and tease neighborhood girls. They said that when they lived in Byculla boys had a choice of three large playgrounds and several work opportunities in the neighborhood to keep them out of trouble. Parents and children miss the schools children had attended in their old neighborhood and said the schools in their current area are not as good in terms of the quality of education. Both parents and children complained that children now have to walk in the hot sun for 15 to 20 minutes to reach their school, whereas in Byculla, children could reach school by a few minutes of walking. An added concern is the safety of children when they walk to school. One of the participants, a mother of three children, said

'It is dangerous for the children - going and coming to school. There are vehicles going on this road 24 hours. It is very dangerous for the children to cross and there is a lot of traffic. There is no signal or anything there so I go and help them cross the street and then come back home. When they come back they find it quite difficult. I am scared that sometimes they might go on the train tracks to cross over to the
other side. I have told them many times to never cross the tracks. But they are children you never know what they will do.’

Parents said that they had more support in their old area from church based groups as well as local and international NGOs with regard to children’s tuition, education, and school materials. A few participants also said children could go and play in the local community house and get refreshments, books, stationary and clothes from the staff or visitors at the community house. One parent said,

‘When we stayed over there we used to get a lot of help with the children’s studies – we used to fill a form and they would get their uniforms and books for free and we only had to pay a little bit of tuition. Now after moving here is it more difficult as we have to spend on their books and uniforms and pay fees – so we have more expenses. For the younger one the municipality will give books and uniform and all, but for the older ones we have to get everything.’

A few caregivers said that in Byculla they used to worry about their children getting traffic related injuries, but for most of the time had been able to keep an eye on them. In the Milan Nagar housing they said it was much more difficult to watch over the children as they lived behind closed doors. One participant said

‘I don’t let the children go outside to play at all. I never let them go. In the evening they play there in the chali a little bit, otherwise they do time-pass in the house. There are three of them right so they do things together – sometimes they write or if they have to study they do that...they are together that is all. This area is like that they are many thieves and people like that. I don’t send them out. I fear for them. There (Byculla) the children were smaller and they used to play in the labor house - in front of the police chowki – that is where they used to play. Otherwise they had no place to play as such anywhere, so they used to go there to play. Children cannot play on the road... Also it was open right – we all lived in the open so we could see
and keep an eye on them. We could see where the children went, where they played – we had a good understanding of all of that. Here we are inside and we cannot see outside...we do not know what is happening outside...so we fear for them.’

Children, especially those who are still traveling to the schools in Byculla, said they are struggling with their schoolwork after the relocation, as they spend a lot of time traveling and because they could no longer depend on their classmates living in Byculla for co-studying.

4.3 Social Support

The Milan Nagar housing project did not materialize overnight. As this and the previous case study show, people living on the pavements of Byculla with support from the Alliance, worked long and hard to make this possible. Residents were fully engaged in the processes (such as enumerations, savings, housing exhibition, construction, and resettlement) that were the building blocks of the new housing. But, even with all of this experience, settling into the new housing has been a difficult process for most residents. While change of location is one of the major issues, they are other factors as well.

As only one of the planned blocks was built, in a participatory process it was decided that only one apartment would be allotted to each family, and extended family would be relocated to transit housing or remain in the old location. In addition, people living in the most vulnerable areas were given priority, which resulted in people from different states moving into one building. This meant that not only did residents have to adjust to new neighbors, but more importantly they had to do so without the support of their extended families whom they had depended on for childcare, emergencies, and financial support.

Latha, one of the participants, said

46 Usually people settled on the pavements of one block/street are from a conglomeration of neighboring villages of a particular state, having their own language, customs, food, and habits. For example people living in Nagpade were primarily from the state of Bihar.
‘That place (old location) was good for our children. My sister-in-law and mother-in-law used to be there so I could leave my children with them, and not worry about them, and go for work. They used to look after my children and I used to go for work....here there is nobody I can leave them with. So I have to stay home.’

Many participants said that they could not depend on their neighbors for help, and that nobody would look out for their children if their children were to get hurt in their absence. All of these participants also said that they had a much better support system when they lived on the pavements. One participant said

‘No nobody helps here – everybody is concerned about their own lives and their own concerns. There is nobody here who will help. In Jhula maidan it was much better, if somebody was hurt or something then three or four people would come running to help that person. It was better there.’

When I asked what had changed given that some of their neighbors were the same and they were relatively familiar with one another, she replied

‘Who knows....but now nobody gives anything to anybody, and nobody takes anything from anybody. It has become like that. Nobody talks to each other...everybody has changed now. Now people say ”I am like this ..and you are like that”. Once a person starts to make money then they start to look at others differently ...so that is what is happening. People who make money, make more money. Then those who don’t make money have fallen below, they become lower class. There in Jhula Maidan it was not like that, we used to eat and drink together, live together. It was not like that there. Here it has become different...’

It was almost like she was stating that the act of living on pavements had been an equalizing factor for residents; while they had differing financial and social capacities even then, the fact that they were all living on the pavement seemed to have helped diffuse these differences.
Some participants also stated that as there were many children living in the building (some homes had as many as eight children), frequent fights broke out between neighbors. They said that children easily got into fights over playing, and parents quickly joined in to defend their children.

When I spoke with the area leaders about the considerations they had taken while planning the building, I learned that specific decisions had been taken to encourage social interaction and cooperation amongst residents. Two such decisions were to have wider corridors (6’ wide instead of the standard 4’ wide corridors) and common bathrooms for each level instead of individual bathrooms in each house. Neither of these, however, seemed to have produced the intended results. They were more fights than amicable experiences over the use of common bathrooms. Even those residents who have no problems with sharing the common toilets with their neighbors said that they would prefer to have toilets within the privacy of their homes.

Some participants of the adult tour pointed to the rubbish thrown near the common bathrooms and said that it should be the responsibility of the area leaders to ensure that place is kept clean as they have hired a sweeper woman to clean the common areas in the building. A majority of the residents felt the new building and its surroundings were not kept clean. Most blame this on the residents who had moved from a particular street and said that they have often told these residents to not litter the place but to no avail. One of the participants said

‘The people on top make this place very dirty...see how dirty it is. We have tried to explain it to them but they still do the same thing we are tired of explaining to them now, They eat something and they throw it down, eat and throw it down, how many times to tell them not to do that! The people living downstairs get troubled and upset. We have talked about it in society meetings but it is of no use. There is no effect! They make the environment very dirty.’
While speaking with the area leaders and residents I also learned that there was a sense of how the building ought to be used that discouraged residents from using corridors spaces and the entrance areas for socializing or performing chores. The area leaders in particular feel that residents should do all of their chores inside their homes and not keep any of their belongings in the corridors. They also said that residents should not be sitting on the steps to the entrance of the building as ‘it looks bad’ and ‘nobody sits outside like that in front of their buildings’. The leaders said that after much policing on their part residents have stopped using the entrance area for chatting with friends during the mornings and afternoons but that they continued to do so in the evenings. One leader said ‘no matter how much we tell them they keep coming out here in the evening ...so we have just given up now.’

Another question I asked residents was whether they have a society in their building. Most participants responded that the area leaders took care of maintenance issues but that only few of the residents listened to them. There was also mention of a new society that has been formed a couple of months ago where members meet at the madrasa every Sunday but nobody was able to give me any other specific details with regard to who formed the society and its agenda. The area leaders as well did not have much information with regard to this new society.

5. Need for Common spaces

When I asked the participants whether there should be any other common spaces that should be incorporated into the overall housing complex both adults and children said that a play space for children is what they needed the most. Some residents feel there should be a ‘function hall’ where festivals, marriages, and other occasions can be celebrated. Others suggested the need for an anganwadi and a madrasa. A few residents talked about the triangular open space between the buildings from the housing complex layout plan and said
that it would be an ideal place to develop common facilities for residents from all the buildings. One participant said

'What we have been saying is that we would like a building or an area in the middle space that is left after the buildings are built where children can play inside and where they can have arvi also. And a place for an anganwadi and maybe in that space we can also do namaz..Then if there is a wedding or something like that also it can happen there. There will be open space in the middle right – so that is what we are thinking.‘

The MM leader and a few of the participants said that common facilities could only be planned once the plans for the remaining buildings were agreed upon and approved. Many residents had suggestions to make the roads in the new area safer. They said adding streetlights, speed bumps, and traffic signals would make the roads safer for women and children.
Chapter 10: MRR2 Settlement

1. Profile of Settlement

The MRR2 settlement is a redeveloped settlement of 42 houses located in the Goregaon East suburb of Mumbai. The settlement was built 20 years ago. It was initially planned to house 52 families but for various reasons only 42 houses were built. As a result residents enjoy a large paved open area in the midst of the settlement. Houses that were built were 150sft in area but almost all families have added a second level, which they use or rent out. The houses are attached and have some verandah space in front where residents perform a range of daily chores such as washing clothes and utensils, filling water, and so on. Over the years residents have been able to pave the open area between their houses, build incremental additions to their homes to suit their needs, address problems related to

Figure 63: Houses in MRR2 Settlement
infrastructure, and secure the settlement by a boundary wall and two gates. Some residents have also planted trees near their homes. Residents have water taps outside their houses and two community toilets. Overall residents are very happy with their housing and their main complaint is related to lack of adequate drainage.

**Population**

The settlement is home to 162 people. A majority of men have monthly incomes and work as office helpers, sales persons, and as security guards. Some residents also have rental incomes. The average income of a household is Rs 6200. All children attend school, and a majority of these children go on to finish secondary education.

**Land Tenure**

In the 1970s settlement dwellers living on municipality owned lands in Mumbai were moved and resettled in suburbs around Mumbai. The MM women and residents I spoke with said that families were allocated plots in areas that were not serviced with amenities, such as water, sanitation facilities and drainage. At first families built their homes out of plastic sheet and scrap, and over time (10 to 15 years), as the municipality provided residents with some amenities, they started to build more permanent housing. Many families moved back to slums in other parts of the city as they were not able to make a livelihood in the resettlement area.

The Alliance started working with residents in these resettlement areas in Goregaon almost 25 years ago through their daily savings and enumerations programs. With a smaller group of residents the Alliance worked towards building new housing on a plot of land purchased by the Alliance from the BMC (Bombay Municipal Corporation). This resulted in the formation of the MRR2 settlement. Potential residents were trained in construction work relevant to the housing and involved in the design and planning of the new housing. The settlement was planned for 52 houses where each family had to make a down payment of Rs 20000 (USD 400) towards their house. However only 42 houses were built as the
remaining families either wanted to move back to the city or were unable to make the beneficiary payment. These houses are now registered under the MRR2 cooperative housing society\(^{47}\), where each family has security of tenure.

**Infrastructure**

Residents living in the MRR2 settlement have access to electricity, water, and sanitation facilities. Each family has a water tap in front of the house and a washing area inside the house. Water is available from these taps from 6am to 9am, and participants said that this was sufficient for their daily needs. Two community toilets are located in the premises and are managed through monthly maintenance fees collected from the residents. All toilets are kept locked. Three houses share one toilet and each family is in possession of a key to the toilet they use. A person has been hired to clean the bathroom on a daily basis. She also sweeps the open space between the dwellings every evening.

Garbage is collected everyday by a municipality worker who goes from house to house with her garbage cart.

The main problem residents have is to do with the drainage of surface water (sullage and rain water) from common areas within the settlement. The paving in the common areas is uneven and sloped away from drain holes. As result residents have to sweep water from washing clothes and utensils in an upward direction. In addition rain water and water from overflowing gutters during heavy monsoons drains into the settlement and floods homes located near the entrance.

Participants also said that the surrounding neighborhood has developed over the years and that they now have access to good schools (both government and private), shops, and markets in close proximity. What they find to be lacking is access to a government hospital, post office, and a cemetery. They said that the private hospitals located near their

\(^{47}\) Residents in their conversations often used the word ‘society’ to refer to their settlement.
settlement are expensive and demand money upfront, which most residents cannot afford. The burial grounds they have access to are far from the settlement and as a result residents spend a lot of money on transport during burial ceremonies. Participants also said that access to public transport is not convenient. They have to walk at least 15 to 20 minutes to reach the nearest bus stop and over 30 to 40 minutes to reach the train station.

**Engagement with the Alliance**

The participants said that they were indebted to the Alliance for their current housing. They explained in detail how they were active participants in securing land, planning their houses and building them. They said the daily savings program had played a big role in bringing then together as a society and for saving towards the beneficiary payment for their houses. Participants also said the Alliance had assisted them in establishing water, electricity, and garbage disposal services. They said that in the beginning everything had been a struggle but over time by working together and by embracing some of the methods used by the Alliance they have been able to better their lives and invest in securing the future of their children. One caregiver said

> ‘First it was very difficult here – not safe. It used to be a basti (slum) – lots of robberies and fights, people shouting and hitting ...now it’s not like that. The society was not good before. These people came here (MM and SPARC) and then they showed us how to save money and how to live better lives. Things started to change...

> Now we know how to live together with others, how to support others in our community. Before there was no way of living – we used to live by the moment. Now we can think ahead and live better lives.’
2. Methods

Eleven participants were interviewed inside or right outside their homes. The adult led group tour was brief and participants mostly stood in the open area and pointed to spaces they spaces they talked about. Children took me on a brief tour within the settlement and pointed to spaces they used, liked, or did not like. The mainly talked about how they played in the open area and how the space was transformed during festivals and family functions.

Table 16: Overview of methods used in MRR2 settlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Common Spaces</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
<th>Recording of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with MM women</td>
<td>Three MM leaders were interviewed in the Area Resource Center located a few hundred meters away from the settlement.</td>
<td>The interview gave insight to the history and growth of the settlement as well as the surrounding area.</td>
<td>1 hours</td>
<td>Detailed notes were taken and the interview was recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual family interviews</td>
<td>11 families were interviewed inside their homes or just outside their homes. The target children in these families were: boys aged 2, 4, 7, 12, 15 and girls of ages 3.5, 5, 8, 12, 17, and 18.</td>
<td>Children and adults identified and spoke in detail about common spaces in their settlement. The common spaces identified were spaces outside the homes, such as community toilets, open area, and space outside homes.</td>
<td>30 min to 45 hour</td>
<td>The interviews were audio-taped and part of the interview was videotaped. Detailed notes and photographs were taken, and sketches were made of common spaces outside the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-led group tour</td>
<td>Five to eight children participated in the group tour. Three boys aged 7, 12, and 15 and two girls aged 8 and 17. Three other children joined us towards the end of the tour.</td>
<td>Children showed us where and how they played inside the settlement.</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Adult-led group tour
Two women participated in the group tour.
Adults showed us places they use inside the settlement like the community toilet and open area.

20 minutes
The tour was videotaped and photographs of common areas were also taken.

3. Common spaces

3.1 Space outside the house
All participants I spoke with said that the space outside their homes is extremely important to them as it supplements the space within their homes in crucial ways. It allows them to host and accommodate guests, store their belongings, socialize with neighbors, and carry out house hold chores. Residents store water, dry clothes, and store odds and ends in the space outside their homes. Some houses have raised plinths enclosed by metal grill-work, while others have more open verandahs attached to their homes. All of these spaces open out into the main open area within the settlement.

Figure 64: Space outside homes opens out to the large open space between houses
All residents used the space outside their homes for socializing with their immediate neighbors and other residents within the settlement. As the verandah spaces are connected or in some cases only separated by low walls women sit outside their homes and chat with their neighbors as they go about their daily lives such as cutting vegetables, reading the newspaper, and sorting grain.

Young children are simply handed over to neighbors without much fuss or prior notice when their parents need to run quick errands. The space outside homes also allows parents to keep an eye on their children playing in the open space. Mainly, residents of a particular house use the space outside that house. Participants, however, said that they often shared this space with neighbors when they have guests, or during festivals and ceremonies when people sit outside some houses to watch performances. Young girls sit on any verandahs close to where there are playing to chat, or have a quick rest as they play in the open space.

Figure 65: Some residents have incorporated greenery into the space outside their homes
One of the key features that residents appreciate about having this space outside their homes was that it enables them to add greenery to their home. Talking about the space outside her house, Shyamala, a mother of two girls said:

‘Here I wash clothes, I sit here because it is cool. I cut vegetables and read the paper also...all that I do here. I sit and talk with my neighbors all the time...I have put the plants here. I love plants. So I have put all these plants here. See this big plant – I only put it there. It has been seven years now. Whoever is interested puts plants. I have a lot of interest in plants so the minute we moved here I planted these – now they have become big. They give shade, keep the place cool. The are nice right? It looks nice also...It is nice to sit outside because of the plants.’

Children also appreciate the greenery. In the child led tour one young girl said

‘We love having plants here. We like to eat the fruits and the air also is cleaner when you have plants around. There is sitaphal (custard apple), ramphal (wood apple), aam (mango) – and many other fruit trees here’.

3.2 Community Toilets

Residents have access to two community toilets, which have a total of 12 toilet seats and an open toilet area of children. When the settlement was first built there were two community toilet blocks with 3 toilets per block and a common children’s toilet area in each block.

About six years ago through a World Bank project the community was able to construct upstairs toilets in each of these blocks. All residents we spoke with said they have no complaints with regard to the community toilets. A sum of Rs 150 is collected from each
household towards maintenance charges. This money is used to pay the toilet caretaker and common utility bills.

3.3 Large open space in the middle of the settlement

There is a relatively large open space between the houses. The space is paved with cement and is the main circulation area for residents going in and out the settlement. Parents and children both said that this space was important to them as it allowed them to hold family functions like weddings, as well as celebrate various festivals and ceremonies throughout the year.

Figure 66: Large open space in between homes leading up to one of the common toilet blocks
Residents said that tents are put up, stages are erected, and food is cooked in this open space during such celebrations. One resident said:

’In the open space outside there are functions, ganapati (ganesha festival), garba (a dance performed during the evenings for nine days during the festival of Navaratri), all that happens there. Then we have little children’s functions also there. Like two times a year usually during festival time, the children dance on stage and there are some games for them.’

Children also use this place to play cricket, hopscotch, skipping, and to ride their bicycles. Women use this space to dry grains, pulses, and other food items. When I asked the participants if there is a shared understanding among families around how much they could extend their housing - both horizontally and vertically-, I was told that the society had set up rules that people could build one level above their homes and extend their verandahs by four to six feet. Savitri, a resident said

’The society has decided that they can only go up by one levels and the houses can come out this much (pointing to the extended verandah). Otherwise people will be building all over here in the common space and making big bungalows.’

As a result residents have been able to sustain the common open space and develop it over the years (paving) and use it in ways that strengthen community ties.

In this section I have described the various common spaces within the settlement and how settlement residents used them. Table 17 gives an overview of the responses from the participants to some of the key questions asked in the individual family interviews. I now go on to discuss the core issues that cropped up while speaking to residents about common spaces within the settlement.
Table 17: Participant responses from individual family interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Like about your new housing** | Open space (11)  
Space outside house (9)  
Everything (8)  
Toilet (3) | Open space (11)  
Everything (8)  
People (3) |
| **Do not like about your new housing** | Lack of adequate water (2)  
Lack of adequate drainage (4) | Nothing (8)  
Garbage (2) |
| **Important common spaces used within settlement** | Space in front of home (9)  
Toilets (8)  
Open space (8) | Open space (7)  
Toilets (5)  
Space in front of home (4) |
| **Miss about the old settlement** | Nothing (12) | Nothing (3)  
I don’t know (9) |
| **Needs and aspirations of residents** | Improved water supply (3)  
Improved drainage (6)  
Park with slides and swings (1) | Nothing (7) |

4. Core issues

4.1 Water, sanitation, and drainage:

As mentioned earlier all participants we spoke with were quite satisfied with their access to water and sanitation within the settlement. Several participants however, used the topic of
access to water and sanitation to talk about their lives before they came to live in this settlement. Most expressed how miserable they had been in their earlier resettlement area where they had had to struggle to make ends meet as well as walk some distance to fetch water and access public toilets. In comparison, they said they were much better off then they were before moving here. One of the participants we spoke with said that this had been the main reason behind purchasing a home in this settlement and taken significant loans to do so:

‘We used to live in the east sector – it was very bad there. There was no bathroom or toilet I used to work in a hospital then so I used to have bath there and go to the toilet. Sometimes I would not go to the toilet for 4 days as it was so filthy there – I used to feel like vomiting when I saw the toilets there – then I used to go to my in laws to use the toilet. Then I told my husband I cant live like this you go find a place where there is a good bathroom near a room where we can sleep and we will move there. Then we looked and found this place – first we did not have the money but after a few months we got the money and then we moved here. Now it is good. Before everything was a problem – I used to have a small child – no water nothing. My child used to keep falling sick.’

Two residents, however, did mention that access to water in their settlement was an issue and at times led to fights between neighbors. Both of them blamed a floating rental population and their inconsiderate homeowners as the main reasons for their water problems. Jyothi, a resident and homeowner said:

‘There are fights about water and all that...See what is happening is earlier also we had water problems and all but we used to adjust somehow and talk it out and solve our problems quietly. Now we have anybody coming here and staying on rent – god knows where they come from, who they are, what their mentality is...anyway there
are a lot more fights now. The owners don’t let them take water so they come to our tap then I have to go somewhere else – like this lots of tension. This morning also there was such a big fight. We have spent so much money on this water tap – and still we face so many water problems.’

**Drainage:** Most of the complaints with regard to lack of infrastructure within the settlement was in relation to drainage. There were two kinds of drainage that people complained about. The most common complaint was to do with the drainage of gray water from washing clothes and utensils outside homes. As the water taps were located outside peoples homes most tended to do their daily washing outdoors. They wash clothes and utensils. A few residents said they prefer to do their washing inside as drainage of water outside the houses is problematic and sometimes leads to conflict between neighbors. Sunitha, a resident, said

‘I sweep the outside. Everything I do inside. See I don’t like washing outside because the water will go in front of the neighbors house and then they will start shouting and there will be a fight and all that – I don’t like all this- so I do it all inside only. And my hand hurts if I have to sweep all the water so I don’t wash outside. Before I used to wash outside not anymore.’

Residents who do their washing outside struggle to ensure the water does not sully the open areas or spaces outside their neighbor’s homes. After they finish their washing they sweep the water towards the drain holes to keep the area dry and free of stagnant water. Participants complained that as the paving that has been done in the open area is not graded towards the drain holes that had to sweep water towards these drain holes after they finished their washing and cleaning chores. One participant said:

‘If the space in front was a little raised the water would go / drain properly. Now I have to sweep and sweep and sweep for the water to go once I finish all the
washing. I get really tired. Those people don’t sweep so the water comes here and stops. I do a lot of sweeping – so this is difficult.’

A few residents mentioned that they had less problems earlier when the open space was not paved and water could seep into the ground. However, they often countered their statements by saying that the open space is more usable now that it is paved and they prefer to have it paved than unpaved.

The second kind of drainage was to do with problems they faced during the monsoons. As the settlement is at a lower level than the surrounding areas (these areas were developed after the settlement was built), during the monsoons rainwater from other areas drain into and flood the settlement. The most affected houses are those directly opposite the main gate, and houses that have low plinths. Some houses have built beams across their doorways to prevent water from entering their homes. But this did not help during heavy rains.

‘The main problem is during the monsoons – water comes in from the outside – comes into the houses. Sometimes we do not sleep at night during the monsoons – what if the water comes in – then we have to be prepared right…– it fills up till here. Water goes into all our houses over here. We have to put all our belongings on top then..’

A few of the participants mentioned that they were working with members of the Alliance to address this problem.

4.2 Children’s Play
Caregivers and children deeply value the open space between the houses. The open space functions well as an everyday play space for children of all ages as it is safe, well connected
(physically and visually) to residents homes and allows caregivers to easily keep an eye on the children playing outside the house.

Small children play with toys, found objects, siblings and neighbors in the space outside homes and often venture into the open space between buildings under the watchful eyes of residents and caregivers. They are often included in their siblings’ games as bystanders or as active members. During my time in the settlement I often saw toddlers sitting on the laps of their brothers as they waited their turn in a game of cricket, or being carried by their older sisters as they played a game of tag. Residents passing by small children often stopped to indulge them with playful gestures, actions of endearment, songs, and words. Boys (6 to 18) and girls (6 to 12) often combined the space outside their homes with the open space in between buildings while playing. They said they play games like langdi (a game of tag played while hopping on one leg), chupa chupi (hide and seek), chor police (robber and police), lagori, football, board games, carom, pakda pakdi (tag), cricket, bat and ball, char chitti (a game played with a piece of folded paper) in the space outside their homes and in the open space between the buildings. A 11 year old girl said

‘I play chess here, other board games...I play whatever I want here. I play with my friends here. She lives here only in the society. I also play hide and seek, pakda pakdi, cycle all that we play here. There is nice space here to play right – so we get the mood also to play. It is good. We fight also sometimes, but we play also.’

Children play quieter games in the space outside their homes and more robust games like cricket and football in the open space between houses. They use these spaces in tandem while playing games like tag and hide and seek. Children also use the open space to cycle and roller skate.

The only complaint parents have with regard to children’s play is that children tend to be distracted from their studies while watching or listening to other children play. One parent said
'This is nice to here and all that but it becomes a little difficult also having this place outside. Now we keep our doors open and the children just want to go out and play the whole time. We have to shout at them to come inside the house and then they start comparing and saying those kids are playing so why can't we play. Now if we lived inflates then the doors are closed so it would be easier to keep them inside – this distraction would not be there.'

Children used the spaces for robust play from 4pm or 5pm till about 10pm at night. They appreciated the fact that the space is well lit with common lights. The only complaint they had about the space is that residents sometimes threw rubbish in the open space. They said they were scolded by adults only when they were very loud or caused damage to objects like potted plants, parked vehicles, or other things stored outside homes.

Apart from day-to-day play, children I spoke with also gave importance to the space between buildings as it allowed them to take part in cultural activities and celebrations. Young girls and boys said they enjoy putting up song and dance performances, and taking part in seasonal rangoli and kite flying contests.

Older girls said they read books, played board games, looked after younger siblings or chatted with their friends in the space outside their homes. They said they enjoyed chatting with each other after dinner and often met as small groups outside one of their homes.

Parents said they sent their children on errands to shops outside the settlement. Caregivers said they sent their children to shops that were close to the settlement and did not allow them to venture outside too far as they felt parts of there are unsafe. Children said they visited nearby temples, gardens, and shopping malls occasionally in the company of an adult.

4.3 Safety

The MM women from the area resource center near the settlement said that the neighborhood has improved over the years with regard to infrastructure and housing. In the
early days, the MM women said the area was so unsafe that auto rickshaw drivers would refuse to venture into the area, but over the years as the area became better serviced and residents had access to water, electricity, and roads, crime had reduced considerably. In the initial years murders, robberies and sexual harassment were common occurrences but at present the worst crimes are petty robberies usually carried out by adolescent boys in the neighborhood. The MM women said that in recent years adolescent boys have started to form small gangs and indulge in drinking, smoking and doing drugs. In addition they have also started to harass girls in the neighborhood and steal small items such as watches, clothing, and phones by slipping in and out of houses when residents are busy with their daily chores. The MM leaders in the area have been able to curtail some of this behavior by starting an active police panchayat and getting the neighborhood police to threaten the adolescent boys.

The residents of the MRR2 settlement said that about 10 years ago they had experienced a spate of robberies and taken a decision to secure the housing society with boundary wall and two gates. All residents had contributed towards the effort. Ever since, the residents said there have been no robberies and the settlement has become a safe and secure space where they feel comfortable leaving their children when they need to run small errands in the neighborhood. One parent said

‘Only our society kids play here. The other kids are not allowed here. Everybody here makes sure of that. We have put 2 gates so we can secure our area for ourselves and our children. The people outside all know that they cannot come in here. It has been 10 years since we put the gates. We collected money from everybody and put them...There were a lot of robberies that used to happen so that was one of the main reasons we put the gates. After we put the gates we don’t have robberies. Some of
their friends can come and play but we do not encourage it that much. It is better they play with the children here.

The society is good now ...it is safe. I can leave a small child outside to play because the society gate is always closed. So there is no fear. There is place for children to play as well…’

Parents and children said they have everything they need within the society (like water and toilets) and did not have to go far for their daily supplies like milk and vegetables. Caregivers of adolescent girls their main worry was that their daughters had to travel far for school or college and as the train station was not close to the settlement they were concerned for their safety. Parents of adolescent boys said they kept a close eye on them and made sure they did not loiter in the neighborhood as the felt their children would be influenced by other older boys in the neighborhood. One participant with a 15 year old boy said

‘I don’t send him out that much. Sometimes if there are some small things I need for the house I send him out. Otherwise I do most of the shopping myself...

The environment outside the society is not that good. That is why I do not send him out that much. There are a lot of fights that happen...it’s not good...the kids in the neighborhood do drinking and are up to mischief – I am scared he might get into all that so I do not send him out that much...

4.4 Social support

Almost all of the participants said that residents helped each other in times of need. Many said they feel comfortable leaving their children in the care of their neighbors if they had to go someplace for a few hours or even for a day or two. They said they trusted their neighbors and were confident their children would be well looked after. A single mother living in the settlement said that she has received support from her neighbors for childcare
and finding employment. She said that neighbors were helpful and discreet and she could
not have brought up her children without their love and support.

Some participants felt that over the years, residents in the settlement have become more
self-centered and that relationships between residents that were once based on common
good have become more monetary in nature.

'Before everybody were more together, mixed well we used to celebrate all the
functions nicely together. Now it is not so much like that...some say what will happen
if we do not do it. Then they ask money for everything. So that way it has changed a
little...– My only thing is everyone should be together and share...now it is not like
that – people have become more individualistic – they think why should we help that
person. Let us keep this money we have for ourselves..like that...’

These participants also feel that the floating rental population is one of the reasons
residents do not share the mutual trust and support that they once enjoyed. They said that
tenants who come and go are not invested in community activities and at times tend to
misuse common resources like shared toilets and water.
SECTION 3: Analysis and Findings
Chapter 11: Common spaces in existing and redeveloped settlements

The case studies chapters give a cross-sectional and to some extent a longitudinal picture of how common spaces are spatialized, valued, and used in settlements in various phases of redevelopment processes. They also give a glimpse into how broader geopolitical processes of urban policy and planning affect the morphology of settlements, settlement dwellers’ access to infrastructure like water and sanitation facilities, and roads, and social relations between neighbors. While these case studies are by no means an exhaustive sample of the types of settlements or the types of common spaces, they were selected for their heterogeneity and they do provide a solid empirical grounding for a conceptual understanding of common spaces in existing and redeveloped settlements in India.

It is clear from the case studies that residents have diverse uses, meaning, and values for common spaces. Some residents covet the common spaces within their settlements, while others want nothing to do with them. Some residents prefer to make existing common spaces more private, while others crave shared space where their children can play and where they can relax and socialize with their neighbors. Both conflict and camaraderie are elements in how residents engage with and through common spaces. Common spaces themselves manifest in various spatial forms such as shared toilets, streets, open spaces, corridors, space adjoining homes, shared balconies, religious spaces, and institutional spaces, and the norms, rules, and everyday practices around these spaces have similarities and differences from settlement to settlement.

In this chapter I will outline a conceptual grounding for understanding these varying views of residents towards common spaces. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section lays out the theoretical framework, the second section conceptualizes common space in a grounded manner through the theoretical framework of assemblages, and the third section examines how urban policy has shaped common spaces in redevelopment and
resettlement projects. By analyzing common space in this bottom-up and top-down manner I hope to provide a rich scaffolding for the following two chapters where I will be discussing the role of common spaces in the everyday lives of women and children.

**Part One: Theoretical framework**

While urban poor settlements have been the focus of much research for the past few decades there are few studies that offer in depth descriptions of how women and children negotiate everyday spaces in their day-to-day lives in settlements. For urban poor settlements to be recognized and nourished as a legitimate form of spatiality there is a need now, more than ever, to understand the intricate socio-spatial flows lived and produced by settlement dwellers as they support their families. The case studies described so far are an attempt to understand the spatial ecologies produced by the urban poor in a ‘thick’ manner. The primary purpose of this research was to understand the spatialities, uses, values, and meanings of common spaces in settlements in various stages of the redevelopment processes; in other words to delve deeply into how residents in settlements create, perceive, and negotiate space outside their homes as they go about their daily lives.

A significant finding that emerged early on is that most ‘common spaces’ in their own right have no meaning for residents and they are given meaning only in conjunction with the home space and activities that support families living in homes.

The term ‘common space’ in itself has no local equivalent in the context of urban poor settlements. For example there is no word-for-word translation for ‘what are the common spaces you use within your settlement?’ in any of the local languages I have used in this research. The subject of ‘common space/s’ has to be approached 1) in relation to people – what are the places in your settlement that you share/use together with others on a regular basis? ; 2) in relation to the home – what are the places you use in the
settlement apart from your home? ; or 3) in relation to actions – where do you do your washing, where do you do your cooking, where do you talk with neighbors etc.?

The first line of questioning, regarding common space in relation to people, drew few responses. Most interviewees responded with quizzical looks, or said they did not understand the question. This is perhaps due to the daily struggle to secure one’s basic needs – where one’s goal is not necessarily to ‘share’ available space or infrastructure but to use whatever means available to secure what is needed for one’s own family. The concept of ‘sharing’ is a luxury for the urban poor. ‘Sharing’ suggests the availability of a resource that can be divided or given for free. In urban poor settlements, however, even basic survival resources such as water, toilets, space, money and so on are usually very limited. There is seldom enough to go around; and therefore, in the struggle for survival, one grabs what one can to support one’s family. For families that have struggled for basic needs for generations, ‘grabbing’ is a deep-seated approach to life – one that supports survival.

The second line of questioning (in relation to the house) drew mixed responses. A majority of interviewees, both women and children (mostly girls) responded with statements like ‘we only stay at home’, ‘we don’t go outside anywhere ...we stay at home and mind our own business’, or ‘we have so much work at home where do we have the time to go anywhere else.’ At the time, I was astonished to hear these responses, as all the settlements I had visited invariably had more people outside their homes than within. However, after gaining more familiarity with the context, I find that there are two key factors that elicited these responses. One is the importance of ‘home’ as a place for settlement dwellers. It forms the center of their lives. Any work they do is towards supporting the home and members of the household. Also, most other spaces used by settlement dwellers are also used to support the home; buying supplies from the shop, washing and cleaning clothes and utensils outside.
their house, fetching water from water points, and praying for the well being of their families in religious places. Therefore asking interviewees about spaces they used in their settlement other than their home was in essence separating them from what mattered most in their lives. And their responses were in effect stating the importance of the ‘home’ in their lives. The second factor pertains to the formal representation of self of Indian women. Even today, in Indian society, women are seen as the primary caregivers responsible for nurturing the family and upholding the home. Society, culture and traditional values have reproduced the domestic role of women over centuries. While in reality most women in urban poor settlements work both at home and outside to provide for their family, they still identify themselves primarily as homemakers. By stating that they ‘stay at home’ they are reaffirming their role in society as virtuous and hardworking homemakers and simultaneously removing themselves from the negative connotations (gossipmongers, lazy, seductresses) that often identify women seen on the street. The presence of women in space outside the home, traditionally, goes against cultural norms.

‘Common Space/s’ are primarily acknowledged by settlement dwellers for their utilitarian purposes. Roads or lanes are a means to get someplace, or are extensions of the home for performing daily chores, religious places are for praying, water points are for collecting water, and so on. This is perhaps why the third line of questioning (in relation to actions) drew the most responses from the interviewees. Residents rattled off where and how they performed their daily chores, and then spoke in detail about each of the spaces they used outside of their homes. It seemed that when I removed the phrase ‘outside of or other than your home’ from the question, participants warmed up to the question.

Using ‘common space’ as a construct, therefore gives way to understanding settlement space in dichotomous categories – house/common space, inside/outside, private/public, belonging/not belonging, formal/informal – that can easily cast the complex multiplicity of spatial flows into pre-fabricated westernized concepts of ‘private space’ and ‘public space’,
as is evident in my own summaries of the case studies. I find it necessary now to retrace my steps, in order to better understand the varied voices that have emerged from these case studies.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in their seminal work ‘A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ (1980), present a theory for examining societies, spaces, events, and so on that transcends binary thinking (objectivism/subjectivism, man/woman, mind/body etc) and offers a more open, dynamic, and new way of thinking that embraces multiplicities. Their concepts of rhizome, smooth and striated spaces, and assemblage offer useful ways to deconstruct ‘common spaces’. I will now define some of the key concepts from their work and relate them to my own research.

**Rhizome/Tree:** The concept of the ‘tree’ relates to understanding processes of place-making as being homogenous and controlled by a centralized power like the State, whereas the ‘rhizome’ relates to heterogeneous and multiple ways of thinking and place-making where there is no centralized power. The ‘rhizome’ therefore offers us an alternative mode for understanding people and processes of place-making that can provide valued insights. In ‘A Thousand Plateaus’ Deleuze and Guattari state ‘..any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order.’ In principle the ‘rhizome’ signifies rupture, or breaking away from a structure that is established by the ‘tree’. All spaces, people, territories etc. contain rhizome-like and tree-like properties at any given time. According to them every rhizome has ‘lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees.’ But eventually the lines of flight or deterritorialization confront organizations that re-territorialize and resignify everything, restoring power to the signifier. For example urban poor settlements evade the grid-like structure of the city by mushrooming in unused spaces
like along open drains, under bridges and flyovers, along railway lines, and swampy lands but once established they have a localized structure of organization. However, eventually these rhizomic settlements are confronted by centrally controlled organizations like the local municipalities, or the railway departments who ‘reterritorialize’ the settlements through upgrading or resettlement and redevelopment schemes. Deterritorialization is the breaking away from the boundaries of controlled striated spaces and reterritorialization is the reestablishing of striations but under new regimes of power. Incremental housing in informal settlements where dwellings grow horizontally and vertically are more rhizomic, whereas redeveloped housing where dwellings are more rigid and extensions to dwellings are regulated by code are more tree-like. Children’s play can be considered as having rhizomic qualities where they deterritorialize corridors, streets, a cemetery, terraces, steps into play spaces which are often reterritorialized by adults in their everyday interactions with children (often by shouting at children and telling them to play elsewhere, or using covert strategies as pouring water on the narrow streets when children are home from school so children cannot sit and play on the streets). Children’s responses, however, are to deterritorialize these very spaces using various strategies and maneuvers, or to deterritorialize other spaces for their play.

**Smooth/Striated:** Deleuze and Guattari compare smooth space to that of the nomad and striated spaces to that of the town or city. ‘Nomadism’ is according to them a way of life that exists outside of the organizational State. A nomad has the freedom to move across space and does not have to adhere to the rigid and static boundaries imposed by the State. They define smooth spaces as a point between two lines and striated spaces as a line connecting two points where the lines in smooth spaces can take on any direction and have open intervals whereas striated lines are dimensional and have closed intervals. Smooth space has an open surface where one can distribute oneself according to ones needs whereas striated space has a closed surface where allocations are governed by determined
intervals and assigned breaks. They refer to the city as striated space ‘par excellence’ and give the following description of how the city is comprised of both striated and smooth spaces.

‘In contrast to the sea, the city is the striated space par excellence; the sea is a smooth space fundamentally open to striation, and the city is the force of striation that reimparts smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere, on earth and in the other elements, outside but also inside itself. The smooth spaces arising from the city are not only those of worldwide organization, but also of a counterattack combining the smooth and the holey and turning back against the town: sprawling, temporary, shifting shantytowns of nomads and cave dwellers, scrap metal and fabric, patchwork, to which the striations of money, work, or housing are no longer even relevant.’

Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize all ‘becoming’ to happen in smooth space. The changing attitudes of governments over the decades in how they deal with ‘slums’ is a good empirical example of this process of smooth spaces becoming striated where there are significant differences in the process of striation – from razing down settlements, from above, to developing people-centered processes for redeveloping and upgrading settlements.

**Assemblage:** For Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage implies territory and multiplicity: where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and the parts are decomposable. One of the examples of an assemblage given by Deleuze and Guattari is that of the man-horse-weapon where, when each is acting to its full capacities, a larger force emerges that is greater than the sum of its parts. To elaborate, a weak horse, and a man who does not know how to ride a horse holding a blunt weapon do not amount to a larger force when combined but when a skilled rider and swordsman mounts a fit horse (all acting in their full capacities) the combination produces a force that is greater than the sum of its parts. Assemblages are also temporal: once the swordsman dismounts the horse the assemblage
is decomposed and ceases to exist.

Manuel DeLanda, an artist, writer and philosopher, elaborates on Deleuze and Guattari’s work on assemblage and says that assemblages are composed of material and expressive components that are controlled by processes of territorialization and coding. He gives the example of assemblages of ethnic communities and their relationships with each other in the wake of a civil war. Before the threat of war communities are characterized by fuzzy boundaries where people move freely from one community (less territorialized) to another and there are inter-ethnic marriages and collaborations (less coded). But, at the threat of war borders are patrolled (more territorialized) and people are judged by their adherence to each community’s code (religious and cultural beliefs, language, dress code etc.) (DeLanda, 2006)

I find both these versions of assemblage to be useful while thinking about urban poor settlements, particularly with regard to how various components of settlements like people, objects, houses, streets, animals, interact with each other through their materiality and expressivity under different conditions of redevelopment. Through an in depth understanding of these interactions one can begin to understand the conditions that produce deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the everyday practices of settlement dwellers.

More recently, assemblage theory has been recently applied to critical urbanism as a method of research, as well as an ontology by which to understand processes of urbanization (McFarlane, 2011; Dovey, 2011a). Eminent scholars in the field have received this approach with mixed responses. Some scholars feel that assemblage theory offers the possibility to engage with the complexity and chaos that define urban contemporary processes while other scholars feel that assemblage thinking undermines the explanatory power of political economy (Swanton, 2011). Neil Brenner (2011) in a recent work states that, while he accepts that using assemblage theory sheds light on the microsocial and
material facets of urbanization, he feels that as a theory it is ambiguous in its conceptualization (in the field of critical urbanism) and has the tendency to flatten the field and thereby displace the framework of political economy that according to him has a far greater explanatory power for understanding the urban sociospatial polarization, deprivation, and marginalization.

Colin McFarlane (2011), who has conducted a majority of his research in Mumbai, supports the use of assemblage theory in critical urbanism and offers various positions from which one can use assemblage theory. He states that assemblage as an **orientation** allows for a thick description of the city ‘as produced through relations of history and potential (or the actual and the possible.)’ Second he sets out assemblage as a **concept** that ‘distributes agency across the social and material and in doing so draws attention to the agency of materials themselves as processes within assemblages.’ And, third he suggests that assemblage offers an **imaginary** of ‘cosmopolitan composition that can be used to carve out strategies for alternative urbanisms based upon mutual recognition and solidarity and on the generation of new compositions across difference.’

Kim Dovey (2011b), an urban planner and architect, draws on the concept of assemblage as a starting point to better understand the morphology of informal settlements. He reveals that the various parts that compose informal settlements (as assemblages) are simultaneously part of larger assemblages like railways, pedestrian overpasses, high rises and office towers from which they are viewed as well as hotels, homes, and malls (spaces of middle-class) where settlement dwellers are often employed. He stresses that

‘**One of the key questions is to understand the production of assemblages – the ways that parts become connected or disconnected, the ways that different and intersecting desires lead to integrations and segregations.**’

According to him by understanding these connections one is able to see the emergence of assemblages from a socio-spatial field rather than from the application of a transcendent
theory.

For my study I would like to apply the theory of assemblage and the concepts of ‘rhizome’, ‘tree’, smooth and striated spaces, and deterritorialization and reterritorialization to further understand the interconnections between the common space, the dwelling, and the family. The case studies that have been summarized in detail provide a rich platform for exploring these connections to understand in detail how settlements are constantly territorialized and deterritorialized (internally and externally) through various striations and smoothenings of the multiple assemblages that constitute urban poor settlements and are constitutive of urban poor settlements. I use the idea of assemblage primarily as a framework of analysis to see how desires and passions are articulated in the interactions between objects, humans, and spaces.

My framework of analysis takes into consideration both Deleuze and Guattari’s version of assemblage and McFarlane’s application/s of assemblage. By using McFarlane’s version I orient the analysis towards an in-depth description of the socio-spatial transformation of common spaces over time, according agency to both the material and human components to reveal potentialities that emerge and that could emerge. My goal is to reveal the conditions under which assemblages emerge, where parts of the assemblage are interacting with each other in their full capacities/intensities to give rise to a whole that is not reducible to its parts (as described by Deleuze and Guattari). As a form of analysis I also plug various components of an assemblage into other assemblages they belong to, to understand the multiple meanings and values of these assemblages over space and time.

My attempt here is to understand common spaces as a multiplicity and as relational. I begin my analysis in this chapter with a discussion of boundaries and the role they play in urban poor settlements. I then go on to analyze ‘space outside the house’ and ‘shared toilets’ as assemblages. The reason for choosing these two kinds of spaces is because they emerged as two of the most important and contentious spaces in the everyday lives of residents. I
also discuss the ‘cemetery’ in the BBS settlement as a rhizomic example, to weigh in on the different types of spaces that compose urban poor settlements.

**Part Two: Common spaces as Assemblages**

**Boundaries**

In poor settlements boundaries in the form of material expressions (walls, fences, drains, gates) as well as embodied expressions (rules, actions) play a crucial role in how spaces are formed, utilized, changed, and valued at the scale of the individual, home and family, street and immediate neighbors, and the settlement. Boundaries, whether material or embodied (symbolic or metaphoric boundaries and constraints), are acts of striations that regulate rhizomic acts in smooth space and are essential to the creation of the ‘other’. They also represent desire, power, and control.

In the BE settlement and ME settlements boundaries are present in the form of walls, railway tracks, and metal fences to contain these settlements. These have been put in place by authorities in power (neighboring landowners, middle class residents, or railway authorities) to establish the settlements and its residents as the ‘other’. The boundaries have caused negative consequences like flooding and reducing access to vital spaces beyond the settlement, but at the same time have also made the settlements more safe spaces. Settlement dwellers rupture these boundaries through acts of resistance such as breaking a part of the wall or climbing over it to access spaces and materials they require for their survival (such as water or a place for toileting). These boundaries are, however, relatively rigid, and drive residents (funneled by desires to accommodate growing families) to extend their home spaces horizontally and vertically and in the process reduce common space between dwellings used for play and socialization and daily chores to a bare minimum. In such spaces women and children are bounded or contained in their everyday actions of work and play to avoid conflict with neighbors.
In the BIR3 settlement and the MRR2 settlement, boundary walls and gates were desired (BIR3) and constructed (MRR2) by residents to distance themselves from the ‘other’; the ‘other’ in this case being poor people who lived in less developed settlements outside the redeveloped BIR3 and MRR2 settlements. By constructing these boundaries, residents feel they can have more control over common spaces in their areas and can make their settlements safer. In the MRR2 settlement, residents are more free/less bounded in their embodied expressions and share common areas in amiable ways for play and work.

At the level of the street or internal lanes or corridors within a settlement, boundaries are less rigid and exist in the shape of houses and by how people use the space outside their homes. The spatial incremental extensions of the home, condition of settlement infrastructure, and people’s temporal acts of washing, cooking, and storing shape and reshape the space of the street and what it can or cannot be used for. The physical space of the lane becomes narrow or wide, sunny or shaded, dry or wet, congested and conflict-laden or empty and quiet, through the rhizomic acts of incremental building as well as the temporal striations of sleeping, waking up, bathing, cooking, cleaning, and playing. In redeveloped settlements, the physical space and use of corridors is influenced by forces of striations such as housing societies who dictate what can and cannot be done in corridor space, architects who enforce the width of corridors laid out by building code, and rhizomic acts, such as those of the Alliance, who challenge existing building codes to create wider corridor spaces that can accommodate family functions, free movement, and children’s play.

At the level of the home and family, boundaries exist in the form of rules and access to resources, which are affected by composition of the family and their relations with immediate neighbors. For example, in smaller nuclear families that have access to more financial resources girls might be allowed to continue their education and not remain inside their homes as dictated by societal rules. But in larger families which are poorer and have fewer assets, girls are likely to be made to stay at home and help with childcare and
housework; they are made to comply to societal rules as it suits the needs of their parents. At the level of the individual, people are constantly negotiating boundaries of gender, societal rules, and traditions, as they work towards supporting their families. While in this discussion I have separated boundaries by scale, in real life they all exist simultaneously, affecting each other at points of contact. Understanding urban poor settlements in this way reveals that people’s lives and the spaces they inhabit are not necessarily striated by forces of domination and power like societal structures and state policies. But, that people live their lives in a complex woven dance of following desires and needs and in the process negotiating boundaries where power is implicit.

**The Inside house – Outside house – Resident Assemblage:** In most informal settlements the inside and outside of the house are used in tandem. Women move in and out of the house to wash clothes, cook, eat, bathe, sort rice, sleep, boil water, and so on. The pictures and quotes below belong to four different sites:

1) BE settlement – Less dense, not slated for redevelopment, wide internal streets, houses of 100 to 150sft in area;
2) BIR settlement – More dense, slated for redevelopment, narrow streets, houses of 50 to 100sft in area;
3) Milan Nagar settlement – G+3 apartment building, wide corridors, houses of 180sft area;
4) MRR2 settlement – G+1 incremental redevelopment, gated community with wide-open space between houses, 4 to 7ft wide raised space in front of each house, houses of 150 to 300sft area.
1. We use this place many times a day. Do lots of work here. I sweep the area in the morning and put rangoli (traditional floor design). We (neighbors) sit and talk here. Then when children are playing here I sit here and watch them. I clean vegetables here and dal (pulses) and rice. We need this place outside if someone comes - especially when relatives come to visit. Now they can sit outside and sleep there as well. Also if there is a function we need this space because our house is too small. Sometimes we get into fights with the neighbors. Like yesterday there was some water spilled here and her kid fell down and because of that we fought. When it rains, this is a mud road so everything gets dirty and children cannot play.

2. I use it many times a day. We use it to wash clothes, and clean vessels. I also string flowers outside. We have bath inside the house. When there is no current we cannot put the fan inside the house so we go and sit outside the house because it is cooler there. When we wash clothes outside the neighbors scream at us. If we sit outside on the neighbor’s steps to chat they get angry and shout at us. We can dry clothes only in front of our house. If we dry on the neighbors line they get very angry. I don’t know what their problem is. We don’t say anything when they wash clothes or dry them in front of our house.
3. I stay at home and look after the children. I used to do some work before but not anymore. We do all our housework inside only – nothing is done outside. We don’t let anyone do any housework outside in the chali (corridor), and we also don’t do anything there.

4. Here I wash clothes. I also sit here because it is cool. I cut vegetables and read the paper also...all that I do here. I sit and talk with my neighbors all the time...I have put the plants here. I love plants. So I have put all these plants here. See this big plant – I only put it there. It has been seven years now. Whoever is interested puts plants. I have a lot of interest in plants so the minute we moved here I planted these – now they have become big. They give shade and keep the place cool. They are nice right? It looks nice also...It is nice to sit outside because of the plants.

This place outside our house is very important. I am here only most of the time. I do most of my work here. To tell you the truth we bought this place after seeing this space outside the house. There is place to sit outside and it feels a little free. The building itself is okay, but this space outside is very nice. When it is very hot- if we sit outside here then it doesn’t feel that warm.
In the **BE settlement** the *inside house – outside house – resident* assemblages are more or less separate assemblages for separate families. Each family has the luxury of carving out space outside their homes as they go about their daily rhythms of chores, and it is seldom that these spaces are contested or the cause of conflict. The materiality and expressivity of these assemblages are diverse as well; some homes have just a couple of rough stone cut steps leading to their home, others have cemented spaces sheltered by temporary structures with traditional designs adorning the paved space, while still others have more formally included this space into the private space of their home. The possibilities available in the materiality (space available, money, choices of material) and the actions that residents take in manipulating the materiality through their expressivity (individual as well as collective) transform this composition to an assemblage. Where residents are able to experience an assemblage of inside space-outside space-resident they express a great value in the space outside their home and have positive associations with it –

> 'We wash clothes here and vessels that is all (outside paved area). We also all sit and talk here. Me, my sister, grandmother, that girl’s mother (relative), and the neighbors from the house next to ours. We all sit here and talk. We also sit and cut vegetables here, we do that type of work here also. We also dry the clothes here after we wash them. Then once they are dry I put the mat here and fold them on the mat then take them inside. My daughter just plays here and eats. This place is very important for us because we can do lots of our work here that we cannot do in the house. And the house is too small for everyone. We like the trees here because this area remains shady and cool even when it is sunny.’

But, where residents are unhappy with the space outside their homes because it is unhygienic or undesirable and have no choice but to use the space outside of their homes for certain functions, they keep their activities outside their home to a bare minimum.
'I do my washing outside, but there is no drainage here and the streets are always smelly so I don’t do anything else here. Sometime the children play here that is all. This place in not important for us.’

In this case while the inside of the home, the outside and the person are connected the multiplicity does not emerge as an assemblage.

As a settlement becomes more dense, like the BIR settlement, the separate assemblages of neighboring residents begin to clash/graze against each other rupturing each other’s territory. At this point of rupture there is a point of emergence where individual assemblages are deterritorialized to form a larger assemblage that is reterritorialized with stringent codes for behavior and routines in order to avoid conflict between neighbors and distribute resources in an equitable manner. A sense of camaraderie and respect for each other emerges.

'Four houses share this space. We use it several times a day. We use it for all the household chores like cooking, cleaning and washing and bathing the children. Sometimes we have fights but we also settle our fights quickly. We decide how to take turns to use the area.’

However at the point of rupture if the line of flight is unresolved conflict – which is often the case because of the intense pressure on available space and resources - then a larger assemblage does not emerge and each family skirts its individual assemblage, makes internal changes, and retreats further into its own assemblage to avoid further conflict/rupture, which inevitably reoccurs at some point (as is evident in the quote with the second example). The case studies reveal that families have some sense of control at this level of assemblage, and increasingly less at the level of the street and at that of the settlement.

In redeveloped settlements like in the Milan Nagar settlement most of the household chores are performed within the home. The process of redevelopment territorialized and
created clear divisions between the space inside the homes and space outside homes. The space outside homes became more homogenous spatially in the form of corridors and clear rules established by area leaders enforced what could be done or not done in the corridor space. The corridor space could be used for access, for children’s play regulated by time and age, and for celebrating festivals or family functions. Reasons for not using corridor space as an extension of the home included safety concerns, maintenance issues, conflict, because the space would begin to look like a ‘slum’ again and ‘people in buildings did not live like that’, and because some people preferred to do all chores within the privacy of their homes.

In this case, rules, regulations, desires, and past experiences temporalized the assemblage, i.e the inside home- outside home-resident assemblage came about during children’s play and festivals and functions.

In the MMR2 settlement each family has, over time, in increments shaped the space in front of their home. Some residents have enclosed the extended plinths with metal grills, some have left it open to the sky and filled it with plants, and others have added metal stairways to access the first floor (usually tenanted) of their homes. Similar to the BE settlement residents have the option, given their capacities, to shape the space in front of their homes such that the composition of inside home- outside home-residents acts as an assemblage. The context however is different. Most people living in this settlement have worked together to build their homes and over the years have organized themselves to successfully protect, and manage common community resources (water, drainage, open space, toilet block). Through the participatory redevelopment process residents were able to realize many of the desires they had for new housing and establish striations of reterritorialization such that common spaces were maintained for free movement, play, socialization, and for celebrating festivals and family occasions. The relatively high degree of trust between residents and an active housing society further enhances the inside home- outside home-residents assemblage. Every resident had positive associations with the
transitional space in front of their homes, and the open space between the houses.

**The Cemetery-Water point-Residents Assemblage (BE settlement)**

The cemetery was described by the BE settlement leader as very old; in his words ‘*at least 60 to 70 years old*’. It is bounded by a wall on the far end and has a water point in front. Gravestones of various sizes, materials, and shapes are scattered over the cemetery interspersed with large shade giving trees.

‘*Only members of the original family are buried here*’ the settlement leader explained when I asked about who used the cemetery and if people were still buried in the cemetery. He added that people from the settlement used other burial grounds in the vicinity and that it was only members of the original family who still used the cemetery to bury their deceased.

The gravestones and platforms are of various heights indicating that the ground level had been raised over the years. The settlement leader explained that once the boundary wall had been built they had had to raise the ground level of the cemetery to scale the boundary wall and access the open lands beyond for daily toileting. The lands beyond are accessed by a rupture in the boundary wall – one made by the residents – where piles of garbage on either side of the rupture make a pathway to scale the boundary wall and cross over to the adjoining lands.

Over the years as the settlement expanded, trees were possibly cut down (to build more houses) to the extent that the only trees remaining were near the cemetery; residents to a large extent were comprised of extended relations to the original family or migrants who did not bury their deceased in the cemetery and thus the space became less symbolic as a
'cemetery' to residents. A water tap was established 15 years ago in front of the cemetery and residents gradually deterritorialized the cemetery as they saw the potentiality of the shaded grave platforms as a place to rest, socialize, and play. The stones become platforms, trees play things, the wall is made to give way – materials are transformed/deterritorialized through the everyday practices of residents. Points of emergence rise at various points of rupture (for example when a resident first sees the potential of a grave stone for sleeping or resting) and reterritorialize content and expressivity.

The cemetery can simultaneously be plugged into other assemblages to further understand the multiple meanings and values it held for residents and for the settlement as a whole. One would be the cemetery-resident living next to cemetery- houseguests assemblage. A resident living close to the cemetery expressed great discomfort for having to live next to the cemetery. She said that the empty plot next to her house where her children played had just been sold, and that would mean that a house would soon come up and the only access to their home would be through the cemetery.

'We are anxious about that (having to access their home through the cemetery).
We don’t like living here. But for my husband it means a lot to live here. See there are no facilities for the children here. And when someone comes to visit us we are embarrassed..... When someone comes to visit the children or us we are unhappy and embarrassed, because the cemetery is right here. When guests come they ask us why we are living here next to the cemetery and look at us cheaply...and some will not even drink water in our house.’

Her husband was a settlement leader and on my return visit I learned that they had moved away to another area. Clearly the social anxiety and social ostracism faced by the participant affected the way in which she viewed the cemetery. She said her children (7 and 13 year old girls) seldom played in the cemetery and she preferred they played in the open space next to her house. She also said that the grey water from washing clothes and
utensils outside her house often ended up in a large puddle in the cemetery and was often a reason why other residents fought with her. For her the cemetery had little value sentimentally, or as space to utilize. Instead, she saw the cemetery as a blight in her life that took away from her social standing and caused daily anguish. It possibly played a catalyzing or defining role in their family moving away from the settlement. Another interesting assemblage to examine would be the cemetery-settlement leaders-legal land titles. On my initial visit to the settlement I was told by the settlement leaders that one of their main proofs of residence was the cemetery (as they had family members buried there) and that they planned to use it to prove their right to the land. The cemetery in this assemblage takes on a new meaning, one that holds potential power with regard to residents acquiring legal land titles to the plots they live upon. On my return visit when I asked the settlement leader whether there had been any progress with acquiring legal land titles, I was told that he was overburdened with several other issues pertaining to the settlement and his own life and as his cousin who had handled this issue (the other settlement leader who was mentioned in the preceding assemblage) had left, the situation was unresolved.

Examining the cemetery through these various assemblages reveals the multiple meanings and values it has for various residents within the settlement and how these meanings and values bring about micro and macro level changes within the settlement.

**Shared toilets – Residents – Alliance**

In the history of the Alliance this assemblage of shared toilets-residents-Alliance has played a crucial role in improving lives, empowering women, and shaping sanitation policy in some Indian states (refer to page xx in the literature review section). Susan Chaplin (2011) in her article ‘Indian cities, sanitation and the state: the politics of the failure to provide’ traces how the current municipal corporations in most cities still follow colonial reform structures
set up in the early 1900’s to address sanitation issues in urban areas in India. These colonial reforms were created to produce a segmented city. The city was divided into ‘indigenous’ and the ‘civil lines’ where the latter protected the military and upper class citizens from the former, which was resided in by locals. Basic infrastructure such as water supply and underground sewers were laid out in the ‘civil lines’ but little was done for the ‘indigenous’ areas. Following this trend, city municipalities have allowed themselves and the services they provide to be hijacked by the middle class who use class, caste, and family connections to capture existing and future urban infrastructure. Chaplin gives the example of the Alliance’s work in the arena of urban sanitation as one of the beacons of hope for sanitation in informal settlements. However, scaling up of such examples has proved to be challenging as it invariably involves the State which still views the urban poor as ‘beneficiaries’ and not as active agents of change.

Having access to a safe and clean space for toileting emerged as one of the most pressing needs of women and girls in this research. In existing settlements where the Alliance has not yet built community toilets, the state-provided community toilets are poorly managed, expensive, and overcrowded. Furthermore, toilets are used to secure votes; in some settlements the construction of toilets is started before the voting takes place and demolished or abandoned soon after the voting is over (SPARC Blog).

Over the years the Alliance has experimented with shared toilets in several redeveloped settlements. Some have been successful and some less so; but all have contributed to a knowledge base of what works and does not work when it comes to shared toilets. I examine the assemblage of shared toilets – residents – the Alliance in three of the sites:

1) BIR3 settlement – Each toilet is shared by 3 or 4 houses,
2) Milan Nagar settlement – Each toilet is shared by 3 houses,
3) MRR2 settlement – Two community toilet blocks with 12 toilets are shared by 42 houses.
1. Here three houses share one bathroom. That everybody takes turns and keep them clean. We do not have any problems sharing it. We all live together happily – we take turns and nobody fights or anything. We clean it once in two days. We have a number system we use.

The toilet is also a big problem. The other houses do not keep it clean. We are always fighting with them because of this. We clean up when we use ...they should also do that right? But they never do, always leave it dirty and smelly. The men drink and come at night and dirty up the bathroom. Then in the morning all the women fight saying ‘your husband did this! Your husband did this!’. This is how the fights starts..

2. The bathrooms should be in each person’s home. With three families sharing there are a lot of fights – people say you have a bigger family – you have to clean more – and like that lots of fights happen over these bathrooms. That way (if we have private bathrooms) people are responsible for their own bathrooms – and these fights wont happen over who has cleaned or not cleaned the bathroom.

Everybody cleans it. Others also keep their bathrooms clean – we have no problems.
3. The toilet is outside. We have a person who cleans the place and all. Three houses share a toilet and they keep it clean. Each family has a key. There is no problem for water or keeping it clean. There is separate one for small children. No problems – we don’t have any fights or anything like that. We pay 120rs from each house and pay from that for the cleaning lady, light, water and all that.

The toilet is good. We have no problems. It is clean. Now they (children) are big so they can go and come by themselves; before we had to run with them to the toilet and come back. Now that they are grown up it is more relaxed. The toilet is comfortable for the children also they have no problems.

In the BIR3 settlements the shared toilets are near the respective houses whereas in the Milan Nagar housing the toilets are located at both ends of the building on each floor (3 toilets on each side). Most women have developed some rules to maintain the shared toilets. It is evident in the first two examples that when these rules are questioned or broken the assemblage falls apart. In each case, the assemblage is tenuous to begin with and emerges over time as an accepted expressivity (code) is practiced between the residents around how the toilets (materiality) should be shared. This process of emergence in the assemblage is for the Alliance a community building exercise that contributes to a knowledge, skill, and social support base for residents. For example in the Milan Nagar housing within the first few months of residents moving into their settlement, sanitation pipes, bathroom doors, and other removable bathroom fixtures were stolen. Residents complained to the Alliance to solve the issue but the Alliance pushed the residents to resolve the matter themselves. Over time the residents came together and were able to deduce that the thievery was an internal job, and put an end to it by taking certain
measures such as increasing surveillance and fixing the pipes so that they were un-removable.

In the BIR3 settlement conflicts arose when more households were sharing a toilet. This suggests that perhaps the assemblage has a critical point of composition – and when that is exceeded the assemblage falls apart. In the Milan Nagar settlement a majority of the families interviewed had no issues with the shared toilet, but given a choice said they would prefer to have it within their homes. The two main reasons they gave were that private toilets would allow them more privacy and decrease the possibility of conflict with their neighbors. While listening to their explanations I was reminded of Manuel deLanda’s (2006) example of social ostracism in close-knit communities. He explains how in close knit communities, word of misdeeds or broken promises tend to spread quickly – as the community is highly coded and territorialized – and individuals face social ostracism that can have a powerful affect on their social standing and access to resources within the community. Most urban poor settlements tend to be close-knit communities – people speak the same language, live in close proximity, interact with others to share resources – and the settlements that the Alliance works with tend to be even more close-knit than the average (through savings programs, enumerations, community meetings, participatory planning and building). I find that the fear of being ostracized plays constantly on the minds of residents, forcing them to make choices (such as private toilets) which appear to present the least chance of conflict with neighbors.

In the MRR2 settlement all residents were satisfied with the community toilet and no one expressed a need for a private bathroom within their home. Here the residents were able to prove their capacity in maintaining their original toilet block, which allowed them to be selected for a World Bank community toilet scheme. This scheme gave the community the chance to build and maintain a community toilet with more seats and special toilets for children.
Part Three: Effect of Urban redevelopment policy and programs on common spaces

Urban dwellers now account for 31.7% of the total population in India. With 377 million people living in towns and cities and increasing numbers expected in the future, an in-depth review and restructuring of urban governance structures and urban development attitudes seems necessary. The current form of cities and towns is unsustainable, inequitable, and socially unjust. The history of urban development policies in the introductory chapter shows that while urban government policies have fluctuated between supporting demolitions, upgrading, and redevelopment, none have been able to make a marked and sustained difference to access to shelter and basic services for residents in urban poor settlements. Insufficient funds, corruption, change in governments, lack of coordination between various urban and political bodies, weak urban governments, and the failure to engage residents as active participants are some of the drawbacks common to the execution of most schemes and programs. In this section, I will show some of the ways through which common spaces and urban poor residents’ access to common spaces both within and outside settlements are shaped by urban development policies.

In one of my conversations with a retired planning official in Mumbai, I learned of how master plans and other planning regulations work in complex and convoluted ways in undermining access to open spaces for the urban poor. In Mumbai, in the 1960s, a growing desire (arising mainly from the middle and upper class) for retaining open space was realized through the allocation of certain lands as PGRG (playgrounds, gardens, and recreational grounds) lands throughout the city. These lands that were chalked out in the city master plans belonged to private owners and state and central governments. They were supposed to be acquired from private owners (if they were privately owned) or converted into PGRG lands (if they were owned by the State.) Over time, State-owned lands were

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48 Census India 2011
converted, some of the privately owned lands were acquired by the State and converted and some lands belonging to influential people were rezoned so that they could hold on to their properties. During this time some privately owned lands that were zoned as PGRG were also bought over by slumlords who were able to convince private owners that they would get a better deal with them than with the State. These slumlords then cashed in on these lands by developing them as informal settlements. Over time, as the municipal corporation had little financial or human resource capacity to develop and maintain the converted and acquired PGRG lands, most of them were also taken over by informal settlements.

In the 1990s when the State started to recognize that the urban poor were critical to the functioning of the city and that forced evictions were not a solution, one of the first steps they took - given that a large number of PGRG lands were occupied by poor settlements - was to allow settlement redevelopment on these lands. The State conceded that existing settlements on PGRG lands could be redeveloped if 20 to 25% was retained as PGRG land. This concession had two consequences. The redevelopment efforts that were granted, were allowed a high Floor Space Index\(^49\) (FSI) and minimal restrictions on maintaining open spaces, under the assumption that the master plan had already taken into consideration open space provision (when in fact most redevelopments were happening on these very open spaces). These redevelopment schemes were targeted to attract private developers who were allowed to build market value units as long as they also housed existing settlement dwellers in heavily subsidized apartment buildings. The goal was that, by being granted high FSIs, developers would profit from market value units and settlement dwellers would be re-housed in subsidized units.

The private developers maximized their profits by maintaining bare minimum guidelines

\(^{49}\)FSI is the ratio of the total floor area of buildings on a certain location to the size of the land of that location. The formula is Floor Space Index (FSI)= (Total covered area on all floors of all buildings on a certain plot)/(Area of the plot). Thus, an FSI of 3.0 would indicate that the total floor area of a building is three times the gross area of the plot on which it is constructed.
with the settlement dwellers’ buildings, which meant that little attention was given to layout of buildings and space between buildings. As a result these settlement residents were deprived of open space at the scale of the city as well as at the scale of the settlement. The bare minimum guidelines followed by the developers resulted in deep narrow lanes and homes with little sunlight on lower levels. A recent study on behavior and crime in redeveloped settlements in Mumbai shows that these narrow alleys support gang formation, and harbor risky behavior such as petty theft, drinking, and drug-use (Gupte, 2010).

The second consequence was that the middle class - under the umbrella of an NGO organization called City Space - has protested the disappearance of parks and open spaces in the city, resulting in a recent ruling that settlement redevelopment cannot occur on PGRG lands. The increasing clout of middle and upper-middle class citizens is also evident in Leela Fernandes’ (2004) work where she reveals how a new and angry middle class is working with the State to privatize public spaces for the middle class. In Mumbai the Chowpatty Beach was ‘cleaned up’ by removing “urchins”, beggars, illegal slums, and installing dustbins so that the middle class can finally experience a beach where ‘the sand looks and feels like sand’ (p.2421). Plans to ensure the poor would not re-enter the beach included building a 120 ft high watchtower tower staffed with two policemen.

The deterritorialization of various lands into PGRG lands started with the desires of the upper middle and middle class citizens and their ability to form an assemblage with State powers. However these desires were never realized as the proposed striations for reterritorialization were not enforceable by a State made less powerful by its lack of financial and human resources and simultaneously uprooted by the rhizomic powerful swellings of informal settlements. Years later, when informal settlements were well established, the increasingly neoliberal State, this time backed with the power of increased capital (private developers), was able to reterritorialize the PGRG lands by seducing the residents of informal settlements with new affordable housing in a form (high rise) that
residents believed would allow them to live like the aspired-to middle class. This striation snapped many of the tenuous networks and support systems that urban poor residents employed. Vertical housing made it quite impossible for residents to maintain some of their networks that had thrived in the rhizomic horizontality of their previous housing. In addition residents felt short-changed as the housing they were provided was nothing like the housing they had desired (the middle class apartment houses that many urban poor women had worked in as house maids). This left the residents feeling dissatisfied and more vulnerable. Recent reviews (Kapur, 2013) on the progress of projects under the much publicized JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Redevelopment Mission), particularly where housing and infrastructure for urban poor is concerned, show that the completion rate for projects is way behind schedule, available funds have been underutilized, and involvement of settlement dwellers was tokenistic. In addition inadequate governance devolution from states to urban governments have also hindered progress (Nandi and Gamkhar, 2013). Most municipal bodies have had to liaise with CBOs and NGOs to convince settlement dwellers about the authenticity of the scheme. The urban poor in general have expressed wariness around government housing and infrastructure schemes as they have been used as vote banks and been manipulated in vote bank politics for far too long. In all of the existing settlements I visited residents expressed their disgust with their local municipalities and politicians for undelivered promises (housing, roads, water, toilets etc) and wanted little to do with redevelopment efforts where they had no way of knowing whether they would or would not have a house in the years to come. They were more content with living in their current conditions that they were able to negotiate through time-tested self-developed strategies than gamble with the unknown – especially when the unknown involved a corrupt government that had used them in more ways than one.

The JNNURM scheme has specific guidelines for carrying out housing and infrastructure projects for the urban poor. There is a 65% built up area and 30 to 35 % common area
distribution recommended for redevelopment projects. The scheme stipulates two common areas (a community meeting room and an anganwadi room (State provided childcare center)) for every 100 dwelling units. All homes are to be at least 25m² (270sft) in area. While speaking to a municipal technical official who oversaw the JNNURM scheme in Bangalore I came to understand that all recommendations/guidelines stipulated in the JNNURM scheme are subject to the availability of space. He said that they first attempt to give every household a home that is 270sft in area and then juggle the remaining area to best fit the infrastructure. To maintain these stipulations the standard response to most in situ redevelopment projects was to build g+3 buildings. He also said that in relocation projects where available land is often plenty, they provided the full gamut of common facilities recommended in the guidelines for large-scale redevelopment projects. These include a park, anganwadi, health clinic, community meeting room, function hall, and two to three shops.

When I visited one of these relocation and redevelopment projects, I discovered that residents had been allotted housing through a lottery system or through political connections, which meant that few residents knew one another. Even though the project had been ready for occupation for over six months, only 20 to 25 families had moved into their houses as the project was located a considerable distance from people’s work and children’s schools, and because the availability of water and electricity had been very irregular. The families I spoke with (those who had moved into the housing), however, had invested a significant amount of money and energy in upgrading the interior of their homes (retiled floors, replaced existing light and bathroom fittings with more expensive ones, repainted walls with different colors) and were excited and anxious about starting their lives in the new settlement.

The common facilities were located in a G+2 building in the center of the project with a large open space in front of the building that was to become a park. There was ample space
between buildings and all homes had adequate light and ventilation. Residents I spoke with were unsure about how the common infrastructure would be managed and said that once more people moved into the development they would form a committee to manage the common spaces.

When I spoke to members of the Alliance about these relocation projects I was told that these projects were created to fulfill political favors and ‘win’ prestigious titles such as the prime minister’s award for the best redeveloped settlement. They said there was absolutely no resident involvement in the development of these projects and that they completely undermined processes such as the Alliance’s that build on community empowerment and collaboration.

Recent media reports (The Hindu, 2012) show that the relocation project I visited has only 40% occupancy (almost two years after completion) and is plagued with infrastructure issues.

Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), another new national scheme that was approved in 2009 to provide secure tenure and housing to the urban poor, has been recently revised as the state governments have shown little interest in partnering with the central government in carrying out this scheme (the main reason being they want the central government to bear a higher proportion of the project costs). The revisions underway show that the central government will shift focus from providing housing to improving basic infrastructure and in assisting residents invest in their homes. Community participation is mandatory in these projects.

In my conversations with planning officials and members of SPARC, one of the questions I asked was about the possibilities of addressing common space in redevelopment or upgrading projects. One suggestion was to attempt redevelopment with larger tracts of land as opposed to piecemeal pockets – as working with larger tracts of land would open up open space that could be pooled together more effectively. A second was to develop innovative
design options through collaboration between architects and settlement dwellers. An example of such a design (mentioned in two of the interviews) was the courtyard spaces in a transit housing project, formed between clusters of houses by manipulating the minimum guidelines of spacing between houses. These courtyard spaces proved to be lively and social spaces that supported household and community activities. A third suggestion was to look into how common spaces such as courtyard spaces in Mumbai’s chawls\textsuperscript{50}, street corner temples, local shops and so on have been used in the past by city dwellers. The consensus of SPARC staff and planning officials was that small local level common spaces tend to be more relevant for settlement dwellers; but as these spaces often fall through the gaps between city master plans and community redevelopment plans they seldom feature in redevelopment efforts.

In this chapter I have used the concepts of assemblage, rhizome, deterritorialization and reterritorialization to discuss how people, through their everyday practices, and the State, through its urban development policies, shape common spaces in existing and redeveloped settlements. In the following chapters I discuss the role of common spaces in children’s lives and women’s lives by employing the same concepts as well as some additional ones.

\textsuperscript{50} Single room tenements in 4 to 5 storied buildings that have common toilet blocks and in most cases a large central courtyard space.
Chapter 12: Role of common spaces in children’s lives

Introduction

Even though children were not the primary focus of my research, much of the discussion that emerged around common spaces had direct or indirect relevance to the lives of children. The case studies reveal that children’s interactions with common spaces were constantly influenced by social and cultural restraints (class based aspirations, confinement of adolescent girls to their homes), parents’ concerns (fear of conflict with neighbors, fear of children being kidnapped and abused, concerns that small children will get hurt via railings and steps in new housing, fear of children developing bad habits) and the physical conditions (unsanitary, rich in affordances for play, exclusionary, exposed to hazards) of these spaces.

My conversations with children ranged from shy responses where barely a few words were uttered, to in depth conversations where children and parents described both individually, and through co-construction, their meanings and values for common spaces. Young children (below 13 years of age) in general were more positive with regard to the places they lived in and often responded with ‘I like everything’ when I asked what they liked about their settlement, in contrast to their caregivers’ responses, which were mostly negative. The child-led tours and informal observations of common spaces in and around settlements allowed me to see children engaging with these spaces either by themselves or in the company of peers, siblings, and adults. In existing settlements I was mesmerized by their agility in negotiating with ease complex and risk laden surroundings. They swung their bodies across ladders, jumped across barriers, skipped across traffic laden roads, climbed trees and poles while giving a running commentary of the spaces they were in or taking me to. During the tours, my preoccupation with their safety, handling the camera, and trying to keep up with them left me quite frazzled and distracted. But in reviewing the photographs
and video and observing in detail how they judged, reacted, negotiated, and engaged with their surroundings I was able to grasp more fully children’s competence in negotiating their surroundings. In comparison, the child-led tours in redeveloped settlements were less nerve wracking but equally informative in terms of how children were adjusting to their new environments and discovering opportunities for play.

The case studies reveal that existing and redeveloped settlements present children with both contrasting and similar sets of opportunities and risks that affect their health and development. In existing settlements children are routinely exposed to open garbage, sewage, stagnant water and other risk vectors in the environment as they run errands, play, go to school, and work. But at the same time these surroundings also provide children with easy access to community life and to a rich range of affordances for physical, social, and imaginary play, and provide a sense of familiarity and rootedness51. Redeveloped settlements are mostly multi-level buildings where parents and children have to adjust to new elements such as stairs, elevators, corridors, and balconies and terraces. In these multi-level redeveloped settlements, the inability to see children playing outside the settlements, and concerns about children’s safety with respect to stairways, balconies and terraces caused some parents to place restrictions on children’s mobility and access to outdoor environments. In both existing and redeveloped settlements, children and adults alike voiced the need for play spaces. Children wanted a place where they could play without being scolded by adults and parents wanted a play space for their children where they would not be responsible for instigating conflict among neighbors.

In this chapter my aim is to analyze some dimensions of space and time (with regard to common spaces) that have emerged as important for children in different age groups through the concepts of affordances and assemblages. By doing so, I hope to better

51 Some of these tensions are pointed out in the literature by various researchers who have written about the affects of informal settlements on children’s health and development (Bartlett et al, 1999; Hardoy et al, 2001; Chatterjee, 2006).
understand the tensions around the immediacy of children’s play, caregiver’s concerns, routines, and practices, and political and economic processes that shape existing and redeveloped settlements.

The first section of this chapter describes how the theories of affordances and assemblages are relevant to this analysis. In the second section I discuss existing and redeveloped settlements with regard to how they affect children’s growth, overall development, play, and mobility. The analysis is organized by the age groups of children: small children (0 to 5), young children (6 to 12), and grown up children (13-18/20).

**Theoretical framework**

J.J Gibson, the founder of ecological psychology, was instrumental in founding and advancing the ecological view of perception. In ‘Ecological Approaches to Visual Perception’ Gibson (1979) states that the animal and the environment are mutually defined entities, each supporting the other in a life frame. He explains how the properties of the environment- such as gravity, oxygen content in the atmosphere, availability of water, firmness of the ground- all either support or constrain the inclusion of human life on earth.

A defining concept of Gibson’s is the “ambient optic array”, which is light reflected multidirectionally from all surfaces of the environment, carrying information specifying the invariance of the surfaces, thereby allowing the substance to be viewed by its invariant properties from various places. With direct perception, Gibson emphasizes the immediacy, directness and tangibility of the environment-person relationship. In his emphasis on the mutually defining character of the person and the environment he moves towards establishing an inherent commonality between the two. In other words, perception is the pick up of information in relation to the needs of the perceiver. Gibson’s theory of direct perception relates to his theory of affordances. ‘To perceive is to perceive what they afford.’ Affordances are the usable properties of the environment. An affordance is neither
subjective nor objective, but points both ways simultaneously, to the environment and the perceiver. For example a 12-year-old boy walking on the street suddenly leaps into the air to touch the leaves of a low-hanging branch – the branch affords reaching and jumping for him. But a five-year-old boy passing the branch may ignore it. Affordances therefore change with the developmental capacities of individuals (Heft, 1988).

While Gibson’s stance embraces the instantaneous property of the individual-environment relationship, and highlights what the environment offers the individual, it does not deal with the other side of this equation. He does not address how human emotions of desire and feeling are relevant to perception and affordances. Nor does the concept of affordances enable us to understand how children read and negotiate constraints in the environment put in place by adults (such as restraints placed on the mobility of adolescent girls).

In contrast, Deleuze and Guttari, position desire as central to the concept of assemblages. Deleuze (1996), in his interview with Claire Parnet, states that ‘to desire is to construct an assemblage’. To elaborate, a person never desires a thing in isolation but in an aggregate form, and desire flows through the various components of the aggregate. For example a 14-year-old boy’s desire to play cricket is probably an aggregate of wanting to belong to a specific group, love for the game, a way to escape from troubles at home, and so on.

Assemblages have four main components; state of things (eg – a boy likes cricket), statements (swagger, movements, language that are part of playing cricket), deterritorialization (takes over internal lanes that is usually used for access and household chores), and reterritorialization (adults chase the boys away for disrupting access on streets; or the boys negotiate with adults to use the space during specific times of the day and lay out specific rules for use of space). Affordances dwell on the immediacy of the environment-human relationship whereas assemblages enable one to see affordances as constructed in and through a multiplicity of times and spaces.
Common spaces in children’s lives

Small children (0 to 5)

It is evident in the literature from both global (UNICEF, 2012; UNICEF and WHO, 2008; Bartlett et al, 1999) and local sources (Agarwal, 2003 and 2011; Chaudhari et al., 2009; Vaid et al., 2007) that children in the zero to five age group living in poor settlements are most vulnerable to malnutrition, illness, and death.

Lack of water and sanitation facilities, crowded homes, uneducated and overburdened mothers and caregivers, poor health care services and poverty are crosscutting factors that make poor settlements high-risk environments for young children. Children as they grow are driven to explore their surroundings with all their senses. This means crawling over thresholds, putting rubbish into their mouths, touching exposed wires, peering into a bucket of water, banging on a metal pot, picking up small dried flowers, bouncing a ball and so on – children are constantly manipulating the environment around them through the affordances they perceive.

How these interactions become safe or un-safe, rich or hollow experiences, can be further understood by seeing these interactions as part of assemblages. A sibling watching over her brother scoops him up as soon as he crosses the threshold so that the hot stone steps do not burn his mostly exposed tender skin, or a watchful grandmother is quick to pull the...

Figure 68: A small boy playing with a large utensil in an existing settlement
rubbish out of her granddaughter’s mouth, a father finds some wooden pieces to build a
cover for the water pump motor with exposed wires, a mother who has gone to fetch water
has no choice but to leave her son unattended - so she locks her door to prevent him from
wandering outside- only to return and
find that he has fallen into the bucket of
water.\textsuperscript{52} The presence of extended
family, access to material resources, and
access to basic services are all integrally
linked to care giving practices.
As children, driven by their inherent
desire to play (state of things), interact
with the environment around them
through rhizomic acts of
deterritorialization, caregivers use
strategies to reterritorialize (for example
a mother tells the child the pot is not for
banging and put is away from the child’s
reach) or in some cases further deterritorialize the environment (adults and/or other
children join a toddler in banging on a metal pot,\textsuperscript{,}). It is clear from these examples that
assemblages emerge and dissolve with time. Below I analyze common spaces in both
existing and redeveloped settlements that small children often use, as assemblages and in
terms of the affordances they offer.

\textbf{Space outside the home – small children – caregivers}

\textsuperscript{52} All of these examples are from research log notes on informal observations within
settlements or based on incidences narrated by caregivers.
In existing settlements it was common to see large numbers of small children on the internal streets either running errands for their parents, playing with their peers or siblings, or playing close to their caregivers in front of their homes. In redeveloped settlements, particularly in multistoried buildings, these small children were less visible in spaces outside of their homes.

Small children growing up in existing settlements are, in comparison to their cohorts living in redeveloped settlements, more a part of day-to-day community life. They witness and are part of the daily rhythms of household chores, routinely treated with affection by immediate neighbors and passersby, and at a very young age begin to actively participate in community life. In redeveloped settlements, however, small children are confined to their homes for varied reasons. For instance, parents may be afraid of children falling down flights of stairs; redeveloped homes are more likely to have better light and ventilation and more space to accommodate children; caregivers are more likely to stay indoors as they prefer to do household chores and socialize inside their homes. These changes lend themselves to changes in the basic ways through which children learn, perceive the world, and interact with others in their vicinity (Rogoff, 2003). For example, in existing settlements, children as young as two years were sent to the shops on errands, whereas in redeveloped settlements such incidents were rare. The verticality of redeveloped settlements places several constraints on small children’s mobility and participation in community life. In the BIR4 settlement interviews with caregivers living on the ground level and the second level revealed some of these constraints:
Interview with mother of a three year old girl living on the second floor:

'The young children play here only – inside the house, in the little space outside, and sometimes near the steps. I am scared about the railing because they look down by putting their head through the bars – what if they get stuck or hurt themselves...so I don’t let them play near there. I am always scared they will fall down the stairs...so I will be behind them. The railing is a problem – when the cars go by the children go to look at them and they stick their head through the railing or climb, I’m very scared they will get hurt. Unless we are around we do not let them play near the railing or the steps.’

Interview with mother of an 18 month old girl living on ground floor:

'I use this space right outside my house. I cut vegetables, clean grains, dry clothes and do other small small chores.... My daughter also plays outside. I chat with my neighbors – mainly people who live on the ground floor. A lot of the kids from the building come here and play also. Some of them like to come and play with her (her daughter)...so they will all be playing together here. I like this place outside our house. I only use this space, I don’t use any other space. We have put this cot and bench...
here so we sit outside here and do work or chat sometimes. I have a relative staying on the 2nd floor. I go to see her sometimes and that is all. I don’t use other places here.’

The railing seen in Figure 70 clearly affords climbing and looking through. Obviously, little thought about children’s safety went into the design of these railings. In addition the small patch of undifferentiated corridor space outside homes on the upper floors allows little opportunity for children to play without blocking the way for other residents or engaging in adventurous behaviors like climbing railings. In contrast, the open space that adjoins the house on the ground floor (Figure 71) affords safe play and crawling, allowing children to observe adults as they go about daily chores, and to be part of a micro social life that occurs between neighboring families in these spaces on the ground floor.

Some residents living in very dense existing settlements also preferred to keep their children indoors as the environment outside their homes was unsanitary and posed several hazards. In the ME settlement a mother of a five-year-old girl and three year old boy said that they were renovating their home so her children could spend more time inside and less outside their home where they could easily come in contact with ‘filth’. Her house faced the railway tracks and the space outside her home (and other adjoining homes) was covered with rubbish. She said that people living in the settlement often threw their rubbish on the tracks, or people in trains threw rubbish outside, and that a lot of this eventually landed up close to their houses. As a result, she said, there was all kinds of garbage near their home (including infant and toddler feces). She said she tried to keep an eye on both of her children as much as she could but eventually she would find one of them playing in the rubbish. She also added, in this context, that not having access to sanitation facilities was problematic. She explained how she had to accompany both her children to the bushes near the khada (a mined out quarry filled with water and covered by water plants and bushes).
for toileting and often feared that they would be bitten by snakes or run on to the nearby tracks. She said:

‘I take both of them with me when I need to go to the toilet or they need to go as I’m scared to leave them alone here...it is very difficult when I sit I have to hold both their hands...or when I am with one of them the other one wanders away and I have to shout at him to come back...the tracks are right there so I am scared they might go there...or to the khada – god knows what is there...bad people, snakes everything!’

For young children rubbish affords manipulating loose parts, discovering shiny objects, finding objects that can be used for pretend play, all of which are part of a larger assemblage that could include feces, broken glass, and other household waste. Children at this age are not able to comprehend the affordances they perceive as part of the larger unsafe assemblage.

A grandmother of four girls living four houses away had similar dilemmas with regard to her youngest granddaughter playing in the space outside her house. She said:

‘This younger one is a real ‘badmash’ (naughty girl)...she keeps running outside to play here and there and someone or the other will be shouting at her to come back into the house. She says she wants to play...what can I say to her. She plays with other small children in the area. She will play with the mud outside, then with the garbage lying there and says she is cooking or making ‘paan’ for all of us. We shout at her, but she keeps playing like that only...what to do she is still a child. Her clothes get so dirty we have to keep changing her...Then she plays with the clothes lying around – ties a duppatta (scarf) around her head and says look I have long hair – she does all these things..’

53 A commonly consumed mouth sweetener/freshener made with betel leaf and areca nut and or cured tobacco.
‘People (residents living along the interior lanes) sometimes tie it (garbage) in a bag and throw it on the tracks. Sometimes the garbage person comes and asks to put it in her dabba (bin), otherwise people from the back just come and throw it here. We have told them (residents living along the inner lanes) many times not to do that (throw garbage near the tracks) – we ask them how they will feel if we throw rubbish in front of their houses and like that we have fights..our children only fall ill because of all the garbage lying here..but who do we tell this to? There is nobody who will listen to us...The garbage lady goes inside but they still throw the garbage out here. I have told you right....these zhoppadpatti (slum) people will never become better in their ways – they will be like this only! Nothing will change for us....we will live and die here..’

Both of the women above live in homes that have more space outside their homes than other homes located along the narrow internal lanes of the settlement. Yet, they find themselves at a disadvantage as this space is routinely deterritorialized by garbage dumped from settlement residents and passengers in moving trains. When I asked both these women what they did with their own garbage, they said they usually dumped it in the garbage lady’s collection box. When I asked them where she dumped the garbage I was told that she threw it in a ditch along the tracks away from the settlement. It is highly possible that most of what the garbage lady collects also lands up right outside these people’s homes. Exploring this garbage as an assemblage that includes the local municipality and the railways reveals the inherent complexities around provision of basic services in informal settlements. The municipality is unable to send a garbage collection truck as the railway authorities and adjoining middle-class housing societies have walled up all of the access points into the settlement as a way to restrain the growth of the settlement. While the residents deterritorialized the railway land by building their homes and finding jobs and
schools, the railway authorities used several strategies directly and indirectly to reterritorialize the land occupied by settlement dwellers.

Not all spaces outsides homes are unsafe for small children. There are spaces outside homes in both existing and redeveloped settlements that afford small children multiple affordances for safe play and social interaction. In existing settlements such spaces are mainly possible in settlements that have gone through incremental upgrading and where residents have access to and are able to control the space outside their homes. Such settlements usually have secure tenure, access to basic services (through powerful area leaders who are able to connect with other assemblages of power), and it’s residents have access to jobs. In existing settlements extended family living next to each other have also been able to claim and combine resources to create common safe spaces for their children.\(^{54}\)

The MRR2 settlement is an example of a redeveloped settlement where residents have been able to develop and control space outside their homes (by extending verandahs, using

\(^{54}\) These spaces are discussed in detail on pg 340 of this chapter.
metal grills, securing the larger open space onto which these spaces open by gates). This has been possible as the Alliance was closely involved in empowering and facilitating residents to plan, design and build their homes. In both settings children played with various loose parts (stones, string, vegetables) and fixed parts of the environment like steps, small walls, and ladders. While the environment is not completely risk-free the fact that these spaces enable several adults (grandparents, neighbors, passing children) to have their eyes on the children creates relatively safe spaces.

**Anganwadi (childcare centers) – small children – caregivers:**

In both redeveloped and existing settlements lack of access to adequate anganwadi centers (state provided childcare services) emerged as an ongoing issue that parents of young children struggled with. Young children being left alone at home while parents worked was not uncommon. Some of the caregivers we spoke with said they had no choice but to leave their children for three to four hours at home as both parents worked and they had no extended family living close by. A few of these caregivers said that their children played or sat around with other young children on their street who were also left behind by their parents. Pavitra, a mother of two children living in the BE settlement explained:

*I do housework in peoples houses. I go from 9am to 1pm. I leave the youngest one (4 year old boy) at home and leave the door open. On this street there are lots of*
mothers who work and they also leave their small children when they are away. They all just play together, if something happens then the neighbors help them.’

When I asked her in what ways the neighbors helped children she said they broke up fights amongst the children, attended to them if they were hurt or sick, or gave them some food. Children at this young age are unable to distinguish between the positive and negative affordances in the environment and thus are exposed to a number of disease vectors present in settlements with poor infrastructure. Unsupervised, they are more likely to play with garbage, ingest contaminated food, and play in unhygienic environments. Both older children and adults mentioned how young children fall sick while playing with open garbage. Small children also tend to hang around with older boys who have dropped out of school and quickly pick up risky behaviors such as chewing tobacco and consuming alcohol. During the child led tours in the BE settlements children told us of incidents where parents in their settlements had sold or tried to sell their young children. Further enquiries revealed that one such incident was related to a drunken father who had tried to sell his child to repay gambling debts when the child’s mother was working as a housemaid (to support her child) and therefore away from the house.

An anganwadi or childcare center clearly plays an important role in the lives of families of young children as the ability to care for small children is inextricably tied to the social and economic capacities of these families. A deeper look into anganwadis reveals the effects of poorly run anwanwadis or non-existence of anganwadis on young children and their families.

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program establishes anganwadi centers to provide health, nutrition, and education services for pregnant and lactating women and children below 6 years of age. It was started in 1975 and targeted to families below poverty line but as of 2005 was declared as universalized even though the residents of undeclared
slums, often the poorest of families are left out of this scheme. This program is run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and accounts for 73% of its budget. While over the last six years the budget for the ICDS program has almost tripled from around USD 600 million to 1700 million, the effectiveness of the program is questionable. Recent reports (Kapur, 2013; Agarwal et al, 2000) show that 46% of children under ICDS schemes exhibited mild to severe forms of malnourishment, showing that centers are not fulfilling their function. In urban areas the coverage was inadequate and failed to reach people who most needed it: undeclared slums, which account for almost 50% of the slums in urban areas, were not included in the ICDS program. In addition, lack of space and large densities in urban slums coupled with poorly trained and overburdened anganwadi workers impacted the efficiency of the program. An analysis of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS 3 – 2005-2006) revealed large disparities among poor and non-poor children in urban areas. Results showed that the under-five mortality per thousand for the urban poor was 72.7, and 41.8 for non-poor; and that among urban poor, 47% of children under-five were underweight for age compared to 26.2% of the non-poor (Agarwal, 2009). There is no support from the government for setting up the physical spaces to house anganwadis, as this has been
designed to function as a ‘community outreach program’. But in poor settlements where space is scarce, having access to a room or house for setting up an anganwadi might be one of the biggest challenges. A recent report on anganwadis in Bangalore shows that in general the physical infrastructure for anganwadis is dismal; over 40% have leaky roofs, 70% have no access to water, and over 50% have no toilets (Vaijayanti, 2010). Another recent report reveals that anganwadis are mostly housed in cramped garages, open terraces, and other spaces that are unsafe for children (Mobilecreches, 2011).

While several parents listed an anganwadi as a top priority in terms of common facilities they required within their settlements, many parents who did have access to anganwadis refused to send their children on grounds of mistreatment of children, irregular timings, poor quality of food, and mishandling of resources. Very few parents who sent their children to anganwadis were happy with services provided in these childcare centers. Where parents had more money they preferred to send their children to NGO-run or privately-run childcare centers as they provided better care, food, and education. The anganwadis I visited were located in spaces that often doubled as community meeting rooms. Teachers at these anganwadis told me that they were unhappy with this arrangement as their materials often went missing, the space was left in disarray and they had to cancel sessions according to the whims and fancies of settlement leaders. They also said parents sent their children in time for food and not for other activities that were part of the program. None of them had established supportive relationships with caregivers. In an ideal situation an anganwadi worker should be a well-networked member of the community and should receive training to be an anganwadi worker – but this was seldom the case. Two of the anganwadis I visited were in a dilapidated state and seemed to be unsafe spaces for small children (see Figure 74) and provided little shelter from the weather.

55 Government run community outreach programs do not qualify for physical infrastructure funds
Young children (6-12)

The lives of children in this age group were mainly governed by the daily rhythms of attending school, going to tuition classes\(^{56}\), and using whatever time they had in between to eat, sleep, play, and run errands and do chores for their parents. Holidays, particularly the warm days of summer, allowed children to explore, claim, and deterritorialize common spaces in and near their settlements for play. As I had the opportunity to visit some settlements during school and non-school days and holidays it was possible to observe and speak to children about how their spatial preferences and values changed with temporal shifts. During the summer holidays, children made active claims on common spaces such as open lots, a cemetery, terrace, adjoining plots, and streets. During school terms they ceded away much of these spaces on the grounds that they simply did not have the time to play. Parents and caregivers were also more supportive of children’s play during the holidays than during school terms, when they expected their children to ‘finish homework’, or ‘study’, and not ‘waste time playing’.

The spaces that children commonly valued were semi-private spaces, communal activity areas, and open spaces. Below I describe these spatial patterns in terms of the affordances they offered and how they emerged and disappeared through daily and seasonal rhythms.

**Semi-private spaces:** Where available, semi private spaces close to homes were highly valued by caregivers and children. Such spaces were noted in the BE settlement, the BEP settlement and the ME settlement. In existing settlements, these spaces emerged where extended family lived in homes next to each other and had the economic and social capacity to execute change. In these cases families were able to come to an understanding and

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\(^{56}\) Private tutoring is a common practice in India amongst both government and private school children. Teachers supplement their low wages by offering and encouraging students to attend tuition classes, and parents send children so they do better at school or because they are unable to help their children with their homework.
create semi-private spaces from circulation spaces by means of a roof cover, a temporary gate, and paving. By using these strategies, residents were able to convert what would otherwise be circulation or public space into a more intimately owned space. For example in the BE settlement one resident described how over time her family and her husband’s brother’s family living in the house next to them had established a common toilet and extended roofing across the common passage way to create a semi-private space for both families. She said:

‘Our family and his brother’s family who live next to us, we all use this area many times. We store water here. Children play here. After eating they come and sit here. I leave my children here when I dry clothes outside or cook outside. I dry small clothes here and big clothes outside the house. We store odds and ends here. I clean vegetables here and rice. We sit with friends and chat here. We have some breathing place here. It really helps to have this place because when I go out and the children come home they can be here. Children play here and I can see them when I clean things’

Her seven-year-old daughter added:

I play here. Sometimes with water and mud. Then we fight with each other. We play god- god here, and I play with my dolls and toys. My brother studies here. We eat here. We use it to sleep, play, and eat. We like this place.

As mentioned earlier, Deleuze said ‘to desire is to create an assemblage’; the assemblage of these semiprivate spaces does not happen in isolation or as a sudden action on the part of residents. They are desires articulated through various factors that constitute an assemblage. For instance, the need for protection from weather for belongings stored outside homes, negotiations between the two families, the fact that the strip of space is not
an access space for adjoining homes, a desire to have a more private space between the toilet and houses, and the backing of the boundary wall are some of the conditions that enabled the deterritorialization of a more common space into a more private space. This space afforded children the chance to play, study, sleep and eat in an area that was protected from the elements but still had access to the outside. Parents were able to keep an eye on their children as they went about their daily chores and to an extent keep them from playing outside their home where they might bring about conflict with neighbors. In the BE settlement there were about six sets of houses that had a similar assemblage (always with extended families), and such assemblages were also present in the BEP settlement, suggesting that this is a pattern through which residents appropriate space to better suit their needs.

Another example is the LCS settlement, an existing settlement I had visited in the exploratory phase of my research. An extended family of seven or eight households living next to each other had made a low wooden gate across the narrow street that could be closed when needed. The children I spoke with from these families said that they played amongst themselves as their parents forbade them from playing with other children in the settlement. Parents said they did this in order to avoid getting into conflict with neighbors. From the above two examples it is clear that children’s play is closely connected to parents’ concerns, territory, and affordances for children in the territory.
Children showed how they improvised upon traditional games so that they could be played in smaller spaces. Elements such as the wooden gate, steps, and walls were treated as boundaries for containing play as well as taking on other meanings that afforded play; for example the wooden gate was used in lieu of cricket stumps, walls were used for bouncing balls, and steps were used for defining particular spaces in pretend play. These boundaries also led to increasingly coded practices (children conversed in their mother tongue for the most part, did not mix with other children).

Yet another example is that of families deterritorializing the more public space of the street through paving to make it more private. Here, space adjoining homes was differentiated by various paving materials such as brick, stone, or cement to make the space more usable and more private. While it allowed for circulation, it also separated it from the more public space of the street. Where possible, residents used awnings, built forms (toilets, benches, washing stones), and trees to further define and deterritorialize these otherwise more public spaces. Parents and children considered these spaces ideal for carrying out daily chores and play; where rhythms of play were closely linked to the rhythms of caregivers’ chores. Some observed examples include a child playing five stones by herself on the paved area is asked by her mother to help with drying the clothes and in the process the mother and child have a game of wringing out water from clothes; a mother chopping tomatoes gives one to her six year old daughter who is looking after her toddler brother so she can entertain him in a game of ‘rolling the tomato’; a few young children wait for their mothers (three houses share a washing stone) to finish the washing in the washing area so they can use the space for playing ‘making food’; a seven year old girl plays with water and utensils while helping her mother wash dishes.

**Areas around communal activity:** Some of the common spaces frequented and liked by both boys and girls in this age group were those that formed a locus for communal activity.
These included small temples, small open squares, raised platforms around trees, shrines, and spaces like internal streets, corridors, roads, courtyards, and open spaces that were transformed during celebrations and festivities. Children enjoyed playing in these spaces as they afforded open space that was not heavily contested; parents did not mind children playing in such spaces – even when they were away from their homes – as they felt their children would be in the vicinity of women or the elderly who also frequented such spaces for informal socialization. Both parents and children considered temples in their settlement to be important as they visited them on a weekly basis to worship local deities. Similarly, Muslim families highly appreciated the presence of a masjid close to their settlement. They also valued the presence of madrasas where most families sent their children to learn about Islamic values.

Children especially enjoyed taking part in communal activities that happened around these spaces. Religious festivities often ruptured the routine cycles of daily life to create assemblages that allowed for children to participate in specially held competitions (rangoli, kite flying, dance, singing) and contribute towards transforming space through temporary decorations, paint, props, cleaning, building, and performances. The rhizomic ruptures of festivities also redefined ways in which adults treated and interacted with children: they played and danced alongside children, tolerated noisy behavior for which children were otherwise admonished, and indulged children with new clothes and sweets. Certain common spaces were particularly valued by both adults and children as they afforded communal activities. One mother and her child living in the MRR2 settlement described the central open space as important because-

*Mother:* ‘*In the open place outside we celebrate all the festivals there – Ambedkar Jayanthi, Diwali, Navratri. We have Ganapati there in the center during the Ganesh Chaturti. When there are weddings people have mandap and all out there. They have*’
the food outside and all that. Then for garba\textsuperscript{57} we use the place also. If we did not have this space we would not be able to do anything, if we were in a building we would not have place like this - this space is very important for us. We kept the area open so children could play, if there is some function then there is place for that. It is nice to have some open area near the houses. It looks nice also.’

Child: ‘I like singing and dancing. Here they make a stage sometimes and I like to dance on the stage during functions and all. We all have a lot of fun then, all of us friends dance and sing and everyone claps - it’s nice.’

Family functions like weddings also created similar ruptures. Large tents were set up in open spaces or terraces, food was made on a large scale, and help was sought (for accommodation, food preparation, childcare, and so on) from close neighbors. Children we spoke with in various settlements were quick to reminisce about these festivities during child led tours and describe in detail how and why they enjoyed these festivities.

In existing settlements such common spaces existed with a certain identity that differentiated them from the rest of the settlement; for example the temples in BE and BEP settlement with small open spaces, the cemetery in BE settlement, tree with raised platform in BEP settlement, and small shrines in ME settlement. Spaces like the cemetery, and the tree with the raised platform were historical artifacts that reflected the age of the settlement and rooted the constantly morphing settlements with a historicity and served as landmarks of space and time. The raised platform around the tree is a spatial pattern that can be traced to vernacular village life and even back to ancient temples and gurukuls in India as a space that afforded informal and formal gatherings.

Most redeveloped settlements lacked such elements, but in some settlements both adults and children made attempts to reestablish these spaces over time. For example in the BIR4

\textsuperscript{57} A traditional dance form performed during the festival of Navratri, where men and women dance around in a circle.
settlement children had created a shrine behind their settlement on a wall that also had remnants of their old settlement. In the same settlement residents transported the shrine of a local deity to a space just outside their settlement and over the course of two years built a temple that was maintained through collective action. Similarly in the BIR3 and MRR2 settlements residents had added a small temple and a small structure around a tulsi (holy basil) plant. The fact that residents took the effort to reestablish these spaces in their redeveloped settlements at their own initiative and cost shows the importance of and need for such spaces.

**Open spaces:**
Settlement boundaries

A common theme that arises from the case studies that is related to children’s play, mobility, and safety is one of boundaries. In existing settlements boundaries in the form of walls, railway tracks, gates, drains, roads either pre-exist or are established by more affluent and powerful neighbors or the State to contain settlements and control settlement resident’s access neighboring areas. In redeveloped settlements walls, gates, and grills are put in by builders or residents as protective elements to ensure the safety of residents. These boundaries can be seen as elements of segmentation and politics that actively separate parts of the city. Adults and children had differing relationships with these boundaries. Below I examine in detail the various dimensions of boundaries and how they affected children’s lives and vice versa.

Walls: In the BE settlement the boundary wall afforded the opportunity for climbing and jumping. Boys we spoke with said that they climbed the wall at various places to access the lands behind the settlement. The wall also created small niche spaces adjacent to the settlement where some of these boys could hang out without being in the gaze of settlement residents. Women we spoke with said that the boys broke the boundary wall so that they could more easily access the lands behind the settlement for toileting. This act of transgression -breaking the wall- was specifically pinned on the boys even though it was done under approval of adults and settlement leaders. In so doing, the women were able to underplay what might have become a legal issue with the authorities.

For girls in the settlement, the boundary wall further exacerbated their problems with regard to toileting; earlier the girls were able to slip into the adjoining grounds without being seen but after the wall was constructed they had to use the path across the broken portion of the boundary wall which put them in full view of other residents. Girls complained that they felt more exposed, vulnerable, and ashamed as a result. Boundary walls affected common space (streets, open spaces) in more ways than one. The women in the BE
settlement felt that on one hand the wall made their area more vulnerable to flooding and stagnant water as it prevented the natural drainage of rainwater. This led to loss of property, increase of mosquitoes, and mosquito related illnesses such as dengue and chicken guinea. But on the other hand they also felt that it made their settlement safer for their children as outsiders could easily be recognized and they could control to an extent who came in to their settlement.

The notion that boundary walls were needed for safety was also echoed in the BIR3 settlement and the MRR2 settlement. In the MRR2 settlement, women we spoke with said that they had been able to bound their settlement via walls, a toilet block and gates, so that access was possible only through the front gate. They said that by having done this they were able to control who came into their settlement and, more importantly, create a safe open space where girls, small children, and boys could play safely. In the BIR3 settlement, adolescent girls, women and the settlement leader felt they needed to build a boundary around their settlement so that the could restrict entry to outsiders and create a more secure and protected environment for girls and small children. Adults, for the most part voiced these opinions about security and boundary walls.

Roads and railway tracks: In Byculla and in the ME settlement, the road and the railway tracks existed prior to the settlements. As families began their lives close to these boundaries they used many precautions with regard to how their children interacted and negotiated these features. In both settlements, parents used vivid examples of traffic related accidents or incidents of children being killed by passing trains to keep their children away from these spaces. But the fact that these spaces had to be negotiated by children on a day to day basis to get to their schools, tuition classes, parks, or modes of transport tended to normalize the risks and dangers of these spaces. When children spoke of accidents, it was more with the excitement of narrating a gory story than with fear in their hearts. In the Byculla settlement both boys and girls were fearless. They raced across busy
roads, teased motorcyclists, ran behind cars, and negotiated traffic with agility and confidence while I followed them with my heart in my mouth. Similarly in the ME settlement the boys who took me around the settlement ran and jumped across stone platforms separating the tracks, told me that they race trains on these platforms, and showed off surface wounds that were a result of tripping or falling off platforms and being cut by glass or wounded by sharp stones.

**Boundaries in existing vs redeveloped settlements:** There was also a consistent difference in how girls and boys in both existing and redeveloped settlements negotiated boundaries. Caregivers, in general, were more protective of girls and enforced strict rules on where they could and could not go in both existing and redeveloped settlements. Girls were confined to places close to the home where adults could keep an eye on them. Their concern for girls stemmed from culturally coded restrictions as well as their perception of the environment (influenced primarily by the media and in some cases as a result of girls being kidnapped in the area) as being dangerous for girls. As a result, it was mostly boys who were present in child-led tours that involved places outside the settlement (with the exception of the Byculla settlement). In existing settlements, boys tended to disregard boundaries and included other parts of the neighborhood in their tours. Boys living in redeveloped settlements were more content to show the spaces within their settlement and to some extent just outside their settlement. For example, in Bangalore boys living in the BE settlement and BEP showed us the extensive lands outside their settlement (BE), roads (both), drains (BEP), and function hall (BEP). Children living in the BIR4 and BIR3 settlements, in contrast, for the most part pointed to places they used outside their settlement and occasionally took us to the road just outside their settlement. Similarly in Mumbai, in both the ME and Byculla settlements children took us to parks, playgrounds, shops, and tuition classes as part of the child-led tour; but in the Milan Nagar and MRR2 settlement children showed us spaces within the settlement and did not venture outside. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it
seems that content (materiality) and code (language, rules of conduct, etc) are quite different in assemblages of existing and redeveloped settlements.

In a redeveloped settlement in Dharavi (Mumbai) I had the opportunity to speak with six boys (aged 10 to 14). These boys recounted that when they lived in the basti (slum) their parents allowed them to go to other places outside their settlement, but after having moved from temporary housing to their redeveloped housing (in situ) their parents forbade them to venture outside by themselves. They said they liked their temporary housing as there was a ground right outside where they could go unaccompanied to play cricket and other games.

But in their new housing, not only could they not venture outside but they were forbidden from playing on the apartment grounds as they tended to break window glass and damage parked motorcycles.

Ahmed (11) and Sohail(12), two of the participants said:
Ahmed: ‘Before this we used to live in Ambedkar Nagar, in Sagari apartments (temporary housing). It used to be much better there – there used to be a ground there where we used to play. Here there is nothing. Here nobody lets us play, we try like ten times and we get to play once, it is like that. Today the chairman (elected head of the building society) is not here so we have the chance to play. Otherwise the watchman, chairman all shout at us. He has one room in this building and thinks the whole building is his.’

Sohail: ‘Before we used to play here (open areas within the apartment complex), and they (adults) would not shout at us so much – but then we started to break glass and all that and then one mother would complain to another and then the mummies would get into fights and then the daddies would get into fights and it used to get very bad. So they are very strict now and they don’t let us play anymore. This chairman is not nice he is very strict and made all these rules. The earlier chairman was better – he was like our friend and all.’

Further into the conversation, the boys unanimously agreed that their present housing was excellent except for the fact that they had no place to play cricket, football, or other robust games. They explained that while they understood that they were forbidden to play because they caused damage to property and could potentially hurt passersby or themselves, they could not ‘live without playing cricket.’

Relocation to another area can be quite disruptive for young children. As children’s lives revolve around the nested environments of home, friends and relatives houses, schools, and play grounds, having to relocate to a new home in an area far from their existing networks can be quite challenging – particularly if the new area is not as well endowed with good schools and play areas. Children living in the Milan Nagar housing had the most to say about what they missed about their old settlement and those in the Byculla pavement settlement about why they did not want to move to a new area. In comparison to children in
other settlements, these children expressed the most regrets about having to leave their surroundings. In the Byculla settlement children had access to good schools and numerous places for play (grounds, small parks) in their immediate neighborhood, whereas once they relocated to the Milan Nagar settlement they found that they had no access to play grounds and they had to travel longer distances to schools that were not as good as the ones they attended when they lived in their old settlement. Being separated from assemblages they thrived in was difficult particularly for school-going children and adolescent boys. A family living in Milan Nagar settlement reminisced about their old settlement saying:

*Asif (11yr boy)* – ‘everything was nice over there. I had lots of friends there and we played nicely all the time. We played in Jhula Maidan, YMCA and all….it was very nice there. I was studying nicely in school also there. After coming here my grades fell but now I am trying to make them better.’

*Mother* – ‘There our hut was right behind the school so it was very convenient there. Then there was a church next door. So all they had to do was get up put on their clothes and go to school – and for playing the entire road was there,. So they had no problems there….Here when they play in the chali – they play with the ball and it will go inside someone’s house, and it might hit somebody and then fights happen – so they have these problems about playing here….We used to go to the baby garden (a small neighborhood park for women and young children) also.’

*Grandmother* – ‘In the evenings their mother... she was not doing anything so she used to take 8 to 10 children to the baby garden so they could play there.’

The vast differences in terms of the common spaces offered by the current housing and their old housing made it especially difficult for children to adjust to their new housing. Children from the Byculla settlement who had visited their friends who had moved into the
Milan Nagar settlement said that they preferred to continue to live on the pavement as they had better access to play grounds, schools, friends, and paid work.

**Garbage, toilets, and drainage**

Open garbage on streets and in front of settlements, overburdened and poorly maintained public and community toilets, and poor drainage all affected children of this age group. Open garbage was a subject of discussion that came up frequently in child-led tours of existing and at times even in redeveloped settlements. In existing settlements garbage from homes occupied internal streets and any open spaces; spaces that children routinely used for play. In the BE settlement and the Milan Nagar settlement children made efforts to clean up certain areas so that they could use them for play, but in both these areas children complained that their efforts were in vain as garbage routinely reappeared in these areas. In the ME settlement, the boys we spoke with said that garbage had become part of their lives as it occupied many of their play spaces, and they had become used to playing in it. They rummaged through the garbage for loose parts like rags, wood etc to make cloth swings and toy guns. Some children – often the most vulnerable – became ragpickers and scavenged through garbage and sold scrap (glass, metal, plastic) to support themselves and their families.

Children often pointed to public and community toilets that were overburdened and or poorly maintained as sources of discomfort. Children living close to these toilets said they were at times so repulsed by the smells emanating from these toilets that they prevented them from eating, sleeping, or studying. Children also said that toilets often had long queues in the morning that prevented them from reaching their schools in time, and as a result many resorted to urinating and defecating in open spaces (in open drains, behind bushes, train tracks etc.) While boys for the most part did not mind toileting in the open, girls said they were often afraid to toilet in the open because of being teased and/or
abducted, fear of snakes or stray dogs, and because they felt exposed and ashamed. Most girls stated private toilets to be their top priority in redeveloped housing. A majority of girls also said they tried to use toilets in their school as much as possible to avoid toileting in the open.

Drainage, both of rainwater, sewage and grey water was a problem in a majority of existing settlements and in two of the redeveloped settlements (BIR3 and MRR2). Settlements are prone to flooding as they are situated on low lying lands (left unused by the State or private developers for the very reason) or become vulnerable to flooding as a result of actions by the State or powerful neighbors. Children in existing settlements complained that flooding often meant loss of books and uniforms, sleepless nights, and in one case loss of life. This often meant that children fell behind on their schoolwork and parents incurred more costs to replace books and uniforms. Poor drainage or rainwater also resulted in boggy waterlogged streets in settlements with unpaved streets. Children in these areas said that during such times their clothes and shoes became extremely dirty and resulted in them being punished by teachers and or being laughed at by peers in school. Therefore, children took circuitous routes to avoid such streets, which added up to one hour to their travel time to school. In the BE settlement children complained about overflowing sewage, and stagnant pools of water; they also associated disease and particularly young children falling ill or getting hurt as a result of these factors in the environment.

A crucial factor is that all of these problems are usually present in several existing settlements and together contribute to an environment that is hazardous for children’s health and development. For example, in settlements with overcrowded or poorly maintained toilets children, urinate and or defecate in open areas. Garbage dumped in these areas has a high probability of containing fecal matter (from infants and toddlers). Children most often play in these areas, which exposes them to a host of disease vectors, and as water is scarce and children have an underdeveloped sense of hygiene, risks are further
increased. During rainy weather when surface water drainage is poor, muck of all kinds is tracked into homes. In redeveloped settlements these deprivations are rarely all present at the same time and they are therefore more supportive of children’s health and development.

**Adolescent Girls and Boys (13-18/20)**

While most young children (6-12 age group) attended school, few children went on to secondary schools. In this age group fewer adolescent girls attended school than adolescent boys. Girls discontinued their education for various reasons; to help out at home, because there were no secondary schools in the neighborhood, because parents feared they would be abducted, molested, or harassed, or because they did not want to study anymore. Boys dropped out of school to earn money and supplement the family income or because they lost interest in school and or took to alcohol and drugs.

There was a notable difference in how parents referred to and treated adolescent girls and boys. Parents of children from both Hindu and Muslim families felt strongly that once adolescent girls reach maturity they should stay within the confines of the home. Parents were very protective of their adolescent girls and often tended to paint the outside environment as unsafe and dangerous where girls were concerned, often using that as a reason to enforce the rule that their daughters not leave the house unaccompanied. Adolescent boys who worked and earned money to supplement the family income were treated with respect and shown off with pride. One of the main concerns voiced by parents was the probability of boys succumbing to bad habits (gambling, drinking, drugs) and 'becoming useless' or 'leaving the house’. While parents were able to exercise control over their adolescent girls, they struggled to do so with boys. Girls were often idealized as 'good’, 'helpful’, 'quiet’, and 'obedient’ whereas boys were regarded as 'hotheaded/angry’ and 'rebellious’.
Adolescent girls: In both existing and redeveloped settlements most adolescent girls stayed within the confines of their home. When I asked them about common spaces within their settlement the standard response was that they did not use or know about spaces other than their homes. Parents or caregivers often supported the girls’ responses with statements like ‘..she is 16yr old….no she does not go anywhere as she is a big girl now. Only school and house. This is how it is everywhere.’

The advent of menstruation is a very significant event (both in Hindu and Muslim cultures) and is marked by various tradition and family based rules and regulations that have a major influence on the independent mobility and behavior of adolescent girls. While the event is shrouded in traditional dos and don’ts the actual biological process is rarely explained to these girls. A study based in an urban poor settlement in New Delhi shows a majority of women that were interviewed were taken by surprise at the onset of menarche and had little prior knowledge of the event. There was a ‘culture of silence’ that surrounded the event (Garg et al, 2001). The taboos and restrictions placed on adolescent girls include ‘not going outside the house by themselves’, ‘not speaking to boys or men’, and ‘not wasting time chatting with friends’. Parents and caregivers I spoke with felt the above restrictions protected girls from sexual harassment and kept them out of ‘trouble’.

All of these restrictions particularly affect how adolescent girls use and perceive common spaces in settlements – both existing and redeveloped. After they reach physical maturity, they are suddenly removed from spaces where they played and chatted with their friends and confined to being inside homes. Most of their responsibilities that involved going outside the home, like going to the shop or fetching water are passed on to younger siblings or taken on by other family members. One mother said

‘oh she (her 15 year old daughter) does not help with the water anymore…she has become a big girl now so she has to stay at home. This one (her 8 year old daughter) helps me now.’
Similar to findings in another study that explored adolescent girls perspectives on urban neighborhoods as social spaces (Singh, 2010), the girls in this study too perceived the space outside their homes as a gendered constraint and while they accepted the restrictions placed by adults they also longed for more freedom and opportunities to voice their opinions. Some of the girls I was able to speak with in the BE settlement expressed their frustrations for not having a voice within their community. One 13-year-old girl said

‘If we tell our problems to anyone, no one cares. If our parents tell, also nobody cares. If we had the guts to speak out, would our area be like this? Our parents don’t let us speak out – even if we say we will complain – our parents say what do you know you are small children just shut your mouths and sit at home. They shut us up like that. Then if parents say anything then they are scared that they will get into fights and they will be outcast – and they will not be helped by anyone here.’

The fear of social ostracism, as this quote reveals, is a defining factor that suppresses both adults and children from voicing their opinions with regard to the settlement. Adolescent girls are mostly given more household responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger siblings. However, in poor settlements where basic facilities like toilets are outside homes, adolescent girls must inevitably leave their homes. While girls do step out to go to school (in a few cases), use community toilets, and in some cases fetch water or food provisions when their mothers are overburdened, they do so minimally and with increasing anxiety and decreasing confidence.

Most child-led tours of settlements were devoid of adolescent girls as they seldom left their homes. In settlements where girls had to use the outdoors for toileting or even community toilets, they described the humiliation they faced when boys on the street teased them, or when they were caught in the act of disposing sanitary napkins. Some girls also complained about being chased by dogs when they went to use the public toilets. As children are shielded from common spaces through rules set by their parents, they are at the same time
deprived of the chance to develop an ability to negotiate these spaces. So when their bodily needs push them into these spaces to carry out extremely private functions, they are at a loss with regard to how they could possibly confront the teasing boys or chasing dogs and are often overcome with fear and humiliation. Caregivers of adolescent girls in these settlements were often reduced to tears as they talked about what the lack of toilets meant for their children.

Adolescent girls, as compared to other children, often described spaces outside their homes as ‘dirty’, ‘filthy’, ‘filled with men hanging out’, and used these as reasons for not stepping out of the house. By doing so they internalized and reinforced the code of behavior set by their caregivers that controlled their access to spaces outside their homes in settlements. Occasional rhizomic ruptures that allowed them to use common spaces occurred during festivals and other celebrations, and while minding their younger siblings.

As common space within the settlement was out of bounds for adolescent girls for recreation purposes, a number of girls said they went to see the movies, or to the mall, or to larger city parks with their friends or parents. In redeveloped settlements girls in this age group were also most appreciative of their new environment, and in existing settlements they yearned for better housing where there would be water and toilets within their homes. Some were quite descriptive of how their new homes should look – Sania, a 17 year old girl living in the Byculla settlement spoke about the Milan Nagar housing that she had recently visited:

‘There people don’t live like building people only...they live like they are from the joppadpattis (slums) only. They live like they used to here, they don’t live clean and nice like building people. When you go there you don’t even feel like those people have moved to a different environment, the way they used to live here they live there also like that – just like that. The environment should be different...the place
should be clean and people should keep it clean. There should be ‘togetherness’
there. People fight a lot there.

It should not be up-down (meaning she prefers not to have a loft space), like here…
like a slum, it should be a single level and a little bigger like how they usually have in
buildings. There should be something for the children also – where they can play.

For me, the most important thing would be a library – I love to read – and if there is
one, then I will just be there all the time reading books.’

In both existing and redeveloped settlements, parents tended to structure their daughters’
days with household tasks, school, or extracurricular activities so that they had less time to
‘get into trouble’ and in the bargain could be useful or ‘learn something.’ In most cases the
girls were accompanied by an adult or went with their friends or siblings. In the Milan Nagar
settlement there were a number of opportunities for older girls to learn tailoring, teach,
attend computer classes, and learn embroidery work. Saira, a 16 year old girl described her
day as below:

‘I go to school and I go to tuition. Tuition is here only, in the house opposite. I go for
Arbi also, it is here only – on this floor after a few houses from ours. I also go for
embroidery class – that is in the tuition class only. The same person who takes
tuition class also teaches embroidery. I also go for tailoring class and work there
also. I do this after school – from 2pm to 7:30pm. I go for tuition from 8:30pm to
9:30 pm. Then for embroidery I go from 10pm to 11pm. I sleep at 12:30 at night. I
have school from 7am to 1pm.’

When I visited some of these spaces I found that residents had effectively converted their
living spaces into work and/or teaching spaces and while maintaining the lofts as more
private spaces. This might not have been possible if the homes were like standard
apartment blocks that Sania and other women I spoke with in the Byculla settlement said they preferred. Some residents in Milan Nagar said that having the loft space not only increased the space they had but also gave them an option to differentiate spaces effectively. They said they preferred this layout to the ubiquitous one-level layout.

**Adolescent boys:** Cricket was what most of the adolescent boys talked about. They showed me places within and outside their settlement they used to play cricket. Most boys of this age group tended to play more in spaces outside the settlement than within. They said adults scolded them if they played within the settlement as it often resulted in disrupting circulation spaces, hurting young children or adults, causing damage to property and conflict amongst residents. Instead, these boys, said they preferred to play in cricket grounds, in their schools, or open parks. Open parks, that were nothing more than an open ground, were often taken over by boys of this age group and older men who used the space as a field to play cricket and often bullied and chased away younger children who tried to use the space. Adolescent boys were most knowledgeable (amongst children) of the larger assemblages that their settlement was a part of, and were able to connect how deprivations in their neighborhood were connected to local politics, corrupt municipal officials, and powerful neighbors. For example in the BE settlement the adolescent boys I spoke with spoke knowledgably about who had built the boundary wall around their settlement and how it caused flooding of homes during the monsoons and restricted their access to lands behind the settlement. Similarly in the BEP settlement the adolescent boys said the large open space within the settlement was left as it was as the landowners had 'special connections' with the settlement leaders. In the ME settlement one of the boys in the child led tour explained how the access points to the settlement had been blocked by railway authorities.
and other influential neighbors and because of which if there was a fire in their settlement a
fire truck would never be able to enter the settlement.

In existing (BE and ME settlements) as well as redeveloped settlements (BIR3, Milan Nagar,
and MRR2 settlements) caregivers and children complained about adolescent boys who
indulged in drugs, alcohol, and smoking and caused trouble in the form of harassment,
noise, and fights and created an unpleasant environment. In the ME and BIR3 settlements
residents complained about boys taking over common spaces within and outside the
settlements for these purposes. In the BIR3 settlement residents said that adolescent boys
from adjoining areas would drink and walk into their settlement to harass young girls. In the
Milan Nagar and MRR2 settlements residents complained of local neighborhood boys
hanging out and drinking and doing drugs in specific locations within the neighborhood.
They said they were concerned that their children would also be lured into these activities.
Some of the adolescent boys I spoke with, while never admitting they themselves indulged
in these activities, said others did and showed me the places that were frequented for such
activities and described in detail the kinds of substances that were partaken.

**Summary and Reflection**

Existing settlements are constantly changing in terms of density, their access to basic
services, access to roads, sizes of homes and the width and quality of internal lanes. For
children this means that some play spaces and affordances disappear or are transformed by
garbage and sewage, additional and or extended housing. Within this changing environment
children’s own needs and perceptions change as they develop from infants, to toddlers, to
school going children, to adolescents and young adults. So for many children the play
spaces they played in or watched their older sibling play in no longer exist as the years
pass. They constantly reinvent play spaces as part of growing up. This might be one reason
why children are less attached to places they played in and are not too upset when they
disappear. Children mostly expressed regret over losing play spaces when the loss was
abrupt. For example in relocation and redevelopment projects, when they are uprooted from social networks of friends they have grown up with and depend on, and removed from other settings like schools and play grounds that they went to previously with these friends, they not only lose their play spaces but the whole assemblage. Transitional spaces or semi-private spaces between the home and more public spaces like internal lanes or roads are valued as important spaces by small children, young children, adolescent girls and their caregivers. These spaces are possible in existing settlements where residents are able to negotiate their creation by collaborating with neighbors (mainly possible with other family members living close by) or in redeveloped settlements where incremental building is possible. These spaces allow for an easier transition to the outside world and allow for ‘nested spaces’ (Doxiadis, 1975) where children, as they grow and develop, are able to access spaces of increasing complexity.

As was the case in the GUIC research (Chawla, 2001), children in both existing and redeveloped settlements gave importance to spaces like temples, masjids, and small open spaces, and occasions such as festivals and marriages that made them feel more a part of the community. They also valued natural elements like water bodies and greenery where present.

However important play may be to children themselves, it tends to deplete social capital among households. In particular where parents and caregivers have borne the negative consequences of children’s play (mainly getting into fights with neighbors over play which caused noise, accidents, broken glass etc.) they tended to associate less with their neighbors and keep children from playing outside of their homes. A study based on the inner city neighborhoods of London had similar findings. But this study also reveals that where safe play spaces and other common areas such as daycare centers and gymnasiums were present, parents were able to make more social connections within their community through their children’s activities in these places (Weller and Bruegel, 2009). Another study
that investigates the role of libraries (provided by an NGO) in urban poor communities in Bangalore reveals that these spaces are particularly important for adolescent girls as they give them a ‘sense of place and belonging’ within the community. These libraries not only offered children a safe and secure space that parent’s appreciated as an alternative to children ‘loitering on the streets’ but also connected children to wider assemblages of librarians and NGOs. The libraries were also spaces that inspired and nurtured other community development projects (Pyati and Kamal, 2012). Both of these studies support the findings of this research where both parents and children in both existing and redeveloped settlement have voiced their need for safe play spaces and other supportive common spaces like libraries, study spaces for their children, and places where women and adolescent girls can have access to vocational training. As the above studies indicate, such spaces can also be crucial for building social capital within communities. Common spaces that afford play, reading, social interaction, and skills can also lure children away from viewing television sets (an activity supported by parents to entertain children and keep them away from the usually toxic outdoor environments), which seem to be becoming increasingly prominent in urban poor settlements in India (Raghav and Kumar, 2010).

Children are seldom part of upgrading and redevelopment processes. Some of the reasons stated by my partners for why it would be difficult to involve children were children’s busy schedules, their immaturity, and because parents knew what was best for their children. This research however points to several reasons why children should be part of these processes. They often have a more positive image of their settlement (perhaps because they are sheltered from the worst by their parents or caregivers) whereas parents are often too overwhelmed by their efforts to cope with the negative aspects of settlements to be able to see anything in their settlement in a positive light. Drawing on this positive image will help identify spaces and patterns that are important and worth protecting in redevelopment.
and upgrading processes and could provide the basis for innovative ruptures in cookie cutter redevelopment efforts. Another reason to involve children is that, while parents strive to do what is best for their children, they might be unable to gauge what is best for them in incremental as well as redevelopment efforts that involve a multiplicity of issues to contend with. Instead, when children as a group have a voice they have a better chance of influencing changes to take their needs into account. As most children also attend school, given some exposure to issues surrounding redevelopment and upgrading efforts, they might also be better able to articulate their own needs as well as those of their families.
Chapter 13: The Role of Common Spaces in Women’s Lives

The case study chapters and the preceding analysis chapters reveal to a certain extent how women in urban poor settlement negotiate, use, and value common spaces as they go about their daily chores and care for their children. In these earlier chapters I have refrained from ‘classifying’ common spaces into categories but have examined them in all their complexity as assemblages. This has enabled me to consider how various common spaces emerge and are shaped as parts of larger assemblages, allowing for a grounded understanding of the multiple meanings residents assign to various common spaces as well as the intimate connections of common spaces to homes, people, settlement infrastructure, and larger urban infrastructure, services, and policies. But this approach has been limiting in drawing together commonalities across various sites and examining in detail how various common spaces add to or detract from the physical, social, financial, and human resources of households. In this chapter I use Caroline Moser’s Asset-vulnerability framework to consider how common spaces function as assets and/or affect the various assets and lives of urban poor families, particularly women.

In existing urban poor settlements the limited, congested and poorly ventilated private space of the home is often extended to spaces outside and in between homes which form semiprivate spaces where daily chores such as washing, cleaning, cooking, and bathing are routinely performed. These spaces also allow for informal socialization between neighbors as well as affording children the chance to play close to their homes. These extensions of homes often open out to small internal lanes that are also relatively semiprivate in nature and which connect to larger and busier streets within the settlement. Women traverse these internal streets regularly to go to shops located on the main streets, to access community or public toilets, fetch water, go to places of worship, drop their children at anganwadis,
schools, or bus stops, visit with neighbors and relatives, or to go to work outside the settlement.

And yet, when I asked women about the spaces they used other than their homes most responded with statements like ‘we stay inside our homes that is all...we don’t go anywhere else....we mind our own business’. As I have mentioned previously, it was only when I asked the participants about where they carried out their specific daily activities that they acknowledged the spaces they used in the settlement that were not their homes. While women alluded to cultural and traditional values for ‘staying at home’ they often manipulated these in their daily practices. As Mary Douglas (2004) states ‘culture’ is never a fixed set of norms and rules but is relational to socioeconomic realities.

Common spaces produced social cooperation and solidarity as well as conflict and social tension among women. The case studies reveal that well kept community toilets, adequate access to water, and a sizable amount of space outside homes allow women to go about their daily lives in relative ease and to develop and maintain good relations with neighbors.

In settlements where space outside homes is severely restricted and where children have no place to play, women struggle to perform their daily chores and are intensely wary of actions that might cause conflict with neighbors.

In this chapter I will delve deeper into why and how certain common spaces in settlements are physical assets that give women more choices in how they live their lives. In the first part of this chapter I review the larger discourses on women in urban poor settlements, as well as the specific context of women in public spaces in India, and the role of women in the Alliance. In the second part I lay out the theoretical framework and in the third part use this framework to further extend my analysis on the role of common spaces in women’s lives.

1. Urban Poor Women

It is generally considered that women in urban areas are better off than their counterparts in rural areas in terms of their access to social, economic, and political opportunities and
less subjected to gender-based injustices and inequalities. While this may be true to a certain extent, recent review articles focusing on gender and urbanization in Majority World countries reveal that poor women living in informal settlements face an inordinate number of hardships as they juggle with managing shelter, strategizing around services and caring for their families; they can hardly be considered to experience an ‘urban advantage’ (Chant, 2013; Chant, 2012).

While poor women contribute to the prosperity of cities with their paid and unpaid labor, they receive little in return. Women, cast into ‘reproductive’ roles by societal norms, take on the brunt of the labor needed to support their families. They fetch water from local standpipes that usually have long queues, cook food, clean utensils, wash clothes, look after young and old family members. As the money earned by male household members is seldom enough to make ends meet (one of the main reasons being that large portions are used by men for alcohol, smoking, or gambling), women also take on home-based jobs (like sewing work for garment export companies, rolling beedis and incense sticks, making flower garlands) or work as maids in middleclass households. As men seldom help with ‘reproductive’ work on the home front, women face a double workload that is physically, morally and psychologically exhausting (Letsch, 2001).

Nothing comes easily. Water, toilets, open space, and home-based work are all contested arenas that usually strain the bonds between neighbors and family members. The paid work women that take on does little to empower them, as the money earned is used towards supporting the family, and the work they take on (as housemaids, garment workers, sweepers) is usually exploitative with little pay for long hours of work (Dickey, 2000; Letsch, 2001). Home-based work is often folded into or negotiated around domestic activities, which renders it ‘invisible’ and does little to transform gender-based societal structures (Truelove, 2011). In addition, taking on the ‘double workload’ can land them in
tough situations; they have to make difficult choices, like whether to secure enough water for their family or keep their jobs.

Urban poor women face more physical domestic violence than their better-off urban counterparts. A recent study based in India shows that lower educational status and lower income increases the risk of domestic violence, which was often triggered by dowry issues as well as negligence or failure to perform the duties expected of a woman by the husband and husband’s family (Babu and Kar, 2009). Poor urban women also show more signs of mental health problems as a result of domestic violence than more well-off urban women (Kumar et al, 2005).

Poor women also face a number of health inequalities. Sixty percent of poor urban women are anemic; they have the highest risk of anemia relative to other groups, including poor rural women (Bentley and Griffiths, 2003; Urban Health Resource center, 2007). They also have higher rates of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases due to overcrowding and poor environmental conditions. Urban poor women are more likely to give birth at home and have less than the three recommended antenatal visits, resulting in high rates of maternal and infant mortality in urban poor settlements (Urban Health Resource center, 2007).

Poor women in urban settlements also have more children\(^58\), as they have less access to family planning information (Garg et al, 2001) and because their spouses’ families and the spouses themselves object to contraceptive measures (Puri et al, 2004). In most of the case study settlements, the average number of children per home was close to four. This increases their responsibilities. Young girls are often pulled out of school to help care for younger children and take on household responsibilities, which forces them into a life no better than their mothers,’ thereby engendering a cyclical process of gender-based impoverishment (UNICEF, 2004).

\(^{58}\) The fertility rates of urban poor women and non-poor urban women were 2.8 and 1.8 respectively (National Family Health Survey 3).
The case studies give ample evidence of the physical and emotional hardships and violence that women and adolescent girls face, as they condition their bodies to respond to the lack of services within their settlements. Waking up at odd hours to fill water, making multiple trips on unpaved dark streets or up and down several flights of steps is back breaking work – made even more difficult when young children are in tow. Waiting for sunset or the wee hours of the morning to defecate, and being exposed to sexual harassment and even rape as they negotiate increasingly dangerous spaces for open defecation all take a toll on the health and well-being of women in poor settlements.

Poor women seldom have property rights. Houses and land, where they are owned by a household, belong to the male members of the family, which allows women little bargaining power in family decisions. A fairly recent study (Bhattacharya et al, 2009) shows that even in vastly different States such as Kerala (an affluent southern state that has matrilineral societies) and Uttar Pradesh (a much poorer northern state that has patrilineal societies) women’s ownership of property has a large effect on reducing domestic violence. Women usually put up with domestic violence and other injustices as lack of education, technical skills, mobility, and property rights leaves them with few choices to fend for themselves and their children in the outside world (Chant, 2012; Datta, 2006). In addition, the infrastructure of cities in India is planned with little concern for women’s needs, which adds another layer of exclusion for women in accessing the city and what it has to offer. For example women avoid dark public streets as they fear crime and sexual harassment (PUKAR-BMW Guggenheim Lab Collaboration, 2012); off-peak bus timings mean women wait longer hours at bus stops to go to markets or to pick up children from school (Chant, 2013), newly designed buses are based on European standards which are ergonomically uncomfortable and unsafe for Indian women\(^59\) (Das Joshi et al, 2012), and public parks are

\(^{59}\) Women in Hyderabad have complained that in the new JNNURM busses they are unable to reach the handgrips and find the seat rods to be too low. In addition they find the front rows of facing seats to be uncomfortable.
designed and managed such that women seldom feel safe or comfortable in these spaces (Ranade et al, 2009).

1.2 Women in public space in India

To a large extent, societal and cultural norms limit women to domestic spaces. While they are visible in the public realm – in streets, shops, etc - their presence in these spaces, as a recent study of public spaces in Mumbai shows, ‘is circumscribed by the need to demonstrate purpose and respectability’ (Ranade et al, 2009, p438). There is an implicit moral policing of women in public spaces in India – women in public spaces are judged by what they wear, what they do, what time they are outside, who they are with and so on. Another relevant study on the use of public spaces in Mumbai revealed that among the women interviewed, 87% felt that at least one or more public spaces in Mumbai were inaccessible for them. Safety, sexual harassment, societal perceptions, presence of men, and family restrictions were some of the major reasons women gave for not using public spaces. Women living in crowded settlements said they longed for clean, safe, and green open spaces close to their homes where they could enjoy some solitude or spend time with their peers without being teased by men (PUKAR-BMW Guggenheim Lab Collaboration, 2012). ‘Public space’ therefore reflects the conditions of inequality within a society and perpetuates systems of domination and discrimination (Fraser, 1990).

In poor settlements, women’s movement within and around their settlements is shaped by everyday activities. On a daily basis, women stay within or in close proximity to their homes to cook, clean, feed their families, and sleep. They may venture further away from their homes, but in most cases stay within a settlement’s boundary to access water, toilets, and neighborhood shops. Women usually venture outside their settlements only to take their children to school or for paid work. On a less frequent basis (one or two times a month)
they travel further away to go to religious spaces, entertainment spaces, or to visit with relatives within the city (Mukhopadhyay and Dutt, 1993).

Looking back at these earlier chapters I feel that common spaces in settlements can be best understood as a combination of private and parochial spaces. Private spaces are defined as homes that contain the most intimate relationships between groups; parochial spaces are spaces shared by acquaintances who have similar needs and are connected to each other through interpersonal networks and institutions within the community (like schools, religious spaces, community centers) (Hunter, 1985).

1.3 The central role of women in The Alliance

As I have previously explained in the Byculla case study, Mahila Milan evolved out of a collaboration between middle class women activists and poor women pavement dwellers who worked together to challenge and transform existing norms around the legality and perceptions of pavement dwellers and enabled women to have more control over State-led evictions and to voice their needs and preferences in effective ways. Women are central to the Alliance.

According to Moser (1989), women’s needs can be construed as both practical gender needs and strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs are those required to support a family and in socioeconomic and spatial terms can be linked to the domestic arena, income-generating activities, and community-level requirements for housing and basic services. These needs conform women to the dominant culture and do not raise questions about subordination or position of women in a given society. Strategic gender needs are context specific (vary with change in class, culture, ethnicity, region) and question the structure and nature of relationship between men and women. They can be related to issues such as property rights, gender divisions of labor, domestic violence and often require empowering women and addressing laws and policies through social and political reforms (Moser, 1995).
The birth of the Alliance was a response to poor women’s practical and strategic gender needs. It is important to address both these kinds of needs in order to achieve lasting improvements in women’s quality of life. The spaces that support these needs in urban poor settlements are closely linked and change can affect both types of needs in multiple and contradictory ways. For example piped water within homes gives women more control over their bodies and satisfies the daily requirements of water for cleaning, cooking, washing but also further ensconces women in the domestic sphere and deprives them of the informal interactions they had with peers while waiting to collect water at public standpipes.

Sheela Patel (2001, p53) one of the founding members of SPARC in an early paper describing women’s leadership roles in community processes states:

’The focus on women was both a means and an end. Women in survival situations use resources judiciously, whenever they control distribution it is equitable and their ability to operate as a collective ensures democratic organisation. Strengthening this function and increasing its acknowledgement both within the community and outside affects many sets of relationships. It challenges traditional community organisation practice which inevitably locates a single male leader as a conduit of resource/information flow from outside. It formalises and acknowledges what women do anyway, so that their abilities are better used for all in the community. After all, if women cook food, handle demolition, manage water and sanitation, they would know best what ingredients are essential for the solution and if the solution is viable.

When women accept the mantle of leadership for the "good of family and community", then they also feel less self-conscious about their role transformation and communities/men don’t harass them while they are still vulnerable. Gradually as women develop confidence, this confidence creates the basis of renegotiating relationships in the home and in the community.’
For members of SPARC supporting poor women in challenging situations did not mean imposing a western notion or a middle class notion of feminist ideals of confronting the domestic nature of their roles within their families and societies. Instead they listened to what mattered to poor women most – which was for them to be able to care for and nurture their families and keep their families intact. Therefore the aim of SPARC as an organization became not to deliver assistance by which women could better care and nurture their families but to empower women to find solutions to their problems and in the process renegotiate their roles within domestic and societal spheres in incremental but transformative ways.

My conversations with Mahila Milan women in Bangalore always led to them talking about how they have changed as individuals after being a part of Mahila Milan. They talked about how before they were part of the MM they had ‘barely stepped outside of their homes’ or ‘looked another man in the eye’ and their only aim was to support their families. But after having joined the MM they said they travel by themselves locally and as part of a group to other cities and countries, talk to settlement leaders and meet with municipal officers who are mostly male, and feel they are part of a larger organization. MM women said they also feel they have more purpose to their lives now as they are able to facilitate daily savings and address the needs of poor families in settlements to a certain extent. While these are all are huge steps towards addressing the strategic gender needs of women, it came at the expense of challenges women faced as they juggled their home and work based lives. The MM women talked about not having enough time to cook and clean for their families (duties they are still expected to fulfill) and complained about the crowded buses they had to negotiate on a daily basis as they visited settlements. Change is also slow to come about in terms of settlement redevelopment; many women also said they might
never see the benefits of their work in their lifetimes but hoped their children would gain from their efforts and live better lives.

2. Theoretical framework

Caroline Moser, an urban anthropologist, developed the asset-vulnerability framework during her longitudinal research with urban poor families living in South America. Her key finding from this research was that shocks such as natural disasters and economic crises and chronic long-term macro and micro socio-economic changes caused families to move in and out of poverty. She defines vulnerability as:

‘..insecurity and sensitivity in the well-being of individuals, households and communities in the face of a changing environment, and implicit in this, their responsiveness and resilience to risks that they face during such negative changes.’

Moser found the assets families had access to were key components in determining their vulnerability in urban poor settlements. Much of her work is influenced by the writings of Amartya Sen (1981) on famines and entitlements and assets and capabilities and by Robert Chambers’ (1992 cited in Moser 2006) work on risks and vulnerabilities, which together define poverty as a static concept and vulnerability as more dynamic (Moser, 2006). Sen (1981) showed that using economic terms to define poverty was highly misleading. His groundbreaking work revealed that people who died from starvation during the Bengal famine did so not because of the lack of food but because of a lack of capability to access food that was controlled by a number of socioeconomic factors like declining wages, unemployment, rising food prices, and poor food-distribution systems.
An asset is defined as a "stock of financial, human, natural or social resources that can be acquired, developed, improved and transferred across generations. It generates flows of consumption, as well as additional stock" (Ford Foundation 2004, p. 9 cited in Moser 2006). The more assets that poor families can draw on, the less their insecurities and the less vulnerable they are to changing conditions. Assets can be both tangible and intangible, including not only physical assets (housing, infrastructure, equipment), financial assets (financial resources available to a family) and human assets (education, skills, health), but also social capital (which includes rules, norms, social obligations, reciprocity, and trust embedded in social relations, social structures, and societies’ institutional arrangements).

Assets are not dead resources; they can be actively manipulated and they afford people the capability to be and to act.

Common spaces can act as assets that women can draw from to support their family during short and long-term crises. What remains unclear from the case study summaries and to an extent the thematic chapters is in what ways or under what conditions common spaces act as assets. While there are multiple indications that suggest common spaces can act as assets, they are present only within the individual contexts of each case study. I would therefore like to use asset –vulnerability and asset-adaptation frameworks as tools to cut through these individual contexts and generalize about how common spaces are used or adapted on a day to day and on a long term basis by women to support their families.

Common spaces can be assets depending people’s capacity to deterritorialize, or reterritorialize these spaces. For example a family can turn the space adjoining their home into a tangible asset given they have the capability to deterritorialize this space through concrete actions such as paving the space or putting a temporary shade extending from their roof of their homes, having successful negotiations with neighbors, and by claiming this space through everyday reproductive work and socialization activities. The ability to deterritorialize (by converting it into more private space from parochial space) the space
outside a person’s home therefore also depends on other tangible and intangible assets that are families have access to. For example access to money, credit, skills, material, and the ability to develop and maintain good relations with neighbors and people in positions of power. In turn the space outside a home can also act as an asset that increases the asset bases of families. For example useful extended space outside homes can allow for productive work through which women can earn additional wages to support their families. It also allows for families to host guests and relatives and hold family functions by which they can increase their social capital. There is therefore a complex relationship between common spaces in settlements and a family’s asset base.

3. Common Spaces as Assets

In this section I will examine how some common spaces that women described as important or valuable function as assets and/or influence other assets available to families. I give more attention to the ‘space outside homes’ as women in all existing and most redeveloped settlements described this space to be extremely important.

3.1 Space outside homes

To begin with I would like to analyze common spaces in relationship to the home. For women living in poor settlements, their home is their most important physical asset. Women also identified most with their domestic spaces and their roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers. So I feel it is important to relate common spaces within settlements to how they strengthen homes as assets and support women in satisfying women’s practical gender needs. Aside from their homes, a large majority of women who participated in this study said that the space outside their homes was extremely important and valuable to them and their families. As women often draw upon the physical space outside their homes as a resource and in some cases develop it (through additional paving, an awning, a bench) this space can be considered a physical asset.
**Extremely dense settlements:** In existing dense settlements women have to manage with very small homes and limited space outside their homes. Three of the settlements studied as part of this research fall into this category - the BEP settlement in Bangalore and the Byculla and ME settlements in Mumbai. Most women interviewed in these settlements described the place outside their home as ‘important’ or ‘indispensable’ as it allowed them to carry out daily chores necessary to support their families, which they were unable to do within the narrow confines of their homes. However, as the space outside homes is continuously affected by increasing densities and the quality of basic services (such as water, sanitation, and garbage disposal) it often ceases to be an asset.

The BEP settlement is situated in a well-connected and well-serviced part of the city, and is overseen by settlement leaders who have ample political capital. This has allowed for physical assets such as electricity, paved roads, water, and drainage to be established over the years. A good location, access to jobs, and reasonably good infrastructure has resulted in generations of families settling down in the BEP settlement and attracted relatives of original settlers from other parts to set up house in the settlement as well.

Figure 77: An internal lane in BEP settlement
Over the years, subdivisions of plots, house extensions, and addition of rental housing by well-to-do-residents have accommodated the growing population within the settlement. Homes were extended horizontally to take up every inch of land possible (leaving the bare minimum for circulation purposes) before being extended vertically. These changes have resulted in the narrowing of open spaces between houses to the bare minimum. Spaces that were once open spaces outside homes and used for daily chores have been absorbed into multiple extended units of built up housing; therefore what was an unrealized physical asset that was shared by say ten families at the street level becomes a physical asset at a household level distributed between twenty or more families.

Increase in the number of households also puts intense pressure on other community level physical assets such as water, community toilets, drainage, and garbage disposal services. The brunt of this pressure is mainly born by women and children. There is a chronic depletion of human capital assets where women are concerned as it is women who toil over securing water for their families and control their bodily urges while waiting in long queues at community toilets. Domestic activities take up much of their time and energy and they have little left to invest in self-development through education or vocational skills.

Children’s health is also disproportionately affected when access to services is strained and garbage becomes more concentrated in common areas where children tend to play. When children fall ill, women bear the brunt of the emotional and physical stress of nurturing a sick child. There is also significant impact on a household’s financial assets.

Narrow lanes also adversely affect intangible assets like social relations between neighbors. In the BEP settlement several residents complained of how fights erupted and escalated to larger issues over petty matters like spilled water and children’s play. So while residents were able to increase their financial capital over time (by staying in a location where they had access to work opportunities) some of their physical, human, as well as social capital
had depleted over time. In the BEP settlement while residents were able to convert financial assets into physical assets such as new clothing, television sets, sewing machines and other objects; a house with better facilities in the same location was simply out of their reach. When I asked women in the BEP settlement about how they addressed common problems (with regard to water, sanitation, or garbage) most said they took their problems to the settlement leaders to solve as it was their ‘job’ to do so. They said they were overburdened with responsibilities at home and did not have the time or energy to address common problems within the settlement by themselves. To a large extent when practical gender needs of women are unmet the burden of domestic chores and childcare is further exacerbated and affect their ability and disposition in taking a more active role in community development activities.

More space outside homes allowed women to amicably share and develop the space, socialize, and in some cases use the space for some income generation activities (increasing their physical, social, and financial assets) but, with increasing densities, the resulting narrow spaces between homes are no longer assets that can be developed and improved upon and passed on but serve as spaces that women use for tasks which they would prefer to do within their homes but cannot. The gendered socialization of women, strained social relations, and the dominant role of settlement leaders who are mostly male, are all factors that contribute to silencing the strategic gender needs of women in urban poor communities.

In the ME settlement in Mumbai, also a very dense settlement located in a prime area in Mumbai, women face similar hardships. In the ME settlement as well as in some other settlements (like BEP, Byculla, and BE) many residents identified with the street they lived on rather than the entire settlement – particularly when there were clear spatial differences among streets. For example in the ME settlement women living near the tracks said they did not use any other spaces apart from their homes, the small shop on their street, and the
space outside their homes. When I specifically probed for other spaces they used within the settlement they said they did not go inside the settlement for anything as everything they needed was along their street. They also had an antagonistic relationship with people living on the inner streets as these people often disposed their garbage near the tracks or in spaces close to houses near the tracks, which affected their physical as well as human capital assets.

In this settlement, participants living on one of the inner lanes within the settlement were more satisfied with the settlement than women living in homes closer to the railway tracks were. They felt safer, as their homes were away from the railway tracks; also, they could

Figure 78: A lane in ME settlement
depend on an elderly woman called Nafisa (who lived on their street) to give them support and guidance with regard to household problems or issues with regard to the settlement. On this particular lane, even though it was narrow, participants said they shared the available space amicably as they all adhered to certain rules and norms laid out by Nafisa for its use. They described the space outside their house as valuable as it allowed them to carry out their domestic chores. Most participants also said that earlier they used to chat with neighbors outside their homes or walk down the lane to visit with friends on other lanes, but of late they used it less for such socialization purposes. Nafisa, the elderly woman who other participants looked up to explained:

‘I go to the garden, for work, bazaar, small shops, the mandir. We don’t go out there (to other lanes) much anymore. Before we used to go see people and visit them but not anymore. The times have changed now. It is not like before. Earlier there were fewer families, there used to be some love and friendship between families living here - now with more people coming here, we don’t know who they are, they create fights here, we stay away from all that.’

She went on to describe in detail how speculation of new housing spurred by recent redevelopment schemes had attracted ‘people with money’ to build houses in their area and rent these out to ‘anybody and everybody’. She said that in the process some of these new owners had erected houses that were of low quality and not livable. She took me to one house that was being used as a place to dump garbage along their street, and said

‘That person does not live here now – but neither has he sold it, nor has he made a proper house and rented it out. So now people from everywhere throw garbage in there, there are dead rats and god knows what. It smells very bad because of this - we don’t know where he is, only if there is a survey or something for new house then he will show up. I go and clean up that place now every month – people throw dirty clothes, food, alcohol – god knows what.’
Even though residents make conscious efforts to clean and share the space outside their homes, these efforts are often undermined by larger capital forces and government policies that lead to an influx of speculators who are there to make a profit and have little concern for community processes or residents.

In the Byculla settlement, space outside homes changes dramatically from busy domestic reproductive spaces in the mornings to busy noisy commercial spaces during the afternoon to spaces of socialization in the evening to quiet spaces where male or adult family members sleep at night.

Figure 79: Homes on the pavement in Byculla

As the settlement is located on the pavement of a public road, there is no possibility of parochial spaces between the private space of the homes and the busy public street. Residents treated the space outside their homes as borrowed space and used it only when
they had no other choice. Most chores (washing, cleaning, and bathing) were finished in the early hours of the morning or done in the late evening. Many participants reiterated in our conversations that they did not use the place outside their homes for ‘anything else’. They also juggled their chores and material objects so that they did not cause any traffic related disruptions. A father of five children said

‘All the cooking happens inside. Then we see if there is less traffic and no traffic jam – then we also have bath here and wash clothes and all that. We usually do that early in the mornings. If there is traffic then we shift all our things to the side. We do not cause trouble for the people on the road. Like when the bus is going and all – we do not put anything in the way that will delay the bus.. We sleep outside – whoever can sleep inside sleep there and then the rest sleep outside.’

Not having a semi-private/parochial buffer space made the residents on the pavements more vulnerable to a range of problems. The busy street made the space outside homes unsafe for children’s play, leading to accidents and injuries. Residents were also exposed to all kinds of insults from passersby and better off neighbors living in flats. Participants also said that they were less capable of protecting belongings outside their homes as municipal vans that came unannounced to clear pavement vendors often took away household items such as vessels, water containers, and other odds and ends along with the illegal wares being sold by pavement sellers. The space outside these pavement dwellers homes therefore was not an asset they could consistently draw upon and the lack of such an asset had varied affects on their financial (loss of belongings in municipal raids), social (exposed to insults), and human (children were often injured in traffic-related accidents) assets.

In dense settlements, every inch of space outside homes is used to its fullest extent, contested, and closely linked to various tangible and intangible assets accessible to families.
Moderately dense settlements with single storied and incremental housing: These settlements have relatively larger homes (100 to 150 sft) than those in extremely dense settlements and also have enough space between homes so that residents are each able to claim some part of this space as an extension to their homes.

Figure 80: A lane in BE settlement

In the BE settlement the streets are unpaved and relatively wide. Most residents have developed the space outside their homes by adding cement paving, additional seating (stone benches), washing stones, temporary roofing, steps, and more permanent structures like a toilet or an additional room. By doing so they were able to increase their access to physical space that accommodated a growing family and supported their day-to-day activities. Shops were also part of house extensions, and increased the financial assets of their respective owners. Children also played in the small extensions, opens spaces, and internal lanes outside people’s homes.
A majority of women found the spaces outside their homes to be incredibly useful as they acted as functional extensions to their homes. While doing daily chores in these spaces they were also able to keep an eye on their children (increase human capital) who played close by and chat with neighbors doing similar work (increase social capital). The private and parochial spaces of people living on the same street were therefore intimately linked. While women in the BE settlement spoke at great lengths about the usefulness of the space outside their homes they also described how these spaces were routinely affected by changing seasons, incremental building, and most of all by the poor infrastructure in the settlement. A lack of community-level assets such as adequate water, sanitation, drainage, and garbage disposal facilities and paved streets all affected the tangible and intangible asset bases of families. Women, again, faced the brunt of lack of infrastructure as they had to be awake at odd hours, waiting in long queues for water, and walking in darkness across unpaved streets carrying pots of water. They also had regular tussles with other women over water sources, overflowing pits and stagnant water, with their implications for daily chores. Lack of access to private or community toilets exposed women to sexual harassment, caused health problems, and routinely placed women in situations where they felt ashamed and more vulnerable.

As a physical asset, the space outside homes is highly influenced by community-level infrastructure assets. In the BE settlement, access to infrastructure was influenced by its categorization as an ‘unrecognized slum’ (due to lack of political capital as well as poor urban policies), being unable to build good relationships with surrounding land owners (lack of bridging social capital\(^60\)), and internal conflict between settlement leaders (lack of bonding social capital). By establishing a relationship with the Alliance (developing bridging social capital), and becoming members of the Mahila Milan’s daily saving program, residents, through community meetings (increasing bonding social capital), were able to

\(^60\) Refer to Chapter 1, pg 30 for a description of bonding and bridging social capital.
establish over time more water taps and improve their access to water within their community. However, addressing just one of the needs in isolation led to the worsening of other physical assets – more water led to increased overflow of sanitation pits, caused lanes to become boggy, and also resulted in stagnant water. This shows that upgrading of community infrastructure needs to be holistic for it to have a significant impact on people’s lives.

The BAS\textsuperscript{61} settlement is another moderately dense settlement, located in an area that was once peripheral to the main city of Bangalore but that over the years has become a thriving neighborhood that is well connected to the rest of the city. While both the BE settlement and the BAS settlement have been around for a similar amount of time, residents living in the BAS settlement have better access to water, sanitation, and garbage disposal services and paved roads. One of the main reasons the BAS settlement has been able to secure and sustain physical assets at the community level is because the settlement leaders have the support of the community and are also well connected with local politicians (both bridging and bonding social capital).

\textsuperscript{61}I visited the BAS settlement in the first phase of the research. I have used it here as an example as it allows for a comparison of moderately dense settlements that have access to different levels of political capital.
Access to political capital has also allowed the settlement to become a recognized slum which has resulted in families gaining legal property rights to the land they have occupied. Apart from being able to secure adequate water and sanitation facilities for the settlement, the settlement leaders were also able to use vote bank politics to have paved roads laid out in their settlement more than 10 years ago. This, as well as policing on the part of settlement leaders, has kept residents from constructing incremental additions to their homes that would make the internal lanes narrow. The settlement leader said that they did not want their settlement to become like other ‘slums’ where people have ‘no place to move around’ and therefore had taken a conscious decision that was agreed to by other residents.
in the community to maintain the width of the streets at 15 ft. The residents in the BAS settlement therefore enjoy internal lanes that are too narrow to allow regular four wheeler traffic but wide enough for children to play close to homes and for women to do their chores and chat with neighbors outside homes.

This access to natural capital (land) and better services has resulted in families investing their financial capital on improving their housing in ways that do not encroach on shared space. Several families have built pucca houses (houses with brick or concrete block walls and concrete roofs) and added additional floors. The settlement has a mix of kachcha houses (houses made of bricks or tin sheets with asbestos sheet or thatch roofing that are usually one or two feet below the street level), single storied semi pucca houses (made of brick or concrete walls, with raised floors, and sheet roofing), pucca housing with two levels, and apartment type housing (two to three stories high).

In this settlement, poor women living in smaller kaccha houses used the paved streets for cleaning, washing, and bathing their children, while women in better off households carried out all of these tasks within their homes. But all women and some of the older men often sat outside their homes on steps or benches to chat with neighbors, watch over children and pass the time. Spaces outside homes were cluttered with other physical assets such as bicycles, motorbikes, construction material, handcarts, small vans, autorickshaws, water bins, and other odds and ends.

Women we spoke with said they were happy with where they lived and were mainly concerned for their children’s future. They wanted them to be able to do well in school, get good jobs and live better lives. Even though the BAS settlement has relatively good infrastructure and secure housing it has been able to hold on to its classification as a slum because of the political clout of the settlement leaders. This has made it possible for the settlement to be selected for redevelopment under the JNNURM scheme and residents of all
kachcha houses and semi pucca houses will have access to central government and municipal funds to rebuild their houses. In the immediate vicinity of this settlement is a smaller settlement of 25 houses located precariously along a large storm water drain. The houses are all kachcha houses and residents have very poor access to water and sanitation facilities. Ironically neither this settlement nor the BE settlement qualify for the JNNURM scheme as they are not ‘recognized slums’. This is a clear example of how political capital and poorly framed and executed redevelopment policies and schemes can aid the misallocation of resources, the brunt of which is born by women.

The MRR2 settlement is a redeveloped settlement that has houses similar in size and occupancy to the BE and the BAS settlements. This settlement, however, is much smaller and consists of just 42 households. In the BAS settlement there is a blur of activity on the streets adjoining homes like passing motorcycles, piles of construction material, handcart vendors, that allows a certain privacy for women within or just outside their homes, whereas in the MRR2 settlement which is much quieter and contained and everybody knows everyone else and residents as a group have privacy from the larger bustling streets outside the settlement. It is therefore possible for women to find refuge from the streets without having to withdraw from shared space. The space in front of homes in the MRR2 settlement is highly coveted and has been built up incrementally over the years following certain rules and regulations agreed upon by the residents. Women use the space in front of homes for domestic work, childcare, and for relaxation and socializing with neighbors. There is a highly parochial quality to the nature of space in front of homes as these spaces open out onto a central courtyard space, which is accessible only to residents as access to the settlement is controlled by a boundary wall surrounding the settlement.
These spaces outside homes in the MRR2 settlement had increased the physical, social as well as the financial assets (the space outside home is attractive to home buyers making the houses more premium) of residents. As infrastructure within the settlement is well established women lead more comfortable lives and have more control over their bodies. While some women work outside the settlement other women are grateful that their sons have taken over the responsibility of supporting their families and that they can now lead more relaxed lives.

**Multi-storied redeveloped housing:** The spaces outside homes in redeveloped settlements were on average less important for women living in these buildings. Women valued spaces that could be differentiated, had a certain amount of privacy, and were of adequate size. Narrow corridors outside homes were seldom used. Women were also influenced by middle class norms of how people should live and what practices should be followed while living in multistoried dwellings. As a large number of women worked or had
previously worked as domestic helpers in middle class homes their exposure to the middle class ways of life formed a basis for their aspirations. Therefore when women moved ‘up’ in life from ground level dwellings to multistoried housing they felt compelled to draw upon the practices and norms that were used by middle class women living multi-storied buildings. For example in both the BIR4 and Milan Nagar settlements residents said they did not do any chores outside of their homes as they felt it was inappropriate. One resident in the BIR4 settlement said

‘we are building people now ...building people don’t sit outside their doors and do chores...everything must be done inside’

The BIR3 settlement, the BIR4 settlement, and the Milan Nagar settlement are three redeveloped multistoried settlements, part of my core research. Both the BIR3 and the Milan Nagar settlements were redeveloped with community participation and were innovative in terms of the choices that have been made to accommodate poor peoples needs into multi-level housing. The BIR4 settlement, in contrast, was a typical generic multistoried building and was built without any input from the community.

In the Milan Nagar settlement, six foot wide corridors were incorporated so that people had space to hold family functions, young children had space to play, and to allow for circulation spaces that were spacious and not congested. The space outside homes in the Milan Nagar settlements is similar for all residents, whereas in the BIR3 and BIR4 settlements the space is differentiated and varies by floor level, orientation, and block (BIR3).

In the BIR3 settlement women used the spaces outside their homes as extensions to their homes, similar to how they lived in their ground level dwellings. On upper floors, the placement of toilets in front of homes and the narrowness of the space limited what women could do right outside their homes. They did not want to use spaces near a toilet for cooking related tasks and there was simply not enough room to do many domestic chores. However, ground level dwellings that opened out to internal streets or courtyards and upper level
houses that opened out onto wide terraces/balconies allowed women to use the space for food preparation (sorting, shopping, drying food items), drying clothes, keeping an eye on their children when they played in these spaces, and chatting with neighbors and passersby. The staggered and ‘informal’ layout of housing, inspired by the old settlement, allowed for several homes to have relatively private and differentiated space outside their homes, which made it more usable and valuable for women. Women in this settlement were less inhibited by middle class norms about what one should do or not do in the space outside their homes. One reason could be that the ‘informal’ nature that the architect translated into the built form afforded less similarity with typical apartment buildings.

The verticality of these redeveloped buildings placed residents on upper floors at a disadvantage, especially when there were water problems. In the BIR3 settlement and BIR4 settlement residents living on upper floors said that hauling water up several flights of stairs was extremely tedious and caused chronic leg and back aches. In the BIR3 settlement, the shortage of water meant that women living on upper floor had to carry water up the stairs after having already carried the water from water tankers or common standpipes. Some women living on upper floors preferred to do their washing on the ground floor so that they could limit the quantities hauled upstairs – but this led to grey water in front of homes on the ground level which led to fights between women living on the ground floors and women from upper levels.

In the Milan Nagar housing the corridors were wide, but the longitudinal layout of the building with the long corridors ventilated only by openings at either end, meant they were also dark and monotonous. The BIR4 building, by virtue of its irregularly shaped site, had an ‘L’ shape, which allowed for bright and airy circulation spaces. It is interesting to note that the Milan Nagar settlement is more grid-like in its layout than the BIR4 settlement – despite the fact that the former, but not the latter, had been subject to community input.
As described in the previous chapter, safety was a serious preoccupation for residents living on upper floors. Parents were concerned that children would get their heads stuck in railings (BIR4 settlement) or fall down stairs (BIR4 and BIR3 settlements).

In the BIR4, Milan Nagar settlements and other redeveloped multi storey redeveloped settlements I visited in Mumbai, residents were often discouraged from keeping household belongings outside by the housing societies and/or the MM women who visited these settlements. In most of these buildings, residents only kept shoe racks and potted plants outside their homes and in some cases adorned the floor space with permanent or temporary *rangoli* designs. MM women I spoke with said, if not kept in check, the corridors would quickly become littered with objects and make the building look ‘slum-like’, and block access paths in ways that could prove dangerous in times of emergency. In the BIR3 settlement, however, perhaps due to the lack of a housing society as well as the layout of the building, people kept things like large water bins, chairs, and other odds and ends in the space outside their homes.

In the BIR3 and Milan Nagar settlements, intentional design and planning decisions allowed spaces outside homes to act as assets, as they supported children’s play and family functions. In the BIR4 and BIR3 settlements space outside homes on the ground level was more of an asset than space outside homes on the upper levels.

**Roads and internal streets:** Participants did not refer to ‘roads’ or ‘lanes’ as spaces they shared with other residents. They said it was what they used to ‘come and go’ from their homes to other places in the settlement or outside the settlement. But they did feature in conversations with regard to homes, spaces outside homes, and children’s play. In very dense settlements, people spoke of how work on the lanes had to be stopped so that people could pass, or how in some places the lanes became so narrow that children carrying large school bags got stuck, they also said it was impossible to move large objects via the lanes.
and had to be carried over the roofs of houses. The combination of poor drainage and unpaved roads often led to fights amongst neighbors. In moderately dense settlements like the BE settlement women complained of unpaved roads that made their homes dusty, and lack of drainage and poor sanitation often led to stagnant pools of water and boggy streets. In redeveloped and relocated settlements like the Milan Nagar settlements participants complained of lack of street lights that made it unsafe for women to leave or return to their homes at night or early in the morning.

Some participants pointed to garbage on the lanes of existing settlements or around redeveloped buildings (often chucked out from the windows on upper floors) as an irritant the made their settlement unhygienic and unsightly.

In none of the sites did residents do much towards the upkeep of internal lanes or more busy roads within the settlement. Parts of streets were claimed for their own use and these spaces were cleaned, decorated, and used. Women in general did not show a ‘civic’ disposition for spaces they did not consider a part of their home (Chakrabarty, 1992).

I have so far discussed how spaces outside homes in dense, moderately dense, and multi-storied settlements function as assets and influence other household assets. I now go on to discuss other important common spaces identified by women within settlements such as childcare spaces, religious spaces, and commercial spaces and examine how they function as assets and affect women’s lives.

3.2 Childcare settings

Urban poor settlements are home to predominantly young and growing families. In most settlements, as noted, the average number of children per home was close to four. Parents of small children were most concerned about lack of adequate childcare settings within their community. Having access to extended family networks or a reliable and good quality anganwadi was essential for women to carry out household chores and take on paid work
whether inside or outside the settlement. When parents were overburdened with childcare responsibilities older girls (where present) in the family who were made to drop out of school and help out with childcare and other domestic chores. Parents in such cases tended to use ‘traditional and cultural values’ to justify their decision of keeping girls from continuing their education. This supports Mary Douglas’ (2004) statement that the role of culture is relational to the social and economic capabilities of families and that ‘traditional culture’ is usually referred to, to find justification for one’s actions. Lack of family planning and reliable childcare thus pushes women into gendered roles and prevents them from addressing their strategic needs.

Having access to an anganwadi where women know their children will be well cared for lessens some of the burden of childcare, allows women to take on paid home-based or outside work, and where possible invest the time in gaining skills such as tailoring which would allow them to start their own enterprise. It would be one less reason for why girls are pulled out of schools. This shows that an angawadi center, a physical asset at the community level, can support and enhance the human, financial, and in some cases social assets of individual families with small children.

3.3 Community meeting rooms
One of the first objectives of the MM when they start to work with a community is to have the area leader/s of a settlement locate space for a community meeting room. The meeting room has symbolic and practical functions. The allocation of space on the part of the area leaders shows to an extent their commitment towards the MM processes and a banner outside the allocated space is symbolic of the presence of MM activities within the community. In the BE settlement and ME settlements the space was a small room within the community. In the BIR3 and Milan Nagar redeveloped buildings, apartments were allocated as meeting rooms. In the MRR2 and Byculla settlements, small rooms in the neighborhood
functioned as meeting rooms. The BEP and BIR4 settlements did not have meeting rooms and people met in open spaces (BEP) and on the terrace (BIR4) for community meetings. Some of these spaces functioned as solely meeting rooms while others were also used as anganwadis or for family functions. The spaces are primarily used to hold community meetings, have discussions with stakeholders and professionals, and to meet with residents for the daily savings. In those settlements I visited which did have community meeting rooms, around half of the participants I spoke with mentioned the meeting room as an important common space within the community. They said it allowed them to come together as a community to address common issues with regard to housing, water, sanitation, drainage, and safety as well as meet with MM leaders to talk to them and hand in their savings or take loans. These meeting rooms are physical assets at the community level, which can improve the social and physical assets of families as well as the community as a whole. They can prove particularly important at times of shocks (such as floods, fires, raids) to lessen the vulnerability of residents.

### 3.4 Religious spaces

In both existing and redeveloped settlements there were religious spaces or symbols that were regularly used by women in these settlements (BE – temple, BEP – two temples, BIR3 – temple, BIR4 – temple, Byculla – madrasa, ME – shrines, Milan Nagar– madrasa, MRR2 – tulsi plants). These spaces supported women’s spiritual beliefs and were also venues for holding festivals and drawing people together to celebrate these festivals. Participants said they visited temples once a week on a particular day of the week that was of importance to them. The said they valued temples as they could pray for the well-being of their families and give offerings to deities. Having temples within settlements made it convenient for women to access these places. The maintenance, upkeep, and running of a temple was usually taken on by more religiously inclined men living within the settlement. Muslim
women expressed that having a madrasa within their settlement was very important as it played a central role in imparting religious as well as cultural teachings to their children. Many women who could not afford schools sent their children to madrasas for longer hours. When asked what common spaces were important women gave more importance to children’s play spaces, libraries, computer classes and said temples were less important and they could visit temples outside the housing or settlement. However, in all redeveloped settlements residents put more effort in developing religious spaces than other facilities. One reason for this could be that residents in fact did value such spaces more than they expressed but another reason could be that they felt more equipped and capable in terms of knowledge and material required in establishing such spaces than others, which would require more technical skills and collaboration with outside organizations. Religious spaces are community assets that support the day-to-day spiritual and cultural beliefs of residents. Residents also work together to create such spaces and come together around such spaces for festival celebrations, which increases social capital of settlements.

3.5 Spaces for family occasions and festival activities
Marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, death ceremonies are all events that are significant to families and towards which many families spend most of their savings or borrowed money. These events are statements of social status within the larger family as well as within the community. Women gave importance to space outside their homes or open spaces within or outside their settlements that made it possible to host such ceremonies. Usually cloth tents and other decorations were put up to make the space more festive. Terraces, wide lanes, open spaces, and community meeting rooms, were also commonly used for such functions. The use of terraces for such events was usually decided upon by the housing society in the respective redeveloped settlements; in some redeveloped buildings there was a charge for using the space while in others it was free of
cost. In some redeveloped settlements built by the Alliance there were large function halls with a central raised platform, a place for cooking, and toilets. Residents in these buildings said they found these spaces to be very useful for hosting family functions as they spent only a fraction of the sum they would normally use to rent such spaces outside the housing. In dense existing settlements as well as redeveloped settlements not having appropriate space for hosting death ceremonies caused much grief to families. In very dense existing settlements like the ME and BEP settlements many women who had lost their family members remembered in detail the problems they encountered while carrying a dead body out of the settlement and performing the appropriate ceremonies. In redeveloped settlements like the BIR3 settlement women living on upper floors said they had no space in front of their homes to lay out their family members when they passed away and when they used the space on the ground floor families living closest objected to their using the space as they considered it inauspicious.

Large open spaces and wide lanes also allowed for activities such as parading of gods, dances, bursting of firecrackers, games, and contests that were part of festivals to take place within the community. Some women said that festival celebrations allowed them to forget about their daily struggles momentarily.

3.6 Commercial spaces
Women in both existing and redeveloped settlements said the shops located within and close to the settlement were of importance to them. Shops are physical as well as financial assets for residents who own them. For other residents they provide quick and safe access to daily requirements such as food items, stationery, and small odds and ends. In existing settlements they are very useful as most households do not own refrigerators and they need to purchase perishables as and when they need to use them. In addition their proximity to houses allowed caregivers (usually busy with household chores) to send their
children on errands to these shops. Women said that if they did not have access to neighborhood shops they would have to depend on their husbands to make regular purchases.

In redeveloped settlements convenience stores were located close to the settlement. While in all cases they were a stones throw from the redeveloped building many parents did not send their small children to these shops as they would have to cross streets with vehicular traffic. In the Milan Nagar settlement, some residents had started small convenience stores within their homes, which they said helped earn extra income to support their families. In the BIR3 settlement, shops were part of the redeveloped building but none were in use due to some disagreements between the Alliance in Bangalore and the settlement leaders. In three other redeveloped settlements, shops were located on the ground floor of these buildings and were available to residents at a price to start small businesses. In these settlements the commercial spaces were bustling with activity and ranged from bicycle rental shops, to hardware stores, hair dressing salons, and convenience stores.

4. Summary and reflections

Common spaces that are more parochial than public are particularly beneficial to women. Spaces outside homes, anganwadis, shops, meeting rooms, and religious spaces all draw women from inside their homes and provide them with an opportunity to engage with other women in the community. While most women we spoke with said they did not interact with other members of the community when they went to shops, anganwadis, or other common spaces, some did mention that they greeted or stopped to chat with acquaintances along the way. While women stressed the importance of having common spaces that would support their day-to-day lives, they also spoke of the need for places where they could ‘relax’, ‘chat’, ‘sit in the shade’. Working with women to develop the latter spaces can be
one way of questioning and challenging societal norms that dictate the ‘place’ of women in society.

In existing settlements, space outside homes in moderately dense settlements emerges as a physical asset that is most beneficial for women, particularly when infrastructure within the settlement is reasonably good. Upgrading interventions in such moderately dense settlements that tackle infrastructure issues as well as tenure and place emphasis on creating other common spaces that support children’s play, child care, purchase of perishables and other goods, income generation for women, community meetings, and family functions and festival celebrations can lead to self sustaining communities that also have the option for vertical incremental development. Current policies and schemes identify settlements as ‘slums’ by nature of the type of housing present i.e kachcha or pucca, and or by quality of infrastructure. This research shows that the width of lanes and sizes of homes are also important factors to consider for determining appropriate types of interventions. While it is crucial to pay attention to extremely dense settlements with failing physical and social infrastructure it is also important to intervene in and upgrade moderately dense settlements as otherwise most of these will quickly become extremely dense settlements.

The solutions for extremely dense settlements can only be insitu redevelopment where ground level dwellings are replaced by multi-storied buildings; but intervening in moderately dense settlements allows for retaining and building upon housing and community patterns that has been generated by residents over many years. Participatory processes in settlements are extremely important for addressing the practical gender needs of women as well as in empowering women to recognize and voice their strategic gender needs. The daily savings method that is used by the MM women was conceived as a method through which women can increase their access to financial assets in times of emergencies, but more importantly as a way for women to come together to share problems, solutions, and exchange information and support one another. While the former
goal has been accomplished in most settlements the latter has proved to be more challenging.

In Bangalore, the MM women prefer to go from door to door to collect daily savings as it is easier and faster than waiting for women who are preoccupied with domestic chores, childcare, etc. to show up in the community meeting room or the area resource center set up by the MM women and SPARC. The MM women we spoke with said that long travel times (due to increased traffic and clogged roads), together with their own domestic responsibilities, left them with little time in settlements. This shows that women’s needs, both practical and strategic, are dependent on micro and macro-level infrastructure provision in cities.
Chapter: 14 Implications and Conclusion

The last three chapters have shown that while common spaces in both existing and redeveloped settlements are important to residents, they can be quite elusive to attain within State driven schemes that are laid out in the dominant language of the ‘dwelling’. At present, in redevelopment efforts common spaces are subjected to ‘minimum guidelines’ in insitu projects, or are given full berth in disruptive relocation projects where there is more land available – but little else in terms of infrastructure and jobs. In this chapter my aim is to discuss how one can begin to use ‘common spaces’ to re-imagine and rework dwellings. Using ‘common spaces’ as an alternative planning lens and being particularly conscious of the rights of all citizens concerned will allow for the creation of new spatialities that could lead to alternate ways of addressing urban poor settlements. While there is little room for such exploration in Mumbai, there is potential in places like Bangalore which have less dense settlements and more disorganization at both State and community levels.

Ways to incorporate common spaces into settlement redevelopment plans

Arjun Appadurai (2004), in his article ‘The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition,’ talks about the ways in which culture matters for development and poverty reduction. He states that

‘...it is in culture that ideas of the future, as much as of those about the past, are embedded and nurtured. Thus, in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor, the future-oriented logic of development could find a natural ally, and the poor could find the resources required to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty.’

He elaborates on the capacity to aspire as a ‘navigational capacity.’ The rich, he says, have a well established and supple "map" for navigating their concrete wants and relating them
to general norms, supported by their education, their exposure to a complex array of realities and possibilities, and their relative freedom to experiment with options. The poor, by comparison, have a weak brittle map with tenuous links between concrete wants, intermediate contexts, and general norms. In urban poor settlements residents seldom have opportunities to experiment with ways that work for them, instead they oscillate between being loyal to politicians or taking out protests against authorities. Providing the poor a supple ground to experiment with the possibilities that work for them (housing, infrastructure, trade etc) allows them to develop a better navigational capacity to aspire. In the sites I visited, residents often spoke with caution of their settlement being redeveloped through the recently launched urban development schemes. One elderly woman said

'I have lived my whole life here, people keep saying that we will have new housing but nothing happens. People come and do surveys, collect details, talk to us - but in the end nothing happens. I have no hope it will happen this time, when it happens then we will see’

In contrast residents in some settlements that had been associated with the Alliance for many years expressed more hope. They spoke about the small changes they were able to make in their settlements by working with SPARC and MM which had improved their lives, such as increasing their credit base through daily savings, adding new water taps, becoming more organized, and building community toilets. Each of these small successes increased the residents’ capacity to aspire. Residents spoke of new redevelopment plans with more hope as their implementation was being done with support from the Alliance.

It is evident from this research that settlement dwellers have varied needs, aspirations, and dreams. Top-down policy does little to support this multiplicity of desires, but instead undermines them by providing cookie cutter solutions that contribute to brittle navigational capacities. The poor are often framed as the ‘needy’ or the ‘ungrateful’ and are given houses and infrastructure or crucified for wanting to capitalize on the housing provided by
the state. They are seldom framed as ‘entrepreneurs’ who, when given an opportunity, are able to make market savvy choices. Vineet Mukhija (2006), in a study of a chawl redevelopment project, shows that design proposals that reflected the social life of chawls through shared spaces and facilities were rejected by residents as they led to smaller individual housing units of less real estate value than the more conventional apartment units. At the same time, participants in all settlements in this study expressed a desire for common spaces that would support domestic chores (common washing areas, shops), learning new skills and income generation, children’s play and study, and informal socialization among residents. This study, as well as the work of the Alliance, has helped to establish some ways through which common spaces can be developed in existing and redeveloped settlements.

Some Recommendations
Urban poor settlements have often been addressed with regard to provision of new housing or infrastructure; I feel that paying attention to ‘common spaces’ can be an additional way to address poor settlements. Housing and infrastructure require immense planning and coordination and funds from both the community and supporting agencies, whereas ‘common spaces’ can be easier to handle. Paying more attention to developing common spaces can also provide communities and CBOs the opportunity to work with and draw upon the financial as well as technical and knowledge-based resources of diverse agencies such as those specializing in childcare provision and vocational skills.

Planning for common spaces would require the community to come together to determine whether they feel the need for ‘common spaces’ and if they do, to prioritize these needs and explore various ways through which they can satisfy these needs. In addition to realizing goals for establishing common space, these activities offer the promise of increasing a community’s asset base, reducing its vulnerability by creating more supple maps for
achieving other changes and strengthening the overall capacity to aspire.

Below I build upon the existing practices of the Alliance to introduce ways through which ‘common spaces’ can enter the overall discourse and specific practices of upgrading and redevelopment of urban poor settlements.

Creating awareness and starting dialogues

Many of the methods that the Alliance uses such as enumerations, daily savings, and setting up area resource centers all form excellent platforms through which more information and awareness about common spaces can be generated. Documenting information on how women use, share, negotiate space outside their homes can lead to a rich repository of strategies that can be applicable to other women in similar types of settlements. In addition, helping various stakeholders (residents, facilitators, and government officials) to recognize that all dwellings have such space outside their homes can redefine how dwellings are mapped and measured. This also would involve a close investigation of what ‘home’ means for both residents as well as the State. If women in settlements redefine homes such that they recognize space outside their homes to be part of their home, then this leads to an important shift in thinking about urban redevelopment and upgrading. To have space outside homes be considered as part of homes gives women the comfort of being associated with what is considered socially appropriate as well as gives them a vantage point to socialize with neighbors, talk to passersby, and watch over their children as they play. Reproducing this pattern in redeveloped housing can offer women similar advantages that could in turn create more social capital within the community. Of course we have to also remember that there is the additional challenge of cottage industries - in some communities men rely upon common space for work such as pottery, leather work and machine repair. An important finding in this study is that residents become aware of the loss of common spaces only after having lived in redeveloped housing for a period of time. Having residents living in settlements that are in the planning stages of the redevelopment process visit
redeveloped settlements will give them a starting point for reflecting on their own needs for housing. It will also give them an opportunity to compare against what they have in their existing settlements, allowing them a different and more pragmatic vantage point from which to reflect upon their new housing.

Including children in the process—which could mean talking to them or incorporating them as active participants in processes like community mapping, planning, and design can not only bring their needs and voices to urban development processes but also give them exposure and skills in the area.

Across the case studies the inadequate access to basic services and the inevitability of children’s play had the effect of eroding social capital within the community. The implications of lack of services in redeveloped housing is never addressed as the State ‘guarantees’ all redeveloped housing will be fully hooked up with adequate services. However this is seldom the case. Many women feel shortchanged in their new environments as they find themselves lugging water up three floors – something they never had to do in their earlier settlements. We need a process for auditing this commitment to services in both upgrading and redevelopment processes, which can lead to more responsive and sustainable housing solutions.

It is very rare that children’s play receives any attention in planning processes. Municipal and planning officials who are actively involved in the planning process often perceive children’s play as relegated to playgrounds and school grounds. They have little awareness of the ecology of low-income housing and the inevitability of children’s play that happens within the folds of these housing structures – in proximity to their caregivers. The active involvement of children and caregivers, as well as creating more awareness on this issue among government and municipal officials, would result in children’s play being better incorporated into up front planning processes and could sensitize stakeholders to some of the concerns around children’s play.
Assessing Needs

Conducting a baseline survey that assesses the need for various types of common spaces and the willingness of residents to contribute towards these spaces will help identify patterns of needs in different types of settlements. For example, for a settlement propped up alongside a drain, where new housing is a distant prospect, what are the short-term interventions that residents find most useful? Is it water taps, a childcare facility, bridges across the drain, or barricades that create more safe spaces for residents? Generating lists of common space needs and priorities in different types of settlements that vary in being ‘notified’, ‘recognized’, or ‘identified’, their status of tenure, and availability of infrastructure can give a more holistic picture, reveal patterns of priorities and possibly guide policy decisions.

Setting precedents

The Alliance has already set several precedents in improving urban poor settlements in India and other parts of the world. From giving voice to the poor, to empowering them, and evolving community generated designs in the form of loft spaces in homes, community toilets, and wider corridors to name some that I have had the opportunity to see. Working with residents on finding community generated patterns for ‘common space’ can be another form of precedent setting. Finding ways by which common washing areas could be developed or childcare facilities could be assimilated, for example, would make a critical difference in the lives of women and children. On the face of it these kinds of common spaces seem to be relatively simple, but when examined within the composite of existing infrastructure, capacities of residents, and current urban policies creating such spaces can be a mammoth task. For example, a common washing area would require space, but also water (which is usually intermittent in supply), drainage, management of the facility, and
negotiation around how it is used – all of which can be highly politicized decisions that require social cooperation. Similarly, developing appropriate childcare facilities would require one to question whether the existing anganwadi system is the answer, or if there is a need to develop a new model – one that operates for longer hours, is staffed by local women who receive basic training, has adequate space and infrastructure, and includes a trained anganwadi worker who visits the center on a regular schedule.

The main advice many residents living in redeveloped settlements had for others who would be going through a similar process was to learn to work together, to voice their needs, and to actively seek information on the project and process. Many women regretted not being part of the process as they were too busy caring for their children and domestic chores. Ironically, if they had common spaces it could lighten the load on women with regard to childcare and domestic chores and thereby allow them more time to participate in redevelopment processes.

**The challenges of Multi-level Housing**

Multi-level housing is clearly not ideal, but is inevitable in redeveloping very dense settlements. In many situations residents who agree to multi-level housing often expect apartment buildings similar to middle-income housing, and aspire to adhere to middle-class norms of living practices. This fantasy appears to have worked against the potential inherent in many spaces in redeveloped settlements. To deal more successfully with this phenomenon of aspiring to less-than-constructive middle class norms it is perhaps necessary to tell residents up-front that their housing will not resemble middle-class apartments but instead be programmed to respond to the very different needs of lower-income residents. For example being conscious of and talking about spatial requirements that accommodate home-based work, childcare needs, and seasonal changes in access to water can result in very different spaces that do not push residents to mimic or aspire
towards middle-class practices.

**Housing Allocation**

Allocation of housing is given little importance. Often a lottery system is used to assign apartments to residents. However, as is evident from this research extended families living next to each other often take advantage of common spaces between their homes to create more usable space. More attention to the allotment process can result in residents creating innovative spaces in upgraded or redeveloped housing.

**Building an Archive of Patterns of valued common spaces in Existing and Redeveloped Settlements**

A close look at common spaces in existing settlements reveals some community generated patterns in the use and modification of common spaces. While this research points to a few such ‘patterns’ that have emerged in the existing settlements that I have visited, further research on this topic could add to this list. A documentation of such spaces could potentially be an important tool for developing common spaces in existing settlements. It would be necessary to ensure that these patterns would not just be focused on the physicality of spaces, and include the various complexities social, political, and cultural that are core to these spaces.

Below is just a beginning typology of common spaces as they existed in various settlements.

**Existing Settlements**

**Combining space outside homes**

Open: Residents of two or three adjacent homes paved the open area in front of their homes in a common material such as cement or stones. This larger common space allowed for wet and dry areas where residents could perform chores simultaneously as well as chat
with each other. Even in dense settlements there are examples where families (usually related) have built common benches or raised platforms that can be used by both families for sitting, talking, and other chores. In some cases families have added a temporary shade or permanent shade structure over the combined spaces.

Enclosed: Extended families enclose the space between their homes by adding a roof and a door. This space is shared by families for various chores as well as used for activities such as eating, sleeping and playing. In some cases families have constructed a common toilet at one end of this space.

Home extensions

Open: A majority of residents made some changes to the space outside their homes so that it could be used for carrying out their daily chores, bathing, storage, children's play, informal socializing, and in some cases sleeping. These additions included steps, raised platforms, washing stones, benches, cement or stone paving, and awnings. At times residents used temporary screens in the form of sarees and charpoys for privacy.

Semi-open: In some settlements residents extended the façade of their homes using shelving and a counter to create convenience stores. This extended space was covered with an awning or tin sheeting.

Enclosed: Residents added extensions to their homes both horizontally (where space was available) and vertically. The extensions were added to increase living space within homes and create separate spaces for activities such as cooking and toileting. When extensions were made at the ground level, they were either fully incorporated into the existing home (by breaking the front wall and enclosing additional space) or kept separate such as toilets that could be accesses only from outside the house. Residents often added loft spaces that were used for sleeping. These spaces were accessed by metal ladders from outside homes.

Temporary gated communities
In one dense settlement an extended family that live in five houses around a dead-end lane had created an option for temporary protected space by fixing a low wooden gate across the lane. They said that this allowed their children to play in relative safety and kept them from getting into trouble with neighbors.

**Raised plinths around trees**

In one settlement residents had built a raised platform around a large tree near a temple. This pattern is similar to village architectural patterns where raised platforms around trees (usually those of cultural significance such as Banyan, Peepal and Neem trees) are created to house deities, for the village elders to meet, for women to socialize near homes, and to hold local meetings.

**Small open squares:**

Small open squares created in front of temples or at a junction of lanes. In such spaces small shops, idols, and some seating (both temporary and permanent) are likely to crop up over time.

**Main street and periphery streets:**

In settlements that are connected to an access road to the city, the access road is extended into the settlement as a main street. In some settlements, small shops and businesses crop up around this street. The main street is also wide enough to allow small and medium sized four-wheelers that are usually relevant to these businesses to enter the settlements. The smaller lanes within settlements branch out from the main street and are often just wide enough for handcarts and two-wheelers. In settlements like the ME settlement where the settlement is not connected to an access road to the city there is no main street and the settlement is a web of narrow internal lanes.

**Redeveloped Settlements**

In redeveloped settlements too there have been some innovative attempts to shape
common spaces so that they are more responsive to resident’s needs: both domestic and social.

Wide corridors:

Wide corridors (6’ in width) were incorporated in some of the buildings planned by the Alliance with community participation in response to narrow streets in existing settlements that often hindered movement, became dark ‘hard to breathe’ alleyways, led to fights, created fire hazards, and made it impossible for residents to move large objects. A majority of the women I spoke with in the Milan Nagar housing said that they liked the wide corridors as they could move about freely and because their children could play close to their homes. Some women, however, felt that the space could be better used if it was incorporated into individual homes. The corridors were also dark and monotonous which made them less useful. A couple of architects who worked with SPARC also felt the wide corridors were not fully used and felt the need to further develop on this pattern to make it more useful for residents.

Gated communities

Safety was essential to residents. In all redeveloped settlements residents that I visited used walls, gates of various sizes, and grills to control access to their settlement. In some existing settlements these features were not generated by the community but imposed upon them by more influential neighbors whereas in others they were very much desired by residents. Participants in existing and redeveloped settlements said these elements prevented to a certain extent petty thefts and other crimes and strangers and ‘troublemakers’ from entering their settlement and kept their settlement cleaner and safer.

Steps at the entrance

A common feature that was appreciated and used by residents for socializing amongst themselves were the steps at the entrance of redeveloped settlements. These steps were usually wide and long and allowed residents to sit comfortably, chat with one another and
greet those entering or leaving the building. However in some settlements, aspiring towards middle-class norms, residents were forbidden from using these spaces for socializing.

**Courtyards**

The courtyard spaces I saw in one of the redeveloped buildings were small in size and seldom used by residents. They were only used at festival times to display gods or perform rituals or dances associated with these festivals. The courtyards have been enclosed and kept locked with folding and sliding grill gates as they were being used by children for play (who created a ruckus and disturbed residents) and by some residents for storage of odds and ends and construction material.

Two SPARC member described courtyard spaces in temporary housing and a redevelopment project that have been well liked and used by residents. In the temporary housing the houses were built such that four houses shared a small open courtyard in their midst. These spaces were shared by residents for carrying out domestic chores and children’s play. In the redeveloped settlement wider lanes within the settlement were narrowed and the extra space was used to create courtyard spaces between four or five homes. This served two purposes – it discouraged through traffic and encouraged slower speeds and gave residents more usable space close to their homes.

The large open space between homes in the MGS settlement is yet another good example of courtyard space. This space allowed for celebrations and performances on festive occasions as well as play and domestic chores (drying of food items, washing clothes) in resident’s day to day lives.

**Multi-purpose halls**

In some large redeveloped housing projects large rooms sometimes fitted with a stage area, attached toilets and storage areas were incorporated into the building design. These spaces were used for family celebrations such as weddings and were rented by residents for a nominal fee and rented out to others for a higher price.
Shops
In several large redevelopment projects the ground floor space facing the street was divided into small shop spaces and leased out to residents. This enabled some residents to have a livelihood close to their homes as well also offered access to goods and services to other residents living in the buildings.

Home extensions
Grills: In many multi-storied buildings windows were extended by metal box-type grills. These grills allowed residents to dry clothes as well as store a few odds and ends. They also protected the windows from being broken (usually by boys playing cricket in the vicinity).
Verandahs: In the MRR2 settlement residents extended the outside of their homes in the form of open and semi-open verandahs. These spaces were valued by residents for carrying out chores, talking with neighbors, storage, and for accommodating their children’s play close to their homes.
Temporary structures: On festive occasions, many residents used colorful cloth canopies that extended from the entrance of their homes on to the corridors or balconies adjoining their homes. These remained for the duration of the occasion and were later removed.

Temples
Residents very often built small religious spaces like temples in the case of the BE and BIR4 settlements or accommodated them into the existing built form like the madrasa in the Milan Nagar housing. Residents used these spaces regularly and considered them important.

Meeting rooms/Anganwadis
In some redeveloped settlements community-meeting rooms doubled up as anganwadis. In others they were separate spaces. These spaces were also used as study spaces by older children living in the building especially during the time of their school examinations.

Other common spaces that featured regularly as spaces residents wanted in existing and
redeveloped settlements are:

- Play areas for children
- Common washing areas
- Libraries and study spaces
- Computer training centers
- Park spaces with seating
- Income generation/vocational centers
- Informal socialization spaces

**Direction for Future Research**

Urban poor settlements are often studied as snapshots in space and time. While these snapshots give an insight into the complexities of settlements, they offer little understanding of how settlements change over time and space and through political and socio-economic changes. A study of the morphology of settlements, that looks at settlements over a period of 10 or 15 years is necessary to understand how micro and macro level changes affect community spaces and resident’s aspirations are realized in these changes of community spaces. Such studies will also be useful to map why and how urban redevelopment schemes succeed or fail, so that later efforts can benefit from the learning of these findings.

**Limitations of the study**

Though chosen for their diversity, the types of settlements covered in this study are limited and do not cover the full range of types of settlements that exist in India as well as other parts of the world. Therefore the findings of this study may not be applicable to all types of urban poor settlements. This being an exploratory study, I was not always equipped with the knowledge to be able to probe deeper into certain areas such as infrastructure issues.
Having some prior technical knowledge in the area of water, sanitation, and drainage would have allowed me to dwell more on these issues and contemplate on possible solutions with residents as well as member of SPARC and municipal officials. In retrospect, I feel I might have spread myself thin by taking on eight case studies. Limiting myself to fewer case studies might have allowed me to delve deeper into some of the issues that emerged on the sites.

**Conclusion**

This study provides insights into common spaces in existing and urban poor settlements. It reveals how common spaces are shaped by the daily practices of residents as well as urban development policies and schemes, and how residents understand, give meaning to, and use and values these spaces in their settlements. The study also challenges widely held notions of solidarity and social capital being generated by shared use of space. It shows that while in some cases this is possible, in many settlements common spaces are sites of contention and conflict. There are few studies that voice the opinions of women and children regarding their perceptions of space and provision within poor settlements in urban India. Yet this study has revealed the value of talking with women and children for understanding the strategies they use to routinely negotiate geographies of risk as they go about their daily lives. It is my hope that this study, and other studies of its kind, can help promote a new alignment to understanding built forms in existing settlements as a basis for planning and change. Such studies are necessary if we are to allow built forms and practices to evolve from a time tested spatiality rather than a hegemonic one.
Appendix A

Interview guide for settlement area leaders

1. Please tell me a little about the history of your area. (probe for age of settlement, growth, details on land ownership, types of housing, rentals)

2. How has the settlement changed over the years? (probe for number of houses, types of houses, infrastructure, land tenure, people, safety, access to resources)

3. Do people living here have easy access to resources like hospitals, public transport, schools, shops, markets, and other facilities? (probe for distance, type (government or private))

4. How many people live here now? How do people make a living? (types of jobs, working men, working women, working children, access to employment opportunities)

5. Do children go to school? (probes - where, how, how many, till what age, differences between girls and boys, any difficulties)

6. Is there an anganwadi in the settlement? If yes where is it located, what are the timings, and how many children attend the anganwadi? Are parents happy with the service? (why or why not)

7. What are some of the major issues that people living here had to deal with in the past? How have people managed to deal with these issues? (individually, through settlement leaders, NGOs, CBOs, municipal officials, politicians)(probe for experiences dealing with officials)

8. What are the major issues currently experienced by people living here? How do they deal with them?

9. What are the things that are good about your area?

10. Would you say there is a strong sense of community in your area? (probe for do people come together to address common issues, do people help each other out, childcare)
Appendix B

GROUP 1
Questions for families living in settlements with no 'new housing' option

Warm up question: What do you like and not like about your area? Why?

1. What are the places in your settlement that you share with some or all the of the people living here in your settlement? For example, the roads in your area. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)

   ALTERNATIVE: What are the places that you and your children use in your settlement apart from your house? –
   • Where do you do your washing?
   • Where do you do your cooking?
   • Where do you buy things for cooking etc?
   • Where do your children play or socialize with others?
   • Where do you chat with neighbors?
   • Where do you wait for the bus?
   • Where do you drink tea?

   Are there any other kind of shared spaces in your settlement? Please tell us what these are. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)

2. Who else uses these places? Are there differences in how accessible they are to different people? Please describe

3. Which of these places do you consider as important for you and/or your children? (Enter these places in the response chart)

Ask the following questions about each common place that has been identified as important:

   • Please describe how you use this place. (prompt for how this space is shared with others)
   • How often do you use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.
   • Please describe how your children use this place
   • How often do your children use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.
   • What do you value most about this place?
   • What do your children value most about this place?
   • What concerns do you have for you and your children with regard to this place?
4b. Are there any places in your settlement that your children treat as common space and play and socialize there with other children (even if they are sometimes actually private spaces)?

4. Do you or your children have concerns regarding other common areas in your settlement? What are these areas and what are your concerns? (Enter these places under the ‘other common places’)

5. Is there anything you have done/can do as a family or as a community to make these places better for yourselves and your children? Please describe.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the common places in your area?

GROUP 2
Questions for families living in existing settlements where the process of planning for 'new housing' is underway.

Warm up question: What do you like and not like about your area? Why?

1. What are the places in your settlement that you share with some or all the people living here in your settlement? For example, the roads in your area. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)

   ALTERNATIVE: What are the places that you and your children use in your settlement apart from your house? –
   • Where do you do your washing?
   • Where do you do your cooking?
   • Where do you buy things for cooking etc?
   • Where do your children play?
   • Where do you chat with neighbors?
   • Where do you wait for the bus?
   • Where do you drink tea?

   Are there any other kind of shared spaces in your settlement? Please tell us what these are. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)

2. Who else uses these places? Are there differences in how accessible they are to different people? Please describe

3. Which of these places do you consider as important for you and/or your children?

Ask the following questions about each common place that has been identified as important:
   • Please describe how you use this place.
• How often do you use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.

• Please describe how your children use this place

• How often do your children use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.

• What do you value most about this place?

• What do your children value most about this place?

• What concerns do you have for you and your children with regard to this place?

4b. Are there any places in your settlement that your children treat as common space and play there with other children (even if they are sometimes actually private spaces)?

4. Do you or your children have concerns regarding other common areas in your settlement? What are these areas and what are your concerns?

5. Is there anything you have done/can do as a family or as a community to make these places better for yourselves and your children? Please describe.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the common places in your area?

7. In the new housing, do you think that there will be changes in the availability of common spaces?
   a. What are these?
   b. How do you think you will be affected?
   c. How do you think your children will be affected?

8. Do you have any ideas about how common places could be developed so they make the new housing a better place for you and your children? Please describe.

9. Would you be willing to contribute towards developing these places? How?

GROUP 3
Questions for families living in redeveloped settlements

Warm up question: What do you like and not like about your housing? Why?

1. What are the places in your settlement that you share with some or all of the people living here in your settlement? For example, the roads in your area. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)
ALTERNATIVE: What are the places that you and your children use in your settlement apart from your house? –

- Where do you do your washing?
- Where do you do your cooking?
- Where do you buy things for cooking etc?
- Where do your children play?
- Where do you chat with neighbors?
- Where do you wait for the bus?
- Where do you drink tea?

Are there any other kind of shared spaces in your settlement? Please tell us what these are. (Make a list of the places mentioned in the response sheet)

2. Who else uses these places? Are there differences in how accessible they are to different people? Please describe

3. Is this an improvement over what you had before you moved here for you and your children? Please describe.

4. Which of these places do you consider as important for you and/or your children?

Ask the following questions about each common place that has been identified as important:

- Please describe how you use this place.
- How often do you use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.
- Please describe how your children use this place
- How often do your children use this place? several times a day/ at least once a day/ at least once a week/ at least once a month.
- What do you value most about this place?
- What do your children value most about this place?
- What concerns do you have for you and your children with regard to this place?

5b. Are there any places in your settlement that your children treat as common space and play there with other children (even if they are sometimes actually private spaces)?

5. Do you or your children have concerns regarding other common areas in your settlement? What are these areas and what are your concerns? (Enter these places under the ‘other common places’)

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6. Is there anything you have done/can do as a family or as a community to make these places better for yourselves and your children? Please describe.

7. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the common places in your area?

8. What were common places like for you and your children in your old settlement? Please describe what you liked or did not like about them.

9. Are there places that you and/or your children miss from your old settlement? What are these places? Why do you and/or your children miss them?

10. Looking back, do you feel that there should have been more attention paid to developing common places in your new/current housing? If yes, what could have been done differently? If no, why?

11. What would your advice be for other people moving to new housing regarding how they should plan for or think about common places in their new housing?
Appendix C

1. Could you talk about your experiences/perception/thoughts with regard to common spaces in urban poor settlements. (probe for resident’s perceptions, challenges, uses, values, meanings)

2. According to you, is ‘common space’ an important issue to address in settlement upgrading and redevelopment? (Why/Why not, please describe)

3. How are decisions taken with regard to common spaces? (building codes, resident participation, needs)

4. Could you talk through examples of completed or ongoing projects about –
   • Successful innovations around common spaces
   • Loss of common spaces and its consequences
   • Steps taken towards betterment of common spaces

5. According to you, has ‘common space’ been a challenging issue to address in upgrading and redevelopment projects? Please describe

6. How has the government played a role in shaping ‘common spaces’ in existing urban poor settlements and redeveloped settlements? Please describe

7. What has been your experience in working with professionals like architects and urban planners in redevelopment? What attention is given to common space?

8. What needs to happen for ‘common space’ to become a more central in the upgrading and redevelopment of settlements?
Appendix D

**Code List:**

Water

- Water consumption

Toilets

- Public toilet
- Public toilet use frequency
- Community toilet
- Toileting outdoors
- Individual toilet
- Shared toilet

Lack of facilities

- lack of sanitation
- poor drainage
- lack of transport

Lack of space

- Large family no space
- Not enough space inside house

Space outside house

- No space outside house
- Semi open space outside house

Children's play

- Small children
- Young children

Adolescent girls

Adolescent boys
Children’s mobility
    Going to school
Childcare
Children's future
Children and studying
Good environment for children
Not good environment for children
Children’s first response
I stay at home
House as family
Informal socializing space
Temple
Anganwadi
Open space
Shops
    Settlement shop
    Outside shops
Meeting room
Streets
Cemetery
Steps
Terrace
Corridors
Settlement improvement strategies
Individual house vs Multi-storied housing
Temporary housing
New housing
  Common spaces in new housing
  Life in new housing
  Needs in new housing
  Contribution for common space new housing
  Incremental building
  Housing finance
Social capital
  Conflict with neighbors
  Family ties
Filth
National symbols
Festivity
Safety
Participation
Nature
Building maintenance
Alliance
Old settlement
Shame
House ownership
Temporary housing
Dreams and aspirations
Parking for vehicles
Lifts
Access to city
Privacy

**Code co-occurrence List:**

Children’s mobility and Safety
Streets and Safety
Water and Safety
Toileting outdoors and Safety

Open space and Festivity

Space outside house and informal socializing space
Space outside house and Water

Safety and Children’s Play
Space outside house and Children’s play
Open Space and Children’s play
Needs in New housing and Children’s play
Children’s mobility and Children’s play
Streets and Children’s play
Informal socializing space and Children’s play
Social capital and Children’s play
Corridors and Children's play

Needs in new housing and Children’s play
Needs in new housing and Children’s study
Water and New housing
Safety and New housing
Participation and New housing
Social capital New Housing

Settlement improvement strategies and social capital

Garbage and Streets
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