

# **Governance of Urban Periphery: A Case Study of Contemporary Kolkata**

Sarani Khatua

Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta

Report

**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences  
(including Languages)**

F.25-1/2015-17-GE-WES-3931/ (SA-II) dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016

## **Acknowledgements**

*The Report is the synopsis of the research done under Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Fellowship in Humanities (including languages) under the mentorship of Prof Mahalaya Chatterjee, Centre for Urban Economic Studies (CUES), University of Calcutta. The funding from the aforementioned fellowship provided me with the necessary opportunity to carry out the research work and would not be possible without it.*

*Though an independent project, Prof. Mahalaya Chatterjee has been extremely supportive throughout and I am indebted for her guidance and positivity. I am also grateful to the host institution CUES for providing me with the necessary facility to work. I have been deeply benefitted from the other faculties and colleagues at the Centre who has contributed to a supportive work environment.*

*I am indebted to the various governmental departments and planning bodies in West Bengal. I would particularly mention Department of Planning, Statistics and Project Monitoring, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority in this respect. I would also like to thank Borough offices of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Planning officers and Municipal Chairpersons of various municipalities in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. The officials and Pradhans in the Panchayat Offices visited during the project work also deserves mention as they have been very helpful.*

*I am grateful to the various respondents that include both government officials and residents of neighbourhood towns and villages.*

*Lastly, I am indebted to my family for their constant mental support. Any mistakes and errors are my own.*

*Sarani Khatua*

## **Abstract**

*As urban has moves beyond the conventional sense of the term, the study explores into the variegated periphery produced at the margin of the Kolkata city within the larger metropolitan area. Taking the towns and villages of Kolkata Metropolitan Area as the immediate periphery of the city, the study has dealt with governance issues of the different units namely, the statutory towns, the census towns and rural mouzas that serve the core city. Most of statutory towns in the metropolis share the same colonial legacy like the core city and have been revived to a great extant in the post nineties period with the enactment of the Seventy Fourth Constitutional Act 1994. Recently however the census towns have garnered much attention owing to their high rate of formations in the last decade and their sustenance under rural local self-governance. The study through both secondary data obtained from Census of India and various district level Statistical handbooks as well as at primary level in the form of interviews have tried to unearth the complexities in the governance of the metropolitan area which is more a conglomeration of different units rather being an agglomeration. In the process issues like basic services, municipal revenue and expenditure, municipalisation, change in the municipal and metropolitan boundary have been studied in order to understand the kind of hinterland the city produces. The periphery, particularly that of a large city has become the hotspot of developmental activities and is expected to keep changing. Though any single project is not enough to grasp this dynamicity fully, the study attempted to cover at least few of the multiplicity of the governance in the metropolis.*

**Keywords:** metropolis, municipalisation, governance, fringe, census, local self-government.

## **Contents**

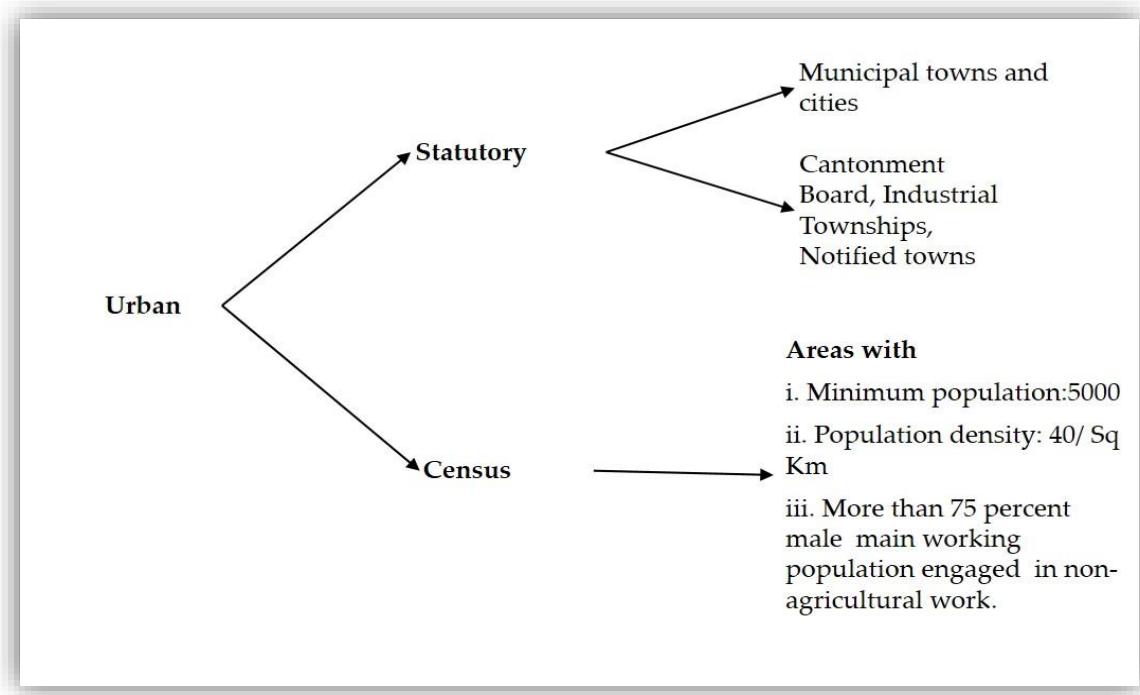
	Page nos.
1 Introduction	1-10
2 Tracing The periphery	11-32
2.1 Census towns	11
2.2 Added Areas: Reconfiguration of Municipal and Metropolitan Boundaries	17
2.3 Municipalisation	28
2.4 Rural Mouzas	30
3 Periphery and the basic services and housing	32-38
3.1 Condition of Housing	33
3.2 Source of Drinking water	34
3.3 Latrine facilities	36
3.4 Waste water disposal	37
4 Complexities and multiplicities of governance	38-48
5 Conclusion	48-50
References	51-52
Annexure I: List of Publications	53
Annexure II: List of Presentations	53

## **1 Introduction**

It is not without reason that Urbanisation is being considered to become planetary. Urbanisation is not about few cities, or more specifically few cities or metropolis in the world. The phenomena has moved beyond what is was thought to be and there has been much change to the urban process as whole. Several evidences in form of reports and research suggest that urban demography is concentrated in the Asia and Africa and not in the American and European countries. (Parnell, 2015).

Planetary Urbanisation has produced or opened up space to new forms and patterns but urban process itself has undergone vast changes. The former process and conventional terms associated with the urban phenomena have gone through drastic alterations, which require a different perception and which is not necessarily dependant on concepts originating in the global north. This however does not mean that whatever is being experienced in the urban arena is absolutely new. Urban was limited and this limit was more pronounced in global south in general. When demographic concentration in urban areas of the Afro-Asian nations swept over in an unprecedeted volume and manner, how we look into urban space, urban process needed renewed attention and fresh lenses to think, re-think. Likewise the way we perceived urban limit needed re-assessment. In fact the limit has emerged as the hot-spot for the urban. In most of the absolute official counts of population terms, space is binary—urban and not-urban. The non-urban, commonly termed as the rural, is categorised as areas with majority of population involved in agricultural activities, low density of population etc. Though the exact parameters deciding what to be constituted as urban and its binary opposite rural, vary from one nation-state to another, the broad basis is more or less same. So is similar idea that rural is non-urban. With agricultural dominating many of the post-colonial states in Africa and Asia, rural population ranged higher in many till seventies and in some countries till eighties.

The Indian Census like any other census has a set of specific parameters to designate urban and anything outside the designate urban is considered rural (Figure 1.1)



**Figure 1.1 Urban in Indian Census.**

Source: Metadata, Census of India, 2011

The population threshold that is the first criteria to determine a town varied over time. For instance, in 2001 Census, the population threshold was 4000. As observed from the Figure 1.1, there are two types of urban namely the statutory urban and census urban. Indian census witnessed an explosion of census urban in the 2001-2011 decade owing to increased percentage of workforce in non-agricultural pursuits (Sidhwani, 2014) . As the term suggest statutory towns are declared urban through some specific Act.

Enactment is crucial in defining urban as well as rural. Since in case of Acts, rural is not defined relative to the urban but has its own nomenclature. As observed from census data, India's urbanisation is more about growth in small and medium sized towns with decreasing pull from urban agglomerations. The situation is not different

in West Bengal. The growth of small and medium sized towns in West Bengal have been huge and happened irrespective of their distance and influence of the megacity. In fact Urbanisation through creation of census towns is highest in the state as recorded in the Census 2011. Census towns are primarily the class IV and V towns, or the medium and small towns. The census towns have been under spotlight owing to huge increase in their numbers in the last decade, and how urban is evolving in the cities of global south, statutory towns carry no less significance in the event of recent urban scenario. Statutory towns, namely municipality, Cantonment Board, Industrial Township, and Notified Area, etc. have existed as urban since historic times. In some nations, urban existed since pre-historic period. This is particularly true for the Indian sub-continent. The current megacities in the country has their origin in the colonial period. Megacity, which is not a single city denotes the urban agglomeration. Though the extent of agglomerations have extended in the recent time, more typically around the core of Delhi, Mumbai etc., the majority of Kolkata agglomeration still represents the colonial industrial belt.

This is however not to say, that there has not been any peripheral expansion. The old agglomerations have reacted differently in the contemporary. On one hand there is Delhi projected to be the largest agglomeration within the next decade, some very fast growing metropolis like Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and highly dense Mumbai, and then there is Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta), which is possibly the only Indian megacity, which is projected to go down the rank of world's largest agglomerations. However it is established beyond doubt that demography is not the sole parameter to measure urbanisation; it is rather a reflection of the trend.

Amidst growing difficulty in finding limit to the urban, it is all the more necessary to find the periphery of urban. The periphery is obviously not clear and well defined. But an attempt is necessary in order to understand, how is it produced and governed.

Before getting deeper into subject matter, it is important to delve into the ontology of the fringe.

Etymologically periphery means a boundary, circumference of circle or any bounded figure—outside of anything. The outside of anything when broadens to its second connotation as something of secondary importance or having marginal significance /influence. Again periphery could be absolute, physical, functional and relative. It is absolute when the statutory limit of the urban is considered. It is physical when limit is defined by the land use change, it is functional when periphery is defined by the change in linkages; it is relative since each unit may have its periphery but itself being part of periphery of another. One cannot evade the idea of marginality in context of discussion of periphery, be it spatial or across scale/levels. All these categories are linked and overlapping.

The concept of urban periphery is possibly not much different, though deducing the periphery of the same has become a herculean task in context of planetary Urbanisation. In the late eighties, Ramachandran defined fringe in term of spatial boundary,—

*The rural-urban fringe is an area of mixed rural and urban populations and land-uses, which begins at the point where agricultural land-uses appear near the city and extends up to the point where villages have distinct urban land-uses or where some persons, at least, from the village community commute to the city daily for work and other purposes' (Ramachandran, 1989).*

This definition may be considered as the starting point of my present work as well this definition would also serve as the point of departure. Though in recent time defining urban limit or technically identifying it, has become practically impossible in the backdrop of planetary urban, one cannot deny the importance of rural-urban binary in this context. Urban fringe is also a space that cannot be defined independent of its rural counterpart. In fact rural, though defined as *anything outside urban* ( Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011), is the spatial

entity from which the very urban sketched out. Thus it could not be deduced with clarity whether rural is at the margin of urban or vice versa.

The rural urban binary in the state nomenclature is crucial to find the fringe, since they are governmental category (Bhagat, 2005, Pradhan, 2013, Roy, 2015) and their classification determines the amount and types of resource and grant that need to be allocated, both from central and state government level.

While planetary urban theory puts forward for a world where non-urban is subsumed within the urban (Brenner and Schimdt, 2012), many scholars had argued the need to have a non-urban category (Ghosh, 2017) and others argued that in context of the south, Frontier urbanism is more relevant which reflect the land as essential criteria in urban agrarian context (Gururani Shubhra, 2018). Apart from what constitutes a fringe, it is essential to know the scale of the periphery that is margin to which hierarchy of urban is being considered. Being a variegated space, it would be wrong to decipher that at the edge of city lies a village; it may be another city, town. Expecting to find mixed land use characterised by agricultural land use at the margin of the urban and urban land use at the rural margin is too simplistic interpretation in the contemporary urban fringe since the rural itself is evolving.

Urban periphery marks a space that may well be considered as the hot-spot of Urbanisation. Urbanisation and urban process, particularly in global south, Urban periphery marks a space that is increasingly coming under the scope of development literature. The question, whether at all, the periphery of the big towns or million cities coincides with the urban periphery or whether there is any such concept as urban periphery left anymore. It is beyond doubt that the urban has impacted beyond the known periphery, but at the same time it would be too hasty to state that urban influence has become so strong or overwhelmed that there exists no periphery beyond the administrative boundaries of rural urban.

Even rural fringe was defined with different parameters from its urban counterpart.

Over the years, the question regarding what could be periphery needs re-assessment. In this scenario, urban governance has assumed a tactical format moulding in the way the urban trajectory is being shaped. What is meant here is that rather than urbanism, urban governance has assumed a tactical role, which is adopted as per the requirement of the state.

### **Objective and Research Question**

The study aims to explore the variegated suburban and periurban space around the core of Kolkata. The city with a long colonial history has a periphery, which is not only spatially diverse, but also temporally varied. In the process it is also difficult to map the larger periphery of urban. The term urban has a specific definition as per Indian Census, but the term rural as per the same is anything outside urban. The definitions of urban and rural itself makes tracing the periphery even more difficult. Neither the city is homogenous, nor is its periphery. The objective of the research to explore the differentiated periphery produced at the city edge in the city. The city edge has both the older and newly formed towns and cities as well as the rural areas. Kolkata metropolis in recent years have witnessed faster expansion on its eastern and south-eastern margin compared to other parts. Not only that, census urbanisation has been more prominent in comparison to municipal urbanisation in not only in Kolkata but in the entire state of West Bengal. But at the same time the census towns remains within the ambit of rural administration in West Bengal (to be discussed in detail later). Census towns constitutes the rurban space of the city. This space, in particular reference to the metropolitan core has been referred as the periurban in the research.

The questions are:

- Could rural be considered anything that is not urban, especially within a metropolitan area?

- How do census towns, delimitation of municipal and metropolitan periphery, and formation of new municipalities contribute to the production of periphery?
- If peripheries are the hot-spot of current urban development, how do the different units fare in terms of provision of basic services?

These towns and cities outside the municipal limit may well be part of the larger metropolitan area, which is essentially urban in character; they are also part of the suburban space produced through governmental activities over a considerable period involving both colonial and post-colonial time.

Periphery/margin/ fringe could also be considered as outcome of urban processes of governance that consequently results in peripheralisation or marginalisation of one over the others. There has been much debate challenging the traditional core-periphery model in an urban era when sub-urbanisation and peri-urbanisation assumes significant role. Kolkata is often described as a metropolis with declining core and declining periphery (Sivaramakrishnan, 2015) and do not reflect the kind of expansion, other metropolis in India has witnessed.

Then the fourth question is:

- Do all towns and cities on the margin assume same importance in the event of contemporary suburban development? How do different levels of governance contribute to the multiplicity of the periphery?

## **Methodology**

The study has been carried with secondary data analysis simultaneously with field work. Secondary data have primarily been collected from Census and district level statistical handbooks, project plans and reports. This part would enable to provide a holistic view of the study area. In my study I have taken periphery of Kolkata as the suburban and periurban units of the greater metropolitan area surrounding the core city. Although there are various ways to identify the periphery, it is difficult to

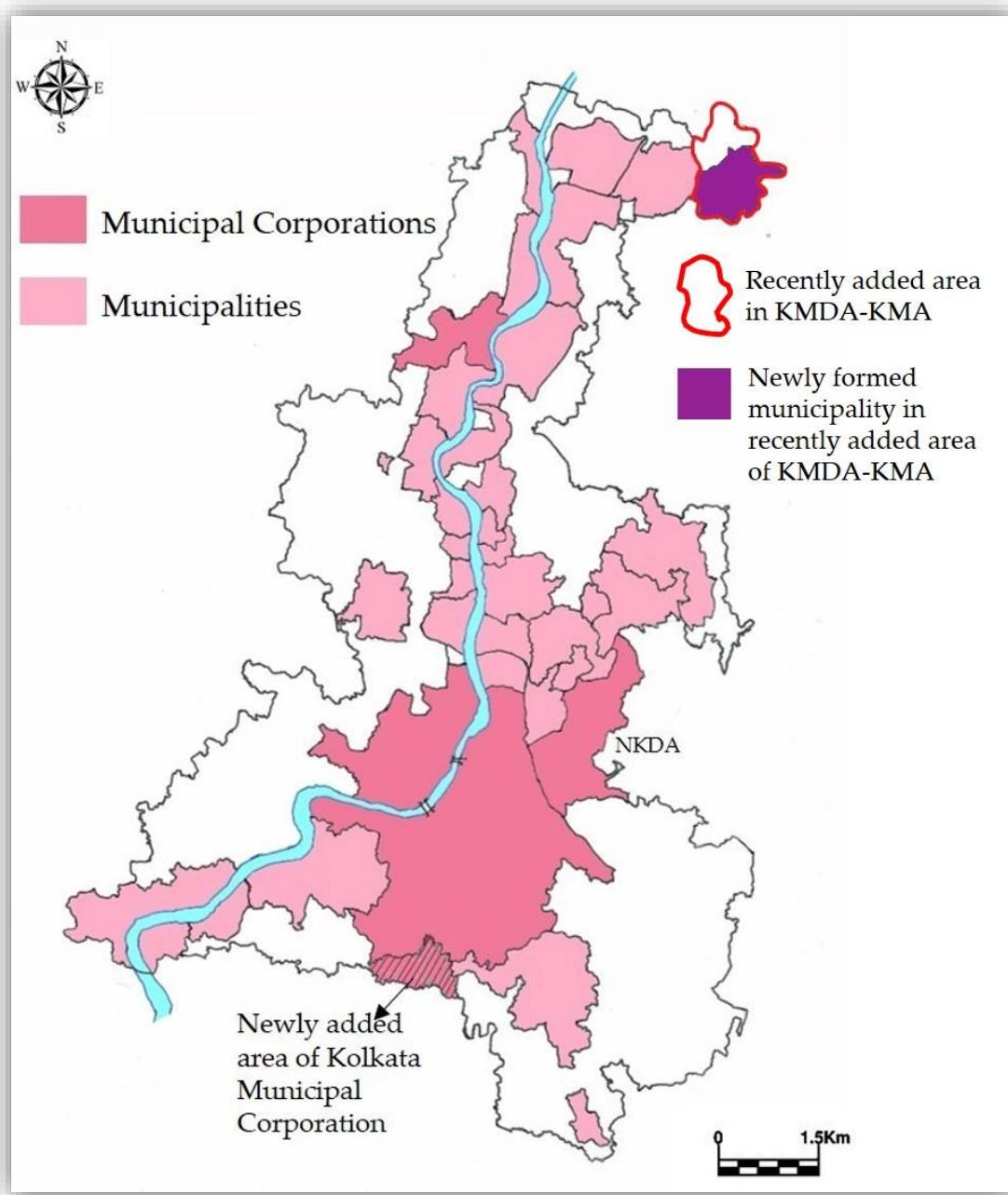
delineate a concrete margin in a constantly evolving urban. This is particularly true to the global south countries which has experienced considerable urbanisation in the last fifty years.

In order to understand the periphery of study area, the background set-up of the same is essential. Broadly the city is situated in country that is not constituted by the fastest growing metropolis in the world but also country that has witnessed phenomenal rise in its small and medium towns and cities. Again Kolkata is situated in country, which is constitutionally a Union of states with federal structures in a number of issues. Urban development is one such factor where the regional state is very crucial. Hence despite being Indian city with same colonial legacy, no one city is similar to another though bind by a common string. Hence in case of Kolkata the regional state of West Bengal assumes important. Since the study is about expanding urban, one has look into the formal boundary beyond which one can posit the expansion. In this study, I have considered the Kolkata metropolis outside the Kolkata city, which is administered by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC).

This is not to say however that hinterland of the city ends at the boundary of the Kolkata Metropolitan Area (Figure 1.2), which is a planning area consisting of 3 more Municipal Corporations<sup>1</sup>, 39 municipalities and 28 Panchayat Samity within Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (henceforth KMDA). Also, Haringhata Municipality was formed very recently post 2011. So the Census as well as KMA data from 2011 does not have data on Haringhata municipality. New town planning area has also been brought recently within KMA is marked outside KMDA-KMA as NKDA since Newtown planning area is under Newtown Kolkata Development Authority or NKDA.

---

<sup>1</sup> 3 Municipal Corporations excluding KMC



**Figure 1.2 Kolkata Metropolitan Area (within Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority)<sup>2</sup>**

Source: Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA).

<sup>2</sup> The newly added areas from Haringhata which constitute a municipality by same name is marked by red bold line. This added area is part of KMDA-KMA. The area was added within KMA in 2009/2010, though complete data is not available yet.

The NKDA, outside the KMDA-KMA has been mentioned only in the Figure.

The last Municipal Corporation was formed by the merging of Bidhannagar and Rajarhat Gopalpur Municipality in 2015. This increases the number of Municipal Corporation but decreases the number of municipalities. In the analysis of Census data 2011, the two merged municipalities of present Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) would be considered separately, since at that time these were separate units. The data for newly formed BMC is also yet to be available. Also

The study in order to explore the periphery has discussed both the suburban and periurban constituent of the metropolitan area. The study has used the same rural urban binary in the research to explore the messy-ness of the region.

The study has used Household data table H-14 for West Bengal and Town and Village Amenities of West Bengal from Government of India Census repository, municipal receipt and expenditures from Government of West Bengal, Reports of Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA). Municipal data, Household asset data, for each constituent unit of the KMA has been dealt with in order to look into how the periphery fares without the core city. The core city has been taken as an outlier in the discussion. The data have also been considered in terms of the type they fall within, whether rural, urban, or the rurban.

As part of the study a primary level work has also been conducted through field visits, informant and personal interview, participant observation, informal conversation and visual recording. The respondents included people from formal governance network, residents and co-travellers of the researcher on way to field sites. This study does not highlight into any single site particularly, neither the study makes any separate section for secondary and field level explorations in separate groups. Instead the research would be narrated with a combination of two simultaneously. A list of publication and presentation for the study has been provided in the *Annexure I and II* respectively.

## 2 Tracing the Periphery

**2.1 Census Towns.** As already discussed KMA outside the core city has been accounted. The region outside the core is not homogenous and highly fragmented. Number of villages has gone down owing to increasing number of census towns in the decade—2001 to 2011. Technically this means that reconfiguration of rural landscape to urban within the metropolitan area has increased in the proportion of urban in the periphery. The intra-peripheral changes or what is better termed re-adjustment or re-configuration is important for Kolkata where the outward expansion has not been as stark and aggressive as experienced in other metropolises of the sub-continent. This arrangement is also crucial to understand the governance of the city and its greater region.

Since in India two types of urban exists in which one is governed by the municipal units and the other, either through rurban governance unit called *Nagar Panchayat* or through *rural Panchayat*, it is obvious that metropolitan would be having an amalgamation of both.

In KMA around 736.11 Sq. Km of area (46.63%) is occupied by statutory towns, 332.82 Sq. km by census towns (28.08%) and 509.61 Sq. Km (32.28%) rural mouzas<sup>3</sup>. Since within West Bengal Municipal Act 1993, there is no provision for *Nagar Panchayat*<sup>4</sup>, 28.08 percent area under census town is also administered by the Rural Panchayat. This adds up the total area under rural administration 53.37 percent of the total area of greater or larger KMA.

How does it matter? In the last decade around 73 new rural mouzas urbanised to census towns that is around 151.71 Sq. Km of area urbanised within KMA alone. If number of all census towns of the adjacent districts is considered, the percentage is

---

<sup>3</sup> The figures exclude the area under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) that administers the core city.

<sup>4</sup> Nagar Panchayat is the third kind of local self-government primarily meant for the census towns or rurban units, as provided in the Seventy-Fourth Amendment Act 1992 (74th CAA 1992). The 74th CAA 1992 constitutionally recognised local self-government as the third level of government.

even higher. Around 316 new census towns were recorded in the districts of South Twenty Four Parganas, North Twenty Four Parganas, Hugli, Howrah and Nadia combined. This is 59.85 percent<sup>5</sup> of the total new census towns formed within the entire state of West Bengal. In general for whole West Bengal, total number of census towns recorded in 2011 is 780, a whopping 209.52% higher than the last decade.

It is true that there are claims that urbanisation has defied conventional definitions of census, but one cannot deny how census data or other official records have been crucial in gauging the spilling urbanisation and still acts as starting point for initiating spilling urbanisation in India. Census 2001 and 2011 specifically reflects the new emerging trends of urbanisation in India, post nineties. Increasing number of small and medium towns, focus moving away from the million cities, deprave condition of services and amenities in small spatial units irrespective of urban and rural status, types of slums etc. have been brought to forefront through the government led enumeration. This is primarily because urban and rural is a crucial governmental binary category.

After enumeration data were first published particularly for the urban areas, a number of significant work has come up regarding increasing number of small and medium towns with and without municipal status often developed beyond the metropolitan influence namely in the form of subaltern urbanisation ( Denis Eric, Zerah Marie-Helene (ed), 2017). Scholars like Keil has argued that urbanisation is in large part of the world, rather dominated by the suburbanization, '*fragmented*' in nature (2017). Urbanisation beyond conventional statutory boundary has dominated urban issues (World Bank, 2013).

Census town has garnered so much attention as it connotes diversities associated typically with southern urbanisation. Unplanned growth, diffusion of urban in to

---

<sup>5</sup> The total number of new census towns recorded in the 2011 Census for West Bengal is 528. The number has been arrived by subtracting total number of census towns in 2001 from total number of census towns in 2011.

rural landscape, urban without urban administration, rural without agricultural land, or simply emergence of a small market towns within a sphere of concentrated rural clusters—contribute to census towns. Even within a single state they are multiple in characters and different owing to their time of formation or spaces they produce.

In the research, census towns within KMA have been taken up for discussion. The census towns within the metropolitan area are space directly produced through the influence of the regional governance and spilling of the core city. The census towns are outcome of state's metropolitan governance. They are adjacent to the core city or other secondary city or any new town. The growth of census towns in the last two decade also suggests the metropolitan development trajectory. In few relevant occasions, census town growth would be discussed outside the KMA.

Growth of census towns within the metropolis would be traced through districts, through time and particularly with reference to statutory towns in the metropolitan area.

At present there are three areas with concentration of the census towns. These three sites are from three districts namely, Howrah, Hooghly and South Twenty Four Parganas. South Twenty Four Parganas, in general has highest number of new census towns formed followed by Hooghly in the entire state.

The research does not dispute the fact that a major concentration of census town is within the metropolitan area. In fact suggest that since in a metropolitan area the rationale for formation of census town is direct and dependant on the metro core, formation of Census town is also an outcome of the state governance. As a state level distribution of census towns district-wise and KMA-non KMA cluster wise has already been discussed in details by Chatterjee (2013), the present research would discuss the distribution of KMA census towns within the Kolkata Adjacent District

(KAD)<sup>6</sup>. In the present study census town is being considered vis-a-vis the periphery of the city. It is observed that although South Twenty Four Parganas in general has highest number of new Census towns in West Bengal in general, Howrah has the absolute highest as far as total number of census towns (old and new combined). Within KMA, highest percent of census towns are there in Howrah, which is 36.13 percent of the total census towns in KMA (table 2.1.1).

**Table 2.1.1 Census Towns in Kolkata Adjacent Districts (KAD) and Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) 2011**

Census Towns	Howrah	Hooghly	Nadia	Twenty Four Parganas (N)	Twenty Four Parganas (S)	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KAD	135	64	55	78	111	443
KMA	56	40	2	26	31	155
Proportion of census towns in KMA to Total census town in KAD (%)	12.64	9.03	0.45	5.87	7	34.99
Proportion of census towns in Total KMA (%)	36.13	25.81	1.3	16.77	20	100

**Source:** Computed from Town Directory, West Bengal 2011 and Different Units of Kolkata Metropolitan Area obtained from KMDA.

Formation of census towns in Howrah is not new to the last census. Howrah as a district has showed high level of urbanisation, owing to presence of number of manufacturing units, including household and large and medium scale industries. For long rural units peripheral to the three statutory towns of Howrah, Uluberia and Bally have been residences to industrial labour coming from neighbouring districts as well as states. These units continue to remain under rural administration. There is a general adversity from both the residents as well as the Panchayats, to get

<sup>6</sup> Kolkata Adjacent District or KAD is a term used in the study to denote the five adjacent district of Kolkata that contribute to the greater metropolitan area of city.

incorporated within the Municipality. The rurban stage is best suited. Being outside the municipal limit there is no imposition of municipal tax. The census towns are residences to the labour including the agricultural and industrial labour and cultivators. Areas surrounding Uluberia, Andul, Dhulagori industrial belt, Domjur have high concentrations of industrial units and consequently a high concentration of census towns. South and North Twenty Four Parganas and Hooghly have recorded higher number of new census towns in the last decade but the reasons are not same. Establishment of Dankuni municipality with around 11 rural mouzas in 2008 with strong industrial base consequently created a Dankuni Urban Agglomeration, the second agglomeration within KMA. Dankuni Urban Agglomeration is a continuous spread of around 19 census towns with Dankuni municipality at its core. In the last decade owing to the state plan to set up automobile manufacturing unit at Singur there has been enormous change in the rural areas adjacent to the manufacturing site in Hooghly. Though the plan failed owing to mass protest from the farmers regarding the land acquisitions made by the state government, it did not stop transformation of rural mouzas from agricultural to pre-dominantly non-agricultural landscapes. The case is similar to that of Dankuni. Initially Dankuni was to be developed as industrial town and land was acquired by Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority. A large chunk of land was acquired for the development of Dankuni Township by DLF. The area was constituted by 4840 acre of land, which included multi-cropping land and homestead plots. The project could not take off owing to massive protests from the farmers' association in the area; later the proposed township area was then reduced to 500 acre township, which also did not materialise as the state government could not acquire land. DLF ultimately withdrew from the project 2009. Municipalisation happened in 2008. With municipalisation, arrangement and planning for most of the infrastructures was rested with KMDA and Dankuni municipality. Being contiguous to the National Highway (Durgapur Expressway), Dankuni rapidly developed as the industrial hub of KMA instead of a real-estate township built on public-private partnership basis.

In 2013 construction of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor began by the Indian Railways with loan from World Bank, connecting Ludhiana in the North with Dankuni in the east with funding from World Bank. This further made urbanisation in Dankuni aggressive, and fast formation of census towns in the vicinity. Around 50 percent of the new census towns in Hooghly are within KMA (table 2.1.2).

Very small portion of Nadia comes within KMA. As per KMDA's Annual Report (2011), around 30.34 Sq. Km of land from Haringhata in Nadia district and 4.92 Sq.

Km from Baruipur in South Twenty Four parganas were added to KMA.

Accordingly, only two census towns Nadia district fall within KMA. These two census towns are new census towns. Before 2011 there were no census towns from Nadia that came within KMA. 35.62 percent of new census towns in KMA were formed within South Twenty Four Parganas alone followed by Hooghly which had 24.66 percent of new census towns in KMA. Hooghly's urbanisation in the form of census town particularly with respect to KMA has already been discussed in the previous paragraph.

**Table 2.1.2 New Census Towns formed in Kolkata Adjacent Districts (KAD) and Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) in 2001-2011 Decade.**

New Census Towns	Howrah	Hooghly	Nadia	Twenty Four Parganas (N)	Twenty Four Parganas (S)	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KAD	85	36	40	58	97	316
KMA	13	18	2	14	26	73
Proportion of New Census towns in KMA to New Census towns in KAD (%)	15.29	50	5	24.14	26.8	23.1
District-wise Proportion of new census town in Total KMA (%)	17.81	24.66	2.73	19.18	35.62	100

**Source:** Computed from Town Directory, West Bengal 2011 and Different Units of Kolkata Metropolitan Area obtained from KMDA.

Out of total 97 new census towns formed in South Twenty Parganas, 26.8 percent are formed within KMA (table 2.1.2). Out of 58 total new census towns in North Twenty Four Parganas, 24.14 percent are within KMA (*ibid.*). The Twenty Four Parganas both North and South are on the eastern, southeastern and southern part of the Kolkata Agglomeration where the city has experienced maximum expansion in terms of not only census towns but statutory towns as well. This has been prominent post formation of Bidhannagar in the fifties and then development of Rajarhat Newtown. In 2007 Newtown Kolkata Development Authority was formed through the Newtown Kolkata Development Act 2007 responsible for New Town Kolkata Planning Area. In 2015, Bidhannagar Municipality merged with Rajarhat-Gopalpur municipality and Mahishbathan II Gram Panchayat to form Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation. In the last decade the areas contiguous to the Kolkata, Newtown went through rapid urbanisation either through expansion of boundaries or through urbanisation of the rural. Rural mouzas from southeaster margin, Baruipur subdivision, was incorporated within the greater metropolitan area. How the formation of census town is relevant to governance of the periphery but, before that reconfiguration of the existing municipal boundaries also need to be discussed.

**2.2 Added Areas: Reconfiguration of Municipal and Metropolitan Boundaries**

Incorporating rural mouza, census town as well as outgrowth within the limit of an existing municipality or even within existing metropolitan area has been a more regular way of expanding the urban limits than creating a new statutory town all the way in this part of the region. This is not new to the post nineties trend of urbanisation. In the eighties with the enactment of Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act 1980 and Howrah Municipal Corporation Act 1981, the municipal boundaries of both cities were extended. In the erstwhile Calcutta number of wards<sup>7</sup> extended from 100 to 141 while that in Howrah increased from 40 to 50. In case of Howrah the adjacent areas of the same district was incorporated. This was essentially under rural

---

<sup>7</sup> A ward is the lowest unit of administration in urban local self-government in India.

governance. In case of Calcutta, mouzas and urban non-municipal areas from South Twenty Four Parganas were incorporated. This area is still termed as the added area. In post independent period this was major re-configuration of municipal boundary for both the cities.

### ***2.2.1 Added areas of Howrah and Kolkata***

Many times, despite being included within the municipal limit they tend to remain a position of marginality with respect to access to basic services; in few cases these areas are provided municipal tax relief for number of years making the areas ideal for increasing density. This has been very prominently witnessed in the both cases of added areas of the Howrah and Kolkata. In case of Kolkata the added areas (ward 101-141), residents continued to pay Panchayat tax for almost two decades. Non-starting of municipal tax done in order not to burden the residents of added areas immediately with municipal tax. But such an initiative could definitely be considered as part of vote bank politics. For the same number of decades the level of basic services remained starkly different from that available in the core areas (table 2.2). For instance for, 84.9 percent of household in the KMC as a whole access to treated tap water as source of their drinking water (census H-14 table). But when the same is taken into consideration for the core areas, the average percent of households with access to tap water from treated source is 93.08 percent as against 75.26 in the added areas. Similarly only 14.4 and 71.45 percent of average households with latrines in their premises have access to piped sewer system and septic tank respectively in the added areas. Around 14.11 percent of household does not have that also and have to rely on other arrangements of sewerage despite having latrine within premise. In case of waste water connection the added areas have only 64.9 percent closed drainage as against the total average of 81.3 percent for the whole city.

Municipal taxation started since 2000. This was also the time when Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project (KEIP) was launched within the city. KEIP was

the first multifaceted project in the city with loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and implemented directly by the KMC. The project aimed at the environmental degradation of the city and barring few of its components like slum improvement, it aimed at the added areas that are for the wards from 101 to 141. KEIP had been instrumental in improving sewerage and drainage of the outer city though it had its fair share of controversy with regards to its implementation particularly with respect its resettlement programme which was an offshoot initiative of its canal rehabilitation programme. KEIP ended in the 2010 but later re-launched as Kolkata Environmental Improvement Investment Project (KEIIP). The same is also aimed at improving the sewerage and drainage of the added areas and is under operation at present.

In case of Howrah city the condition of the basic service as whole for the entire city is quite appalling, particularly with respect to sewerage and drainage condition. In the *Basic Development Plan 1966-1986*, the first perspective plan prepared for the Calcutta Metropolitan District<sup>8</sup>. In the plan Howrah was considered as the dual centre with Calcutta. A separate plan was prepared for the Howrah city itself. But even after more than fifty years Howrah continues remain as the edge city to the Kolkata. Once considered as the *Sheffield of India* (Mukhopadhyay and Bhattacharya, 2015).

Howrah's status as a leading industrial city declined post independent period (*ibid.*). One of the most important aspects with regard to urban governance is the deploring condition of the basic services and road in the city. The added areas that are area under ward 41-50 did not have to pay municipal tax. What has been more striking is that unlike KMC, there has not been any form of tax paid by the residents, not even as Panchayat tax. The added areas are comparatively higher populated than the core

---

<sup>8</sup> Calcutta Metropolitan District (CMD) is the first attempt to delineate a metropolitan region around the Calcutta city. It was done by the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation (CMPO) in 1960 with assistance from Ford Foundation. The output was *Basic Development Plan. Calcutta Metropolitan District. 1966-1986*. Calcutta Metropolitan District was later renamed as Calcutta Metropolitan Area, now Kolkata Metropolitan Area. In the eighties the new planning body was enacted—Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority after dissolving Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation.

area wards. This is owing to absence of municipal tax. In fact the Household asset data suggest that average percentage of owned house in the added area is 78.32 percent (table 2.2.1a), much higher compared to the core area or for HMC taken together.

**Table 2.2.1a Ownership Status of Household in Howrah Municipal Corporation**

HMC	Owned house	Rented house	Any others
	In percent		
Ward 1-40	53.17	43.43	3.40
Ward 41-50	78.32	17.09	4.59
Total	61.4	35	3.6

Source: Computed from H-14 Table, Howrah District, West Bengal in [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)

But condition of sewerage is deplorable in whole HMC. Out of 94 percent household having latrine within household, only 11.1 percent population have piped sewer system and 73.4 percent households have septic tank. For the core wards (41-50) percentage is 12.59 and 78.21 respectively for households with piped sewerage and septic tank. In case of the added wards, the figure is further deplorable; of the 93.07 percent of household having latrine within premise, only 9.89 percent have piped sewer system, 68.52 percent have septic tanks. The rest depend on other system; in the added areas around 11.87 percent of households have pit latrines. The situation for the waste water drainage is nothing better as observed from table 2.2.1b.

**Table 2.2.1b. Types of drainage for waste water connection**

HMC	Closed drainage	Open drainage	No drainage
	In percent		
Ward 1-40	37.06	60.21	2.74
Ward 41-50	18.85	61.59	19.56
Total	29.8	60	10.2

Source: Computed from H-14 Table, Howrah District, West Bengal in [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)

The very basis of bringing the added areas within the purview of the above discussion is that the added areas were once part of the periphery. They were cored

into the municipal limit. It has been almost thirty eight years since the expansion was implemented. In case of the core city a major initiative was taken in the beginning of the century, but in case of the Howrah the situation persists with no major change. During implementation of Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM or simply NURM), supply of water improved due to installation of Paddapukur Pumping Station. But drainage and road condition remains deplorable. Added areas in both the city continued to have increasing population, since these were cheaper areas to stay or buy homes. Most of the homes built on these areas were auto-constructed and rarely followed plans and frequently flouted building rules. Absence of municipal tax was another reason. The decision to re-define was often dubbed as political decision. But any governance decision in the region or in the state has rarely been apolitical.

Though KMC being the core city could hope to have some improvement in its added areas, the situation has not changed much for Howrah. The added areas in the HMC are also dotted with factories and industrial units frequently clubbed with residential units. Such co-existence of factories or manufacturing units in close vicinity with residences are undoubtedly environmentally risk. But it is probably a norm here. Reports of residents complaining of deplorable living conditions have often been highlighted in the media, where residents have complained that being areas without municipal tax, the situation has been worse. There have been efforts on part of some residents regarding initiation of municipal tax in the areas, but to not much effect.

There were some initiation from Municipal Corporation in the beginning of the new millennium, that valuation of the houses or properties would carried out and municipal tax would be initiated, so as to provide better amenities. Applications were filed by the residents of the cooperative as well as other neighbourhoods in the ward. But nothing happened eventually. So at present the situation had been like a trap. Since there is no municipal tax, one cannot

claim for better services; again if there is not better services, why pay the municipal tax. [Respondent is a resident living in an old Cooperative Housing Society in ward 45 of Howrah Municipal Corporation].

In this juncture, both the core city and its edge city has undergone change again post 2010. Three new wards were added to the core city on its southern margin by bringing to Gram Panchayats—Joka I and II within KMC jurisdiction. The Gram Panchayats were part of the southern adjacent district—South Twenty Four Parganas. In case of Howrah, Bally municipality merged with the HMC. In the former, it was direct incorporation of the rural within the urban or an instance of extension of urban periphery through re-organisation of the city limit. In case of later, it was more of a reorganisation of the city limit but not through change in the frontier or rural-urban boundary. Both cases reflected governance decision, more specifically that of the state. The state, in the federal structure of India, there are three different levels, namely, at the centre, at the regional state and at the local level. The functions of the three levels have been rather clearly depicted within each jurisdiction. The local self-government despite being the third tier, their delineation, creation is dependent on state government. Therefore each state has its own Municipal and Panchayat Act. Case of West Bengal is not different. Only, in case of the West Bengal the threshold for forming a municipality is rather high with minimum population required for forming a municipality is minimum 30,000 and that for forming Municipal Corporation is 50,000. This is beside an equally high threshold of population density and percentage of population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. But all these criteria, which is important, is that state government's decision reigns crucial. Incorporating adjacent rural areas within the existing boundary or merging the two municipal units area rather convenient than forming new municipality for a number of reasons.

Joka I and II Gram Panchayat comprised of 16 units of rural mouzas and census towns. Being adjacent to the KMC, the area is within regular commuting zone of the

city and this had been the case from fifties when the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta came up. Within years a residential complex came up in the area—Diamond Park, one of the largest cooperative housing society in West Bengal. This was followed establishment of Siemens units. In the late eighties the tramways extended its terminal point on its southern fringe till Joka. But tram as a transport mode suffered setback not owing to its slow rate but due to newly constructed flyovers and bigger scope of metro railways as a more favourable mode of transport. The tramway was already reduced to its periphery, owing to construction of a flyover. The remaining line had to be abolished in this southern fringe of the city in 2011 owing to launching of extension of metro-railway project. The metro-railway project is a new line and not an extension that is supposed to make new connection of the central area of the city with Joka. This escalated the land price in Joka. Joka became a real-estate hot-spot on the southern fringe. The Gram Panchayats already had a sown area reduced to the marginal mouza. That is the agriculture was almost nil in the areas near to the roadside. This is to be mentioned that Joka was on either side of the Diamond Harbour Road, A state highway that connected the Diamond Harbour on its extreme south to the central core city. The Panchayats on either side had rapidly changing landscapes and increase in the number of census towns along the road. Practically these were urban areas that continued under rural governance. Link between Joka and city was direct. Joka was almost a residential suburb without being urban. In the nineties the Siemens units was again relocated to another place. In the area another housing named *Genexx Valley* came up. But Joka remained within rural governance. Demand for the improved basic services grew and issues like what to do with the waste, deplorable conditions of sewerage system and drainage, water logging etc., remained problematic. A detailed discussion of how the waste disposal were managed and negotiated at the local level had been described in details by Shaw (2005).

Plan to incorporate Joka within KMC came with change in the state government. It was an election promise to the residents of Joka. Joka's inclusion within KMC made it not only eligible to avail basic amenities services provided by the Municipal Corporation, responsibility of the entire areas was taken up by KEIIP.

KEIIP as stated earlier is instrumental in improving sewerage and drainage network for the added areas in the city. When Joka was included within the municipal limit, KEIIP became primary implementing body in developing the area, with laying of water pumping booster stations, sewerage and drainage lines and other relevant infrastructural development. Both construction of metro railway lines and infrastructure development are in operation simultaneously in the area.

Inclusion of Joka did not evoke any particular protest as the area was already substantially urbanised. In fact, most of the time street forms the ward boundaries, especially in case of the Kolkata. That meant, being on one side of road and within Municipal Corporation, were eligible for Municipal services, while on the other side of street there had been stark deficiency in provision of amenities. Demand for better amenities and infrastructure had been for long. The question was then, *why there is municipalisation of periphery now and not before?*

Joka's recent spurt in real-estate development was triggered by making it a terminal point for the new line of metro-railway. It was already on a commuters' zone and connected to the city proper by the fragmented intermediate public transport towards the fringe. Tram service, being reduced, posed a serious problem of commuting. Hope or aspiration for new transport medium spiralled real-estate development. Being outside municipal limit and owing to decreasing net sown area, speculative measures for land had been rampant. Most of the respondents opined that widespread increase in the land demand and encroachment had been frequent<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> Interviews carried out in December-January 2018 with municipal officials, resident of Diamond Park Housing Cooperative Housing Society and others living within Joka.

The kind of attention Joka received in the last 5-7 years has been remarkable. It also highlights the state's focus on its east and southeast margin. A huge amount from KEIIP's total funding was spent or more aptly are still being spent to re-build Joka at par with the Municipal standard or specifically at par with the changing landscape in the fringe. Joka is no more at the periphery. It is now the part of core.

Merging of Howrah Municipal Corporation (HMC) with the Bally municipality happened more –or less at the same time period. But the purpose was different and so was the process and outcome. Bally was merged with HMC on ground that a clubbing with a Municipal Corporation would be more prospective for development of Bally, which had been lagging behind for long. Bally and Howrah were same municipality and got separated to form two separate municipalities in 1883. The context of merging the two municipal bodies occurred in seventies only to be reverted back owing to non-compliance from Bally's side. In 2015, despite, opposition from the ruling municipal board, the state government decided to go ahead with the merger.

One of the officials working in the Howrah Municipal Corporation office at Bally, opined,

'If a merger had been decided by the state government, it does not matter, who does not want it. Neither such merger was necessarily done with development in mind. But merging with a Municipal Corporation does have the possibility of getting included within projects that are meant for larger cities.'

The comment resonates with what was considered in case of Joka, though it was neither triggered by real-estate development nor was the outcome led to increase in the land value.

Another respondent, a middle aged man staying at Liluah (coming within Bally Municipality) has been visiting the Municipal office since last few years in get his property assessment, so that he could pay tax or go for mutation. He stated that he was not sure whether getting within HMC would improve the situation. But also states that municipality is focussing on improving road condition, which was not observed before. His opinion reflects the same condition as observed in added areas of HMC. The question is— *would a merger be effective in regularisation of municipal tax? If it would have, then why the added areas still had sustained irregularities?*

Joka and Bally offers two different situations of governmental re-definition. One, where re-definition was reflection of the state's neoliberal policy and expansion of facilitation of the real-estate development; municipalisation had long been overdue. In another, the redefinition did evoke protest but could not influence the outcome; neither did it enable to bring in any marked change in the area except some stray hopes of getting improvement in the long run. The second instance did not involve rural urban change, nor was an expansion of periurban boundaries. But it reflects how state government has strengthened with regards to local development despite having third ties of governance.

### ***2.2.2 Added areas of other towns and cities of KMA***

For other municipal bodies in the region, the municipal limit remained unchanged till nineties. The structural adjustment programme accompanying New Economic Policy in the nineties unleashed remarkable changes in the municipal governance of India. When West Bengal Municipal Act 1993 was enacted, a number of Notified Area Council was upgraded to Municipality. Regularities were brought in the incumbent municipalities. In the process boundaries of a number of municipalities were re-organised that led to their expansion. In KMA around 13 cities and towns expanded to include Outgrowths, adjoining census towns as well as rural mouzas within their boundaries. These areas remain considered as the added areas and how far their addition to the municipal limit brings betterment of services and amenities

remain doubtful. But incorporation of the adjacent rural within the municipal limit is possibly the easiest way to ensure urban expansion without much resistance. This type of expansion often goes through without much resistances or confrontation but could not be considered less significant with respect to governance.

Other than Howrah and Kolkata around 14 older towns and cities in KMA went through area expansion through redefinition of boundaries, post enactment of West Bengal Municipal Act 1993 and subsequent rejuvenation of the almost defunct municipalities. The process included particularly the statutory towns, which had rural areas on its fringe or within interstitial areas within two or more municipalities. Prominent among other cities, which have gone through redefinition of municipal boundaries include Chandannagar Municipal Corporation, Baidyabati municipality in Hooghly, Rajpur Sonarpur in Twenty Four Parganas (S), Dum Dum, North and South Dum Dum, Rajarhat Gopalpur municipality within Twenty Four Parganas (S). The municipalities of Twenty Four Parganas (N & S) are contiguous to the municipal limit of KMC as well as within 30 Km distance of Newtown and Bidhannagar. The municipalities have served as the residential suburb of both KMC and Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) that combines Bidhannagar with Newtown. There has been massive expansion of Rajpur Sonarpur Municipality lying to the south eastern margin of the city, reiterating eastward development of the city. Spurring real estate growth, extension of metro railway track till beyond southeastern margin, connecting southern margin till Baruipur with Bypass road network reflected on the margins of the municipality. The Municipality before nineties had 14 wards formed from 11 rural mouzas. In 1993, the number of wards increased to 30 since with addition of 26 mouzas from adjacent Sonarpur area. This renamed the municipality from 'Rajpur' to Rajpur Sonarpur Municipality, which is spread over an area of 49.25 Sq.Km., which is around 134.75 percent increase in area from what existed before. Rajpur-Sonarpur is also considered as real-estate hub similar to that of the Joka. The

municipality is equidistant to the Bidhannagar and easily accessible to the Newtown as well as Bidhannagar Sector V and Nabadiganta Industrial Township.

The metropolitan boundary has expanded several times through incorporation of new rural mouzas. Such an expansion of metropolitan limit is not new, but has happened before and this expansion is more prominent on the eastern side of the metropolis.

### **2.3 Municipalisation**

As has been stated earlier, the minimum demographic threshold criteria to form a municipality is quite high in the state, though formation of a new municipality does not necessarily originate from the demographic high or percentage of population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. As per both 74th and 73rd CAA 1992 and 1993 respectively, delineation of new municipalities or rural mouzas is state government discretion.

Urban comes within the state list and hence urban delineation rested with the state government before nineties also. Around 5 towns were formed within 1950-1990 in KMA. This includes the planned township of Kalyani and Salt Lake City (now Bidhannanagar), Uttarpara Kotrung municipality and New Barrackpur. Chandannagar was a French colony till 1955 and was treated as Municipal Corporation of the state of West Bengal since 1955.

Within 1991-2001 around 5 towns were created, within KMA. Kalyani and Bidhannagar was upgraded to municipality in the nineties from Notified Area Council. And the within 2001 and 2011 Dankuni formed in 2008 and Nabadiganta Industrial Township in 2011. Haringhata Municipality formed in 2015 with rural mouzas added from Nadia district in 2009/2010.

Formation Rajarhat Newtown and Satellite town of Bidhannagar is well documented not only in planning documents but in academic publications. The report would discuss Pujali as a case study.

### ***2.3.1 Pujali Municipality and CESC Budge Budge Thermal Power Plant***

Pujali is the smallest municipal entity in KMA which was notified and municipalised in the initial years of nineties. The municipality is situated on the south-western corner of the city and adjacent with Budge Budge municipality. The municipality was formed with full Pujali Gram Panchayat and part Rajibpur municipality, which were both part of Budge Budge subdivision in Twenty Four Parganas (South). Within Pujali gram panchayat, Pujali was a non-municipal town and Kalipur—an outgrowth of the Budge Budge municipality. The area had an alternate history. It is the place where first Chinese settlement developed before they moved to the inner cores of the Kolkata city. The place is also the first place to have a sugar factory in India, set up some five hundred years back. Situated on the bank of Hooghly, this area was more a peripheral area to the Budge Budge rather than being Kolkata. The area gained attention when Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation (CESC) planned setting up a thermal power plant in the Budge Budge area that would cater to the daily shortage of power supply to the core city. Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA, which later became KMDA) started acquiring land for the purpose. This led to massive protest in the area. The land which was to be acquired varied included the agricultural area, school area and homesteads. There were several lines of contestations, first of which was the acquisition of agricultural land. Second was how much land was required. There were different versions from CESC and CMDA. There were different versions at different time. The third point of contention had been what was to be paid for compensation. Though a job and a homestead were promised most of the evicted farmers did not agree with. Fourth point of contention was apprehension regarding establishing a thermal power plant close to the river bank and close to residential allotments as these plants are subject to produce fly-ash as by-product, which is highly detrimental to health. Fifth point of contention was which areas to acquire. For instance, in the initial stage, there was plan to acquire the Chinese temple and a

contiguous Indian temple. These were considered heritage sites and strongly protested. Sixth point of contention had been lack of transparency from the state government side. Amidst mass protest in the area, acquisition was done in a hurry. The temple sites were left out, but agricultural land and school areas were acquired. Later the school was re-established in another alternate ground in the adjacent area, which the CESC had funded with. Compensations were also provided and a resettlement colony is existent in the municipality. Another parcel of land was acquired to dump the fly ash. This area was also within homestead area.

Post notification of the area, municipality was formed in the late nineties. After almost two decades, Pujali remains the thermal power town. CESC has been recipient of the most environment friendly thermal power plant in the country as accorded by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and another UN prize for economic use of fly-ash. Despite this, residents from the municipality complained that there have been pollution within the vicinity and dust often creates health issues or affect agricultural productivity in the adjacent rural areas where cultivation is still on. CESC remains the main tax payer for the municipality. Many respondents have argued that municipalisation has helped in improvement of roads. In the interviews conducted it was apparent that for residents of Pujali municipalisation remained separate from land acquisition. Many did not consider as municipalisation as the outcome of the establishment of the thermal power plant. In fact in many areas thermal power plant did not necessarily create municipalisation or as such urbanisation. With municipalisation Pujali is currently being developed as river-side day tourist spot.

## **2.4 Rural Mouzas**

Estimates for numbers of rural mouza are not same though as per KMDA there are 28 numbers of Panchayat Samity<sup>10</sup> within KMA, which are part of the KAD or

---

<sup>10</sup> Panchayat Samity

Kolkata Adjacent District. In 2001 Kolkata District Census Handbook the estimate for total no. of rural units were 445. An estimate provided in Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority is that in 2011 the total no of villages are 437. Another computation has been done in the research based on KMDA 2001 report and census towns formed within 2001-2011, finds there are 356. Another estimate (Sivaramakrishnan, 2015) provided that total numbers of villages in 2001 as 492, which reduced to 405 in 2011.

Though there have been decrease in the number of villages from 2001 to 2011, there is addition to the total list through incorporation of new areas within the metropolis. In the decade of 2001-2011 around 9 and 11 mouzas were added in the metropolitan area from Nadia and Twenty Four Parganas (S) district. Extension of metropolitan boundary is rather silent in comparison to the municipal formation.

The rural mouzas within the metropolitan periphery remain within rural governance like rest of the state. The only major departure from non-metropolitan rural mouzas is that the development rights of a rural area within metropolitan boundary rests with the planning authority, in this case the KMDA. While this may be a single issue, it is a significant one with respect to infrastructure development. This may be illustrated through an example. The bypass road connecting the KMC, Rajpur-Sonarpur with Baruipur municipality and further beyond has urbanised the entire stretch of rural units contiguous to the road.

Though much is discussed regarding 74th CAA 1992, the implementation of the 73rd CAA 1993 does need further critical evaluation in terms of its relevance with regards to the local self-government in rural areas. In West Bengal the rural local self-government further assumes importance since the census towns are managed by the Panchayats only. The West Bengal Gram Panchayat Act 1973 has gone through several amendments in the last few decades; so has the West Bengal Gram Panchayat Building Rules 2004. The West Bengal Panchayat (Amendment) Building Rules 2017 has introduced building rules in the Panchayat areas. Though the rules are applicable to the all panchayat areas, but it assumes more significance within a

planning area, since it has augmented real estate development in the Panchayat areas. As Shatkin has stated (2015), real estate has been predominant in any form of development of peri-urban areas, there has been mass commercialisation of the same in recent years. The land value of the agricultural areas has increased particularly. Even if there is no land acquisition, selling of land especially those on fringes have increased. Though land acquisition remains the most contested issues in contemporary development literature, this is also true that commercialisation of land has not increased the land value but also increased the negotiation scope. This was witnessed when the land needed to be acquired in Dankuni-DLF public private partnership (PPP) project where the state failed to acquire any land. One of the main reasons for the failure had been paying comparatively lower compensation per acre of land acquired (Bandyopadhyay, 2017). A similar situation was also witnessed on the southern margin of the city in context of laying metro rail line. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited or RVNL entrusted with laying the metro line needed land to construct metro rail depot. The price offered by the RVNL was not accepted by the farmers and state government had to fill in the gap between what was provided by the RVNL and what was demanded by the farmers<sup>11</sup>.

It is difficult to discuss rural mouzas separately from the census towns as both are within the panchayat administration in West Bengal.

### **3 Periphery and the basic services and housing**

Provision of social services in urban areas necessarily include piped water supply, type of sewerage system, and condition of housing are possibly the first or initial or minimal basic services that area provided in an urban area. The household data prepared by the Census of India, provided at the lowest rural and urban level that is mouza and city/town level respectively have been especially helpful to assess overall

---

<sup>11</sup> The same incident have been discussed in researcher's publication, 'Municipalization and Core-ing of the Peri-urban. Case Study of a Newly Added Area in Indian City of Kolkata' in *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*, Vol. 3 (8), 2018.

situations in the variegated space of the periphery, throughout districts in India. In the research also the same household asset data for a specific set have been taken into consideration for the having a comparative assessments across statutory towns, census towns and rural areas within KMA.

They are:

1. Condition of House.
2. Source of drinking water.
3. Presence of absence of latrine and type of associated sewer system or arrangements in absence of sewerage system.
4. Connection of wastewater drainage.

The core city that Kolkata city administered by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation has not been brought in analysing the comparative data for the constituent units of KMA. This is because the study is about the periphery and KMC being the largest Municipal Corporation in the region, is rather be considered an outlier.

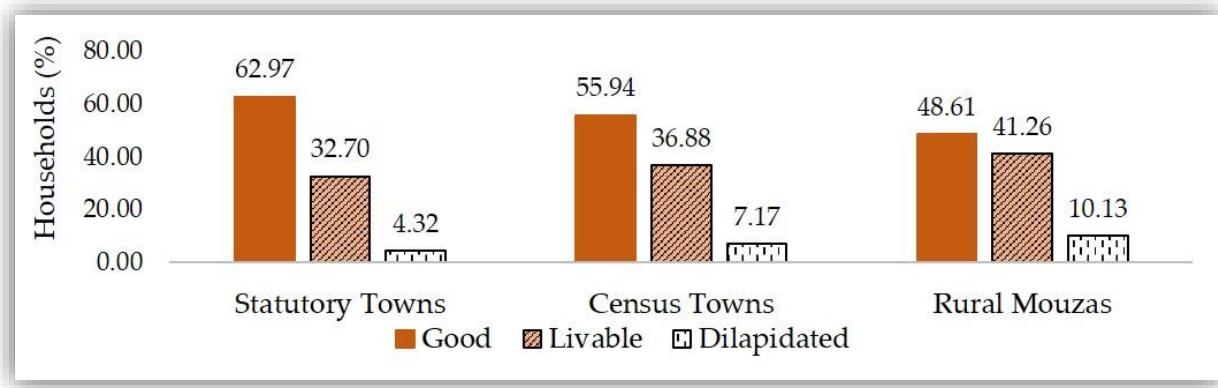
Since census town is essentially urban in character despite being within rural administration, the analysis would keep the statutory towns and census towns and rural mouzas as separate parameter.

The presence or absence of piped water system, presence of piped sewerage condition etc. are considered as amenities which are strongly urban based though there are attempts in recent time to introducing some of these services in rural area.

### **3.1 Condition of Housing**

There have been a lot of projects doing rounds especially in the housing section both at the central and state level and at the urban and rural level in the last few decades. West Bengal and rather KMA is not an exception. In fact most of welfare schemes or in recent missions the agglomeration has had higher rates of implementation from other part of the state. As evident from Figure 3.1, though differences within good

house condition is not very high with respect to the three categories, but has declined from statutory to the absolute rural areas.



**Figure 3.1 Average Conditions of Houses in greater metropolitan area of Kolkata**

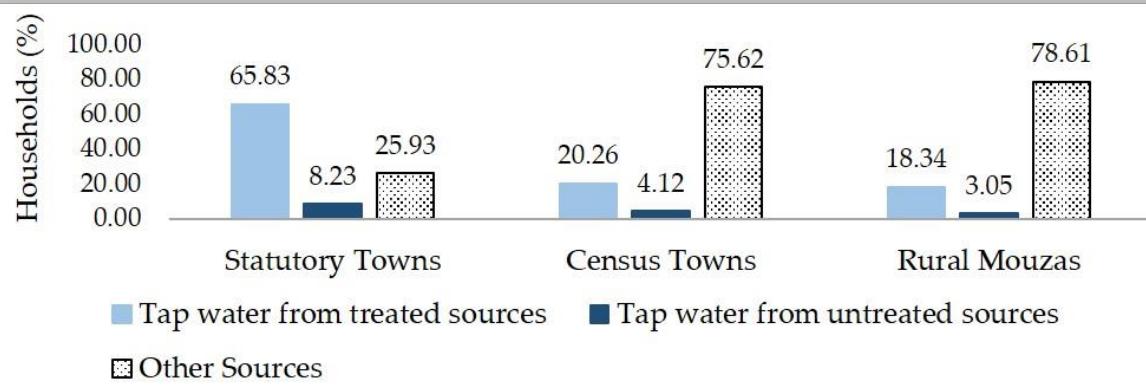
Source: Computed by the researcher from H-14 table Census 2011.

### 3.2 Source of Drinking water

Availability of tap water is crucial in understanding the liveability of an urban area irrespective of being statutory or census. The rural areas falling within a metropolitan area should have a better standing with regards to the availability of basic services since coming within larger metropolitan governance.

In West Bengal, Department of Public Health and Engineering has been primarily instrumental in providing water to the rural areas irrespective of being within or outside the metropolis. In KMA, Kolkata Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority (KMWSA)<sup>12</sup> are entrusted with water supply in the metropolitan area, though this service has predominantly been in the statutory urban areas. Recently KMWSA has also started distributing water supply in the fringe areas in some parts of the KMA.

<sup>12</sup> KMWSA was earlier Calcutta Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority and a separate entity in provisioning water in KMA from the very beginning of the formation of the metropolitan area.



**Figure 3.2 Average Condition of Tap water Supply at household level in greater metropolitan area of Kolkata**

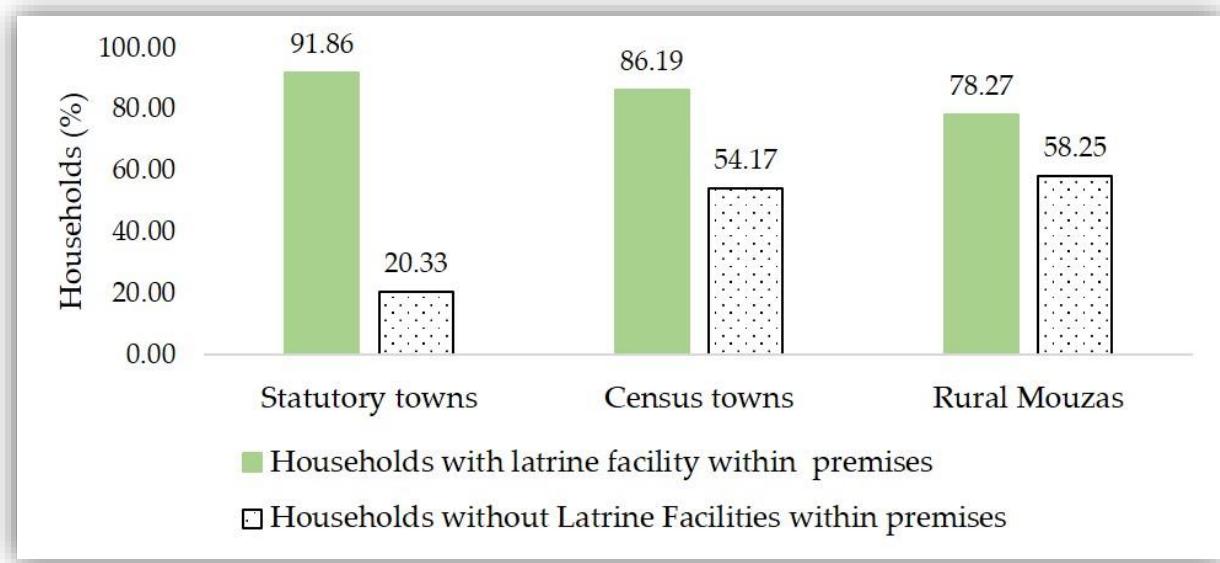
Source: Computed by the researcher from H-14 table Census 2011.

With respect to drinking water supply, the intra-metropolitan differences are visibly steep. While 74.06 percent households in the statutory towns have access to Tap water (both treated and untreated), in case of census towns and rural mouzas the percentage availability of the same goes down to 24.38 and 21.39 percent respectively. Difference between census town and rural mouzas are not very stark. Despite water provided by the PHED, most of the rural households still depends on hand-pumps, boreholes, tube-wells, spring, river, canals tank etc. These constitute the other sources. As per Census 2011 H-14 table on household assets, hand pumps for instance on an average, is the main source of drinking water in 47.83 and 50.31 percent households in census towns and rural areas whereas for statutory towns it is around 29.5 percent of the total households. Arranging water supply on its own is even difficult for the many statutory towns even. The main support is provided through the regional governance body.

### 3.3 Latrine Facility

Presence of latrine facility within premise and type of sewerage associated with the latrine is an important indicator of basic standard of living in an urban area. While it has long been considered as part of urban amenities, construction of toilet within

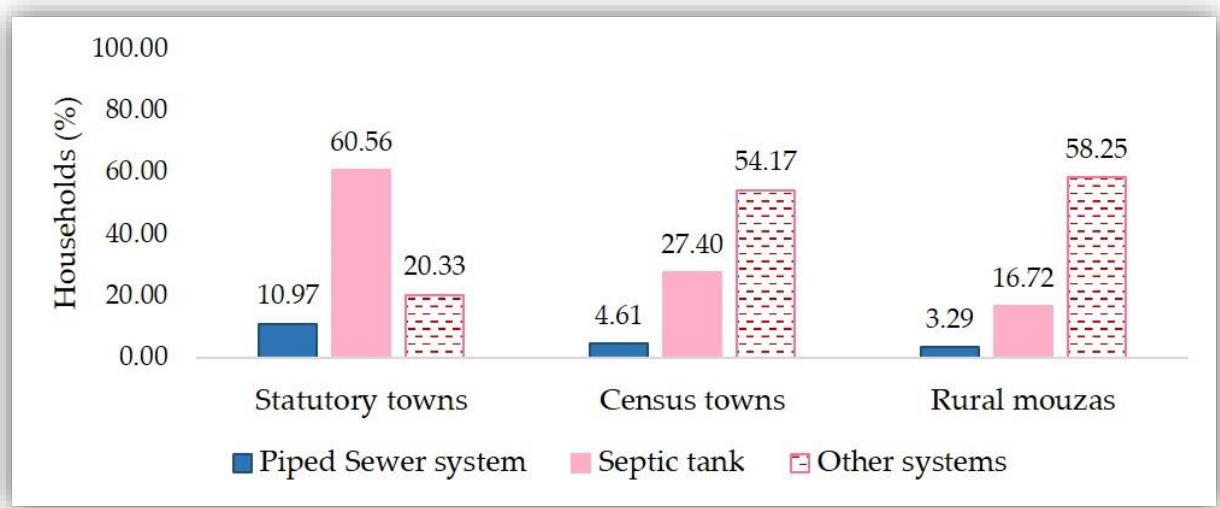
premise is being strongly encouraged through different schemes, and more recently through Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).



**Figure 3.3.1 Average Availability of Latrine facility within premise in greater metropolitan area of Kolkata**

Source: Computed by the researcher from H-14 table Census 2011.

As observed from Figure 3.3 in 86.19 percent of households on an average in census towns within KMA have latrine within premise which is not far behind compared to that in Statutory towns (91.86 percent). Again only 10.97 percent of households on average statutory towns have 10.97 percent of piped sewer system followed by the 60.97 percent average households having septic tank (Figure 3.3).



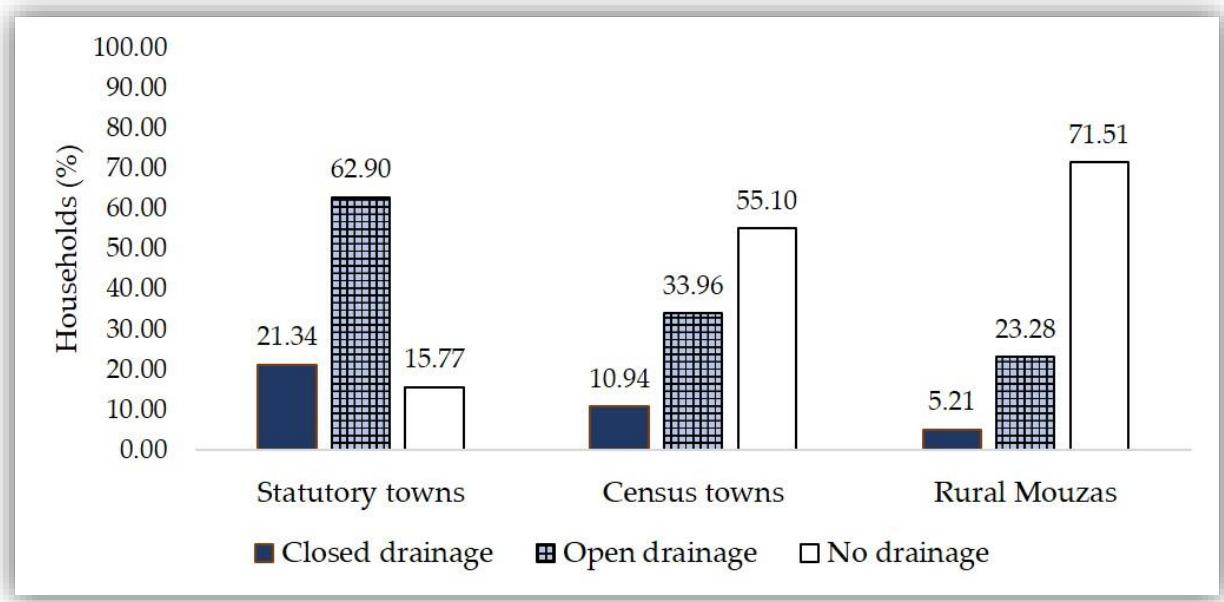
**Figure 3.3.2 Average Availability of Piped Sewer system in greater metropolitan area of Kolkata**

Source: Computed by the researcher from H-14 table Census 2011.

The situation of census towns and rural mouzas with respect to accessibility to piped sewer system and septic tank system is far low. Other systems, namely pit latrine, service latrine, night soil disposal etc. are more frequently available in the census towns and rural mouzas. Of the other forms, 48.09 and 52.13 percent of average households in census towns and rural mouzas respectively have pit latrines (*ibid.*).

### 3.4 Waste water disposal

The last parameter that has been considered in the study is type of waste water disposal the statutory towns, census towns and the villages have within peripheral KMA. Only 21.34 percent of average households living in the statutory towns have waste water disposal connected to closed drainage followed by 10.94 in average households in census towns (Figure 3.4).



**Figure 3.4 Average Waste water Disposal in greater metropolitan area of Kolkata**

Source: Computed by the researcher from H-14 table Census 2011.

Statutory towns have higher percentage of open drainage while in census towns and rural mouzas percentage of average household without any form of drainage is higher in case census towns and rural areas. In fact in rural areas the percentage is much higher with 70.51 percent of households with no drainage on an average.

#### 4 Complexities and multiplicities of governance

In general Census defines these amenities as assets but the study has suggested them as services. This is because in any urban area core or periphery access to these services defines the liveability of the area. In the study only the assets, which define the very basic living amenities have been considered. The average data shows that in general, census towns have lesser percentage of the amenities with respect to the statutory towns though they edge past the rural mouzas. This is obvious given the fact that census towns despite being urban are within rural administration. Within a metropolis, however municipal governance does not matter alone. Regional governance that is role of the metropolitan planning authority is equally important. 73rd and 74th CAA enacted in 1993 and 1992 respectively did not in any way decline

the role of the planning authorities. In many instances the Missions or projects are designed in a way where either municipal government or the planning authority may become the implementing agencies. Many of the municipalities do not have their own capacity to provide basic services. For instance Kolkata Municipal Corporation has been implementing some of the projects on its own post nineties or capable of providing services. In the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, there are separate departments catering to separate services namely, water supply, sewerage and drainage, slum, solid waste management, town planning, planning and development etc. In most of the municipalities there are planners entrusted with preparation of annual plans as well as project specific reports, but there are not always separate departments for separate functions. In smaller municipalities there are not even planners and engineers carry out the functions. Most of the municipalities are not capable enough to carry out functions on their own without the support of the planning authorities or any other parastatal.

One of the major challenges faced by the municipalities is arranging for solid waste management, though this is the only function that has been traditionally been provisioned by the municipal administrations. In most cases finding a land-fill site becomes a problem. This has been resonated by a number of officials working in different municipalities as well as residents residing in these areas.

“Our land-fill site is fast filling up. There is a need to look for alternate site. Solid waste management remains the most challenging issues for local self-governments.”[Respondent—a municipal official].

“When our areas were not a part of the municipal corporation, we did not know where to dispose our waste and the Panchayat did not care. We were within panchayat administration but we were living in cooperative housing. We had to make our own arrangements.”[Respondent—a resident of an erstwhile fringe area, which has recently been merged with the core city]

The narratives relating to challenges of disposal of waste are numerous. In many cases they are also tools of political negotiation. For instance a municipal van with waste material is not allowed to enter the adjacent panchayat. The panchayat alleges, one cannot dump waste generated from the municipality in a panchayat area. In that case municipality has to arrange for their own disposal mechanism.

In these situations, having a trans-municipal method suggests more appropriate. One such case is the solid waste management and recycling project carried out jointly by municipalities contiguous to each other in project funded by Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). At present the solid waste disposal scheme not only works across as a trans-municipal initiative, this has brought immense improvement with respect to the particular issue in the area. The process has been most successful in Uttarpara-Kotrung Municipality among the six municipalities, which has been recipient of the international award (C40)<sup>13</sup> in the solid waste management category (Bhattacharjee 2016). The Project funded by JICA is being implemented at the municipal level by the KMDA. The project though aimed at the six municipalities on the western bank of river Hooghly in the Hooghly district<sup>14</sup> has been complete only in Uttarpara Kotrung Municipality.

Similarly initiatives like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) is implemented at the municipal level, but under auspices of the KMDA except in KMC area. The same happened in case of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). In the municipalities, which are outside the ambit of KMDA, the work is done with monitoring from Municipal Engineering Department, Government of West Bengal.

---

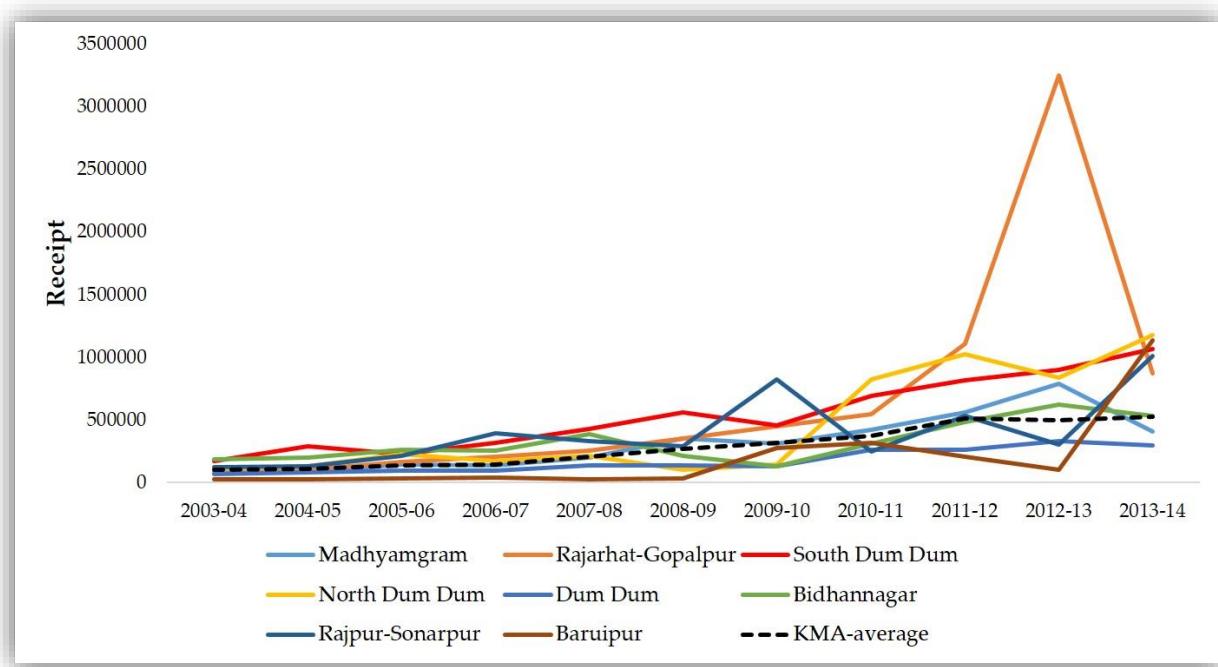
<sup>13</sup> C40 is Climate 40. Uttarpara Kotrung Municipality won C40 award in Solid waste management category in 2016.

<sup>14</sup> The municipalities, which are part of Kolkata Solid Waste Management Improvement Project (KSWMIP), include Uttarpara-Kotrung, Baidyabati , Champdani, Konnagar, Rishra, Serampore.

While there is need for cooperation within the municipal bodies and metropolitan planning authorities especially for those coming within the metropolitan area, there is also conflict so as to who shares which function. When Vision 2025 was prepared, KMDA remained the main planning body while Kolkata Metropolitan Planning Committee (KMPC) was entrusted with preparing sectoral plans. Today KMPC almost lies defunct and there is growing centralisation within West Bengal with several of the institutions merging. KMWSA has been merged with KMDA, Calcutta Tramways Company has been merged with West Bengal State Transport and so on. State government decides whether to form a new municipality, which part needs to remain within a municipality or which part within rural administration. Though in case of immediate periphery of KMC, that is the greater metropolitan area, KMDA act as another governing body, KMDA itself is state government parastatal.

In the respect of urban delineation or production of space in the periphery, in this part, state governance with strong neoliberal approach has influenced. Such policies may not necessarily be municipal formation, but could be executed through building of road networks, flyovers connecting the peri-urban with the core and hence aggravating real estate development or diverting an internationally funded project to that part, which has grown to be the hot-spot of real-estate development. In recent years while urbanisation in the region has moved east and south-eastward, one cannot deny that the process has a distinct form of state governmentality attached to this trajectory. While most of the statutory urban units are concentrated along the banks of Hooghly since colonial period, urban development has been focussed on its periphery. The older periphery created in the pre-independence era, though not always outside the state's policies, but also not the direct culmination of the state's global aspiration. That is why Rajarhat Newtown, Bidhannagar, Rajpur Sonarpur Municipality, Baruipur—all located in the eastern margin has been focussed repeatedly in the state government's policy decision.

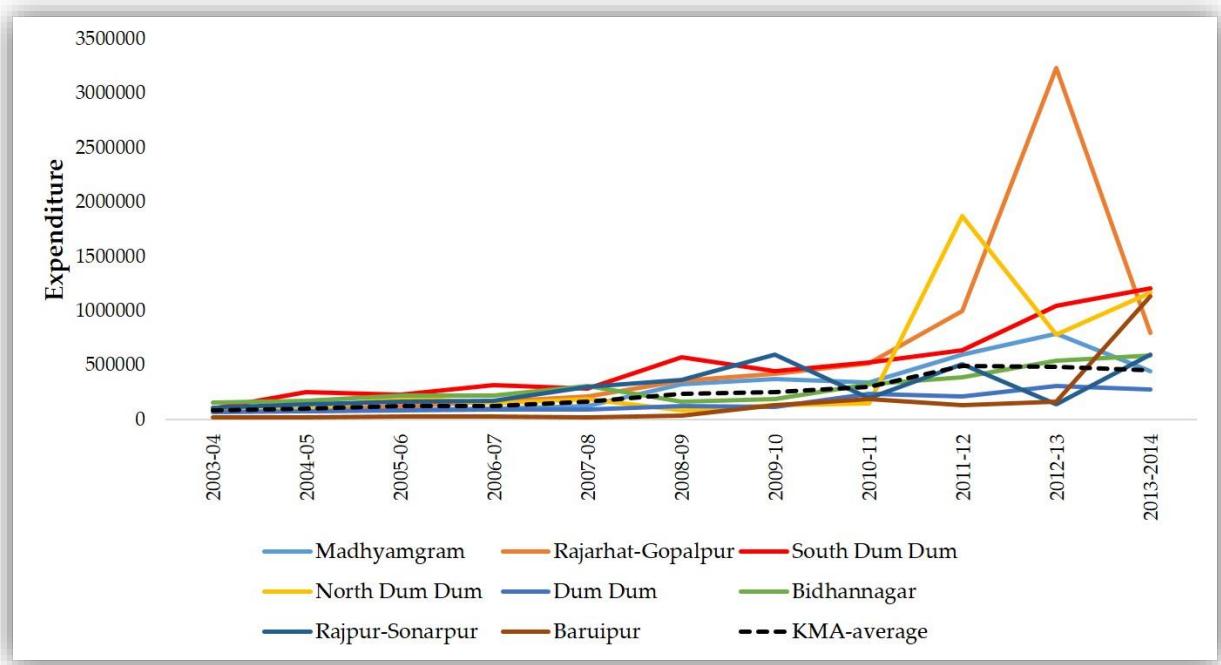
The same trend is observed in case of receipt and expenditure of the municipalities on the eastern fringe of the city. This is especially true for the municipalities that have rural landscapes on its margin.



**Figure 4.1 Municipal Receipts of Statutory Towns on Eastern Fringe**

Source: Computed by the researcher from District Statistical Handbooks of West Bengal for several years, Government of West Bengal.

As observed from Figure 4.1 Municipal receipt has particularly been fluctuating in the last few years and the variation from the average receipt of KMA as a whole.



**Figure 4.2 Municipal Expenditures of Statutory Towns lying on Eastern Fringe of Kolkata city**

Source: Computed by the researcher from District Statistical Handbooks of West Bengal for several years, Government of West Bengal.

The similar trend is observed with respect to yearly expenditures of the statutory towns on the eastern margin of the Kolkata city (Figure 4.2).

The older periphery exists and in its sustenance, municipal government has been playing a definitive role since nineties with increased responsibilities though often guided under the metropolitan development authority, especially with respect to the basic service provision. This is not to claim that the older periphery is out of governance for the state. The older periphery has garnered attention only if it has been in line of the neoliberal aspiration of the state. In this scenario, responsibility of the municipal government (though under the auspices of the metropolitan development authority) assumes a positively definitive role for the older peripheries. As a local self-government, can avail and access funding through different projects from both the state and central government. Often revenue from municipal tax and non-municipal tax is often not enough and there is increasing reliability on grants observed in the greater metropolitan area.

As far as the expenditure if concerned it has been observed that in the last ten years expenditure in general has increased in all the municipalities (Figure 4.2). Highest percentage of expenditure was done in Public infrastructure namely, construction of roads, buildings, stores etc. on an average in KMA in the last few years. A last three year break-up of average public expenditure in KMA (table 4.1) shows that expenditure behind public works has dominated over other heads.

**Table 4.1 Average Expenditure in 3 selected basic sectors in KMA in last 3 years**

	Water Supply	Drainage	Public Works
2011-2012	5.53	4.35	24.49
2012-2013	5.67	4.62	28.78
2013-2014	6.46	4.75	26.05

**Source:** Computed by the Researcher from Municipal Statistics of West Bengal for several years, Government of West Bengal.

Water supply, drainage and public infrastructure—all are part of public health and convenience. Other sectors coming within this broad category include, conservancy, medical costs for vaccination, hospitals, educations, cost behind registration of birth and date etc. In this study since water supply, drainage have etc. have been focussed on, only the average data for the same has been shown. Within the others section, expenditure behind general establishments and collection charges are highest in proportion. General establishments and collection charges include cost behind general administration of the municipalities, pensions, gratuities, salaries etc. The ‘other’ category in table 4.1 includes all other parameters, which have not been included in the ongoing discussion. Within municipal statistics, no separate categorisation is there regarding which part of receipt is used in what type of expenditure.

The last municipal statistics data released is that of 2013-2014 till May 2019. The municipal data for expenditure in general points to the increasing expenditure being incurred by the each of the municipal body behind basic infrastructure and services namely in the form of water supply, roads construction, drainage and sewerage.

When the same is observed for the last three years in the towns and cities lying on the eastern fringe of the core, it is seen that there has been a steady increase in the expenditure in water supply sector and figures are higher than KMA average (table 4.2). In case of the drainage only in 2012-2013 the average expenditure of this is more or less same as the KMA average. In case of public works that average percentage of expenditure in public works exceeds the average percentage of expenditure in public works in total KMA. In the total KMA however, KMC has not been included.

**Table 4.2 Average Expenditure in 3 selected basic sectors in Statutory Towns lying on Eastern Fringe of Kolkata city in last 3 years**

	Water Supply	Drainage	Public Works
2011-2012	5.97	4.61	31.62
2012-2013	7.83	9.54	35.47
2013-2014	9.58	4.32	29.83

**Source:** Computed by Researcher from Municipal Statistics of West Bengal for several years, , Government of West Bengal

A similar picture is seen in case of the three municipal towns on the immediate west of the core city—Maheshtala, Budge Budge and Pujali (table 4.3). In the same, Public works stand to be sector were highest percentage of expenditure has been made by the towns on an average in the last three years. However there has been a decrease in average expenditure in all the three sectors. This is possibly owing to the fact that there is higher dependency on the KMDA and the state for provision of these services. Taking water supply for instance, these three towns are mostly dependant on water supply from KMW&SA and to some extent Garden reach water works from KMC. The problem of roads and networks despite higher expenditure however have not been able to solve issues in the two bigger municipalities of Maheshtala and Budge which have experienced higher growth in the last decade owing to spill-over of population from KMC and subsequent rise of real estate development on the river side in recent years. In case of distant municipality of Pujali however, roads

have been one of the most important sector where municipalisation has been instrumental in bringing changes.

The only thing that has improved changed significantly is the improvement in roads. There have increased paving of internal roads connecting Budge Budge Trunk road to the internal wards of the town. The Budge Budge Trunk road is also in better condition compared to the portion crossing through Maheshtala and Budge Budge [respondent—a resident of the Pujali municipality].

**Table 4.2 Average Expenditure in 3 selected basic sectors in Statutory Towns lying on Western Fringe<sup>15</sup> of Kolkata city in last 3 years**

	Water Supply	Drainage	Public Works
2011-2012	4.72	8.43	40.45
2012-2013	3.03	2.87	38.82
2013-2014	4.94	3.5	33.49

**Source:** Computed by the researcher from Municipal Statistics of West Bengal for several years, Government of West Bengal

The data pertains to municipal receipts and expenditure. In case of KMDA, the regional planning authority, detailed account of receipt and expenditure is not available. Post nineties, role of KMDA has not decreased but distributed. For the core city, both KMDA and KMC assumed almost equal responsibilities with regards to implementation of programmes but for the peripheral towns and cities, influence of KMDA as a regulating/monitoring body remains. In developing new towns within KMA, KMDA retains the first body to delineate the area and developing it prior municipalisation. Once municipalisation happens, the municipal board takes up local area development and function, though development of trans-municipal roads and bridges, water supply etc. are often arranged by the KMDA. KMDA, apart

---

<sup>15</sup> The data is the average of three towns namely Maheshtala, Budge Budge and Pujali, which lie on the eastern bank of the river Hooghly, but west to the city of Kolkata. It does not include the Hooghly west bank towns and cities. The towns absolutely contiguous to the city have been considered.

from planning section has its own engineering sector that looks after water supply, drainage and sewerage, road construction. It also has housing sector that constructs housing for high and middle income group in eastern Metropolitan Township in eastern Kolkata and greater metropolitan area of the city as well. These are government housing but are constructed by KMDA within KMA.

From an estimate of infrastructural projects carried out by KMDA through JNNURM funding and state funding between 2011 to 2016 reveals that projects commissioned to be implemented by KMDA mainly concentrated with the core city and eastern fringe of the core city (table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 Distribution of Implementation of Project Funds by KMDA: 2011-2016**

	Rest of KMA	Municipalities on eastern fringe of KMC <sup>16</sup>	KMC- KMA
(in percent)			
Central JNNURM fund	31.35	22.23	46.42
State fund	6.81	34.53	58.67

**Source:** Calculated from costs shown in Projects Commissioned in KMDA.

In case of central funding, which has been particularly from JNNURM-Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) a higher percent of projects were commissioned in the rest of KMA with comparison to those funded by the state fund. But in both cases of central and state government funds, the projects commissioned were skewed in favour of city proper and its eastern fringe.

There may be multiplicities of governance institutions within KMA, which is assumed to have increased complexities in post structural reform period, but the

---

<sup>16</sup> Municipalities on eastern fringe include North and South Dum Dum, Baranagar, Madhyamgram, Bidhannagar, Rajpur Sonarpur and Baruipur municipality.

These costs do not include expenditure of KMDA behind housing projects. It only includes project cost behind different infrastructure commissioned to be implemented by KMDA. The percent figures represent KMDA's distribution of projects in different parts of KMA including Kolkata.

preferential alignment of fringe development has not ceased. The preference here is for the real estate development which rests on the availability of land. In West Bengal where the responsibility of land acquisition rests with the state, rural space particularly those near the municipal and metropolitan boundaries assumes critical significance owing to spill-over urbanisation. Direct land acquisition is often not only difficult but impossible and for this a careful strategy is required to change the land use gradually through various infrastructure development, changing building rules and urbanising the space. In the metropolitan area these activities are mostly implemented by the planning authorities through provision of infrastructure and services. These complexities makes a metropolitan space 'messy', which is not always negative as observed by Storper (2014). In the cities of global south urban is emerging both as a space and process that have not been witnessed before. Hence how the suburban, the peri-urban, the periphery would be produced is also function of a different sets of governmentality that work either complements each other or contrasts each other resulting in the production of a highly fragmented peripheral space.

## 5 Conclusion

Governance of urban periphery relates to not only multiple governance in a single region, but brings out the multiplicity of the region as a whole which gets lost within the agglomeration. This is not to say that the periphery of the city is limited to its metropolitan boundary alone. The periphery brings out different connotations. In the study particularly urban periphery has been mentioned. But urban periphery is again a term highly paradoxical in the age of planetary urban. The study has tried to explore the boundaries set through the state nomenclature. Though it has repeatedly argued that urban has expanded beyond its formal definition; this is true that formal definitions and delineations are not enough. In fact this is same with the governance. There are governance means beyond the formal governance. But in the research the state boundaries have been brought back particularly in order to look into the how

state has been defining the periphery and at the same time blurring it. For instance formation of census towns in the last decade in any part of the country has been remarkable and produced a number of research work trying to decode the rationale of their formation, which have been discussed in the introductory part of the research. But what needs to be known that census town is very much a formal category that indicates a type of urban that has been produced through shifting of people from agriculture to non-agricultural population without changing their residences. Hence rurban is inevitable formal of changing occupation pattern in the rural. In West Bengal census towns have not been provided with urban or even rurban local self-government, by keeping them within the rural/Panchayat government. Instead the regional state government have been bending Panchayat rules to make the rural (in this case both spaces of rural mouzas and census towns) adaptable to the real estate development. On the other hand even if the Kolkata on its core is declining as well as on its periphery is not expanding at a rate compared to that of other metropolises of India, their trajectory itself is not uniform. Being an agglomeration of more than fifty percent of its statutory units formed in colonial period and revived in the nineties, the periphery with larger rural expanse (North and South twenty Four Parganas) have not only been subject to contestations and protest but also platform of neoliberal aspirations. The older periphery exists with revived municipal and regional governance. But both older and newer periphery is subject to state government decision. During nineties and post nineties many of the older cities expanded on its own adjacent periphery. These expansion do not cause much noises. The municipalities may be merged or created, state parastatals could be merged or created, and even two planning areas could be merged with one— all as part of state governmentality. While land remains the most prominent defining criteria in such governmental decision, the research has used selective amenities from the census household enumeration data. The data suggested that despite having lesser accessibility to basic services compared to the statutory towns, census towns and the rural mouzas within the metropolitan area have better amenities

when compared with whole West Bengal average. Though census town is urban by definition and not by statute, what kind of administration would it be within, is decision of the state government. Also this would be wrong to state that census towns are without any statutory governance since they are within statutory rural governance. The rural itself has gone through irreversible transformation owing to the commodification of land (Denis Éric, Translated by Oliver Waine, 2018).

Development of Newtown in Rajarhat as a Greenfield township suggests that the rural peripheries have been more favourable site for global aspirations of the state urban department. At present a part of NKDA area is also under consideration for development of a private city. Municipalisation and at a larger stage urbanisation in this part is strongly guided by the state government. Activities of KMDA, NKDA and municipalities are reflections of state's urban aspirations. The gram panchayats are not an exception to this. The study comes as the governance of periphery and has explored and discussed how the dynamics of governance has varied within the different peripheries of the same agglomeration. This is to argue that urban periphery is not homogenous not only in terms of different agglomerations; the space produced at the suburban reflects the how the city and city region has transformed over the years particularly in global south. The main takeaways from the research in the particular metropolis are that the production of diverse peripheries in the KMA has been primarily been governance initiative of the state government and rural space has been more prominently subjected to the state's aspiration for the foothold in global arena. Real estate has emerged as primary factor controlling land development and consequent infrastructure development. Local self-government in both rural and urban and more prominently in urban has acted as key instrument in service provisioning even if there is influence of regional governance authority and the state government. Amidst the fast developing rurban space, there is a need to classify rurban as a separate category. Though in Indian census town is designated category within urban, a further more administrative initiative is required for governing these spaces.

## References

- Bandyopadhyay, K. (2017, April 24). Depot land handover, Rs 580 crore push Joka Metro to reality. *Times of India*. Kolkata, West Bengal, India: Times of india. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/depot-land-handover-rs-580-crore-push-joka-metro-to-reality/articleshow/58334337.cms>
- Bhagat, R. B. (2005). Rural-Urban Classification and Municipal Governance in India. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(1), 61-73.
- Bhattacharya, S. (2016, December 13). *A tiny town in West Bengal turns Waste into piles of Wealth*. Retrieved from Hindustan Times: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/a-tiny-town-in-west-bengal-is-turning-waste-into-piles-of-wealth/story-wDI7lRq4JCcd8o7fobQeKJ.html>
- Brenner, Neil and Christian Schimdt. (2012). Planetary Urbanisation. In M. Gandy (Ed.), *Urban Constellations*. Berlin: Jovis.
- Caldeira, T. P. (2017). Peripheral urbanization: Autoconstruction, transversal logics, and politics in cities of the global south. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(1), 3-20. doi: 10.1177/0263775816658479
- Chatterjee, M. (2013). A Preliminary Discussion on the Census 2011 Results. *Urban India*, 33(I January-June).
- Chatterjee, Mahalaya and Anis Mukhopadhyay. (2015). *Urban Development in Howrah. Socio Economic Perspectives*. (M. C. Mukherjee, Ed.) New Delhi: Primus Books.
- Chatterji, T. (2017). Modes of Governance and Local Economic Development: An Integrated Framework for Comparative Analysis of the Globalizing Cities of India. *Urban Affairs Review*, 53(6), 955-989.
- Denis Eric, Marie-Helene Zerah and Partha Mukhopadhyay. (2012). Subaltern Urbanisation in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(30).
- Denis Eric and Marie-Helene Zerah (ed). (2017). *Subaltern Urbanisation in India. An Introduction to the Dynamics of Ordinary Towns*. India: Springer.
- Denis Éric, Translated by Oliver Waine. (2018, April 20). Urban Desires and Lust for Land. The Commodification of Rural Spaces in the Global South. *Metropolitics*. Retrieved from <http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Urban-Desires-and-Lust-for-Land.html>.
- Friedmann, J. (2016). The future of periurban research. *Cities*, 53. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2016.01.009.
- Ghosh, S. (2017). Notes on Rurality or The Theoretical Usefulness of the Not-Urban. *The Avery Review*, 27.
- Gururani Shubhra, R. D. (2018, March). Frontier Urbanism. Urbanisation beyond Cities in South Asia. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 52(12).
- Keil, R. (2017). Extended urbanization, “disjunct fragments” and global suburbanisms. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(3), 494-511.

- Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority. (2011). *Introducing KMA*. Kolkata: Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority.
- Mitra, S. (2015). Anchoring Transnational Flows: Hypermodern Spaces in the Global South. In F. M. Kudva (Ed.), *Cities of the Global South Reader* (pp. 106-114). London and New York: Routledge.
- Mukhopadhyay Anis, Uttam Bhattacharya. (2015). What has happened to the Sheffield of India? A study of the Foundry Industry in Howrah. In M. C. Mukherjee (Ed.), *Urban Development in Howrah: Socio Economic Perspectives* (pp. 67-99). Kolkata: Primus Books.
- Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner. (2011). *Census of India. Metadata*. New Delhi. Retrieved 2016, from  
[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/Metadata\\_Census\\_2011.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/Metadata_Census_2011.pdf)
- Parnell, S. (2015). Poverty and 'the City'. In C. Lemanski et al. (Ed.), *The City in Urban Poverty* (pp. 16-38). usa: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pradhan, K. C. (2013). Unacknowledged Urbanisation. New Census Towns of India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(36), 43-51.
- Ramachandran, R. (1989). The Rural-Urban Fringe. In *Urbanization and Urban Systems in India* (pp. 293-321). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Robinson, J. (2007). *Ordinary Cities between Modernity and Development*. London: Routledge.
- Roy, A. (2015). What is urban about critical urban theory? *Urban Geography*.  
doi:10.1080/02723638.2015.1105485
- Shatkin, G. (2015). The Real estate turn in policy and planning: Land monetization and political economy of peri urbanization in Asia. *Cities*. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2015.11.015
- Shaw, A. (2005). Peri-Urban Interface of Indian Cities. Growth, Governance and Local Initiatives. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(2 January 8), 129-136.
- Sidhwani, P. (2014). *Farm to Non-Farm: Are India's Villages "Rurbanising"*. CPR Urban Working Paper 4, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.
- Sivaramakrishnan, K. (2015). *Governance of Megacities, Fractured Thinking, Fragmented Setup*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Soja, E. (2011). Regional Urbanization and the End of the Metropolis Era. In G. B. Watson (Ed.), *The New Companion to the City* (pp. 679-689). West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing.
- Storper, M. (2014, June 27). Governing the Large Metropolis. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 2(2), 115-134. doi: 10.1080/21622671.2014.919874
- World Bank. (2013). *Urbanization beyond Municipal Boundaries: Nurturing Metropolitan Economies and Connecting Per-Urban Areas in India. Directions in development; countries and regions*. World Bank. Washington DC: World Bank. Retrieved from  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13105>

## **Annexe I**

### Publications

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Journal</b>
Khatua Sarani 2018	Demographic relevance of Megacity. A case of Kolkata	Neo Geographia, Volume 7 (2) April ISSN: 2319-5118
Khatua Sarani 2018	Kolkata. A study of Contemporary Urban Form From Regional Perspective	Indian Journal of Regional Science, Volume 50 (2), December ISSN: 0046-9017
Khatua Sarani 2018	Municipalization and 'Core-ing' of the Peri-Urban: Case Study of A Newly Added Area in the Indian City of Kolkata.	International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research. Volume 3(8), August, 4181-4197 <a href="http://ijsser.org/more2018.php?id=295">ijsser.org/more2018.php?id=295</a> ISSN: 2455-8834
Khatua Sarani 2019	Municipal Finance of Suburban Municipalities-Kolkata metropolitan Area	International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research. Volume 4(3), March, 1646-1662 <a href="http://ijsser.org/more2019.php?id=121">ijsser.org/more2019.php?id=121</a> ISSN:2455-8834

Khatua Sarani. 2016: Improvement, Resettlement, Redevelopment and Right to the City: The case of Kolkata. *Discussion Paper 1/2016* (42). Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta. ISBN: 978-81-930572-5-4.

## **Annexe II**

### Presentations

'Looking Through the Towns and Cities of Calcutta in Kolkata', in 3<sup>rd</sup> Urban ARC, City and the Region, Organised by Indian Institute for Human Settlement, Bengaluru, India. 10-12 January 2019.

'Does Smart City Support a Smart Political Society?' In Smart Cities Workshop. Sustainable Urban Development, organised by Observer Researcher Foundation. 27-28 October 2018, Kolkata India.

'Multiplicity of a Metropolis: A Case Study of Kolkata Metropolitan Area' in the 12<sup>th</sup> World Regional Science Congress, organised by Regional Science Association- International and Regional Science Association-India in Goa, June 2018.

'Redefining the Fringe: A Case of Kolkata' in the ARCS 2 Seminar at Bhubaneswar organised by the Xavier Centre for Urban Governance and Management, Xavier University, Bhuvaneswar, February 2018.

## Publications

Sarani Khatua

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Fellowship for Humanities and Social Sciences (including Languages)

F.25-1/2015-17-GE-WES-3931/ (SA-II) dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016

Author	Title	Journal
Khatua Sarani 2018	Demographic relevance of Megacity. A case of Kolkata	Neo Geographia, Volume VII (2) April ISSN: 2319-5118
Khatua Sarani 2018	Kolkata. A study of Contemporary Urban Form From Regional Perspective	Indian Journal of Regional Science, Volume 50 (2), December ISSN: 0046-9017
Khatua Sarani 2018	Municipalization and 'Core-ing' of the Peri-Urban: Case Study of A Newly Added Area in the Indian City of Kolkata.	International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research. Volume 3(8), August, 4181-4197 <a href="http://ijsser.org/more2018.php?id=295">ijsser.org/more2018.php?id=295</a> ISSN: 2455-8834
Khatua Sarani 2019	Municipal Finance of Suburban Municipalities- Kolkata metropolitan Area	International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research. Volume 4(3), March, 1646-1662 <a href="http://ijsser.org/more2019.php?id=121">ijsser.org/more2019.php?id=121</a> ISSN:2455-8834

Khatua Sarani. 2016: Improvement, Resettlement, Redevelopment and Right to the City: The case of Kolkata. *Discussion Paper* 1/2016 (42). Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta. ISBN: 978-81-930572-5-4.

## **Presentations**

Sarani Khatua

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Fellowship for Humanities and Social Sciences (including Languages)

F.25-1/2015-17-GE-WES-3931/ (SA-II) dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016

'Looking Through the Towns and Cities of Calcutta in Kolkata', in 3<sup>rd</sup> Urban ARC, City and the Region, Organised by Indian Institute for Human Settlement, Bengaluru, India. 10-12 January 2019.

'Does Smart City Support a Smart Political Society?' In Smart Cities Workshop. Sustainable Urban Development, organised by Observer Researcher Foundation. 27-28 October 2018, Kolkata India.

'Multiplicity of a Metropolis: A Case Study of Kolkata Metropolitan Area' in the 12<sup>th</sup> World Regional Science Congress, organised by Regional Science Association- International and Regional Science Association-India in Goa, June 2018.

'Redefining the Fringe: A Case of Kolkata' in the ARCS 2 Seminar at Bhubaneswar organised by the Xavier Centre for Urban Governance and Management, Xavier University, Bhuvaneswar, February 2018.

## DEMOGRAPHIC RELEVANCE OF MEGACITY: A CASE OF KOLKATA

Sarani Khatua

UGC Postdoctoral Researcher

Centre for Urban Economics University of Calcutta

[saranikhatua@gmail.com](mailto:saranikhatua@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Population concentration, high population growth or expansion has often been considered as indicating significant change in an area. If that area is a city or city region or a city agglomeration, this assumes further importance in the backdrop recent changes observed in the urban. The term megacity that relates to high population concentration in an urban area is one such city system that has immense impact in the recent urbanisation in the country as well as in the developing realm. With the World Urbanization Prospect set to bring out yet another report to depict the growth of urban agglomerations globally, this paper analyses one of the cities that have featured in its list of largest agglomerations since fifties. Kolkata, or erstwhile Calcutta has long had an arrested urban population as against the other agglomerations in India. This paper is an attempt to discuss the relevance of population growth in the city agglomeration in the background of changing notions of how urban should be considered. The paper reviews the World Urbanization Prospects and national census data of 2011 and aims to address that population still serves as an important indication of the urban change but at the same time there are other issues that need to be looked into in order to study urban development in an area.*

### INTRODUCTION

Demography has been crucial to identify, define, classify and categorise urban and rural. Though every nation state has its own criteria of delineating these units, population remains one of the common parameters. Population change skewed in the direction of urban concentration has been significant last quarter of century clearly pointing towards high urbanization throughout. Over the decades many terminologies have been used to define different urban units. The large urban units have been denoted differently like urban agglomeration, million city, primate city, megalopolis, megacity etc. representing urban with predominantly higher population concentration and economic activities. However these terms are less frequent these days within urban literature especially primate city megacity etc. this is not wrong either with growing numbers of agglomeration, primacy of any single city becomes less feasible.

The study would look into the:

- Relevance of population in discussing the current urbanization.
- What an arrested population growth means for the megacity of Kolkata

### THE CONCEPT

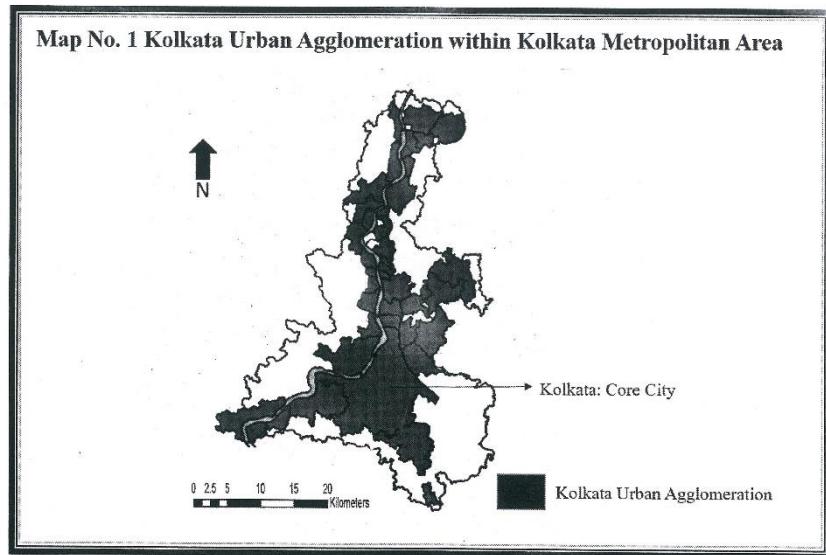
The concept of agglomeration, megacity is not very specific but is often said to be derived from the similar term megalopolis coined by Lewis Mumford in 1938 and later used extensively by Jean Gottman to denote high urbanization in the eastern seaboard of United States of America. In the last century it was further popularised when used to denote cities with 10 million population. At present agglomerations with five million and more population are also taken into cognisance since they are projected to cross the 10 million marks very fast. It originated as a demographic concept but went beyond that in the recent decade amidst vast changes in the urban scenario. One of the detailed accounts of largest megacities of the world is considered to be provided in the *World Urbanization Prospects* published by the Population Division of United Nations from last century<sup>1</sup>. This report has been publishing and updating the growing numbers of megacities around the world, its skewed distribution in African and Asian countries. These megacities, particularly those concentrated in the developing world have always been a cause of concern for the planners and others associated with urban research. However the turn to globalisation from the eighties brought fresh concerns with the inevitability of huge impression on these megacities. In the *World Urbanization Prospects 2001 Revision* seventeen megacities existed worldwide and it was projected that around twenty one such cities would be there by 2015 (UN 2002). It was also projected in the same report that around five-million cities would rise from forty (40) in 2001 to fifty eight (58) in 2015. In 2014 *World Urbanization Prospects 2014 Revision*, twenty eight (28) megacities with 10 million population were recorded and around forty three (43) five million cities were recorded.

In India the term Megacity is primarily used in denoting the metropolitan cities. In 1993 the Government of India identified six metropolitan cities as megacities with national importance namely, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), Hyderabad and Bengaluru (Bangalore). Subsequently Megacity programme was initiated. In Kolkata it was implemented by the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (then known as Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority or CMDA). This programme was first post liberalisation policy and aimed at infrastructural development of the city region. The Megacity Programme continued till it ultimately got subsumed within Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in 2005.

In India megacity is hence synonymous with the metropolitan region of national importance (Sivaramakrishnan, 2014) and not necessarily only agglomerations. As per Indian Census, Urban Agglomeration is a contiguous urban with at least a core town and outgrowths and minimum population of the contiguous units have to be 20,000<sup>ii</sup>. Then there are number of organisations which considers city systems with 5 million as megacity. One aspect is certain that cut-off population for a megacity varies from five to 10 million and generally takes into account a settlement system rather than a single city.

#### Kolkata Urban Agglomeration-Megacity

In this paper Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (KUA) as defined in Census of India would be considered (Map No. 1). The population for the same is accepted in the world Urbanization Prospects. KUA is constituted within the Kolkata Metropolitan Area, which is a planning area established through the statute of West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act 1979.



Source: Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA)

Kolkata demographically have been dominating the cities within the state of West Bengal as well as those in the adjacent state till date. This raises an inevitable question regarding whether a city with higher population concentration is also the city with higher domination or simply said whether the bigger cities could sway more supremacy over other urban counterparts? Also in backdrop of Indian urban scenario, having a primate city has never been feasible. The fast growing periphery of the urban, mass increase in the number of small towns, rise of new towns etc., increase in the number of new metropolitan and non-metropolitan centres do not allow absolute supremacy of the other. Moreover demographic concentration is analysed more in terms of rural-urban migration, more employment generation aspects.

So how far the megacities have enabled to become global cities or if the globalisation has further any effect on the prominence of these megacities? Megacity formation initiated with the concentration of huge population in and around the city, but how far could it go to accommodate the effect of globalisation? This is rather to analyse whether globalisation had anything to do with megacity at all.

The history of urban suggests that megacity has longer history than that of global city and is still sustaining post globalisation era as well as post development era.

One of the foremost requirements for stepping into megacity is that it is not a single city. It is accounted by agglomeration of number of urban units. The population recorded for the largest megacities globally are accounted by the agglomeration of the city proper and its contiguous urban units. This points to the fact that megacity needs to be considered from the perspective of urban as a whole rather than a single unit.

The concentration of megacities in the developing realm and movement of the global cities beyond the west has somehow been co-event but they are not similar. Rather they raise questions regarding inevitability of a highly concentrated urban to be a preferable ground for becoming global market.

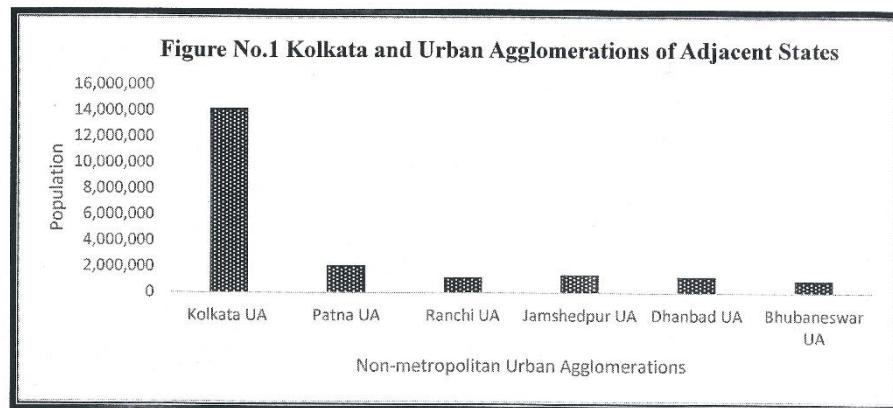
In West Bengal alone, there were 26 urban agglomerations reported in 2011 Census.

*Do recent urbanization trends in India and in West Bengal particularly suggest that there is a need to relook Kolkata as a megacity in the future?*

In the upcoming section the discussion would be taken up in details.

### Kolkata with respect to selected agglomerations of adjacent state

Since Kolkata's primacy primarily at the regional level, only the adjacent state capitals have been considered at the (Figure no. 1) in this discussion.



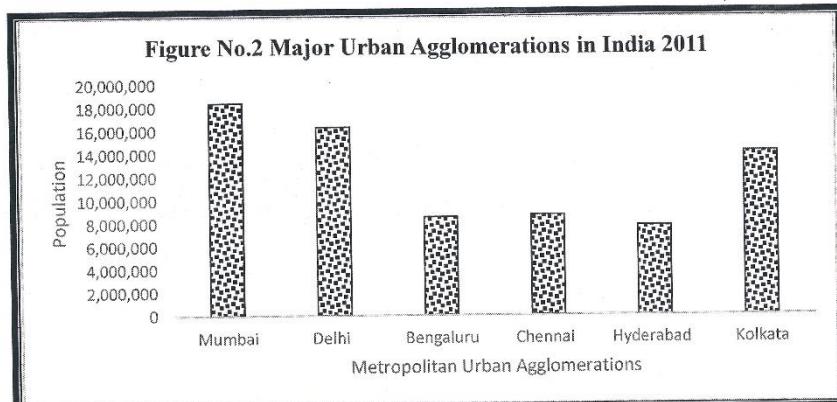
Source: Census of India, 2011 in [censusindia.gov.in](http://censusindia.gov.in)

The cities in the adjacent state of West Bengal had impressive growth rate in last few decades, but still the recent figures show they are far behind Kolkata. Population-wise Kolkata still holds dominance over the region. It is to be noted that though there has not been any marked change with respect to the extent of area of KUA, much has been altered with respect to formation of new towns, new Municipal Corporation, which are highly relevant to the contemporary urban process.

In the following section comparison of the city with the two other largest agglomeration in India and one outside but within the same region would further help to elaborate Kolkata restricted demographic expansion.

### Kolkata and Largest Agglomerations in India and South Asia.

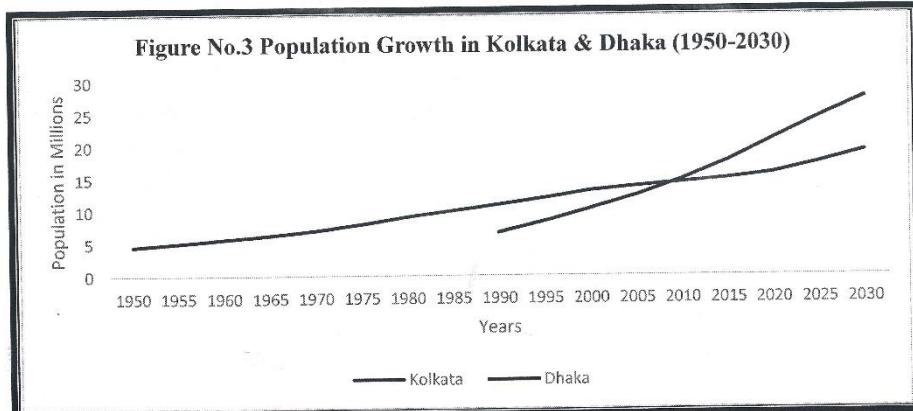
In India there have been an increase in the number of million cities or metropolitan agglomerations in the last few decades. Similarly there has been a tremendous increase in the existing agglomerations. Delhi, Mumbai are best examples. There are other cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, etc., which have experienced growth in their demographically and spatially. When compared to these cities, dominance of KUA is not very prominent (Figure No.2).



Source: Census of India 2011 in [censusindia.gov.in](http://censusindia.gov.in)

The cities of Bengaluru and Hyderabad witnessed massive growth in the last two decades. Both have grown as IT destinations for the country. Growth of Delhi and Mumbai needs no special mention.

The same is true with cities in the same region in neighbouring countries. In this paper, population change of KUA would be discussed with a similar megacity in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. Population growth since fifties and population projection for the next fifteen years suggest a uniform level for the Kolkata when compared with Dhaka (Figure No.3).

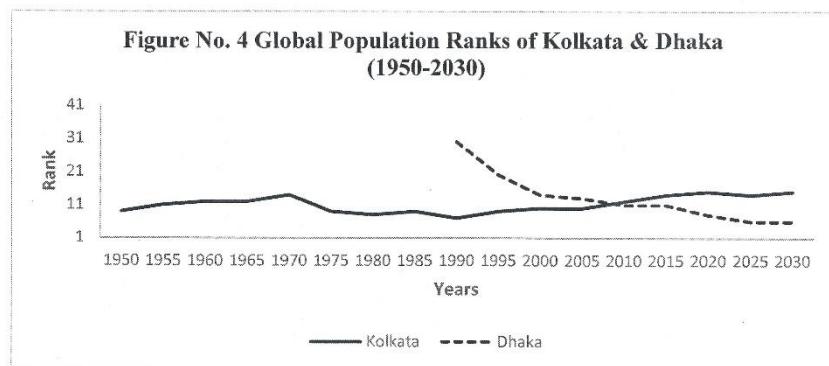


Source: *World Urbanization Prospects, 2014 Revision*.

Note: The population post 2010 is project and estimated figure given in *The World Urbanization Prospects 2014 Revision*.

The KUA has not expanded spatially as much compared to other metropolitan cities. There have been changes within the agglomeration but that has not led to spill over of the agglomeration. Very recently post 2011, area under New Town Kolkata Development Authority have been brought under the metropolitan area of the city. This is expected to increase the agglomeration as well, but this would be reflected in the next census. This has been a major expansion in recent time.

Kolkata's projected rankings in Figure No.4 suggest a little or no change in contrast to Dhaka. The decline in the ranking of the Dhaka indicates increase in the population of the same. In fact the projected ranking for Kolkata is estimated to be going up in the next few years.



Source: *World Urbanization Prospects*. 2014 Revision.

Note: \*: Simply the Ranks according to population have been shown here. The ranks correspond to the top thirty urban agglomerations in the world. Here only the ranking of the Kolkata along with Dhaka, Bangladesh is shown. Dhaka featured within largest thirty agglomerations since 1990. The Lower rank shows higher population. The population post 2010 is projected figure.

These rankings have been made by the World Urbanization Prospects reporting thirty largest agglomerations in the world (the other cities not shown here). It is interesting to note here Dhaka featured in the thirty largest agglomerations at much later years compared to Kolkata. But since then population growth of Dhaka has been phenomenal.

In Bangladesh recently in the last census (2011) a significant redefinition of the urban took place. The Statistical Metropolitan Area (SMA)<sup>iii</sup> was revised and replaced by the Megacity and City (**Table No. 1**).

**Table No. 1. Population of Dhaka at Different Urban Scales 2011**

Dhaka Metropolitan City*	Dhaka SMA**	Dhaka Megacity*** (WUP 2014)
8,906,039	14,171,567	16,982,000

Note: \*: The Dhaka Metropolitan City is referred as Dhaka Megacity in Bangladesh Census post redefinition of urban areas.

\*\*:This would have been the population of Dhaka Statistical Metropolitan Area (SMA), according to older definition of urban in Bangladesh.

\*\*\*: This population has been provided in the World Urbanization Prospects (WUP) 2014 Revision.

Source: Census of Bangladesh 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and  
World Urbanization Prospects, 2014 Revision: The Highlights

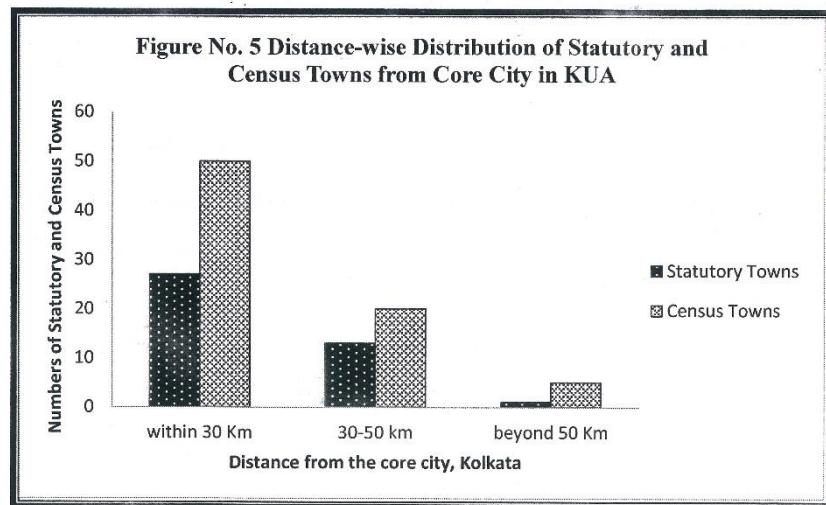
The revision of how to define megacity in Bangladesh led to decrease in the national level of urbanization in Bangladesh. The question is why the redefinition was done-was it to show that a lower percentage of urban concentration within single urban area or does it enable better governance of a smaller urban area or was it to reflect more dispersed urban population.

However despite higher population growth, Dhaka did not reflect as much urban development as its counterparts in the India.

#### **Kolkata and Recent Urban Developments**

While there has not been much remarkable changes in population of the agglomeration in the last few decades, does not necessarily suggest that recent urbanization trends had no impact on this city and its periphery. The city have been growing on its immediate periphery.

Figure no. 5 suggest that urbanisation is most prominent within thirty (30) km distance of the core city of Kolkata. Both the formation of statutory and census towns are high in this zone. The Bidhannagar, Nabadiganta Industrial Township are located on the eastern part of the core city.



Source: Calculated by the author from data of Census 2011

It is evident that KUA had undergone changes nearer to the core city. Distribution of census and statutory towns are maximum within the 30 Km distance of the Kolkata city.

It is true that post nineties, not all cities or agglomeration became global but at the same time, it is also a fact that nineties brought in different form of change in urbanisation in India never experienced before. This trend was evident from huge number of growth of census towns, increase in the number of million cities within the country.

Nonetheless the effect of globalisation on metropolitan cities or the urban agglomerations have been maximum. While larger concentration of the megacities in the developing world post 1950s suggested for a skewed distribution of the urban in the Afro-Asian regions, it also raised questions on the level of development in these agglomerations as well as on the management capability of huge urban population. While the giant cities were increasingly being concentrated in the developing realm, whether the giant size was indicative of global city was not sure. By 2000 global city was, more often used to denote cities with international trade linkages and networks. The names were common with megacities in the west but not necessarily with that of the east. At one point of time, global city was more associated with the developed countries while megacity was more a phenomena of the developing countries (Lepageet al., 2007, Huriot et al. 2006). Gradually with globalisation going global and moving into the realm of the south, many of the megacities experienced global city status namely, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, which is

more apt to be referred as a colonial city does not fit exactly to the global city category, compared to Mumbai, Bengaluru or Delhi. Kolkata featured in the Beta' category from 2012 (GaWC, 2016).

Some important features that could be considered positive for Kolkata's urban trajectory are:

- As per the study of *Annual Survey of Indian Cities* conducted by the Janaagrahaa, urban governance in Kolkata ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> after Pune (Janaagraha, 2017). The study has been based on different parameters.
- Several initiatives are being taken up in the recent years, which goes beyond the core city. Kolkata Urban Services to the Poor (KUSP) implemented in the greater Kolkata enabled preparation of draft development plan at each and every municipal level. It also addressed health issues at the ward level
- Green city mission, which replaced the smart city mission in India is targeted to all municipal level within and outside the KUA.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The supremacy of the city is sustained at the regional level though Kolkata featured almost stagnancy as far as the population growth. But whether population is enough for sustaining a balanced development or attracting investment that would enable better service and infrastructure for the urban is not very clear. In fact high concentration of population tends to put stress on the single region and the state may or may not have the necessary capacity to control or govern that huge region. In recent time, governance capability of a city region and urban as a whole, has emerged more critical concern for the planners, researchers academics. Higher population concentration is indicative of impending governance challenges and whether the local governments have the capacity to confront them (Baud and Wit, 2008).It is important to note at this juncture that the national economies are now open to the international market. Globalization has influenced urbanization to highest level. The governance challenge it faces, mainly in the form of provision of basic services, transport accessibility etc. have thus become major agenda in development planning. This is more critical for the larger agglomerations. It is true this concern existed previously since megacity was prominently a developing world phenomenon and there was an apprehension regarding how to govern these megacities. But recent trends have shown that urbanization is not only concentrated in these megacities. Evidences from different national

census as well as the World Urbanization Prospects show there have been rise in agglomerations and the number of million plus cities and five million cities all over the world. Under such circumstances how far the primacy of a single city is sustainable or relevant becomes all the more relevant. Recently there has also been an emphasis on newly developed urban areas or prospective sites outside urban agglomerations.

KUA has not been experiencing rapid urbanization as its counterparts namely, Delhi, Mumbai or Bengaluru. Still since 2000 there have been some large infrastructural development work taken up through JNNURM and other initiatives. Emphasis has been provided in enhancing municipal governance. Amidst this scenario it becomes all the more crucial to look into both the approach, that is to find a way to manage the agglomerations as they continue to attract the lion's share of investment and development initiatives and at the same time provide attention to the each urban unit be it census or municipal unit within as well as outside KUA.

This is beyond question that currently the city is facing some challenges as there are number of alternate agglomerations emerged in the country as a whole which are rapidly growing in compared to Kolkata. But it is also true that despite a need to look into the overall growth of urban that includes small and medium urban areas, agglomeration continue attract maximum investment and fund as they contribute substantively to the country's GDP. In fact with the growing number of agglomerations that can attract private and public capital, domestic and international investment, there governance become all the crucial and Kolkata is no exception to this reality.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup>: *World Urbanization Prospects* published every two years by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division of the United Nations takes into account the population of agglomeration contiguous the city. Generally the population recorded for the urban agglomeration in the national census is considered.

<sup>ii</sup>: According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of Population Department, United Nations, the term urban agglomeration is defined as “the population contained within the contours of a contiguous territory inhabited at urban density levels without regard to administrative boundaries. It usually incorporates the population in a city or town plus that in the suburban areas lying outside of, but being adjacent to, the city boundaries”.

census as well as the World Urbanization Prospects show there have been rise in agglomerations and the number of million plus cities and five million cities all over the world. Under such circumstances how far the primacy of a single city is sustainable or relevant becomes all the more relevant. Recently there has also been an emphasis on newly developed urban areas or prospective sites outside urban agglomerations.

KUA has not been experiencing rapid urbanization as its counterparts namely, Delhi, Mumbai or Bengaluru. Still since 2000 there have been some large infrastructural development work taken up through JNNURM and other initiatives. Emphasis has been provided in enhancing municipal governance. Amidst this scenario it becomes all the more crucial to look into both the approach, that is to find a way to manage the agglomerations as they continue to attract the lion's share of investment and development initiatives and at the same time provide attention to the each urban unit be it census or municipal unit within as well as outside KUA.

This is beyond question that currently the city is facing some challenges as there are number of alternate agglomerations emerged in the country as a whole which are rapidly growing in compared to Kolkata. But it is also true that despite a need to look into the overall growth of urban that includes small and medium urban areas, agglomeration continue attract maximum investment and fund as they contribute substantively to the country's GDP. In fact with the growing number of agglomerations that can attract private and public capital, domestic and international investment, there governance become all the crucial and Kolkata is no exception to this reality.

#### **ENDNOTES**

i: *World Urbanization Prospects* published every two years by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division of the United Nations takes into account the population of agglomeration contiguous the city. Generally the population recorded for the urban agglomeration in the national census is considered.

ii: According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of Population Department, United Nations, the term urban agglomeration is defined as “the population contained within the contours of a contiguous territory inhabited at urban density levels without regard to administrative boundaries. It usually incorporates the population in a city or town plus that in the suburban areas lying outside of, but being adjacent to, the city boundaries”.

In India, an urban agglomeration “is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining outgrowths (OGs), or two or more physically contiguous towns together with or without outgrowths of such towns. An Urban Agglomeration must consist of at least a statutory town and its total population (i.e. all the constituents put together) should not be less than 20,000 as per the 2001 Census”.

<sup>iii</sup>: Statistical Metropolitan Area in Bangladesh was similar to Urban Agglomeration in Census of India. The population of SMA is considered for population of Dhaka in World Urbanization Prospects' Report. In 2011 Bangladesh Census, the revision of the definition of urban areas led to the exclusion of other urban areas and growth centre. The idea of SMA was itself abolished. Instead Dhaka is termed the Dhaka Megacity (since population was five million and above) and for other cities it is simply called city (population of one million and above).

#### REFERENCE

1. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011: *Population and Housing Census-2011. National Urban Volume-3: Urban Area Report*, Statistics and Informatics Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh.
2. Baud, I.S.A and J.de Wit 2008: 'Shifts in Urban Governance: Raising the Questions' in *new Forms of Urban Governance in India*, Sage, New Delhi, London, California and Singapore, pp. 1-33.
3. Census of India, 2011: "Provisional Population Totals. Urban Agglomerations/Cities having population 1 lakh and above" in [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)
4. GaWC, 2016: "Classification of cities 2016" in *The World According to GaWC 2016* in <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2016>.
5. Huriot, Jean-Marie and Bourdeau-Lepage, Lise, 2006: 'Megacities vs. Global Cities: Development and Institutions' in 46<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Regional Science Association: *Enlargement, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean*, August 30th - September 3rd, 2006, Volos, Greece.
6. Jana Urban Space Foundation India, 2017: *Annual Survey of India's City Systems 2017. Shaping India's Urban Agenda*, Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy in [www.janaagraha.org](http://www.janaagraha.org).

7. Lepage, Lise Bourdeau and Jean-Marie Huriot, 2007, ‘Megacities without global functions’, in *Belgeo*, January, pp 95-114, DOI: 10.4000/belgeo.11675.
8. Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment, 1993: “Megacity Guidelines” in *Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Infrastructural Development In Mega cities*, Department of Urban Development, Government of India, in [www.mohua.gov.in](http://www.mohua.gov.in).
9. Sivaramakrishnan, K.C., 2014: *Governance of Megacity. Fractured Thinking Fragmented Setup*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
10. Ramachandran, R. 1989: *Urbanization and Urban Systems in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
11. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015: *World Urbanization Prospects. The 2014 Revision*.

## KOLKATA: A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN FORM FROM REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Sarani Khatua\*

*Defined as the urban age, the twenty-first century brought with it new aspirations as well challenges of urban development throughout, from local to global. Manifested in various forms from small towns to large urban agglomerations, urban space is central to the study in various disciplines. Nonetheless this has not put the focus off on the large agglomerations and metropolitan regions. Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) and the agglomeration constituted within it, the Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (KUA) have formed much earlier than the onset of present urban age, but its significance in the recent development is beyond doubt. This study into Kolkata from regional perspective or beyond the core city in the contemporary timespan, reviews census data, government reports and various other sources to discuss the changes, aspirations as well as challenges of the metropolitan region.*

### INTRODUCTION

Urbanization has emerged as a key determinant in analysing regional studies in the recent decades owing to its overwhelming influence in shaping and reshaping or even forming new regions as a whole. This is true globally, nationally as well as at the sub-regional level. The sweeping takeover by urban in the last few decades in every process, and space, it is required to look in-depth of urbanisation at different level from small non municipal census towns to million cities. Urban represents consolidated space of small and large units often bound by either census nomenclature or through planning statute. As urban tend to dominate every aspect of space it is required to study the consolidated space as a whole and not to look into a single city.

The study would like to bring in the discussion of the metropolitan region as well as the urban agglomeration constituted within it through a brief discussion of Kolkata and its development in recent decades.

In twentieth century there has been massive growth in urbanization in India, in both quantitative terms as well as qualitatively. There has been increase in number of urban units as well as expansion of already existing towns and cities. The city and its adjoining agglomeration have experienced massive changes in the recent decade. In many international reports and database like *World Urbanization Prospects*, *World Population Prospects*, etc., agglomeration is taken into consideration instead of the single core city.

### THE STUDY AREA

In India Urban Agglomeration is necessarily a census concept and denoted by the coalesced space of municipal bodies, outgrowths and census towns. The Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (KUA) is

\*UGC Post-Doctoral Researcher, Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta.  
E-mail: saranikhatua@gmail.com

that part of Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA), which helps to understand the spread of urban beyond the core city, since it includes both statutory and census towns. The development of this agglomeration dates back to the colonial time. The formal delineation of the present KMA started through comprehensive planning intervention of Basic Development Plan in 1966 initially but more prominently by the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA, known as CMDA prior to the change of the name of city in 2000). It is noteworthy that KMA is a statutory planning area created through West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act. 1979. KMA includes both rural units and some non-contiguous urban units besides the urban agglomeration. The region has dominated the eastern part of India with respect to urban development over the years.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study would look into the:

Changes in urban agglomeration within KMA and other agglomerations in West Bengal and similar changes in agglomeration in the neighbouring state capitals and discuss whether such demographic changes at all have relevance to the large discussion of urban development in KMA in recent decades.

Effect of globalisation and related issues in the national scenario on KMA.

Challenges of urbanization experienced in the recent decades in the agglomeration and consequences for the greater metropolitan area.

### Relevance of the Study

Michael Storper (2010) stated that the requirement for focussing on the study of growth of cities and regions since they constitute a complex system is crucial to Social Science. It would be incorrect to attribute all forms of urban development to be of recent origin. In fact the very idea of metropolitan region has its origin much before the current trends of urbanization. But what is important is the pace of urbanization which has been experienced in the last quarter century was unprecedented. This has been true for most of the developing countries. The common notion of the western cities do not necessarily go with the study of urbanization in the global south. Kolkata Metropolitan Area has its origin much before the current era of globalization. The current form of urban growth as witnessed in the last few decades, would not have been possible if there would not be New Economic Policy based on liberalization, Privatization and Globalization adopted by Government of India in 1991. Again the other question is what kind of change Kolkata is experiencing in the last few decades and how these changes are pertinent to the changes at local, regional and global level.

### METHODOLOGY

The paper discusses urbanization as the phenomena, which could no longer be studied through population growth and density alone and needs to look into pros and cons of such expansion with respect to large dynamics of development. The paper is *exploratory* and aims to raise more questions instead of providing problem solving solutions since urban is at present a constantly evolving notion especially in the global south and any two-three point solutions would make this transition too simplistic. The paper reviews through changes in the urban agglomeration through population Census of India report, national and international policy documents related to the subject of study.

### **Changes in KUA as well as KMA**

Table 1 reveals the KUA registered positive growth since 1991.

**Table 1: Population of Kolkata Urban Agglomeration and Four Largest Urban Agglomerations in West Bengal, 1991–2011**

Urban Agglomerations	2011	2001	1991
Kolkata UA	1,41,12,536	1,32,05,697	1,10,21,918
Asansol UA	12,43,008	10,67,369	7,63,939
Siliguri UA	7,01,489	—	—
Durgapur UA	5,81,409	—	—

Note: Siliguri and Durgapur were not recorded as Urban Agglomerations in 2001 and 1991 census respectively.

Source: Census of India 2011, 2001 and 1991.

A comparison of four largest agglomerations within the state of West Bengal clearly indicates the dominance of KUA. Even the second largest agglomeration that is Asansol, is far behind KUA. (The other two cities did not have agglomerations in 2001).

From the presentation of different events related to urbanization within KMA in Table 2, it is clear that changes have been quite significant.

**Table 2: Few Events Related to Urbanization in KMA since Nineties**

Decade	Events Related to Urbanization in KMA
1991–2000	Older Notified Area Council (NAC) converted to municipalities. 2 new municipalities, namely Pujali and Maheshtala formed. Almost all municipal entities within KUA except Kolkata and Howrah went through spatial expansion through merging of adjacent rural area.
2001–2011	Nabadiganta Industrial Township, which was part of Bidhannagar Municipality, was formed a separate township. Dankuni municipality formed.
Post 2011	Bidhannagar Municipality expanded to include Newtown and adjoining rural areas from NKDA to form Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation. Expansion of KMC boundary. Bally Municipality merged with Howrah Municipal Corporation.

Source: Information compiled by author from multiple sources, namely, Census of India, KMDA and notifications of Department of Urban Development, Government of West Bengal.

The Seventy-Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 and consequent West Bengal Municipal Act 1993 led to the formation of new municipalities as well as spatial expansion of the existing municipal bodies except the core cities. Nabadiganta Industrial Township was established, which was a boost to the industrialisation on the eastern margin. The industrial development based in IT industry led to significant changes in the eastern part of the city. Tathagata Chatterjee (2016) in his comparative analysis of governance in three city regions has also attributed recent changes in the peripheries to IT enabled development in the area.

The western part of the city also witnessed significant transformation with the establishment of Dankuni in 2008. Dankuni though a part of KMA has grown to form separate urban agglomeration.

The large Metropolitan Area went through expansion through addition of new rural areas in Nadia and South Twenty Four Parganas districts as evidenced from KMDA report (2010). Another major expansion occurred in the eastern margin when the area under New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) was incorporated in KMA through merging of Bidhannagar municipality and Newtown and adjoining rural areas to form Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation. This has further expanded the KUA, which is expected to get reflected in the next census. Tapas Mitra, et. al. (2015), in his detailed description of historical development of the city core as well as the region has clearly indicated the outward expansion of the urban along the arterial roads. The growth of the adjoining core city is evident from the following Table 3, which clearly shows that expansion of the agglomeration in the adjacent districts is quite high outside the core city.

**Table 3: Decadal Growth of Kolkata Urban Agglomeration with and without Core City**

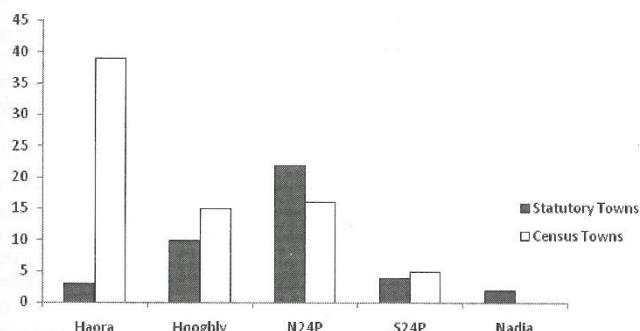
Agglomeration	1991	2001	Growth Rate (1991–2001) (%)	2011	Growth Rate (2001–2011) (%)
KUA with KMC	1,10,21,918	1,32,05,697	19.81	1,41,12,536	6.87
KUA without KMC	66,22,099	86,25,151	30.25	96,15,842	11.49

Note: KMC: Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

Source: Census of India, 2011, 2001, 1991 in [censusindia.gov.in](http://censusindia.gov.in)

Both KUA and KMA spread on the adjacent districts of Howrah, Hooghly, North and South Twenty Four Parganas and Nadia. The Table 3, shows growth rate of these adjacent areas with and without Kolkata; the difference is clearly evident. The growth rate of the KUA without Kolkata city (highlighted) is almost double in both the decades of 1991–2001 and 2001–2011.

Another important manifestation of the district-wise distribution of spread of the agglomeration within KMA is visible through the numbers of the statutory towns and census towns in the respective constituent districts as shown in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1: Distribution of Urban Units within Kolkata Urban Agglomeration**

Note: N24 P: i. North Twenty Four Parganas, S24P: South Twenty Four Parganas.

ii. Data of core city Kolkata (KMC) not included to show the spread of agglomeration in the adjacent districts.

Source: Total numbers compiled by the author based on data from Census of India 2011 of different districts available in [censusindia.gov.in](http://censusindia.gov.in)

The figure clearly specifies that growth of statutory towns is largest in the North Twenty Four Parganas, to the east of the city. Urbanization of west bank of river Hooghly is evident from the high numbers of census towns in Howrah and Hooghly districts. It is noteworthy to add that at present out of total seven (7) Municipal Corporations in West Bengal, four (4) are within KMA alone.

#### **Effect of Globalisation and Related Changes in the National Scenario on KMA**

Kolkata, which is more apt to be referred as a colonial city does not fit exactly to the global city category, compared to Mumbai, Bengaluru or Delhi. But from last few decades there have been changes visible within the KMA, which took place in coherence with the global market. From 2000, Globalization and The World Cities (GaWC) have been publishing the list of most powerful cities categorised into alpha, beta and gamma cities. Kolkata featured in the Beta-category from 2012<sup>ii</sup> (GaWC, 2016).

Establishment of IT hubs, IT based Special Economic Zones (SEZ) as well different other SEZs are major boost for rapid expansion of the eastern margin. A number of infrastructural initiatives through public private partnerships as well as privatisation contributed to the drastic urban development of the agglomeration on its eastern southern part as well as to some extent in the western bank of the river Hooghly. Accordingly transport networks developed on this part have contributed to urbanize the adjacent area. Formation of census towns around the transport lines or a new municipal town are not uncommon. The high concentration of new census towns are not only about population change but also indicate change in livelihood to predominantly non-agricultural types.

#### **Challenges of Urbanization Experienced in the Recent Decades in the Agglomeration and Consequences for the Greater Metropolitan Area**

Urbanization has been predominant in the metropolitan region outside the municipal boundary, one should not ignore the challenges that are brought by such changes. United Nations adopted seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as part of post-2015 agenda. Goal 11 was specifically and exclusively for the cities.

##### **Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (UN, 2015)**

The city does not necessarily denote only a single city, but rather targets all forms and sizes of urban space. This particular goal assumes immense importance with respect to the problems and constraints arising out of urbanization in recent years and how are they managed. KMA is not an exception to this. One of the biggest challenges of urbanization is provision of basic services and amenities to the settlements which include mainly piped water supply, sewerage and drainage, improved roads, proper solid waste disposal system, curbing environmental pollution and so on. There have been a number of initiatives taken at the central as well as the state level; one of the best part of these initiatives is that they are not limited to particular core city. The funding is provided to any municipality within and outside a metropolitan region.

It is also important that governance challenges are met at every urban level that could contribute to the overall development of the metropolitan region. An example of this kind of effort is visible in Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation (AMRUT), whose implementation is not limited to big city. It has been observed in its initial implementation that out of sixty (60) municipal areas selected by the Government of India scheme, Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation (AMRUT) in West Bengal, around thirty one (31) are located within KMA alone. Recently, the Government of West Bengal

has initiated Green City Mission, to be implemented in almost all municipalities irrespective of being within or outside the metropolitan region in West Bengal. Such initiatives are expected to address urban challenges particularly with respect to environmental issues, irrespective of size and population.

Kolkata occupies a strategic location with respect to the east and north-eastern region. Kolkata continues to serve as a port city for most of the eastern region. This strategic location makes the city-region even more crucial for development.

### **CONCLUSION**

Urban today is better assessed through regional perspectives and it holds true for Kolkata also. KMA's expansion in terms of infrastructural development, road networks, communication networks etc has been predominantly on the eastern side has been inevitable with the growth of IT based industrialisation. Such growth has posed challenges to the governance. In order to have a comprehensive development of the region as a whole, an equitable approach to development in all direction is desired.

One of the major concerns is that how far the local government is capable to manage a huge population, whether they have the necessary know-how and capacity to tackle the challenges posed by mega urban regions (Baud and Wit, 2008). Since nineties, there have been various efforts to strengthen local governance. It is important to note at this juncture that the national economies are now open to the international market. Globalization has catalyzed urbanization to every nook and corner of the society. It has become ubiquitous and often referred as urbanization without borders (Brenner, 2013).

Recently there has also been an emphasis on newly developed urban areas or prospective sites outside urban agglomerations. Between 2001 and 2011 West Bengal in India alone witnessed quite a significant urbanization that includes increase in both small and medium towns. Post 2011 there have been formation of new municipalities and Municipal Corporations and it is expected at the next census would come up with increasing number of urban units. Amidst this scenario it becomes all the more crucial to look into both the approach, that is to find a way to manage the agglomerations as they continue to attract the lions share of investment and development initiatives and at the same time provide attention to the medium and small scale towns which has the prospect of development through some form of state support.

The metropolitan area of Kolkata has already been proved to be more dynamic space than the constituent core city. Thorough and meticulous planning is the need of the hour. In order to have maximization of benefits and welfare from the expansion of the metropolis, a comprehensive effort, which would involve different stakeholders and aims at to have an inclusive development is essential to sustain this change.

### **Endnote**

<sup>i</sup>The World urbanization Prospects, World Population Prospects are report prepared and published by the United Nations Population Division of Department of Economic and Social Affairs. These Reports published every two-three years provides a clear idea regarding million cities and agglomerations spread across the globe.

<sup>ii</sup>The Global and World Cities network was created by the Department of Geography, Loughborough University in order to study the global transactions and relations of the city and provide ranking based on this. These rankings are done as 'alpha', 'beta' and 'gamma' cities based on the level of global linkages. The highly integrated cities are ranked alpha cities; the beta level cities are those of high importance for linking their regional and state economy and lastly the gamma level cities which link the smaller economies with world economy. Within these three levels there is further hierarchy like Alpha<sup>+++</sup>, Alpha<sup>+</sup>, Beta<sup>+</sup>, Beta<sup>-</sup> etc.

**REFERENCES**

- Baud, I. S. A. and J. de Wit (2008): 'Shifts in Urban Governance: Raising the Questions' in New Forms of Urban Governance in India, Sage, New Delhi, London, California and Singapore, pp. 1–33.
- Brenner, Neil (2013): 'Urban Theory without an outside' in Neil Brenner (ed.) *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, Jovis, Berlin, pp. 14–35.
- Census of India, (2011): 'Provisional Population Totals. Number of Administrative Units' in [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)
- Chatterjee, Tathagata (2016): 'Modes of Governance and Local Economic Development: An Integrated Framework for Comparative Analysis of the Globalizing Cities of India' in *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 53(6), pp. 955–989.
- GaWC, (2016): 'Classification of cities 2016' in *The World According to GaWC 2016* in <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2016>.
- Mitra, Tapas and Sheuli Mitra (2015): 'Region, Periphery and the City Core: Transformations in Morphology and Growth Symbiosis: A Case of Kolkata City and Region', paper presented in RSA conference of 2015 in [www.regionalstudies.org](http://www.regionalstudies.org).
- Sivaramakrishnan, K. C. (2014): *Governance of Megacity. Fractured Thinking Fragmented Setup*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Storper, Michael (2011): 'Why do regions develop and change? The challenge for geography and economics' in *Journal of Economic Geography*, Vol. 11, pp. 333–346.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, (2015): *World Urbanization Prospects. The 2014 Revision*.
- United Nations (2015): Sustainable development Goals: 17 Development Goals to Transform Our World in [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

## **MUNICIPALIZATION AND ‘CORE-ING’ OF THE PERI-URBAN: CASE STUDY OF A NEWLY ADDED AREA IN THE INDIAN CITY OF KOLKATA.**

Sarani Khatua

UGC Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Researcher,  
Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta

### **ABSTRACT**

Municipalization is a process that brings certain areas within the realm of urban local governance. Extending the municipal boundary of the city through bringing in adjacent areas, contributes to core-ing. Core-ing in the particular study has been referred specifically to the expansion of the core city area in a metropolitan region. The present study would like to bring into expansion of the municipal boundary of the city of Kolkata, which forms the core city within the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. Unlike other metropolitan cities of India, Kolkata has not showed much expansion in recent decades. The decision to extend the municipal limit was primarily triggered through the launch of metro railway project and consequential increase in real-estate development in the area. Municipalization could be considered as governmentality that enables the state to create and refurbish a space in coherence to its larger policies and development trajectory. In this case it facilitates to bring the focus back to the central city of the larger metropolitan area. The paper through review of events post and pre municipalization, review of census data for select basic services and group discussion of local residents would like to explore into the metropolitan governmentality of the state.

**Keywords:** governmentality, metropolitan core, municipal, peri-urban, suburbanization

### **INTRODUCTION**

The scenario in Indian metropolis is not unfamiliar with an outward expanding periphery and gradual stagnating core. Research on peripheral development and consequent governance challenges faced by the cities, especially those of global south predominates urban and development discourse in recent time. An in-depth look into these cities reflects a common trend of transformation, nineties onwards as well as features unique to them. However, the reality is that the changes in peripheries are not something exclusive to post nineties period. Any city whether metropolis or not has undergone changes since their formation. The changing periphery

could have taken place through extension of municipal limit or metropolitan limit or both. Changes may happen though planned intervention or through sprawl, may be statutory or may be through gradual change in occupational pattern from farm to non-farm activities. Recent changes in the periphery have garnered much interest to the planners, academics, policy makers alike, since in the neoliberal time, state has been directly involved in changing peripheries in coherence with privatization, real estate development, rising demand of development for neoliberal activities to flourish; this has been implemented through forming new municipalities, townships, expansion of existing municipalities, merging or two or more municipalities and so on. The political economy of the particular area becomes crucial in decision making, like the importance of the location with respect to current urbanization, the interest of the state to project the particular place within urban, the development trajectory of the area, how the population of the particular area contribute to the current development trajectory and vote bank politics etc.

The study is based on empirical data from secondary source and field based interviews of various officials, members of organizations, residents of Joka.

The paper would discuss the urban trajectory of the study area, the implications of municipalization. Then I would discuss how a single statutory change initiated developmental activities that are taking place post incorporation within the municipal limit of the core city.

The changes and initiatives would be argued in context of recent governance initiatives of the state and how it corroborates to the larger of issues of governing the metropolis and how the state is instrumental in changing the peri-urban interface to urban core and producing new fringe. It is important to delve into how urban gropes in the peri-urban and suburban within its ambit and the expansion within the urban specifies intra-arrangement of the same space.

## **MUNICIPALIZATION AND CORE-ING AND GOVERNANCE OF THE PERI-URBAN**

The periphery of a city is commonly marked by both suburban and peri-urban areas. While there is space, which has suburbanized over time through formation of towns and cities, there are areas which have urbanized but are yet within rural governance. In Indian context the state plays a dominant role in producing suburban and peri-urban space around a city and its adjoining metropolitan area. Though the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 and 1993 have been key to recognize the constitutional status to rural and urban local self-governance, it has also strengthened the state regional government in the process with respect to creation and maintenance of these units. The regional government has the power to define a new municipality or change the existing ones, in case of both rural and urban units. Also each state has respective Municipal and Panchayat enactments, Town and Country Planning Acts to define and delineate urban and rural governance. In a way it holds the power to decide which space retains rural status

and which space to be within urban. This has been a major deciding factor in both metropolitan as well as municipal formation. Municipalization forms an integral tool at the disposal of the state to bring a certain area within the ambit of statutory urban. Municipalization could be of different ways. Like forming a new municipality from rural areas, or incorporating adjoining rural areas within an existing municipal body. Both have taken place in Indian scenario as well as within the Kolkata Metropolitan Area; but the latter is more prominent in case of Kolkata in recent time. Municipal formation often may precede infrastructural development by the concerned/respective metropolitan development authority before handing it over to a municipal body. Incorporating an area within municipal boundary of a city is also an approach of the state to bring more space within the metropolitan core. This process have been termed as 'core-ing' in the research paper. Both, municipalization and core-ing are parts of state governmentality.

Bringing rural space within urban is often marked by resistances from communities residing on the fringe area. On the other hand there are instances where despite change in land use, significant decrease in agricultural activities, shift in the occupational pattern from agriculture to service etc, areas continue to have rural governance and fail to avail basic amenities required in the urban areas. Periphery remains highly fragmented in terms of type of governance it has, rural or urban.

Municipalization of the peri-urban space is crucial in bringing it within the ambit of the urban services. This is important to note that municipalization is not always synonymous to the urbanization, but integral to it. At the same time the process does not claim that an area prior to being under a definite municipal administration did not have any governance. Rather it is a process, particularly in India that replaces rural governance with urban. In case of incorporating additional adjacent areas within the core could be regarded as mode to re-strengthen the central city.

Peri-urban interface is marked by either diminishing rural or absence of urban traits, which needs to be looked into through separate mode (Allen, 2003) and go beyond simple regional category, since expansion of metropolis have contributed to the formation of such kind of complex interactions of rural and urban (Shaw 2005) which no single tool could address. However in the context of India, rural-urban classification remains crucial for local governance and planning for the area (Bhagat, 2005). As metropolis is subject to different layers of governance, regional, urban and rural, one cannot surpass the rural-urban classification so easily.

Such peripheral landscape is often a function of suburbanization, rather than urbanization (Keil, 2017) and it produces particular space that needs to be explored further to address the possible governance challenges, which is inevitable in the background of exploding urban (Lefebvre, 1970/2003). No doubt, governance has assumed centrality in the present perspective (Gururani

and Kose, 2015). Since these areas are space of accommodating expanding/spilling urban population (Vishwanath, Lall, Dowall, Lozano-Gracia, Sharma, Wang, 2013), governance is crucial for their sustenance.

Suburbanization of the once agriculturally dominated space creates peri-urban region, which exhibits mixed characteristic of rural and urban, are densely populated, marks lucrative zone for real estate development, aligned with important road networks connecting to the main city but without the necessary administration to provide services required for coping with the changing space. Eventually with the diminishing agricultural area, increasing in service oriented population, the remaining rural diminishes further.

Despite having a large number of census towns<sup>i</sup> occurring in West Bengal, development in and around Kolkata continue to remain central focus for the state. This is not accidental that Kolkata's expansion primarily on its eastern periphery has directly impacted the sustenance of the ecologically sensitive East Kolkata Wetlands (Dey and Banerjee, 2013). Obliteration of agricultural land and livelihood based on agriculture to give rise to certain form of urban landscape that cater to the neoliberal initiatives of the state, is most prominent through development of Rajarhat Newtown in the eastern fringe of the metropolis. A thorough critical account of such development has been documented by Dey, Samaddar and Sen (2013). But this cannot be said that the other parts of city are not going through transformations. Southern margin of the metropolis have raised serious challenges in terms of governance.

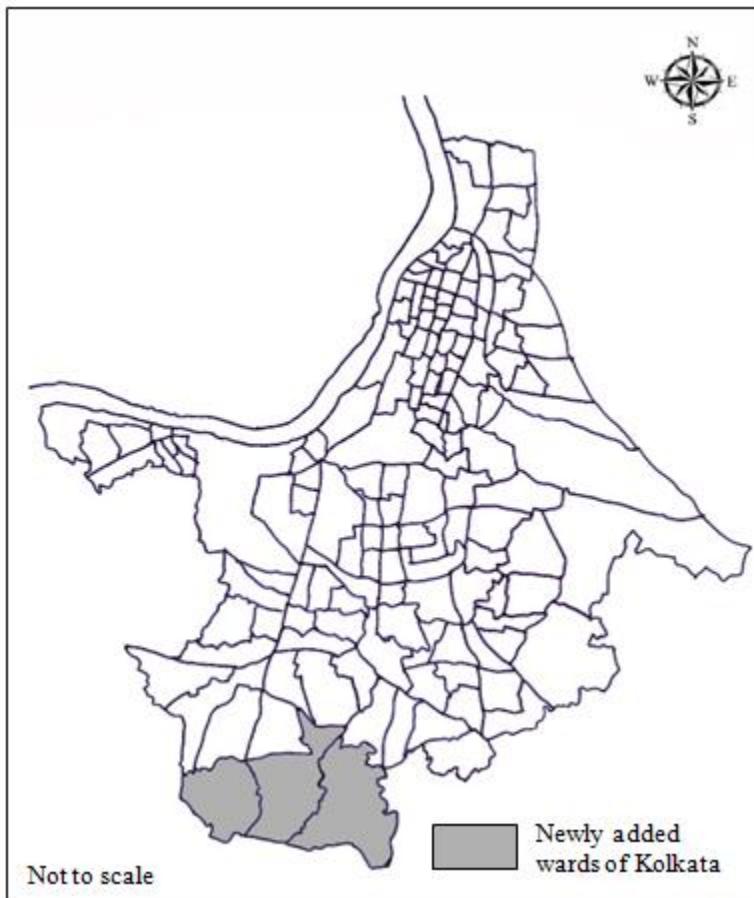
The mixed land use or the peri-urban around the India Metropolis has thrown serious challenges for governance and which needs to be understood in the context of political and social scenario prevalent (Dupont, 2007). The cities, metropolis and their peripheries of the south need to be studied in different light than those in the western world (Roy, 2009; Robinson, 2006). Different institutions address functions which are overlapping creating further contestations and confusions for the population. It is important to note that in southern metropolises, municipalities are instrumental in transforming urban space rather than improving population (Schindler 2014). In India's context municipalities could be extended to state since, municipalization itself is a state decision. This is appropriate to say that, '*municipalities are subsumed within the statist framework*' (Lefebvre, 2014). Municipalization, therefore, need to be looked as an apparatus of governmentality, which enables state to produce certain form of space that would serve its neoliberal policies. Such decisions are also embedded in the political economy of a particular locale.

## **JOKA IN THE PERI-URBAN SPACE OF KOLKATA**

It has already been stated that re-delineation of municipal limit is not very frequent in the core city, the last happening in 1980. The recent incorporation within the main city limit had been owing to promise made to the local residents prior to state election in 2010. The outcome of the decision has had major impact on the local governance with major infrastructural development work initiated by the state right from its inclusion within the municipal limit of the core city. Though the inclusion of the area within the city limit took place only few years back, urbanization of the area started way back owing to spill-over of population to the adjoining areas and mostly to the east and south of the city. The connecting road network in this area and presence of industries, educational institutions accelerated development in the area. Also the increase in demand for services within the city and consequent supply from the adjacent district has led to increase in importance of this area over two decades. The area have had substantially undergone suburbanization. It is interesting to note that the last extension prior to incorporation of Joka within Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) happened more than three decades back in the eighties similarly with another change in power in the state, the advent of Left Front. Incorporation of Joka within the municipal limit of the city was preceded with initiation of construction of new metro railway track from the Joka connecting the central part of the city making the area a hotspot for real estate development.

Incorporation of the areas in the south and southeastern margin of the city in 1980, raised the number of wards in Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) from 100 wards to 141. Joka's inclusion further increased the number of wards from 141 to 144 and the area from 185 Square Kilometre to 205 Square Km (Map 1).

**Map 1: Kolkata Municipal Corporation with Newly Added Wards**



Note: The updated map for Kolkata Municipal Corporation with the newly added areas and clearly defined ward boundaries of 142, 143 and 144 are yet not available from KMC officially. This map is based on the information collected from Borough XVI office of KMC, which provided with the Joka Gram Panchayat I and II. A rough schematic map is also there in KEIIP documents where the boundaries are in conformity with the present map.

As in India urban development remains largely a function of state government, municipal formation remains an important governmentality at the disposal of the same. Every state has specific criteria for municipal formation so does West Bengal. The conditions for forming municipality and Municipal Corporation is stringent<sup>ii</sup>; nonetheless, they are not only factors influencing municipal formation in the state. It is a function of state's willingness to bring a definite area within municipal boundary area or form a separate municipality or municipal corporation.

Possibly municipalization is long due in Joka, since the areas have gone through substantial urbanization over the years. This is applicable to the southern fringe of the city where despite

urban process being quite prominent, municipalization has not taken place to that extent. The city is bordered on its south by the South Twenty Four Parganas. A substantial part of the district is within Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA). There are five municipalities from this district, which are part of Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA), of which two were formed after nineties. The municipalities of Maheshtala and Pujali lie adjacent to the southwestern margin of the city. The older municipalities of the southern district are on the south and southwest margin of the greater metropolitan area. Rest of the urbanization in the southern fringe of the city has been in the form of census towns, also known as the urbanized and semi-urbanized rural. The district has two more municipalities that are outside the Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA).

It is in the opinion of the residents as well as local representatives inclusion of Joka within the municipal limit of the core city, was an election promise of the state government, fulfilling which was taken up right after the election result went in favour of the party holding office at present [Group Discussion, January 2018].

The area under present study has undergone high population expansion in the last two decades (Table 1) and gradual decrease in agricultural land use. The urban expansion has taken place beyond the study area. Urbanization happened primarily along the state highway that traverse through the area. The total population of the two erstwhile Panchayats prior to being incorporated within the city had more than threshold population required to form municipality on its own. By 2001 the total population of the area exceeded 30,000.

**Table 1: Population Growth Rate of Joka I and II Panchayat**

Total Population 1991	Total Population 2001	Growth Rate (in percent) 1991-2001	Total Population 2011	Growth Rate (in percent) 2001-2011
29439	46461	57.82	65147	40.22

**Source:** Compiled from population of rural mauzas and census towns within Joka I and II Gram Panchayat from Census 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Despite having the threshold population for forming separate municipality, this area was included within the existing Municipal Corporation.

Being on the immediate periphery of the metropolis the district is the one of the main source of supply of service workers to the city. While within the two Gram Panchayats, 4 units were already recorded as census towns in 2011 Census, the remaining rural mauzas showed a low percentage of net sown area (Table 2).

**Table 2: Agricultural Land Use in Erstwhile Villages of Joka**

Area Constituting Ward	Total area under Rural Mouza (in Hectares)	Area under Non-Agricultural Uses (in Hectares)	Net Area Sown (in Hectares)
Total	1254.36	990.37	199.77

Note: Total area excludes area under 4 census towns since 'agricultural area' and 'net sown area' category is not provided for towns in Census enumeration. Also total area for towns are provided in Square Km. Ward 142 and 143 has one census town each while ward no. 144 is constituted by 2 census towns.

Source: Compiled by the author from Village Directory, West Bengal, Census 2011.

Agriculture was restricted to inner areas (now ward no 142) away from the main road connecting the city. One of the reasons cited by the existing councillor of the ward for such low agricultural area was siltation and gradual clogging of the canal that previously used to be main source of water in the area. Joka has been a peri-urban suburb space constituted by population commuting to the city centre for daily work. Rent and land value had been cheap compared to the municipal core, prior to initiation of metro rail project.

In case of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation area ward boundary is generally delineated with roads/streets. Similarly the streets are considered boundary marking the area within the KMC and that outside it.

*'One street made all the difference, where locality on left of it (lying within KMC) had access to all forms of services while that on the right side of the same did not have basic amenities since falling outside the municipal limit'* [Group Discussion, January 2018 ].

A look into the average percentage availability of two selected basic services to households within Kolkata Municipal area and that of area recently incorporated within the KMC suggests the difference in amenities within and adjacent to the KMC.

An analysis of the source of drinking water (Table 3) to the households shows a distinct disparity from the city average, which is obvious given the presence of municipal governance in one and not in another.

**Table 3: Households with Tap water as Drinking Water**

	Households (in percent)		
	Tap water from treated source (in percent)	Tap water from untreated source (in percent)	Other Sources
KMC average	84.9	3.2	11.9
Joka I and II average (newly added area)	49.21	0.64	50.15

Source: Compiled from Percentage of Households to Total Households by Amenities and Assets, HH-14, South Twenty Four Parganas, Census of India 2011 (Government of India, 2011b).

It is to be noted here the Public Health and Engineering Department has been engaged in arranging for piped water supply to rural areas in West Bengal. Joka has been receiving piped water supply from the same before being incorporated in KMC. Though coverage of such supply has not been hundred percent, but it catered to a large extent to problem of water supply in the area.

The initiative to provide piped water supply in rural areas have been prevalent for quite some time, the same be said for having a closed drainage system. In fact having a properly built connected sewerage system is not present in many parts of the city, particularly in the older added areas. The concept of having a sewerage system is still urban specific and that too big city specific. Many peripheral cities and towns of KMA have low percentage of closed drainage. Though Joka was outside the municipal limit of the central city, it was within the limits of greater metropolitan area or KMA and post inclusion within KMC, it still is part of the same. This means it is within the purview of metropolitan governance of Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) which is the planning authority for the region. The Kolkata Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority entrusted with provision of basic services like sanitation and water supply in the metropolitan area addresses issue of the statutory urban. The peri-urban governance remains within the purview of the Panchayats or rural administration.

A look into the situation of drainage in the villages constituting the newly added wards (Table 4) would reflect a worse picture compared to that of drinking water.

**Table 4: Households with Waste Water Connected to Types of Drainage**

	Households(in Percent)		
	Closed drainage	Open drainage	No drainage
KMC average	<b>81.3</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Joka I and II average (newly added area)	9.27	19.34	71.38

**Source:** Compiled from Percentage of Households to Total Households by Amenities and Assets, H-14, South Twenty Four Parganas, Census of India (Government of India, 2011b)

Presence of sewerage system enables to have closed drainage. Being outside the municipal area, the areas now within specific wards show that condition of availability of waste water connected to closed drainage is critically low.

The villages coming within the metropolitan area, have their spatial development rules or building rules tied to that of the metropolitan authority. The rest of the functions like provision of basic services are part of rural governance.

The issue of concern is that a space, which has undergone substantial increase in urbanized population, is also a space with very low provision of a very basic amenity. Shaw (2005) has correctly mentioned that even rural local government is entitled to provide basic services as laid down in 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA 1993; the reality on ground is different. Still these amenities are often considered part of necessary services meant for the urban population.

### **JOKA IN THE CORE URBAN SPACE OF KOLKATA.**

The fast undertaking of development work in the newly added areas is primarily because of the already ongoing project of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Investment Project (KEIIP). It is crucial here is to understand the kind of investment that has been put to with initiation of municipalization.

KEIIP is the second phase of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project (KEIP) with loan from Asian Development Bank. While KEIP aimed at overall improvement of the city through laying of sewerage and drainage network, making arrangements for solid waste disposal, canal rehabilitation, slum improvement etc. The laying of sewerage and drainage lines in the added areas had been the primary focus of KEIP. KEIIP or the second phase continued with sewerage and drainage work as well as construction of booster pumping stations for water supply etc in multiple tranches, without the component of the slum improvement and canal rehabilitation. Service infrastructure development in the newly added wards in Joka has rather been rapid owing to the availability of huge funding from Asian Development Bank under KEIIP. Development of

Joka, however had not started from initiation of municipalization of the area. Joka I and II spread over on either side of the road connecting the main city with the southern district experienced urbanization owing development of housing, educational institutions, commercial establishments and presence of tramway terminal. Commencement of work for laying of metro railway line from Joka to the city central increased the land prices in the existing area besides increase in need for better infrastructure and services.

Some of the important initiatives taken up to develop the area and make it at par with the core town had been laying of sewerage and drainage lines, establishing water pumping booster. All these works are ongoing. Besides a number of initiatives were taken up for road repairing and laying of metalled roads, installation of street lights etc., in interior areas.

Looking at the other added areas in Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) as well as other towns and cities of the Kolkata metropolitan area (KMA), one cannot deny the importance Joka has gained within short span of its inclusion. In fact the previously added areas of KMC (ward 101-141) were brought within the domain of this project only in 2000, twenty years after their inclusion within the city. Though it would not be proper to infer that there have not been any initiatives taken in these areas prior to this, but such a huge effort on part of the state took a much longer time when compared with Joka. As already stated, despite having lost its rural characteristics for long, population in this locality had to struggle with absence of some of basic service delivery. The influential community groups, rather had the ability to negotiate with the state or make arrangements on their own; but those residing on the margins and stayed outside the city limit to commute daily for work had to reside in the area without any substantial services. In this respect one, could bring in the reference of one of the oldest cooperative housing society in Joka-Diamond Park.

Established in 1966, this housing society is almost as old as the esteemed educational institute for which Joka has been well known name on city map. Occupied by primarily white-collar job people, who would commute to the city for work, the housing society soon became one of the major negotiating agents for services in the area. Over the years the Diamond Park Housing Cooperative Society, Saturday Forum formed exclusively by the residents of the Diamond Park and OPED formed by both residents and non-residents of Diamond Park have been constantly engaged in negotiating for basic services like improvement of roads, availability of street lights, arrangement for water supply and last but not least disposal of waste<sup>iii</sup>. A thorough case study on solid waste disposal involving OPED and administration has already been presented by Shaw in an earlier work (2005).

Initiation of work to lay metro railway line acted as an important incentive behind the decision to include Joka within municipal area. It is not a mere coincidence that the decision for metro

railway line was taken up by the same political figure while in railway ministry and decision to include area within the KMC was again taken up by the same political party in beginning of its tenure at state government. It is also an irony metro railway project replaced the tram line in the same area operated by the Calcutta Tramways Company (CTC). One of the eco-mode of transport, which exists only in Kolkata within India, is already on its way to oblivion, owing to construction of fly-overs and other transport modes. The tram line connecting Joka with the central city area started operating in 1986. The line was almost reduced to one-fourth due to construction of flyover on the road crossing through Joka and Kolkata in 2003. Lately tram was only plying within Behala (added area of KMC) and Joka. The metro railway project had put the final nail to the existing line in 2011<sup>iv</sup>. The initiation of the project added tremendous push to the development of the area and consequent municipalization. Nevertheless, the metro rail project is itself going through a number of challenges at several points since the inception of the project owing to availability of land. However, this has not been deterrent to increase in land value and real estate development in the locale. A look in to the entire stretch of road connecting Joka with Kolkata would find advertisements of high level private housing coming up at Joka. As Shatkin stated that there has been a 'real estate turn' in the peri-urbanization of the cities of Asia (2016:142), Joka is no exception.

Inclusion of Joka within municipal core created a new periphery to both Kolkata city as well as Kolkata Metropolis. This has further created a space for further contestation and negotiation. Such negotiations do not always originate from land grabbing deals but often about compensation associated with such deals. In an instance of conflict between the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) and farmers on periphery of Joka, the later were unwilling to provide their land the former at the cost provided. The land was required to construct metro railway depot. The price of the land offered by RVNL was not accepted by the farmers. The state government had to step in to fill the gap in between the demand of the farmers and what was offered to by RVNL (Bandyopadhyay, 2017). This incident did not create much public resistance scenario. But such incidents are occurring regularly on the fringe and is expected to continue in future.

Another event that could have led to discontent among residents of Joka for being included within KMC was increase in the property tax owing to change from Panchayat to Municipal Corporation. The state decided not to implement new tax structure on the existing residents for the time being. They would continue to pay at tax at Panchayat rate. Residents showing the proof of staying at Joka before redefinition took place could avail the benefit. The new residents, however have to pay tax at the current rate. This is not coincidence that when 41 wards were added to the city in the eighties, residents of the then added areas were provided the same

benefit. This reflects the prevalence of ‘populist’ as well as ‘pluralist’ mode of governance in this part of India (Chatterjee, 2016).

## **CONCLUSION**

Municipalization is one of the crucial instruments of governmentality as it enabled initiation of arrangements, which are particularly meant for the urban areas. Though in India and particularly in West Bengal the Panchayat enactments have substantial scope for provisioning of basic amenities to the respective communities, implementation has not been satisfactory in certain areas. Joka is possibly an instance that shows municipalization is distinct apparatus of governmentality and it does not necessarily depend on the urbanization of an area. In this particular case where urbanization had been under process for long due to proximity to important link road, increase in non-agricultural activities, increase in demand for service industries and being at the short commuting zone from the city centre, the area continued to be treated as adjoining rural area. It was more appropriate to consider the area as suburban periphery without urban governance. Unlike, cases of eastern fringes of the city, Joka represented a periphery where discontent originated from being deprived of urban services and amenities despite staying close to a municipal core. Such conflict had not been explicit but could be perceived through a general discontent among the population of not getting the necessary amenities despite living adjacent to a municipal area. It is true that demand for municipalization was never direct, nor manifested through public resistances, gatherings and meeting, but is acknowledged through multiple negotiations to avail the services that took place with local residents and the local governance prior to formation of the municipality.

Case of Joka also reveals how the state has evolved stronger over years in question of local governance. If 74th Constitution Amendment Act 1992 was meant for creation of local administration, it was also instrumental in strengthening state since the Act provides the power to the state at regional level to decide on what kind of governance a space should be administered with. Though inclusion of Joka within KMC was not forced, it is not clear why some census towns contiguous to the Joka were left from inclusion or whether they would be integrated with the metropolitan system. At the same time it remains a question how far municipalization could take place or whether such initiatives are aimed at the overall development of the population or whether such decisions are political. The questions and decisions regarding whether to municipalize, which part to municipalize, when to extend the core city area, impact directly on the larger metropolitan governance. As Storper has rightly argued that metropolitan governance is ‘messy’ but could not always be judged positive or negative (2017), it needs to be seen what these kinds of decisions or how these decisions get reflected in the overall urban process in the long run. If urban expansion on the eastern part of the city became a direct threat to the

ecological wetlands, rich agricultural land, what impact does it have on its southern periphery? The south-bound sprawl of the metropolis does not only raise problem of the sustenance of the agricultural land over there but also makes the city aggressing towards the mangrove reserve as well as the coast line. The question is then, can the city, the metropolis, the state create a balance between environmental milieu of the region with its neoliberal ventures and the aspirations of its growing urban population?

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This paper is part of my ongoing postdoctoral research under UGC Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. I am indebted to Prof. Mahalaya Chatterjee, my advisor at the Centre for Urban Economics for her guidance. I am also grateful to residents of Joka, and others who have shared their experiences and opinions with respect to development of Joka.

## **REFERENCES**

- Allen, Adriana (2003). Environmental Planning and Management of the Peri-Urban Interface: Perspectives on an Emerging Field. *Environment and Urbanization*, 15(1), 135-47.
- Bandyopadhyay, Krishnendu (2017). Depot land handover, Rs 580 crore push Joka Metro to reality. *Times of India*, April 24. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/depot-land-handover-rs-580-crore-push-joka-metro-to-reality/articleshow/58334337.cms>
- Bhagat, R.B. (2005). Rural-Urban Classification and Municipal Governance in India. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(1), 61-73.
- Chatterjee, Tathagato (2016): 'Modes of Governance and Local Economic Development: An Integrated Framework for Comparative Analysis of the Globalizing Cities of India'. *Urban Affairs Review*, 53 (6), 955-989, DOI: 10.1177/1078087416650044.
- Dey, Debanjana and Banerjee, Sharmila (2013): Ecosystem and Livelihood Support: The Story of East Kolkata Wetlands. *Environment and Urbanization Asia*. 4 (2), 325-337. DOI: [10.1177/0975425313511158](https://doi.org/10.1177/0975425313511158).
- Dey, Ishita; Samaddar, Ranabir and Sen Suhit (2013). *Beyond Kolkata: Rajarhat and the Dystopia of Urban Imagination* (Cities and the Urban Imperative), New Delhi: Routledge.
- Dupont, Ve'ronique (2007). Conflicting stakes and governance in the peripheries of large Indian metropolises – An introduction. *Cities*, 24 (2), 89–94, DOI:10.1016/j.cities.2006.11.002.

- Government of India (2011a). Village Amenities. West Bengal. Census of India. (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/DCHB.html>)
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2011b). Percentage Households to Total Household by Amenities and Assets, South Twenty Four Parganas. West Bengal. Census of India. ([http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/HL\\_PCA/Houselisting-housing-WB.html](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/HL_PCA/Houselisting-housing-WB.html))
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2001). “Village Directory of South Twenty Four Parganas District” West Bengal. Census of India. (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/DigitalLibrary/MFTableSeries.aspx>)
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1991). “Village Directory of South Twenty Four Parganas District” West Bengal. Census of India. (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/DigitalLibrary/TVDirectory.aspx>)
- Gururani, Shubhra and Kose, Burak (2015). Shifting Terrain: Questions of Governance in India’s Cities and their Peripheries. Hammel, Pierre and Keil, Roger (Ed.) *Suburban Governance: A Global View*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 278-302.
- Kolkata Municipal Corporation (2018). *Social Monitoring Report IND: Kolkata Environmental Improvement Investment Program - Tranche 1*. Manila: Asian Development Bank. March. [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org).
- Lefebvre, Henri (2014) [Translated by Laurent Corroyer, Marianne Potvin, Neil Brenner]. Dissolving city, planetary metamorphosis. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 32(2). 203 – 205. DOI:10.1068/d3202tra.
- (1970) [Translated by Robert Bononno, (2003)]. *Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Robinson, Jennifer (2006). *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. London: Routledge.
- Roy, Ananya (2009). The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory. *Regional Studies*, 43(6), 819-830, DOI: 10.1080/00343400701809665.
- Schindler, Seth (2014): Governing the Twenty-First Century Metropolis and Transforming Territory. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 3(1), 7-26. DOI: 10.1080/21622671.2014.937453.

Shatkin, Gavin (2016). "The real estate turn in policy and planning: Land monetization and the political economy of peri-urbanization in Asia". *Cities*. 53. 141-149. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2015.11.015>

Shaw, Annapurna (2015). Inner-city and Outer-city Neighbourhoods in Kolkata: Their Changing Dynamics Post Liberalization. *Environment and Urbanization Asia*, 6(2) 139–153. DOI: 10.1177/0975425315589157.

----- (2005) 'Peri-Urban Interface of Indian Cities Growth, Governance and Local Initiatives'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(2), 129-136.

Storper, Michael (2014) Governing the Large Metropolis. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 2(2), 115-134, DOI: 10.1080/21622671.2014.919874.

Vishwanath, Tara; Lall, Somik V.; Dowall, David; Lozano-Gracia, Nancy; Sharma, Siddharth; Wang, Hyoung Gun. (2013). *Urbanization beyond municipal boundaries: nurturing metropolitan economies and connecting peri-urban areas in India* (English). Directions in Development; countries and regions, Washington D.C: The Worldbank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/373731468268485378/Urbanization-beyond-municipal-boundaries-nurturing-metropolitan-economies-and-connecting-peri-urban-areas-in-India>.

<sup>i</sup> A census town is a urban unit that is not under any statutory urban governance like municipal body but has been considered as urban by population, density and occupation criteria by the Census of India. Practically they are under rural governance or under Town Panchayats. In regional state of west Bengal a Census town is directly under rural governance also called rural Panchayat.

<sup>ii</sup> As per West Bengal Municipal Act 1993, the criteria to form municipality is minimum 30,000 population, 750 population per square Km and 50 percent of the adult population engaged in non-agricultural activities. The same for the Municipal Corporation according to the West Bengal Municipal Corporation Act 2005, is minimum 500,000 population, population density not less than 3,000 per square Km. and 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the adult population engaged in non-agricultural activities.

<sup>iii</sup> Diamond Park Cooperative Housing Society entrusted with the maintenance of different residences within Diamond Par. As a Society they have regularly been involved in negotiations with the erstwhile Panchayat of Joka regarding provision of various services in the area.

Saturday Forum on the other hand is a voluntary organization formed by the influential sections of Diamond Park Cooperative Housing Society that would often extend their help to betterment of the area as well as involve in negotiation with the authorities for having amenities in their favour. OPED was also another voluntary organization, but comprised of both residents of Diamond Park and well as residents of Joka outside Diamond Park. They were mainly concerned with environmental improvement of the area.

<sup>iv</sup> The website of Calcutta Tramways Company (CTC) namely, [www.calcuttatrampways.com](http://www.calcuttatrampways.com), provides the timeline for initiation and closure of tramlines in the city. CTC is now subsumed under West Bengal State Transport Corporation Limited under Government of West Bengal. CTC also has public bus transport system operating in the city.

## MUNICIPAL FINANCE OF SUBURBAN MUNICIPALITIES—KOLKATA METROPOLITAN AREA.

Sarani Khatua

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Postdoctoral Researcher, Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta, India

### ABSTRACT

Generating fiscal resource to enable provision of basic services and infrastructure has been a challenge especially in the Indian scenario, which has witnessed considerable urbanization in recent decades. The metropolitan areas, which dominates the urban scenario, often considered in holistic way. In order to delve deeper into the multiplicity of a metropolis, and look into the suburban scenario with regards to municipal revenue, this paper takes the case of suburban municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area. Through the review of recent municipal revenue data obtained from state government the study tries look beyond the core city. It explores to find that even after almost twenty seven years of structural adjustment initiative launched in India, percentage of own revenue remains low for the suburban municipalities and they are more dependent on central and state government grant. Being part of the metropolitan area, the municipalities remain within the domain of the planning authority and the dependence has remained intact, despite the respective local self-government are constitutionally recognized. This reiterates local self-government's status in India more prominently in Kolkata as state dependent rather than a separate governance institution.

**Keywords:** municipality, revenue, expenditure, metropolitan area, governance

### INTRODUCTION

Administering planetary urban is perhaps the biggest challenge the practitioners, policy makers, planners and academia is facing in the recent era. With increasing urban population, there is increasing pressure on land and other resources, increasing demand for services and amenities and infrastructure. This is beyond question that directly and indirectly urban management and governance is closely integrated with availability and access to finance. There have been several global institutions namely United Nations, World Bank etc. that have dealt upon methods of financing the city. Municipal finance is one such arena, which have acquired attention at various international and national levels and is considered to be vital in enabling city government capable to govern. The paper explores into the revenue and expenditure of principal items in

local suburban units of the 13th largest agglomeration of the world (UN-DESA, 2018) and a prominent metropolis of global south. India being the hot-spot of urbanization in recent decades have exhibited diverse phenomena with respect to urbanization and there have been some important legal and planning measures taken up since nineties that helped put Indian urban in global map. Finance is one of the crucial aspects of urban management and there have been various studies and efforts to enhance fiscal resource at the local level. Through case study of municipal revenue of multiple suburban units of a single metropolis, would like to argue that even after decades of metropolitan planning, the suburban units lag behind with respect to generation of municipal revenue generation.

### **POSITING THE STUDY AREA WITHIN CONTEMPORARY MUNICIPAL AND METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

In India constitutional recognition was first provided to urban local self-governments in 1992 through 74th Constitution Amendment Act 1992 (henceforth 74th CAA 1992). A number of functions and responsibilities were devolved to the third tier of government. In the initial years a Model Municipal Law was also drafted by the Central government as an exemplary to the state governments. However urban being primarily a state government agenda, drafting and enactment of municipal law was vested with state government and likewise every state has its own set of criteria and threshold for formation of Municipal Corporation and municipality. This is not to state that none of the urban unit in the country had any local self-government prior to the nineties. Statutory towns existed in India not only in pre nineties but also in pre-colonial India. Making local self-government a third tier paved way for a more a decentralised local and regional development. In India, however, devolution of financial responsibilities was not done at par with the devolution of responsibilities and it remains a critical for the cities' functioning even today (Bandyopadhyay, 2014; Mohanty, Mishra, Goyal, Jerome 2007; Bandyopadhyay and Rao, 2009). Insufficient fiscal resource at the municipal level is a major constraint in basic service delivery and has been repeatedly mentioned in various public and academic research documents (Chattopadhyay 2015; HLCFI, 2012; HPEC, 2011). The 14th Finance Commission (GOI, 2014) particularly stressed on implementation of properly formed local self-government in the urban areas so as to avail higher financial support from the central government. Strengthening municipal finance and ways to do it have been looked into through various researches (Sahasranaman and Prasad 2014; NIPFP, 2011; Pethe, Mishra, Rakhe 2009; Sridhar and Reddy, 2009).

Many projects and initiatives on infrastructure and service provision including those targeting slum renewal in post nineties era have been continually including capacity building of municipal governance as a subsidiary project component. Introduction of double entry accounting system, regular preparation of municipal budget, uploading of financial statements to municipal websites,

which mark significant changes in municipal administration are instances of such initiatives. Based on the 74th CAA 1992, each state enacted Municipal Acts or amended the Municipal Act if any existed before.

Kolkata situated within the regional state of West Bengal in the eastern part of India had local self-government prior to 74th CAA 1992. It is important to note Kolkata could be denoted several ways. The city is named as Kolkata while the agglomeration surrounding the city is Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (KUA), which is a census concept. Kolkata metropolis is Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA), which is the planning area and legal entity administered by the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) and consists of the agglomeration as well as the adjacent rural areas. West Bengal Municipal Act 1993 was enacted for all the municipalities in the state; while for larger cities, West Bengal Municipal Corporation Act was enacted in 2005 except for the cities of Kolkata and Howrah, which are administered by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act 1980 and Howrah Municipal Act 1981 respectively.

The Kolkata Metropolitan Area consists of 41 statutory towns, of which 4 are Municipal Corporations including KMC and 36 are municipalities, 1 Cantonment Board and 1 Industrial Township. Demographically, the towns of KMA are classified in six classes (Table 1).

**Table 1: Class of Towns in Kolkata Metropolitan Area**

Class	Population	Numbers
I	100,000 and Above	33
II	50,000 -99,999	7
III	20,000-49,999	1
IV	10,000 - 19,999	1
V	5,000 - 9,999	-
VI	less than 5,000	1

Source: Towns Amenities, Census 2011 (GOI, 2011) and List of towns and cities in KMA, KMDA.

Note: Two towns falling within Class IV and Class VI category are Cantonment Board and Industrial Townships respectively, whose data is not provided for municipal statistics. Apart from the statutory towns, Kolkata Metropolitan Area has a number of census towns which are under rural administrations and are also below class I and II category.

In the study I would particularly look into the capabilities of the suburban municipalities which are within the Kolkata Metropolitan Area but beyond the administrative boundary of the core city or Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), in terms of their dependency on grant and their own tax and non-tax revenue.

From being 9th largest agglomeration in the world in 1950 to 13th in 2015 and further projected to move to 16th rank in the 2030, Kolkata's demographic growth does not exactly match with its Indian counterparts namely, Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru. A significant part of the metropolis is constituted by towns and cities, formed in the colonial period including the core city. KMA does not exactly reflect a globalizing metropolis in its entirety. Though there are number of attempts in putting the metropolis in the global map, a close scrutiny reveals that only a part of the metropolis, characterised by the formation of Newtown in the east, primarily contributes to the global aspiration of the state. Nevertheless with structural adjustment taking over India in nineties, most of the municipalities, old and new have gone through revamping and there have been a mass regularization of municipal services.

### **CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY.**

Suburbanization, peri-urbanization, rurbanization have been doing rounds as different ways of urbanization process that is changing cities as well as notions around cities with some arguing suburbanization dominating urbanization process (Keil, 2017). Different research studies, policy oriented initiatives around the world, in both global north and south, are being undertaken to analyse the huge change experienced and rising expectations from these areas with regard to provision of basic services, infrastructure and amenities. In this respect a number of guiding documents are prepared by organizations as well as urban academics and practitioners who called in for better efficacy at the local development scenario through fiscal decentralization (Alonso and Andrew, 2018; Kamiya and Zhang, 2016; Farvacque-Vitkovic and Kopanyi, 2014; UN-HABITAT, 2009).

At the national level India initiated Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the nineties through constitutional recognition provided to the local-self-government in both rural and urban areas. Within SAP, fiscal decentralization continues to be most problematic, as the responsibility of tax sharing primarily a state subject (Mohanty 2014; Mohanty, Mishra, Goyal and Jeromi, 2008).

But municipal bodies within a metropolitan area have the added advantage of being provided support through metropolitan development authority. A metropolitan development authority is a state created legal entity that administers the region within its jurisdiction and hence administers water supply, solid waste management, sewerage and drainage etc. Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta) Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) created through Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority Act 1973 was entrusted with administering basic services and amenities.

Simultaneously, there is specialized institution—Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta) Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority (KMWSA), which is entrusted with the responsibility of providing water supply and sanitation in the metropolitan area. Suburban municipalities in KMA have been dependant on both KMWSA and KMDA for providing basic services and infrastructure to the residents of the respective municipalities. KMWSA has recently merged with KMDA. Though local self-government has gained constitutional recognition in the wake of 74th CAA 1992, importance of the parastatal organization has not decreased. Intergovernmental cooperation, planning and working is essential for sustainable governance of a metropolitan area (Sivaramakrishnan, 2015). This further augments the requirement of increasing revenue for the municipalities; neither should it overlook how much is expended from the municipal income for basic services. As already mentioned, in India there are two forms of urban, one with urban administration and the other with rural administration.

## **METHODOLOGY**

As already stated, the study is based on the municipal receipt and expenditures of the other towns and cities of KMA outside the core city Kolkata, administered by KMC. In this paper, I have focussed on the suburban municipalities keeping aside the core city, since in discussion of the agglomeration information on individual small and medium cities gets marginalized.

A new municipal entity, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was formed recently, by merging Bidhannagar Municipality with Rajarhat Newtown and adjoining rural areas. Hence, in this study, data for Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation is not available and that of erstwhile Bidhannagar Municipality has been taken into account. The study is based on receipts and expenditures of municipal units, which of Cantonment Board and Industrial townships are not provided in the statistical data set available from Department of Statistics and Programme Monitoring. 2013-2014 was the latest year available till January 2019 for Municipal Statistics in West Bengal, which has been referred for the present study. Data for subsequent years are yet to be released by the Department of Planning, Statistics and Program Monitoring (DPSPM), Government of West Bengal. It is important to note that in the consolidated Municipal Statistics, data for Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) was not provided. Apart from the Census 2011 data have been used.

## **SUBURBAN MUNICIPALITIES IN KOLKATA METROPOLITAN AREA (KMA)**

This is beyond doubt that urban finance is closely integrated with urban management. Higher urbanization is not restricted to demographic growth or increasing number of towns and cities alone. In India, growth of towns does not necessarily mean increase in number of municipal governments. Since in India, there are two distinct form of urban, one census urban and the other statutory urban and the criteria for their formation is different. Statutory urban, remains subject

to state definition and is stringent particularly in the regional state of West Bengal, where Kolkata Metropolis is located. The minimum population to form a municipality in the West Bengal is 30,000, while that for Municipal Corporation is 50,000. Also despite having a set of criteria, their formation is controlled by the state government. Each municipal formation is accompanied by a need to provide basic service and infrastructure to the urban residents. In fact municipalisation or even municipal expansion also happens on logic of providing better service and amenities to the residents. It is accompanied by higher demand for infrastructure and amenities. Better municipal revenue generation implies better service management like provision of piped water supply, drainage, solid waste management, roads etc. Being part of the KMA, the municipalities under discussion are under Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) — a state owned planning body, which has been instrumental in preparing planning for the metropolitan area and provision of infrastructure and services in the city region. Most of the municipal entities in the metropolis other than that of Kolkata and Howrah were either under suspension or supersession. Therefore constitutional recognition provided to the municipalities marked crucial to the urban management with some obligatory functions provided to municipal bodies. Provision of water, sewerage and drainage, solid waste management, slum development, preparation of plan for the urban area some of the obligatory functions of the municipalities.

I have categorised distribution of towns and cities of KMA, distance-wise to show whether towns and cities near to the core city of Kolkata has better/higher receipt in form of tax and non-tax revenue.

Though the towns and cities under discussion fall within the greater metropolitan rare, their distance from the core city assumes significance. I have distributed the towns into categories (Table 2).

**Table 2: Distance of Suburban Towns and Cities from Core City in  
Kolkata Metropolitan Area**

Number of Towns	
Within 30 Kilometre	29
30-60 Kilometre	14

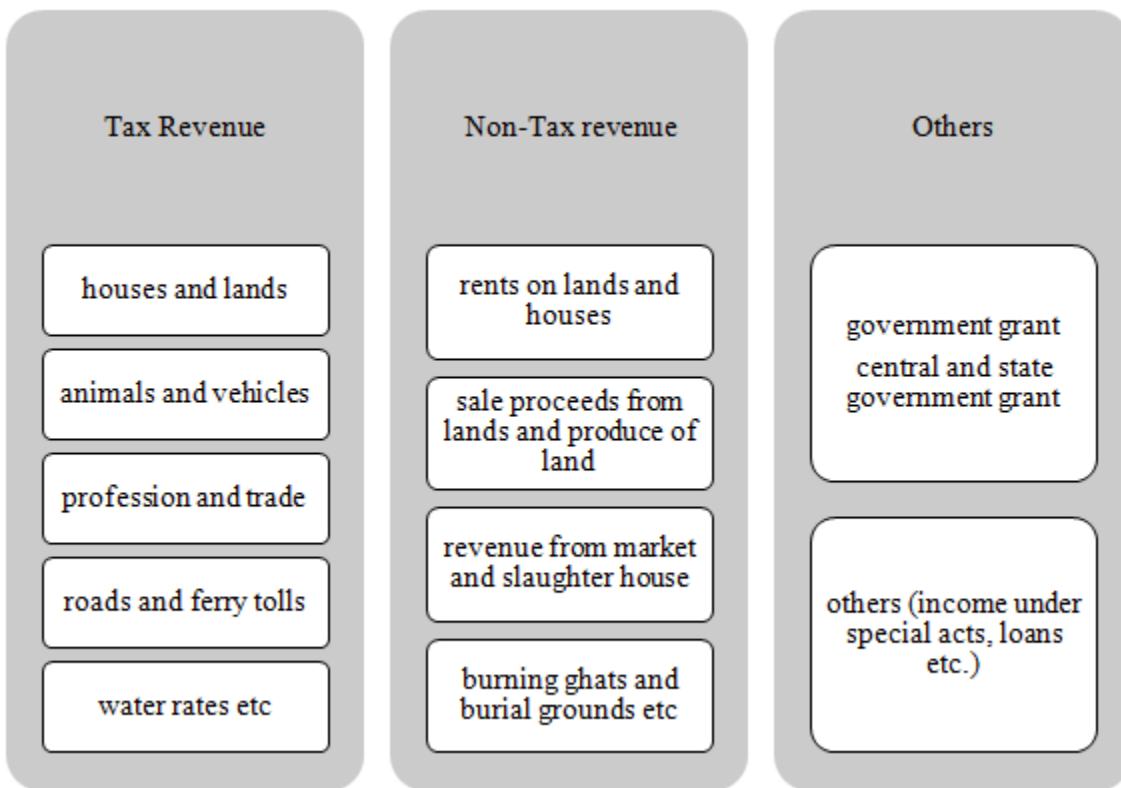
Note: This Table includes two other statutory towns Barrackpore Cantonment Board and Nabadiganta Industrial Township falling within KMA but are not municipalities.

Source: Calculated from list of cities in KMA available from KMDA and Census 2011.

Most of the towns are located within 30 Kilometres distance of the Kolkata city.

### **MUNICIPAL RECEIPT AND SUBURBAN KMA**

Every state in India has its own way of calculating revenue generation, though in general, tax and non-tax revenue, and grant forms major heads under which revenue is assessed. The study focus on the receipt of the Municipal revenue primarily in three forms—tax revenue, non-tax revenue and grant. (Figure 1).



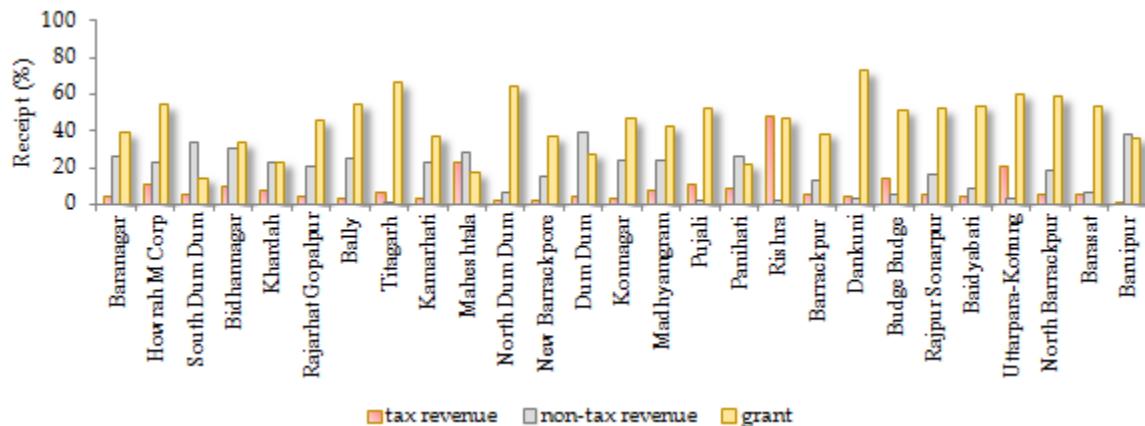
**Figure 1: Principal types of Municipal Receipts in West Bengal, India**

Source: Based on Municipal Statistics 2013-2014, West Bengal.

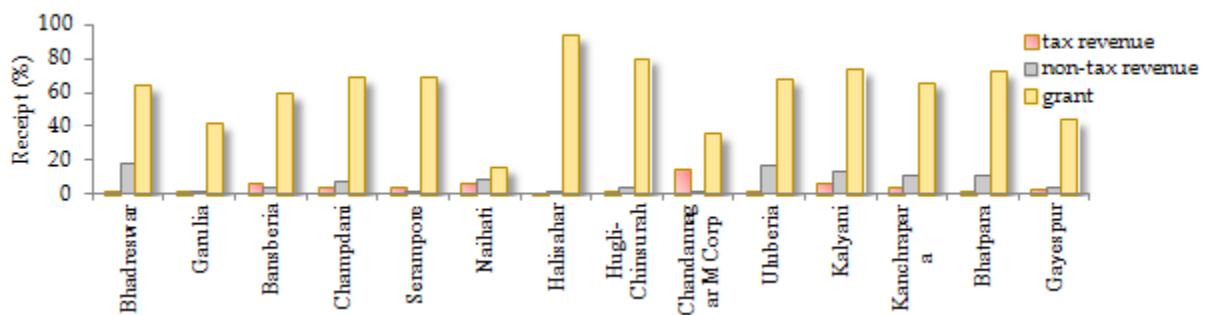
I intend to explore towns and cities nearer to the core present better receipt in terms of tax and non-tax revenue.

Though in India there have been attempts to increase municipalisation through incentive of better grant for a properly constituted local self-government (GOI, 2014), not much have been done to strengthen the fiscal capability of the municipality. Towns falling within 30 Kilometres distance

of the core town (Figure 2a) has higher percentage of tax and non-tax revenue in contrast to towns falling outside the 30 Kilometres periphery (Figure 2b).



**Figure 2a: Income of Suburban Municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area: Towns lying within 30 Kilometres of Core City in KMA**



**Figure 2b: Income of Suburban Municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area: Towns lying within 30-60 Kilometres of Core City in KMA**

Source: Based on Municipal Statistics, West Bengal. 2013-2014.

Municipal revenue in tax and non-tax form is supposedly the most important source of receipts, though after twenty seven years of the 74th CAA 1992, dependence of municipalities on government grant is clearly visible from the Figure 2a and 2b. Only 7 towns falling within 30 Kilometres distance from the city, has receipts in form of tax and non-tax revenue combined, higher than Grant (Figure 2a).

Again within municipal own revenue, share of non-tax revenue is higher compared to the tax-revenue. Though most of the towns in the megacity originated as industrial units in the colonial and continued to form the major industrial base of the city in post-independence period, in recent

years, the towns around the city has emerged predominantly as the residential suburb. Formation of a planned satellite town—Bidhannagar in 1965 and spilling of population outside the core city in the last decade has prominently raised the demographic burden in the immediate periphery of the city as they provide moderately cost residences and rental housing for population working and staying in the city proper as well as in the satellite town and Newtown area. In recent years there has been an eastward expansion to the metropolis with large number of villages being either changing to census towns owing to large scale conversion of population from farm to non-farm activities or they are being incorporated within existing municipal limit. This is evident from more than twice expansion of municipal towns-Rajpur Sonarpur and Baruipur. The physical expansion of the towns has been done through incorporating a number of adjacent rural units within municipal limit. Spatial expansion has been followed by demographic expansion. The growing importance of these two towns as residential suburb to Kolkata has obvious consequences in increasing demand for services and infrastructure. This is reflected in comparatively higher non-tax revenue in both the municipalities.

Low tax revenue in most of the suburban municipalities is characterised by lower valuation of property in the municipal areas. Many of these municipalities are old and there have been very few revision of tax rate. In many areas the added areas (which have been incorporated afterwards) are yet to have municipal taxation. For instance in case of Howrah Municipal Corporation, which is the second largest urban unit in the metropolitan area, 10 wards was added to the town in the eighties. In thirty years, the added wards are yet to have a proper municipal taxation system. In many municipalities, residents living in the added areas continue to pay tax at a rate, which was existent when the units were part of rural administration. Keeping low municipal tax is a populist measure to strengthen vote bank politics, which is prominent in this part of the country. Moreover with emphasis being given by the central government in disbursing fund to a properly formed local self-government, more and more municipal bodies are increasingly relying on government fund. As provided in the Table 3, average revenue receipt is lowest for tax and highest for grant in both cases—towns lying within and outside the 30 Kilometres distance from the core town. The difference is more prominent for towns lying outside, which shows higher dependence on grant on an average.

**Table 3: Average Receipt of Municipal Towns in KMA (in percent)**

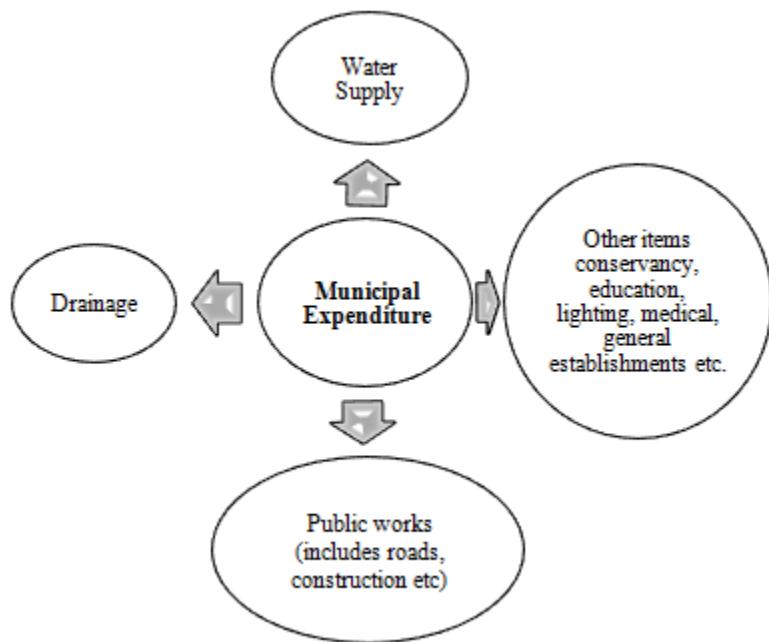
	Tax revenue	Non-tax revenue	Grant
Within 30Km	9.11	17.90	44.71
Outside 30 Km	4.44	7.34	60.43

Note: The Table excludes the 2 statutory towns of Barrackpore Cantonment Board and Nabadiganta Industrial Township, since they are not municipalities and hence not found in the municipal statistics data.

Source: Calculated from Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

### **MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURE AND SUBURBAN KMA**

In order to understand how the municipal receipt is spent, it is crucial to look into the expenditures of the same year by the respective municipalities. However it should be noted that municipal expenditure, while gives account of how much spent under different categories (Figure 3), does not necessarily clarify on which part of the municipal receipt is spent in which item. There is around 14 different items altogether towards which municipal expends.

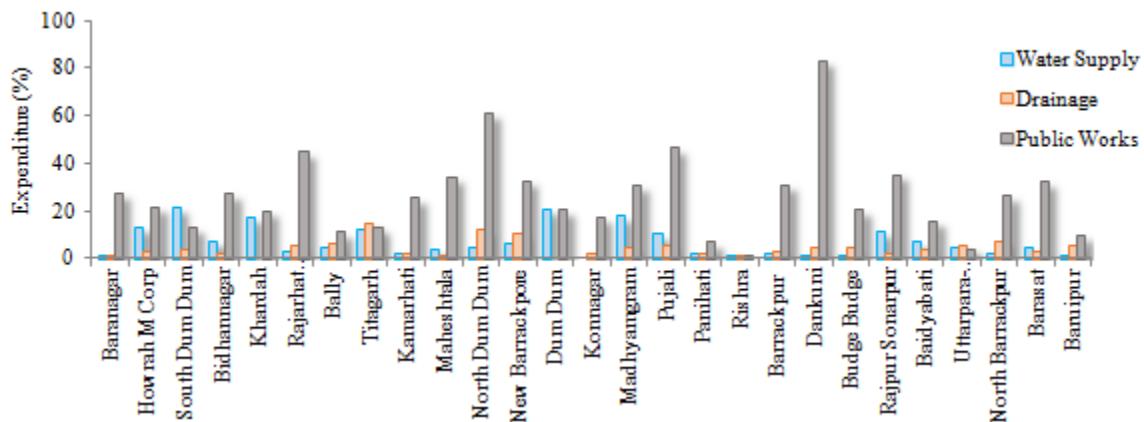


**Figure 3: Selective Principal Items of Expenditure by Municipalities in Kolkata**

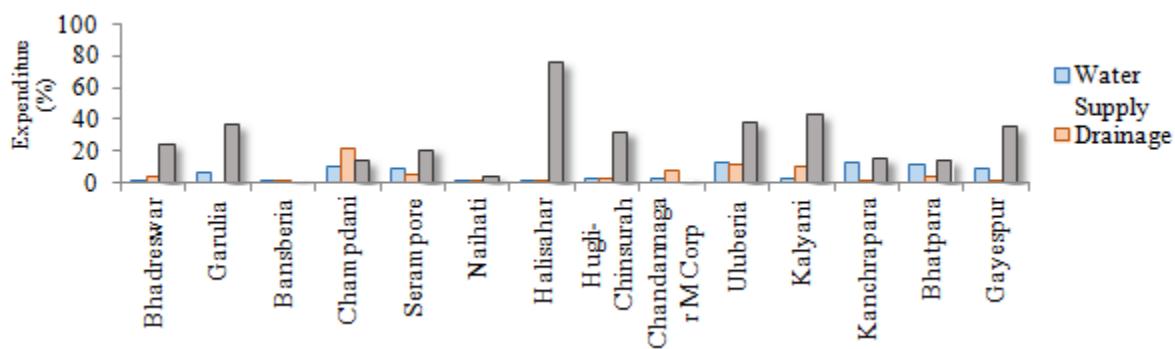
Source: Based on Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

Within 14 principal items of the municipal expenditure, there is general administrative cost, barring which more or less other goes into overall improvement in the municipality.

In the study, I have used the same year data set of municipal finance and focussed on three key issues, namely, water supply, drainage and public works (Figure 4a and 4b).



**Figure 4a: Expenditures by Suburban Municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area: Towns and cities lying within 30 Kilometres distance of core town**



**Figure 4b: Expenditures by Suburban Municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area: Towns and cities lying within 30-60 Kilometres of the Core city**

Source: Based on Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

In both case —cities and towns lying within and outside 30 Kilometres distance— percentage expenditure incurred on water supply is minimum. Expenditure incurred on the public works is higher compared to water supply and drainage. In all these towns, water supply is provisioned from KMWSA, since they are constituted within the metropolitan area or KMA. Though functions like providing water supply, sewerage have been transferred to urban local bodies, towns and cities within KMA continues to be serviced by the KMDA and its allied agency. A considerable portion of municipal expenditure is devoted to public works, namely roads, construction activities. In this case also, there is multiplicity of institutions including the KMDA and the respective urban local bodies that contribute infrastructural development of municipalities present within the larger metropolitan area. Though the study is discussing income

and expenditure by the urban local bodies, it should be taken into account that most of the functions executed by the urban local self-government are implemented under the planning authority. In cases of centrally and state government funded projects for infrastructural projects, service provisions, KMDA remains the implementing body even if the projects are executed at the municipalities, unlike that of the core Kolkata city. The municipal bodies of small and medium towns do not always have the necessary infrastructure to implement a project completely independently.

If average expenditure of these towns is considered (Table 4), towns within both categories—within and outside 30 Kilometres exhibit almost similar characteristics.

**Table 4: Average Expenditure of Municipal Towns in KMA: Showing Three Principal Items**

	Water Supply	Drainage	Public Works
(in percent)			
Within 30Km	6.87	4.40	26.25
Outside 30 Km	5.69	5.43	25.66

Source: Calculated from Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

## **OVERVIEW: MUNICIPAL FINANCE AND KOLKATA.**

In order to assess the average receipt and expenditure of the peripheral municipalities along a different line of category, average municipal receipt and expenditure is considered under a different category—Class I, II and III towns (Table 5 and 6). Municipal receipt through tax and non-tax revenue is higher in case of the class I towns but at the same time their dependence on grant is higher compared to the Class II and III towns (Table 5).

**Table 5: Average Receipt of Municipal Towns in Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA)**

	Tax revenue	Non-tax revenue	Grant
(in percent)			
Class I town	7.99	14.93	50.63
Class II and III towns	5.58	11.68	47.82

Source: Calculated from Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

When average percentage expenditure for the same is considered, it is obvious Class I towns would spend more as their receipt is higher than the other two classes of towns. In case of

drainage it is almost identical, but in case of public works expenditure contributed to public works is higher for the class II and III towns (Table 6).

**Table 6: Average Expenditure of Municipal Towns in KMA in Three Principal Items**

	Water Supply	Drainage	Public Works
(in percent)			
Class I town	6.81	4.79	23.84
Class II and III towns	4.78	4.59	35.17

Source: Calculated from Municipal Statistics. West Bengal. 2013-2014.

Municipal receipt in form of tax revenue is not exactly in coherence with expenditure. There is prominence of Grant and this is expected to sustain since the local self-government remains a governmental tool for both the higher levels of government.

Kolkata city administered by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation receives municipal revenue in form of tax revenue, which was around 29.7 percent in the year 2013-2014 and non-tax revenue as 25.6 percent of total receipt for the same year (KMC, 2015). This make revenue earned from own source (tax and non-tax combined) 55.3 percent of the total revenue. But being the largest as well as the central city of the metropolis Kolkata receives lion's share of grant coming from central, state government and from external sources. Earnings from grant constitute 44.6 percent of total revenue.

KMC receives tax revenue through 6 items, in which property tax has major share followed by trade tax, service tax etc. KMC earns non-tax revenue through almost 16 items (KMC, 2015), which is much diverse than that of its suburban counterparts and in general includes revenue from water supply, sewerage and drainage, roads, municipal markets, land and real estate to name few. A meagre proportion of revenue is also generated through Public Private Partnership (PPP), which is not frequently visible in other municipalities except few within KMA. Similarly in case of expenditure, KMC expends in 18 services that include water supply sewerage and drainage, parks, lightings, roadways etc. and in almost 30 items as part of special program (KMC, 2015). So comparing revenue income and expenditure of KMC with other towns and cities of the same is not always viable.

## **ROLE OF PLANNING AUTHORITY**

As already been stated, planning authority—KMDA plays a crucial part in the provisioning of some of key services to the suburban municipalities. KMDA along with its sister concerns, most prominently KMWSA, is engaged in trans-municipal development within the metropolitan area.

KMDA's main source of revenue has been fixed fund from the state government and project-based funding from central government. Land is another important source of KMDA's revenue (2009). KMDA entrusted with the preparing land-use plans and different statutory and perspective plans for the KMA as a whole and sectors are direct medium through which state government can intrude within the local development.

In the event of structural adjustment adopted in India, 74th CAA 1992, another initiative was taken up to decentralise the power to the lowest level. This was formation of a Metropolitan Planning Committee that would be entrusted with drafting the plan for the whole metropolitan area. One of the main features of the Metropolitan Planning Committee was that it would be constituted by the elected representatives of the local self-government and would not act as another state created organization. However the exact constitution of the Committee would be decided by the state government. Though Kolkata Metropolitan Planning Committee (KMPC) was formed as one of the first in the country, and was also responsible for drafting sector-wise plans for Vision 2025 for Kolkata Metropolitan Area in 2000, KMDA remained its primary technical support. At present KMPC stands almost defunct. Over the years the role of state government has increased in urban arena and so has increased the influence of the central government. In this respect, independence of municipal governments as the third tier government stands rather weak. Planning authorities, which are directly under state government, remains more influential in case of municipal development, particularly in respect of sub-urban municipalities.

## **CONCLUSION**

As already discussed there are other forms of municipal receipt and expenditure but their percentage contribution to the respective head is minimal. It is evident from the above discussion that even after two decades of structural adjustment the local self-governments are yet to realize their full potentials and in fact the arrangement between the three tiers of government—the central, state and the local self-government is such that the lowest tier is heavily dependent on its higher counterparts. With a large numbers of projects and policies now aimed at municipal level, availability of finance to the local bodies becomes crucial. With programs initiated at the central level and aimed at the city, grant is more accessible. Formation of local self-government is also a state subject, which means the criteria to form a municipal government rest with the state government and if the municipality is within a metropolitan area, the state government's influence is doubled. The situation of suburban municipalities of Kolkata Metropolitan Area is not different. The core city Kolkata has a well-developed municipal system with different departments devoted to different service delivery and a large base of municipal tax system. Simultaneously, KMC receives higher amount of fiscal support not only from government sources but through international organizations. The situation is not same for the suburban

municipalities. With very low percentage of tax and non-tax revenue, dependence on government grant and KMDA is inevitable. This is largely owing to the fact that sharing of revenue to be raised by the municipal government is decided at the state level. The revenue situation in the suburban municipalities suggest that challenges of municipal finance is more critical in case of the peripheral towns and cities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I am indebted to my host institution—CUES for providing the office assistance and my advisor—Prof. Mahalaya Chatterjee for her support.

## **REFERENCES**

- Alonso, J. M.; Andrews, R. (2018) Fiscal decentralisation and local government efficiency: Does relative deprivation matter. *Environment. & Planning. C. Politics. & Space.* DOI: 10.1177/2399654418784947.
- Bandyopadhyay, S. (2014). *Municipal Finance in India: Some Critical Issues*. International Center for Public Policy Working Paper Series Paper 11.
- Bandyopadhyay, S. and Rao, M. G. (2009). Fiscal Health of Selected Indian cities. Policy Research Working Paper No. 4863. World Bank Institute, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Division: The World Bank.
- Chattopadhyay, S. (2015). Financing India's Urban Infrastructure: Current Practices and Reform Options. *Journal. Of Infrastructure Development.* 7(1). 55–75. DOI: 10.1177/0974930615581224
- Farvacque-Vitkovic, C.; Kopanyi, M. (Ed). (2014) *Municipal Finances. Handbook for Local Government*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.
- Government of India. Town Amenities. 2011. Available online: <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/DCHB.html> (Accessed on 01/01/2018)
- Government of India. (2014). *Fourteenth Finance Commission, Performance Grant Scheme. 2017-2020 Toolkit*. New Delhi: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, India.
- Government of West Bengal. (2016). *Municipal Statistics of West Bengal 2013-2014*. Kolkata: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Department of Statistics and Programme Implementation, West Bengal.
- HPEC. (2011). *Report on Indian Urban Infrastructure and Services*. New Delhi: Ministry of Urban Development, India.

HLCFI (2012). *Report of the Sub-Committee on Financing Urban Infrastructure in the 12th Plan*. New Delhi: Ministry of Urban Development, India.

Kamiya, Marco. ; Zhang, L, Ed. (2016) *Finance for City Leaders Handbook. Improving Municipal Finance to Deliver Better Services*. Nairobi: UN-HABITAT. Available online: <https://unhabitat.org/books/finance-for-city-leaders-handbook/> (Accessed on 08/02/2019)

Keil, R. (2017). Extended urbanization, “disjunct fragments” and global suburbanisms, *Environment. & Planning. D, Society and Space*. DOI: 10.1177/0263775817749594.

Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) (2015). *Budget Statement*.2015-2016. Kolkata: Central Municipal Office.

Mohanty, P.K. (2014). A Municipal Financing Framework in I. J. Ahluwalia, R. Kanbur, P.K. Mohanty (Ed). *Urbanisation in India*, New Delhi: Sage. 119-146.

Mohanty, P K.; Mishra, B. M.; Goyal, R.; Jeromi, P.D. (2007). Municipal Finance in India: An Assessment, Department of Economic Analysis and Public Policy. Study No. 26. Mumbai: Reserve Bank of India.

National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) (2011). *Municipal Finance matters. India Municipal Finance Report*. Available online: [https://www.nipfp.org.in/media/medialibrary/2013/08/IMFR\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](https://www.nipfp.org.in/media/medialibrary/2013/08/IMFR_FINAL_REPORT.pdf) (Accessed on 26/01/2019).

Pethé, A.; Mishra, B.M.; Rakhe, P.B. (2009). Strengthening Decentralisation – Augmenting the Consolidated Fund of the States by the Thirteenth Finance Commission: A Normative Approach, Development Research Group. Study No. 29, Mumbai: RBI. August.

Sahasranaman, A.; Prasad, V. (2014). Sustainable Financing for Indian Cities. *Yojana.*, 58, September, 47-51.

Sivaramakrishnan, K.C. (2015). *Governance of Megacities, Fractured Thinking, Fragmented Setup*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sridhar, K, S.; Reddy, A.V. (2009). *Land as a Municipal Financing Option: A Pilot Study from India. Final Report, Thirteenth Finance Commission*. Government of India, January.

United Nations DESA/Population Division (2018). The 30 Largest Urban Agglomerations Ranked by Population Size at Each Point in Time, 1950-2035. *World Urbanization Prospects*. Available online: [https://population.un.org/wup/Download/Files/WUP2018-F11a-30\\_Largest\\_Cities.xls](https://population.un.org/wup/Download/Files/WUP2018-F11a-30_Largest_Cities.xls). (Accessed on 25/01/2019)

UN-HABITAT (2009). *Guide to Municipal Finance*. Nairobi, Kenya. Available online: [www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org).

Discussion Paper No. 1/2016 (42)  
December 2016

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

**Sarani Khatua**



Centre for Urban Economic Studies  
Department of Economics  
University of Calcutta

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

**Sarani Khatua**



**December 2016**

**Centre for Urban Economic Studies  
Department of Economics  
University of Calcutta  
1 Reformatory Street  
Kolkata 700 027  
India  
[cuescu@gmail.com](mailto:cuescu@gmail.com)  
+91-33-2479-0156**

**Copyright: Director**

**Centre for Urban Economic Studies**

**University of Calcutta**

**First Published: December 2015**

**Publisher: Mahalaya Chatterjee**

**CUES**

**1 Reformatory Street**

**Kolkata 700027**

**Printer: Suban**

**33/A, Biplabi Pulin Das Street**

**Kolkata – 700009**

**Mobile : 9874555986**

## Preface

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

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

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

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

Mahalaya Chatterjee  
Professor and Director  
Centre for Urban Economic Studies  
Calcutta University

## **Improvement, Resettlement, Redevelopment and Right to the City:**

### **The Case of Kolkata**

#### **Introduction**

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

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

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank Website [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) cites the World Development Report 1978 with this theme though it is not mentioned explicitly in the Report itself unlike other World Development Reports.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At present the state is embarking on a new journey through change from five year plans strategic plans in 2017 to be shaped by the newly formed NITI<sup>2</sup> Ayog, which has replaced the Planning Commission. The strategic plan is supposed to be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals adopted recently worldwide.

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

---

<sup>2</sup> The full form of NITI Ayog is National Institution for Transforming India.

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

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

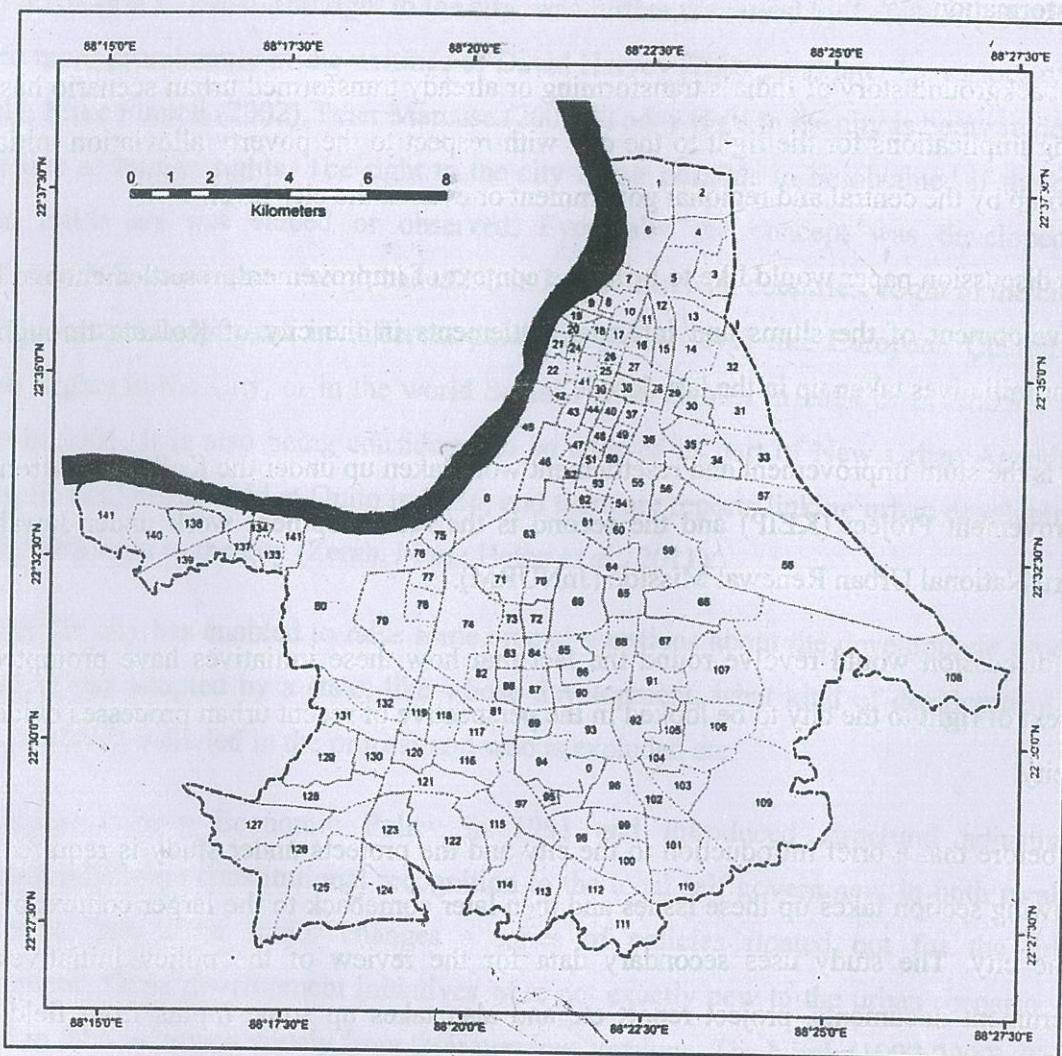
This discussion paper would like to bring the context of improvement, resettlement and lastly redevelopment of the slums and informal settlements in the city of Kolkata through two major initiatives taken up in the last decade.

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

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

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

**Figure No.1: Kolkata City**



Source: KMC.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The two initiatives under discussion are the:

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

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

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

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

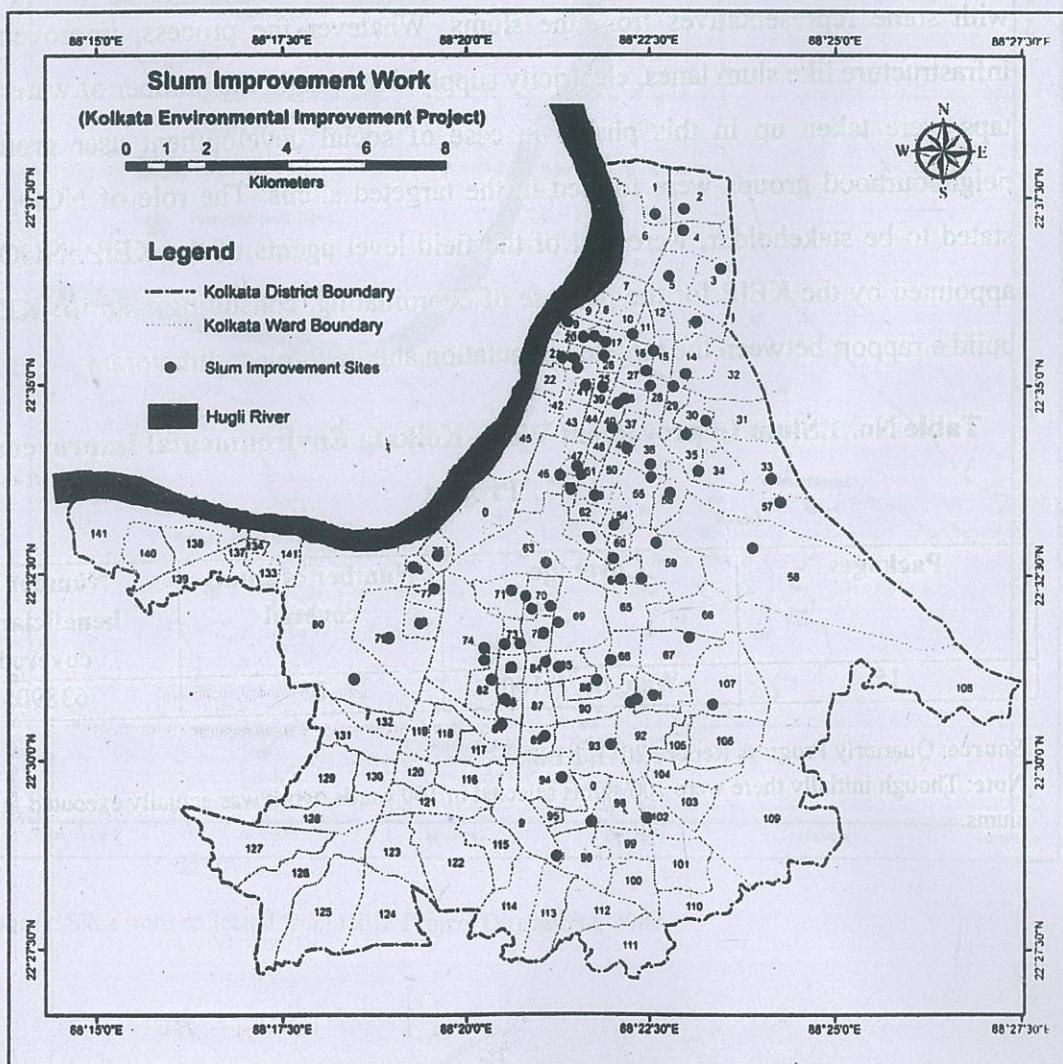
- KEIP is also a multidimensional project, not witnessed in Kolkata urban scenario before. It had four components addressing four environmental aspects, namely, solid waste management, sewerage and drainage, canal rehabilitation and slum improvement. There was another component, namely the Capacity Building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

#### ***Slum Improvement-KEIP:***

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

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

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



Source: Sites were collected from KEIP project directorate, 2009

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

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

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

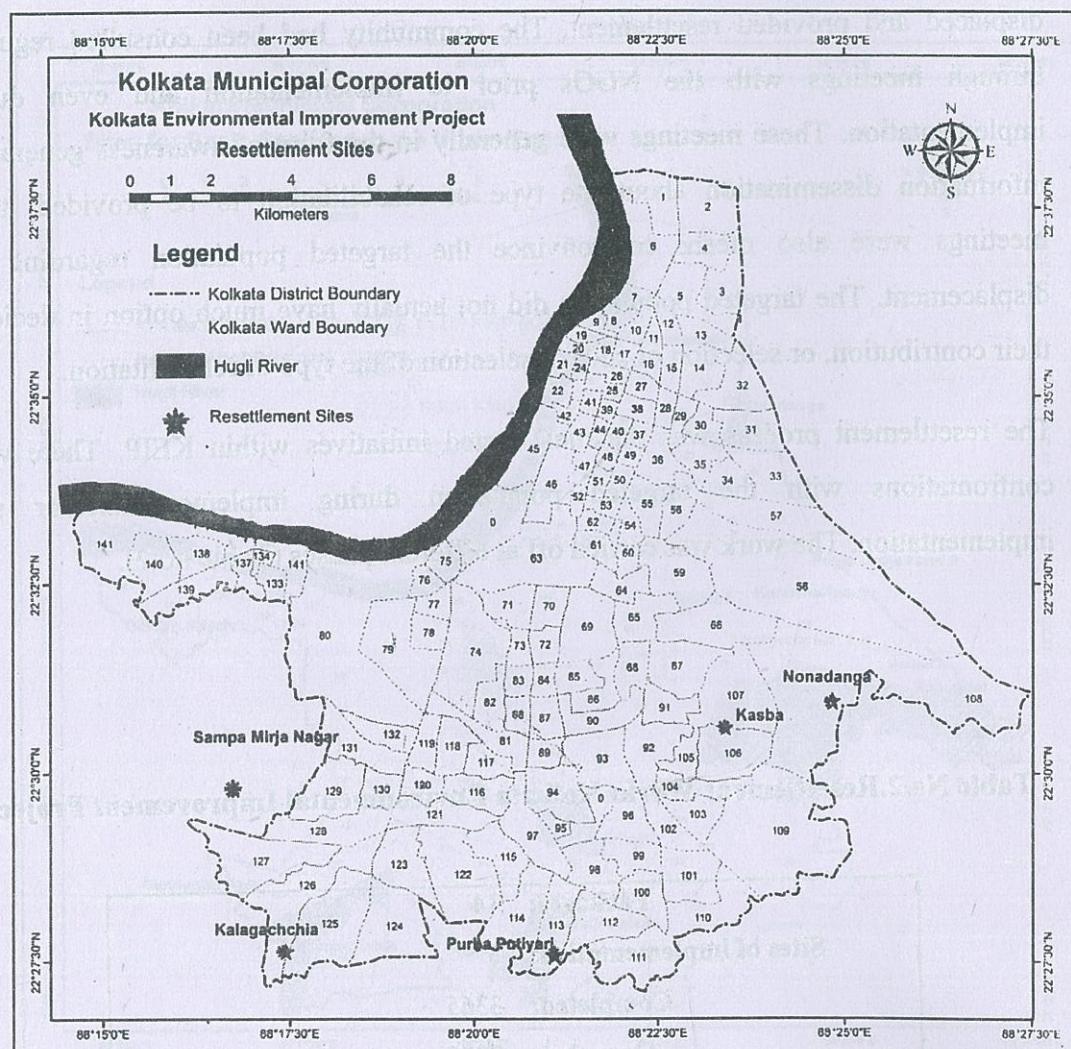
**Source:** Quarterly Progress Report, 2011, KEIP.

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

### **Resettlement-KEIP:**

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

**Figure No.3: Resettlement Sites in Kolkata under KEIP**



Source: Sites were collected from KEIP Project Directorate, 2009

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

The stakeholder consultation meeting would be constituted by the Borough Chairman<sup>3</sup>, ward councillor, the project directorate, the NGOs, and the targeted community. There was also a survey, which was actually enumeration of the canal bank households to be displaced and provided resettlement. The community had been consulted regularly through meetings with the NGOs prior to implementation and even during implementation. These meetings were generally in the form of awareness generation, information dissemination about the type of rehabilitation to be provided; these meetings were also means to convince the targeted population regarding the displacement. The targeted population did not actually have much option in deciding their contribution, or selection of sites or selection of the type of rehabilitation.

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

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

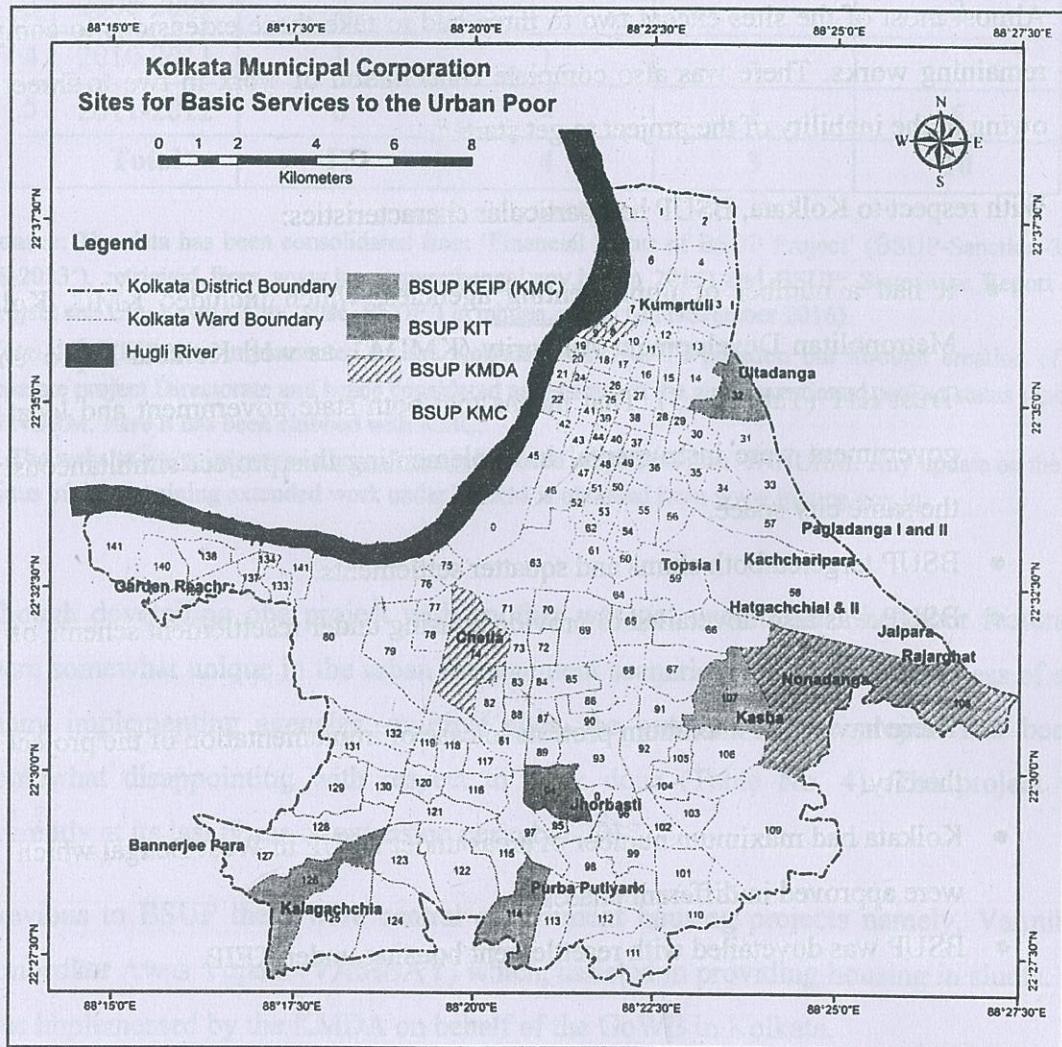
<b>Packages:</b> 14
<b>Sites of implementation:</b> 5
<b>Completed:</b> 3365
<b>Occupied:</b> 2908

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

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

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

**Figure No. 4. BSUP Sites in Kolkata**



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

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

With respect to Kolkata, BSUP had particular characteristics:

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

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

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

**Source:** The data has been consolidated from ‘Financial Status of BSUP Project’ (BSUP-Sanction-31-08-2013’), retrieved from [www.jnnurmwestbengal.gov.in](http://www.jnnurmwestbengal.gov.in) (on 2014) and BSUP: State wise Report at Project and City Level (‘City\_wise\_BSUP’) in [mhupa.gov.in](http://mhupa.gov.in) (on November 2016).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: BSUP: State wise Report at Project and City Level ('City\_wise\_BSUP') in [mhupa.gov.in](http://mhupa.gov.in) (on November 2016).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Source:** Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India.

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

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

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

### **Right to the city and security of tenure**

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

At present the city has different forms of tenure:

- Slums still under the thika tenancy.

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

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

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

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

estate agencies the access to these areas through directly getting in contact with both the thika tenants and the bharatiyas<sup>4</sup>.

### Box No.3. Brief on Major Thika Tenancy Acts

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

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

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

### Right to the city and participation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Right to the city and legality/illegality**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Vulnerability and Right to the City**

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

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

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

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

## **Conclusion**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Bibliography

Asian Development Bank 1995: *Involuntary Resettlement*, August, from [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org) accessed on December 2010.

Beall, Jo and Sean Fox 2009: 'Urban poverty and vulnerability' in *Cities and Development*, pp. 103-137 Routledge, London, New York.

Ceil, Chenoy 2013: *Deconstructing West Bengal Thika Tenancy*, Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2293311> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2293311>, accessed on December 2016.

Chatterjee, Partha 2004: *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, Permanent Black, Delhi.

Cities Alliances (The) 2005: *Cities without Slums Action Plan*, [www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org) accessed on November 2008.

Comptroller and Auditor General of India 2016: *Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on General and Social Sector For the year ended March 2015* Government of West Bengal, Report No. 3, [sajindia.gov.in](http://sajindia.gov.in), accessed on October 2016.

Earle, Lucy 2011: *Citizenship, Right to the City and State Fragility*, Working Paper no.87 in Crisis State Working Paper Series No.2, Crisis State Research Centre, LSE, UKAID (Department for International Development), UK.

Ghosh, Swati 1992: *Thika Tenancy in Bustees of Calcutta: A Study*, Discussion Paper No. 6, Centre for Urban Economics, Department of Economics, University of Calcutta.

Harvey, David 2008: 'The Right to City' in *New Left Review*, Volume no. 53, September-October, pp. 23-48.

Hickey, Samuel and Giles Mohan, (ed.) 2004: *Participation. From Tyranny to Transformation*, Zed Books, London, New York.

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

Kolkata Municipal Corporation 2006: *Resettlement Planning Document*, India: KEIP, (Supplementary Financing), Updated Resettlement Plan, Document Stage, Draft for Consultations, Kolkata.

Lefebvre, Henry (translated by Elenore Koffman and Elizabeth Lebas) 1996: *Writings on Cities*, Blackwell, Oxford and Malden.

Marcuse, Peter 2009: 'From critical urban theory to the right to the city' in *City*, Volume 13(2-3), June-September, pp.185-196.

Mitra, Iman 2016: 'Recycling the Urban: Migration Settlement and the Question of Labour in Contemporary Kolkata' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Volume No. 51 (26-27), June, pp.55-62.

Mukherjee, A and A.Alam 2014: *West Bengal Thika Tenancy Laws, Tax'N Law*, Kolkata.

Parnell, Susan and Edgar Pieterse 2010: 'The 'Right to the City': Institutional Imperatives of a Developmental State' in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume no. 34 (1), pp. 146-62.

Patel, Sheela, Celine D'cruz and Sundar Burra, (2002): "Beyond Evictions in a Global City: People-Managed Resettlement in Mumbai", *Environment & Urbanization*, Volume 14 (1), April, pp 159-172.

Planning Commission (GoI) 2012: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017), Government of India, New Delhi.

Planning Commission (GoI) 2007: *Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2011)*, Government of India, New Delhi.

Planning Commission (GoI) 2002: Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), Government of India, New Delhi.

Purcell, Mark 2002: 'Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant' in *GeoJournal*, Volume no. 58, pp 99-108.

Ramanathan, Usha 2006: "Illegality and the Urban Poor" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Volume 41 (29), July, pp 3193-3197.

Registrar General & Census Commissioner 2011: *India Housing Stock, Amenities & Assets in Slums*, Census of India, Government of India.

United Nations 2015: *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, General Assembly, UN, (A/RES/70/1) in [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) accessed on July 2016.

United Nations 2000: *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, September from [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) accessed on November 2008.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) 2000: "The Global Campaign for Good Governance" in *Environment and Urbanisation*, Volume 12(1).

United Nations Habitat 2006: *What is the Urban Management Programme? Introduction and Strategy* from [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org) accessed on March 2009.

World Bank 2001. *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*. *World Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New York  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11856>, accessed on December 2016.

World Bank 1990. *World Development Report 1990: Poverty*, Oxford University Press, New York, World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5973>, accessed on December 2016.

World Bank 1978: *World Development Report 1978*. World Bank, Washington D.C., [http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/297241468339565863/pdf/PUB20800REP\\_LACEMENT0WDR01978.pdf](http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/297241468339565863/pdf/PUB20800REP_LACEMENT0WDR01978.pdf), accessed on December 2016.

Zerah, Marie Helen, Veronique Dupont and Staphanie-Tama Lama Rewal 2011: *Urban Policies and Right to the City in India. Rights Responsibilities and Citizenship*, UNESCO and CSH, New Delhi.

**Centre for Urban Economic Studies**

**Discussion Paper Series**

1. Solid Waste Management in Calcutta Metropolis – *Pabitra Giri and Sulipi De* (May 1992)
2. Waterlogging and Issues Relating to Drainage in Calcutta Metropolitan District – *Arpita Bhattacharyya* (June 1992)
3. The Structure and Working of an Urban Labour Market in India: A Survey of Two Residential Locations in Calcutta – *Asis Kumar Banerjee* (July 1992)
4. Evolution and Growth of Municipal Towns in Calcutta Metropolitan Area – *Mahalaya Chatterjee* (August 1992)
5. Wholesale Market: Study of a Market in Calcutta – *Projwal Sengupta* (September 1992)
6. Thika Tenancy in Bustees of Calcutta: A Study – *Swati Ghosh* (October 1992)
7. Aspects of Goods Flow in Calcutta Metropolitan Area – *Pabitra Giri* (November 1992)
8. Housing in Calcutta: Problems and Policy Issues – *Nipa Ghosh* (December 1992)
9. The Metro Rail of Calcutta: A Study – *Kuntala Lahiri* (January 1993)
10. Passenger Transport in Calcutta Metropolitan District – *Sudeshna Sen* (February 1993)
11. Consumption and Income in Calcutta Metropolitan Area – *Indrani Chakrabarty* (March 1993)
12. Some Aspects of Calcutta Port – *Arun Prasad Sen* (April 1993)
13. Metropolitan Growth and Demographic Changes in Calcutta – *Pabitra Giri and Sukla Bhaduri* (May 1993)
14. Urban Environmental Issues: A Study of Calcutta – *Ashish K. Ghosh* (January 1994)
15. Calcutta Port: Problems and Prospects – *Sachinandan Sau* (February 1994)
16. Urban Decentralization: A Case Study of Kalyani Township – *Nandita Dasgupta* (August 1994)
17. Urban Sanitation Problems: A Study of Calcutta – *Swadesh Kumar Bhattacharya* (September 1994)
18. Market Towns in Tamilnadu and West Bengal – Eight Development Issues for Field Research and Action – *Barbara Harriss-White* (June 1997)
19. Wetlands and Urban Environment - *Ashish K. Ghosh, Sivabrata Chatterjee and K. J. Nath* (July 1999)
20. Contrasting Urban Patterns: West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala – *Biplab Dasgupta* (May 2000)
21. The Indian Hill Stations: A Study in Social Space – *Aditi Chatterji* (July 2000)

22. Transportation Policy for the Control of Vehicular Air Pollution in Urban Areas: Applying Lessons from North to Calcutta, India – *Madumati Dutta* (September 2001)
23. Urbanisation in the Pre-colonial Bengal –*Biplab Dasgupta* (December 2001)
24. Emerging Issues in Bio-Medical Waste Management – *Sushma Wadhwani* (January 2002)
25. Urbanization and Agricultural Change in North-Eastern India – *J. B. Ganguly* (October 2003)
26. An Analytical Study of the Growth Experience in the Small Industries of Howrah and Burdwan Districts, 1988-2000 – *Nandita Basak* (October 2003)
27. Truck Terminals in Kolkata Metropolitan Area: Master Planning and Market Response – *Anis Mukhopadhyay* (August 2004)
28. Labour Market Segregation and Gender Bias –*Pampa Sengupta* (September 2004)
29. Urbanisation, Migration and Urban Society in Colonial Bengal - *Biplab Dasgupta* (December 2005)
30. The Growth Experience of the Small Scale Industries of North 24 Parganas and Medinipur Districts, West Bengal, 1988-2001- *Nandita Basak* (October 2007)
31. An Environmental Valuation of an Urban Wetland: A Case Study of the Jodhpur Park Lake – *Simanti Banerjee and Ashish K. Ghosh* (2007)
32. Evolution and Growth of Municipal Towns in Kolkata Metropolitan Area – *Mahalaya Chatterjee* (August 2008)
33. Polluting Behaviour of Different Modes of Transport in Big Cities and Policy Implications for Pollution Reduction: The Case of Kolkata, India – *Madhumati Dutta, Mohit Roy and Sudip K. Roy* (July 2009)
34. Spatial and Economic Changes in Asansol, 1951-2001(1/2011) - *Mousumi Ghosh*
35. Some Aspects of Urbanisation in Eastern India (2/2011)- *Somali Chakravorty & Malabika Dasgupta*
36. Modern Mobility, rejuvenation of Howrah and East-West Metro (1/2012)- *Anis Mukhopadhyay*
37. Kolkata Metro: A Study On Passenger Movement And Financial Health (1990-2010) (2/2012) - *Koyel Bhattacharjee*
38. Symbolic Urban Landscape: Science City, Kolkata (1/2014) – *Aditi Chatterji*
39. Use Of Pedestrian Bridge: A Case Study In Kolkata (2/2014) – Tarun Kumar Sarkar
40. Perspectives of Planned New Towns, Its Transformation, Evaluation, Challenges and Problems: Case of West Bengal (1/2015) – Joy Karmakar
41. Growth of Ports and Port Towns in India in the Post Independence Period: in the context of Trade and Urbanisation (2/2015) - Aparna Banerjee, Dr. Sudakshina Gupta, Dr. Uttam Kumar Bhattacharya

***Database Series***

1. Functional Classification of Urban Areas in India 1961, 1971, 1001 —*Mahalaya Chatterjee and Pabitra Giri* (August 2001)