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Re-Imagining State - Citizen Relation through the Politics of Risks: A Case Study of Sanitation System of Gurugram

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Abstract: *This paper analyses how the state-citizen relationship is re-imagined through the "politics of risks" in Gurugram, India, a city characterized by speculative urbanism. Focusing on the fragmented sanitation system, the study examines the three-way negotiation between the state, residents, and private developers. It argues that risks are socially constructed, with residents often leveraging public health and environmental concerns to pressure the state for infrastructural solutions. Through a qualitative case study of two residential sectors, the research identifies "proxy settings" and "quick fixes" as temporary arrangements that create inconveniences. The paper explores how these inconveniences are selectively converted into risks based on a dichotomy of "insider" vs. "outsider" actors, influenced by class and caste dynamics, to advance the interests of certain groups. This process redefines urban governance and citizenship in the context of structural inequalities.*

Key words: Urban Governance, Sanitation, Politics of Risks, Speculative Urbanism, State-Citizen Relations

Gurugram, the millennial city and epitome of New India, is also a witness to speculative urbanism (Goldman, 2011) where residents are a stakeholder in the market oriented urban governance and planning. The city itself, in popular culture, has two stark sites- the Old and New Gurugram. Old Gurugram is representative of the pre liberalisation era where delivery of public works was mainly state controlled whereas New Gurugram is representative of the New India post liberalisation marked by the private's involvement in the delivery of public works. The city has numerous bodies and authorities involved in the planning and governance of the city namely, GMDA (Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority), HUDA (Haryana Urban Development Authority), MCG (Municipal Corporation of Gurugram). The state resorts to outsourcing where private agencies are transferred the task of delivering public works. (Gururani, 2015) (Gururani, 2013) . The involvement of the private in the planning and development of the area, creates "flexibility" in planning which involves making exemptions and creating exceptions by allowing and propagating practices pertaining to the domain of extra-legal or informality. Such practices tend to benefit a certain section of the society like- the politicians, big developers, elites of the society, residents of a specific class and caste (Gururani, 2013).

This is also evident in the anticipated vision of a world class city based on speculative urbanism (Goldman, 2011) being influenced by middle class aesthetic sensibilities (Ghertner, 2015) despite of a fragmentary infrastructural development. For instance, the fragmentary nature like the sewerage network in the city creates exclusions and inclusions and in turn fosters a splintered urbanism (Graham & Marvin, 2001). In this paper,

through the situation of the fragmentary sanitation infrastructural system in the city, I examine the sanitation infrastructural governance in the city where the residents are a stakeholder and employ their urban subjectivities in the speculative market oriented urban governance. The paper looks at the new participatory technologies via the various negotiations that residents engage as citizens with the state to forward proxy settings in lieu of absent sanitation infrastructure. Due to this, the residents often highlight their exposure to various public health and environmental risks. I problematize this scenario and argue that there is an operative politics of risk where the risks are socially constructed (Beck, 2006).

The paper is based on a qualitative case study of the sanitation system of two residential sectors of Gurugram (one developed by the state bodies and the other by the real estate developers). I attempt to analyse the three-way dynamic negotiation between the state, residents acting as public(S) and the speculative market comprising of private players which determines how, whose and if situations like "inconveniences" faced by the residents are converted into "risks". In this regard, the various mechanisms and prototypes of conversion of inconveniences into risks and the outcome of such negotiations in the form of or the arrangements extending beyond quick fixes is studied. It enables us to re-imagine the dynamic and evolving relation between state and the public(s) or public(s) who exploit their claim making rights as citizens (Das, 2011). Therefore, the politics of risks intertwined with the speculative subjectivities of the market in Gurugram and the urbanism embedded in the structural inequalities created by class, caste, and religion, tend to create and push boundaries of citizenship, state- citizen relation and also reproduction of structural inequalities.

Methodology

To explore the above and interpret the subjectivities in sanitation planning and governance, a qualitative research methodology (Creswell, 2013) was adopted. A combination of multiple methods has been used, including policy analysis, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and case studies.

Analysis was conducted on various laws, policies, regulations, protocols, notices, and plans concerning sanitation infrastructure networking, access, and enforcement methods and practices. For instance, the Haryana Urban Development Act, 1977, and the Haryana Building Code, 2016, were examined. Subsequently, a comparative case study was employed to look at two sectors - Sector A and Sector B¹, with the former developed and maintained by state bodies and the latter by private developers. This comparative study allows for an examination of the dynamics between the state and its residents (as the public), and the private developers, against the backdrop of speculative urbanism (Goldman, 2011).

Sector A is developed by Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) where they laid down the sewerage system which is currently being maintained by the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG). Sector B developed in pockets by various real estate developers is currently being maintained by the private developer or their outsourced private agency. Under this comparative case study, different methods of data collection were used like- observation, observational walking and semi-structured interview, focus group discussions, telephonic interviews. (Creswell, 2013). I used purposive and sampling techniques to identify my respondents ranging from- residents, councillor of the wards of the respective sectors, bureaucrats, technocrats of the various state bodies, estate

managers of the residential societies developed by the private developers.

Theoretical Background

The urban development and production of infrastructures is driven by new forms of finances, dominated by capital market (Goldman, 2011). Economic reforms have disinvested the state from land, housing, finance and public infrastructure sectors and greatly limited state's role to that of a broker and an intermediary (Goldman & Narayan, 2021), with more authority shifting to capital markets. This has enabled creation of exemptions and exceptions in the delivery of public works, real estate development, and the re-orientation of public infrastructure (public health, water, sanitation, electricity) for the creation of world class city infrastructures. Gurugram exemplifies this shift for instance- in re-engineering new sanitary regime based on the maintenance of visible, calculable and territorialised cleanliness, rooted in middle class sensibilities. Despite booming real estate development and the creation of world class infrastructures, Gurugram is a city produced without sewers and encapsulates the stark realities of urban India driven by such urban subjectivities influenced by the speculative nature of capital market. This also creates inconveniences like- water logging, deluge, dumping of wastewater in the open which is pitched as a potential public health risk by the residents.

In this paper, I argue that in the context of sanitation infrastructural planning and governance "risks" are generated, distributed, recognized, overlooked and negotiated around based on urban subjectivities that favor the speculative logic too. The situation can be examined through the politics of risk where inconveniences are pitched as risks and simultaneously become a ground for negotiation. Risk is not merely a probability of the occurrence of a catastrophic event instead Beck (2006) defines

it as a social construct. The power relations within a society are simultaneously revealed alongside the embedded motives of the public (S), the state, and the market, as well as the operative code of ethics and morality in the social construction of risks (Beck, 2006 pp.333). However, these risks potentially lead to structural violence (Galtung, 1969, 1980), which is slow in nature (Nixon, 2011) in the way they unfold and manifest itself. Slow violence intertwined with structural violence leads to neglect, lack of care or violation of rights, marginalization and fragmentation.

In the context of Gurugram's sanitation infrastructural governance, the social construction of risks is along the lines of conversion of (whose, why and how) inconveniences as risks around the maintenance of aestheticized cleanliness. It is juxtaposed with the urban subjectivities embedded in the societal hierarchical structures of class, caste and religion. It involves the state, the residents and the market that operate on their specific as well as common rationalities and thereby enable the expansion of the speculative market. This results in unequal exposure to structural and slow violence. Through an understanding of the operationalization of sanitation infrastructure via proxy settings, prototypes of conversion of systematically created inconveniences into risks will be studied in the following sections.

The Operationalization of Sanitation Infrastructure- Proxy Settings and Quick Fixes

In Sector A, as pointed by the residents and officials in the interviews, the sewer lines were laid down by HUDA prior to the settlement of the residents. The sewer lines of the sector are connected with the trunk sewer lines of the city as well as the Sewage treatment plant (STP) in Dhanwapur for treating sewage discharge. On the contrary, sector B which comprises of residential gated societies, that are not connected to the main

sewer lines of the city, the real estate developers are responsible to make arrangements for the sanitation infrastructure within the society². This arrangement which persists in sector B and almost all the newly developing sectors in Gurugram hints at a complex arrangement of proxy settings. The operational definition of proxy settings used in this paper is - institutionalised extension as well as an alternative to the absent infrastructural arrangements and practices that simultaneously enable speculation especially in the realm of real estate development. They comprise of spatial practices or temporal infrastructural arrangements. Though comprising and dependent on informality (both in terms of practices and arrangements), the proxy settings are often prescribed as an alternative or quick fix solution in the state led practices and laws and is a common practice.

Proxy settings allow and assure speculative investments while assuring spatial expansion of the city and meet immediate requirements in the form of quick fixes. Therefore, for the state such settings assure – expansion of the city despite of the state's inability or lack of state sponsored infrastructure, promote and encourage private investments. The private or the speculative market regard these settings as a boost to liberal free market making investments profitable and easy with lack of red tapism. For the residents, such proxy settings are promising for speculative investment in real estate development despite of absence of the state sponsored infrastructure like sewerage network.

However, proxy settings also become a source of inconveniences faced by the residents due to their temporality in terms of being outstretched or overburdening of the infrastructure and services and/or limited timeline/life of the infrastructure or arrangement. For instance, in sector B the overuse of the storm water drainage lines to dump sewage water,

often regarded as proxy settings, ultimate results in oozing of sewer water on the roads causing water logging. At the same time, the cleanliness (territorialised, visual and calculable) regarded as the goal of the sanitation system is compromised. These situations of inconvenience(s) like- inconvenience in the mobility of the residents to offices, metro stations, hospitals and other locations of the city, miasma, creation of breeding grounds of disease-causing pathogens etc are often pitched as risks. Such conversions of inconveniences into risks involves politics of subjectivities ranging from maintenance of status quo in the society to the placement of the causation/ cause of inconvenience like site of dump of sewage water. I attempt to highlight and analyse the politics of risks in understanding which, if, how, whose and when does an inconvenience become a risk. I argue that in the context of sanitation infrastructural planning and governance “risks” are generated, distributed, recognized, overlooked and negotiated around based on urban subjectivities that favor the speculative logic too. The discussion also focuses on how participatory urban governance is being redefined and the boundaries of citizenship (Das 2011) and community is pushed inwards as well as outwards. In order to understand the politics of conversion of inconveniences into risks, I am looking at three prototypes of conversions in the following sections. The prototypes are based on the pivotal points for conversion of inconvenience into risks- namely construction of risks based on inconveniences created by the systems or practices of an “outsider”.

Prototypes of conversions

This section firstly, looks at the dichotomy between “apne log” vs “outsider” which is pivotal in identifying who, how and why inconvenience(s) are caused. It is instrumental in the social construction of risk (Beck, 2006). This will be followed by the

analysis of three prototypes of conversions - who are causing the inconvenience, what are the situations of inconvenience and the site of dump of waste. This will reflect the intersectional dynamics of caste, class, gender and religion.

The “Apne Log” vs The “Outsider”

The framing of outsiders in the case of such negotiations follows a structuralist approach where entry is subject to the status like- caste, class, area, nature of ownership of property. The outsider is regarded as the one outside or excluded from the “brotherhood” or “apne log”. This binary opposition is context specific and temporal in nature. “Apne log” is constitutive of families belonging to the same class, caste or are the owners or tenants of the properties in the sector (in case of Sector A) or the residential societies built by the real estate developers (in case of sector B). The commonalities on the basis of caste, class and ownership or tenancy of residential properties create a sense of belongingness.

Brotherhood is a sense of imagined community that is context specific and temporal while being dominated by the male represented head of the families/ groups. In Sector A³, the categorization of ‘apne log’ is on the basis of caste status and the status of being owners of the properties- here the plot houses. This highlights the intersection of caste and class statuses in the formation of communities or merely social interactions in the urban areas. The belongingness to the community is reaffirmed by engagement in participatory cultural activities like festivals and creating and expanding cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). However, it should be noted that the portrayal of “apne log” is always done as casteless. This would be discussed further.

The “apne log” as a community also extends its boundaries to the tenants though they are not owners of properties and may not

belong to the dominant castes or the same caste as that of the landlord. It should be noted that the inclusion of the tenants as “apne log” often appears to be extended beyond caste boundaries and intersects with class, taste and lifestyle. Therefore, the encompassment of tenants to and as “apne log” or in the brotherhood, though temporal (extended till the time the tenants are occupying the residence as per the rent contract) is also based on their class status i.e. reflected through their affordability of the high rent, their jobs, overall lifestyle and “civil” behaviour with the landlord and the neighbours. Apart from the above, the tenants are also regarded as fictive kin in the absence of real kin where the connection is based on the exchange of “help” in the everyday life of the residents. Though transactional and impersonal, at times, such exchanges bring tenants in the ambit of “apne log”.

In sector B, the category of “apne log” is relatively dormant in terms of its imagination and its everyday functioning, as compared to Sector A. It is perhaps due to the fact that this sector is newly developed (around 10-15 years old), limited types of residential set up, younger demography. Sector B has two types of residential set up – apartments or flats that are owned or rented by the residents or builder floors within the campus of a residential society⁴. The residents, here, are either owners of the apartments or flats who have bought the flats from the real estate developers directly or are tenants who have been paying rents to occupy these accommodation(s) directly to the owners of the flats/apartments. Most of the owners and tenants are migrants and are working in the corporate sector or are entrepreneurs. The time availability to socialize and also by choice, the residents of the residential societies within the sector, seldomly interact with the other residents. The interaction is generally impersonal and short. The condition of community life in sector B is similar to how Louis Wirth (1938) in his essay ‘Urbanism as a way of life’

(Wirth 1938) regards urbanism as a mode of life marked by individualism and rationality. Such a mode of life is characterized by social interaction i.e. impersonal, and transactional in nature

In sector B, the idea of brotherhood or “apne log” in terms of its visibility and formation is very dormant. However, though caste is seemingly mystified in the sector, it does play out through terms like- “acche family” (good family) used to describe the neighbours and the people residing in the residential society. Acche family or good family is used to refer to people coming from a family and behaving in a civilized manner. For example- families that do not create chaos in the open, do not openly fight or argue with neighbours, litter the surroundings, follow the rules of society and have a certain kind of lifestyle. These markers are emblematic of a cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that becomes the basis of commonality or similarity and thereby enables in the formation of a sense of imagined community or “apne log”. The sense of such imagined community or brotherhood is activated in the structural categorization of “outsiders” or against a “situation” to negotiate with the state for their intervention and a fix (quick fix or long-term solution). For instance - in the process of how inconveniences caused by “outsiders” are converted into “risks”. This would be discussed at length in the following sections.

The sociological analysis of “apne log” presses us to re-imagine kinship system as a cultural system (Schneider, 1968) in the context of cities and urbanism. “Apne log”, though an imagined community, comprises of fictive kin with interactions and exchanges which are generally transactional and rationalized. There is a deliberate attempt to mystify caste or create castelessness through the portrayal of “apne log” as a modern “universal” category like the general category (Deshpande

2013), characterized by a specific cultural capital and social capital. Deshpande (2013) notes that in the modern Indian republic, the deliberate attempt to abolish caste, has consequentially led to a new common sense where the privileged upper caste regard themselves as casteless. This is evident in how the category is equated with “acche family”, having a certain aesthetic lifestyle or being civilized and belonging to the dominant castes and/or are having a job in the corporate sector that is marked by “upper casteness” (Shakthi 2023). However, the apparent “castelessness” intersects with class in the formation and imagination of “apne log” or brotherhood. On the contrary, then the other or the outsider is characterized by their caste, religion and or whose activities are insensitive to the life chances of or cause inconveniences to “apne log”.

The discussion below analyses how “apne log” or brotherhood is activated in tangent to the social construction of risks through the conversion of inconveniences into risks. The residents as “apne log” attain the characteristics of public(S) (Anand, 2016) where they are claiming their rights as citizens of the republic in a three-way negotiation with the state- market- residents as public(S). The boundaries and inclusivity of brotherhood is malleable in nature which when juxtaposed with the idea of citizenship becomes more complicated.

Inconvenience into “Risk”

In the context of sanitation infrastructure, specifically the sewerage system, the residents are affected through inconveniences like oozing sewer water in the visible line of sight in their territorialized space. The oozing of sewer water is linked to compromise of “cleanliness” generally regarded as the primary goal of sanitation in practice. It is believed that cleanliness would ultimately ensure in the maintenance of public health⁵. However, it should be noted that cleanliness here is

defined by middle-class aesthetics and their subjectivity. Cleanliness is calculative, visible and territorialized in nature and is determined by these axes through the presence of waste i.e. tangible, miasmatic, visual, spatial and quantifiable. The invisible sanitation infrastructure catches the imagination of the residents only when its goal- the commodified and aestheticized cleanliness (visible, calculable and territorialized) is compromised.

Such inconveniences can be multi-causal in nature involving different sets of actors ranging from residents, state and private developers. The inconveniences are to be resolved either through quick fixes like- using submersible pumps to pump out overflowing sewage water causing water logging or long-term solutions like- construction and better connectivity of sewerage network. However, this is not a linear process and is either catalysed or impeded by the politics of risks involving rationalized negotiations between the state, market and the residents. The following section will explore the three prototypes of risks in the two sectors, namely - who is causing the inconvenience, the temporal situation and the site of the inconvenience- i.e. site of the dump of waste i.e. sewage water.

Prototype 1- who is causing the inconvenience

The binary categorization of “apne log” vs outsider is more evident and operative in terms of the who has caused the inconvenience. This is further exceeded by categorizing the nature of inconvenience which determines the nature of negotiation and the stakeholders involved.

In Sector A, the office of a big MNC situated at the entrance of the sector was allegedly dumping the enormous amount of sewage discharge directly in the master sewer pipeline of the sector. This was causing overburdening of the sanitation

infrastructure of the sector which was causing excessive water logging at the entrance of the sector even during short rain spells.

“ye office wale, humare yahan ke sewer lines mein apne office ka sewage discharge karte hain. Commercial building ka alag connectivity hota hai. Humnein MCG ko complain kiya tha ki humare log ko problem hogi, gandagi faelti hai aur yahan pe dengue hoga. MCG ne bhi suni baat aur unhone rukwaya ye sab varna bahut pareshaani hoti” (ex-Resident Welfare Association (RWA) member of Sector A)

(This office was dumping the sewage discharge of their building into our sewer lines. The commercial buildings have different connections. We complained to MCG that our people will face problems because of this. Water logging will cause problems to our people, dirt spreads around and there will be dengue cases. MCG also listened to us and got this practice stopped or else it would have been very problematic for us)

In the excerpt of the interview, the ex- RWA member points out that the illegal practice by the office of the big MNC was compromising the aesthetic “cleanliness” of the territorialized space with visible, miasmatic and easily quantifiable sewer water. This practice was causing inconvenience to the everyday life of the residents or the “apne log”. In order to make their case stronger and draw attention of the state, the RWA, who are the representative body of the “apne log” of the sector, pitched this practice and its consequence like water logging as a potential public health risk. In this case, the big MNC’s office is regarded as the insensitive “outsider” representative of the neoliberalism. However, the residents or “apne log”, who attain the characteristics of public(S) in construction of risks, do not regard the MNC’s office to be problematic instead are targeting only the illegal practice. The residents, as public(S), seek a solution through the state intervention in terminating the practice but not

in the dislocation of the office from the sector. This is a calculative construction of risks linked to the speculative market of real estate in the sector. The existence of the MNC office does not just act as a landmark but also opens up the sector comprising of plot houses, group housing like apartments, builder floors as a lucrative option for the workers to rent places. The rise in the property rates and rent is a consequence of the same. This in turn is beneficial for the “apne log”. The existence of such offices also assure investment in the city and enable world class infrastructural development. For instance- the coming of cultural recreational sites comprising of big brands, chain of restaurants, in the years following the coming of the MNC office has created a night life in the city and also added to the visual development of the city. Such investments are welcomed by the state as it enables the expansion of the speculative market aiding urban development and overall assuring flow of capital in the city, generation of employment and world class infrastructure development. Therefore, in the social construction of public health risks here, there is a complex trade off that happens between the state, residents and speculative market.

Similarly in sector B, the residents often regard the real estate developer and its outsourced agency taking care of the everyday management as an outsider insensitive to the inconveniences of the residents. The “sewage lake” next to one of oldest residential societies in the sector, sparked a lot of heated exchanges between the RWA representing the residents or the “apne log” and the developer who had outsourced the task of daily management of the society to a private maintenance agency. The RWA pointed out that the sewerage network within the society along with the STP was overburdened due to which sewage water was oozing out of the pipelines and forming a lake just behind the boundary wall of the society. This was posed not just an inconvenience but

was also regarded as a public health risk by the public(S) which would not just affect the residents of that particular society but would bother the residents of the nearby societies too. The residents as public(S) demanded state intervention for two things- a short-term quick fix- to pump out accumulated sewage water from the surrounding, fixing of the leaky pipelines and the connection of the sector's sewerage line to main sewerage system of the city. Since the residents were regularly paying the maintenance charges and had already paid for the external development charges (it would entail extension of the sewerage connection with the city main line), they- *apne log*- considered themselves to be entitled to sewerage connection⁶.

Another incident in sector B that also caught the media attention was the residents' protest of a newly built society by a leading Real estate developer. The residents noted that the additional tower being built in the society was included after the occupation certificate was received by the Town and Country Planning (T&CP) Department. The residents noted that they were not informed or consulted about the same (Singh, 2020). The residents who were already residing in the sector stated that such extension would put pressure on the already overburdened infrastructures like the sewerage system and STPs in the society and would also affect the ventilation in the apartments of the towers next to the extension. The residents as public(S) claimed their right to the city and quality of life as citizens and raised voice against the malpractice first to the (T&CP) Department and then to the consumer forum- National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (Dash & Singh, 2022) (Express News Service, 2022).

The two incidents of the newly developed sector B also point out that in the conversion of the inconveniences to risks, the activities or ill maintenance of the sewerage lines by the real

estate developer or the outsourced agency is called out as illegal. However, the trend of the high dependence on proxy settings as an exception to allow expansion of the city is not considered as a "risk". The HUDA Act, 1977 allows the construction of residential society by developers even in areas where state sponsored infrastructure is absent. In sector B, the development as per the Act was allowed on the condition of installation of proxy setting by the developer- STP and internal sewerage system. The demand, here, is not to stop such expansion of the city but to pressurize the state to think beyond quick fixes and find a long-term solution. Similarly, in the case of construction of additional tower without the consent of the residents and permission of the state, is regarded as a risk to the quality of life and the breakage and overburdening of the proxy setting. We see, the residents as "*apne log*" acting as a public(S) which is similar to a political society that is exercising their claims as citizens for right to city. Citizenship (Das, 2011) is to be regarded as both a status assuring a bundle of rights and as claim making. "*Apne log*" claimed their rights as citizens and exercised their right to city (Lefebvre, 1968) (Harvey, 2003) as citizens. Such complex tradeoffs are also exemplary of how residents as citizens are not passive recipient to governance through plans, rules and regulations. Instead, while exercising their right to city, the residents as citizens through collectives like "*apne log*" are constantly trying to shape the city- here emphasizing on aesthetics like – cleanliness or connectivity and expansion of sanitation infrastructure.

The above discussion points at the fact that the inconveniences that are caused by the "outsider" and the practices that lower the prospects of profit making through investments in the real estate or residences are the ones that are converted into risks. However, it should be noted that the informal practices of the "*apne log*" which are possibly causing inconvenience do not undergo a

conversion and are not pitched as risk. For instance, in the year 2022, an amendment was made to the Haryana Building Code, 2017 by the T&CP Department which allowed further vertical expansion of the plot houses by permitting creation of Ground + 3 floors along with increment in Floor Aspect Ratio (FAR) and ground coverage. Some residents believed that such overburdening of the infrastructure adds to the recurrent water logging. The residents claim that ideally to intake the increased flow of sewage, the existent sewer lines should be replaced by bigger ones. This inconvenience, however, is not converted as risks because the amendment has benefitted the “apne log”. The sector has seen an increment in the builder floors after the amendment which has led to increase in the value of the properties, generation of income by opening the builder floors for rentals. A similar trend was seen in the case of informal practices of some resident or “apne log” like digging around the manhole⁷. A potential damage and added pressure to the sewerage system which also prevents the replenishment of groundwater by the rainwater. Though such informal practices cause inconvenience, no formal complaints are made. Complaining against such informal activities and pitching the inconvenience as public health risk(S) would breach the code of mutual cooperation and exchange of “help” that exists among “apne log”. The state, though aware of this condition, has not made it a precondition- installation of pipelines of larger width, for getting approval and clearance of building plans. The state, on the other hand, is encouraging a vertical expansion of the city to accommodate a greater number of migrant workforce in the city for the upcoming offices without investing in housing and infrastructural development.

Prototype 2- What are the situations of inconvenience?

The conversion of inconvenience into risk is influenced by who is causing the inconvenience based on the categorisation of “apne log” vs outsider leading to normalisation of certain informalities and creation of exemptions and exceptions. There is another prototype in the domain of politics of risks where certain situations of inconvenience are converted into risks while others are overlooked.

The entire city is annually hit by recurrent situation of waterlogging during monsoons. The situation affects mobility and causes damage to the property like- parked vehicles.

“har saal monsoon k pehle ya jab sewer ka paani upar aa jaata hai tab sarkaar ko yaad aati hai sanitation ke baare mein, uske pehle koi nahi sochta” (Every year before monsoons or when the sewer water comes in the visible realm, everyone starts to think about sanitation. No one thinks before that) (Councillor 2, 2022)

There is an annual rise in the cases of dengue in the city because the waterlogged areas become breeding grounds of mosquitoes. In Sector A, there is surge in dengue cases because of waterlogging situation during monsoons. The same is true for sector B where the entire sector road is inflicted with the waterlogging situation. The situation is so severe that a resident pointed out that

“we are scared to send our children to play downstairs to even play, what if they are bitten by the mosquitoes breeding in the logged water. And the odour, its unbearable. This is all sewerage water” (Resident, 2022).

Although the kind of situation of inconvenience that the two sectors are facing is similar, there is a difference in the nature of sanitation infrastructural system. In Sector A, the sewerage lines were laid by HUDA and is well connected with the master sewer lines of the city. The maintenance of the infrastructure is under

MCG. In Sector B, there is no connectivity with the master sewer lines of the city instead is dependent on proxy settings. The residential societies within the sector have an internal sewerage system and STPs are used to treat the sewerage water. The maintenance of the system is done either by the real estate developer or the outsourced maintenance agency. The difference is reflected in the politics of risk and what solutions are demanded from the state.

In Sector A, the situation of the inconvenience is pitched as public health risk to draw the state's attention to the lack of maintenance of pipelines. The "apne log" act as public(S) and claim their right to city and quality of life as citizens. The demand ranges from quick fix to some long-term solutions. During waterlogging, via the RWA, the claim or demand is made for pumps to drain out water from the area. This is a quick fix to the situation. However, the residents also believe that quality of life of "apne log" could be improved if the local problem of waterlogging is linked with the macro structural issues. The pitching of the inconvenience as a situation comprising of public health for all, the risk is spread across the demography. Simultaneously, the boundaries of "apne log" expands and engulfs the residents of the multiple residential sectors- middle class and upper middle class. The "apne log", hence, asks for structural changes like separation of the sewerage system and the storm water drainage system.⁸ They also negotiate for regular maintenance of the infrastructure like cleaning up of drains before the monsoons. (Kumar, 2021). Some demands also entail a change in the governance set up where the public(S) demand for decentralization in the installation of STP where smaller STPs could be installed in coupled municipal zones. This would relieve the two STPs of the pressure and would

prevent untreated sewage spillage in the open posing as a public health risk.

For sector B, the conversion of the inconvenience to public health risks is regarded as an opportune situation by the residents to make claims as public(S) from the state. Through the representative(S) like- RWAs, councillor of the ward and collective of well-connected residents, the "apne log" now expansive beyond the respective residential society to almost all the residential societies of the sector, a range of solutions are demanded from the state. Firstly, to manage the immediate issue of water logging, there is a demand of pumps to drain out the sewage from the sector roads by GMDA as well as from the respective societies by either the real estate developer or the maintenance agency. Secondly, there is also a structural demand being made where the public(S) of the sector claim their right to the city and as citizens demand for connection with the master sewer lines. The public(S) advocate that the localized situation of lack of sewerage connection is in fact adding to the deluge like situation in the entire city. The residents of sector B have noted that the issue of water logging during monsoon is because of the sewage from the sector being dumped in fragmentary pipes that are not connected to the main lines. Such situations instantly expose people to public health risks. Therefore, the residents as public(S) attempt to relate the micro to the macro structural issues and also spreading the health risk(S) created due to the situation to the expanded "apne log" or the public(S). The residents also demand for the inclusion of the sector under the aegis of MCG. The public(S) here believe that under MCG the grievance redressal would be higher as the MCG will be more accountable than the private developer or the maintenance agency.

The situation of waterlogging picked as inconvenience by the public(S) and converted as a public health risk is a deliberate calculative move. Firstly, the situation picked is temporal-recurrent and short lived. The situation can be resolved with quick fixes every year and its recurrence can simultaneously provide a ground for larger structural changes. The public(S) are calculative in demanding for the kind of solution – like connectivity of the sewerage line in sector B with the master line. However, they do not point the speculative market oriented urban development as problematic where exceptions are made for the developers in handing over occupation certificate and passing of the plans without the presence of sanitation infrastructure and its replacement by certain proxy settings. The public(S) is mindful of the same because it might halt and delay infrastructural development in the city and might affect the monetary of their properties.

Prototype 3- Where is the site of dump?

While the implication of inconvenient situation as a risk is spread across the public(S), the extent of inconvenience from the sewage discharge as waste is inversely proportional to the distance between site of dump and the residence. Therefore, the closer the site of dump to the residential area, the higher the degree of inconvenience. This is specifically⁹ seen in the case of sector B. The residents of one of the oldest residential societies in the sector claim that the maintenance agency use tankers at night to dump the unused untreated sewage discharge of the society in an open area adjacent to the society. This is an illegal dumping which has become rampant in the city (Gupta, 2023). The proximity of the site of dump causes foul smell and is an inconvenience to the residents of the society or “apne log”. The inconvenience is converted here as a public health risk by the resident(S) as public(s) who are claiming their right to city as

citizens. The outsider, here the outsourced maintenance agency and the real estate developer, are called out for the same and the state is asked to stop such activities.

The public(S) through such negotiations are also engaging aesthetic governance (Ghertner, 2015) that is based on middle class aesthetics which would disregard compromise of aesthetic cleanliness in the territorialised, visual line of site and calculable. The public(S) through this conversion of inconvenience into risk also drew the state’s attention to extend the connectivity of the sewerage line to the sector and include sector B under the governance of MCG. If the site of dump beyond the line of site and is not compromising cleanliness, it does not become a cause of inconvenience or is not regarded as public health risk. For example- in the sector, the maintenance agencies also discharge the sewage water through the manhole near a school in the fragmented sewage pipeline or storm water drainage system. Since, the sewage discharge is not visible and does not compromise the aestheticized cleanliness, it does not become a matter of inconvenience. Thus, the location of the site of dump becomes important because presence of waste or waste site would compromise the commodified and aestheticized cleanliness with such grotesque imagery (Bakhtin, 2005) of waste. This will also compromise the value of the property in real estate market because imagery and miasma of the waste compromise the aesthetics and the envisioned quality of life.

In these prototypes of conversions of inconveniences into risks, it should be noted that all the three prototypes can operate simultaneously. In this politics of risks, it is not necessary that the solutions suggested by the public(s) or their demand are always met. The state might just response through quick fixes like in the cases of situations of waterlogging instead of providing a long-term solution. The public(S) acknowledges

such tendencies of the state but uses these prototypes to provoke and push the state to think beyond quick fixes to more sustainable solution. The responses of the state in the form of quick fix or gradual shift towards sustainable solution always factors in the speculative market of real estate development which is important in the urban development of the city. For instance, GMDA is constantly working towards expanding the sewerage network in a phase wise manner. (The Times of India, 2025) while not stalling the development process like construction of residential societies by developers in areas not connected with the sewerage system. Therefore, as per the speculative logic, such efforts of the state will augment the value of the properties now being connected through the sewerage lines.

Politics of risk and the Structural violence

In the conceptualisation of “apne log” for whose interests, insurance and sustenance, inconveniences are converted into risks, does not include these peri-urban dwellers. These dwellers are othered and regarded as an outsider. Unlike, the “apne log” who are often pictured as casteless, the outsiders are characterised on the basis of their caste, religion and class.

“The practice like dumping sewerage water in the open areas in close proximity to the nearby villages exposes them to health risks. It is quite unfair” (Journalist, 2021)

The above excerpt from an interview indicates that there are situations and dumping sites which are not just inconveniences but potential public health risks for the peri-urban dwellers next to Sector B. However, the “apne log” do not regard this as an inconvenient situation that can be converted into a public health risk as the as it concerns the outsiders who are structurally

occupying a lower status¹⁰ with no commonality in experiences, lifestyle or struggle. Also, the waste or site of dump is not under their line of sight and is not compromising their aestheticized cleanliness. However, in actuality, the outsiders are exposed to public health risks. They are even experiencing structural violence where the distribution of risks is based on the subjectivities where the hierarchical relations within and between the society tend to privilege the ones on top of the hierarchy. Galtung (1969, 1980). This structural violence is slow in nature and is inflicted on an everyday basis in the form of “inconveniences”. The structural violence thus leads to the exploitation and potential marginalization of the peri-urban dwellers. However, the peri-urban dwellers do not claim their rights as citizens to exercise their rights to the city due to their precarious situation. Instead, they consider this situation and proximity to these residential societies as easy and accessible job opportunities. Therefore, the “outsiders” are also bargaining and negotiating with the structural system despite of facing inequality, neglect and marginalization.

Conclusion

The public(S) through selective and calculative conversion of inconveniences into public health risks follow the speculative logic to either assure the value of their property to augment like-resale value or rental value of the property. At the same time, the prototypes also suggest about fuzzy logic that residents opt for in withdrawing from converting inconveniences caused by their “apne log” into risks. The residents, however, completely disengage with the “outsider” and to the inconvenience caused to them because of the structural othering and how such inconveniences does not impact the aestheticized commodified cleanliness or the exchange value of the property of the “apne log”.

Such politics of risk where inconveniences are converted into risks, links the state, residents and the speculative market which encourages us to think about urban development in the era of neoliberalism where urban citizenship is not passive in nature. The prototypes of conversions by and for the “apne log”, as seen in the discussion above, shows how the public(S) (Anand, 2016) as citizens (Das, 2011) claim their right to city (Harvey, 2003). The nature of urban citizenship is not passive in the given context instead the public(S) are negotiating and engaging through complex trade off i.e. apne log, with the state and the speculative market.

Through the politics of risks, the residents as public(S) also enter the domain of participatory governance through the demands and solutions made by them to the state. Right to city, exercised by the public(S) as citizens, is not limited to access but also the ability to shape and reshape the city through its infrastructure. This like a Particiopolis (Kamath & Vijayabaskar, 2009) where residents as public(S) are engaging as participants in the governance of the city and eventually the urban development. The very existence of particiopolis in millennial city prevents an undisputed global financial ascendance that has a top-down approach in which the neoliberal market would be penetrative and dictating all kinds of exchanges and development. However, the politics of risks points that the local politics influences this ascendance where the state acts as a mediator between the residents as public(S) as well as investors and the speculative market.

The public(S) as citizens are still dependent on the state as guardians and mediators to check on unregulated or unequipped development like- lack of maintenance of sewerage system and hold the private developers accountable for their lack of compliance. The state is also seen mediating through quick fixes

and assuring phase wise sustainable solutions like- phase wise connectivity to sewerage network. The state therefore tries to create a win-win situation for both the residents as citizens and the speculative market. The study, thus, compels us to re-imagine the relationship between the state and the citizens as well as re-imagine their roles in urban planning and governance where the speculative logic is operative in creating exceptions and exemptions to benefit the elites and the neoliberal market. Gurugram stands as an example to this while also illustrating how micro local politics can have an impact on the macro global neoliberal financial flows and vice versa is also true.

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¹ For maintaining the anonymity of the respondents, the pseudonyms are being used to refer to the names of the sectors.

² This is done as per the Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) Act 1977, and Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, (HDRUA) 1975 where the site plan also containing the layout of the sewerage network and STP within is passed by the Town and Country Planning Department. The residents can only be shifted once the sewerage network and STP is installed and is functional within the society.

³ The sector mainly comprises of plot house owners belonging to the dominant castes (Srinivas, 1962) like Yadavs and Jatt

⁴ This was found only in one of the oldest residential societies of sector B. Over here, the bigger real estate developer had given the contract to relatively smaller builders to build floors within the same campus.

⁵ This is referred in the National Urban Sanitation Policy (NUSP) and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).

⁶ This would also entail the sector B to come under the everyday governance of MCG.

⁷ The residents in Sector A generally do that because they do not make exit points for rainwater to the storm water drainage instead make the rainwater flush out on the roads. To prevent water logging in their territorialized area i.e. outside their houses, the residents dig holes around the manhole.

⁸ In Gurugram, just like many other cities of the country, there is no separation between the storm water drainage and sewerage system.

⁹ In Sector A, dumping of sewage water is a rarity. However, during water logging during monsoons the sewage water mixed with rainwater is sucked via the pumps and later dumped in the storm water drainage system.

¹⁰ They are either Muslims or hail from the Dalit community. They are the ones who generally work as gig workers or in the residential societies as guards, cleaners, house-help, drivers.

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Addiction of Online Media on Youth and its Consequences: A Social Study

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Abstract: *Technology has changed people's lives in every way, be it entertainment, cooking, shopping, gaming, dressing, interacting, or online transactions, etc. The way we look at the world before online media and the life we are living today has changed the lives of all of us. With the exposure to online media among kids, teenagers, adults and old people, all are viewing the same content available online, which has diminished the boundaries of viewing the content on the web, which has shown a hike in new experimental tendencies among kids and teenagers. As in the traditional era, children, youngsters, and youth learn things according to their age, but in the age of technology, people want to learn everything before their age. In the technological era, we all are connected through the Internet and social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc., which makes us busy throughout the day in checking our smartphones again and again, which after some time converts into a vicious circle of checking posts, likes, shares, comments. Our society is an information-based society where information flows through online networks*