

## *Urban Aspirations: A Field View from the Margins of the City*

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IAFOR International Conference on the City 2016  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

Cities in India are transforming rapidly. Though there is a huge variation between the transformation of various cities but metropolises like Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai are witnessing major changes as they are making their ways into the global economic networks. These transformations are not apolitical in nature rather represent the imaginations of the people occupying dominant city spaces, largely middle class. Urban transformations, therefore, are manifestations of city visions of the dominant class. Post-economic liberalisation period has seen major shifts in the way Indian cities are planned and structured. There has been a gradual increase of exclusionary city spaces and gated enclaves. Development plans justify these transformations as fulfilling people's aspirations and reflect homogenous and uncontested imagery of city. But are these visions really homogenous? Do alternate city visions exist? Do transformations silence these alternate visions and result into the divided city? What is the nature of this divisiveness? Is this restricted to physical segregation or present at subtle levels of urban social fabric? The present paper which is a synthesis of the ethnographic study done in a rapidly transforming metropolis of India, Delhi, aims to address these questions and challenges the homogenous idea of the city as projected in development plans. It explores the alternate visions, visions from below, of the urban poor through their aspirations for the spaces around them.

Keywords: Aspirations, Urban, Urban Poor, City,

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## Introduction

Delhi is the capital of India. With the population of more than 16 million<sup>1</sup>, Delhi stands as second most populous city after Mumbai in India. The city holds a significant position not only from a demographic perspective but also because of its ever increasing political and economic influence in the country. From the colonial period to present times, Delhi has been a centre of the political action and decision making that has impacted the larger political scenario of the country. Beyond these characteristics, the city has an identity of being multicultural and multilingual. The constant inflow of population in the city is certainly the reason for its diverse socio-cultural character. Delhi is reported to record an increase of 23 percent of its population due to migration between the years 2001-11<sup>2</sup>. Kumar (2013) explains that Delhi's first Human Development Report indicated Delhi, not Mumbai to be most sought after city of dreams for the common India. Nearly 40% of the population of Delhi is composed of migrants. On an average 665 people migrate to the capital city every day. About 63% of migrants in Delhi from Bihar and 46% from Uttar Pradesh are 'poor'. Employment and livelihood opportunities are the major reasons for this population to migrate to Delhi.

The city of Delhi has always found itself at the crossroads with this population. On the one hand, this population is the source of the majority of essential services in the city; while on the other hand, their habitations have been seen as a blot on the image of 'world-class' Delhi. The urban restructuring and transformation practices that took place in Delhi specifically post-1991<sup>3</sup>, are along the lines of a 'world-class city'. The urban renewal practices hence followed have aimed at making city spaces impeccable, well-ordered and opulent. A direct implication of these practices has been the invisibilisation of the urban poor from the city spaces and their peripheralisation to the marginal locations. This paper is a synthesis of the ethnographic work done in one such settlement located on the peripheries of Delhi, *Bawana resettlement colony*. This settlement came into existence in the year 2004 after the demolition of the Delhi's one of the largest slum clusters, *Yamuna Pushta slums*, situated on the banks of the river *Yamuna*.

The paper deals with the imaginations and the aspirations of the people of the *Bawana resettlement colony* about the spaces around them. It aims to explore the way the urban poor aspire for the spaces around them; the nature of this imagined space and its relation to the contemporary discourses of urban spatial transformations. The sections following will delve briefly into the history of the emergence of *Bawana resettlement colony* amidst the discourse of *world-class city*. The paper problematises the concept of 'aspirations' and makes an argument that although aspirations are located in the everyday and appear as a natural phenomenon, a specific research focus on aspirations is significant while understanding cities. It further goes on to elaborate the aspirations and imaginations of people of *Bawana* for their private and public spaces and analyses it in relation to the planning of city of Delhi as exhibited in the master plans.

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<sup>1</sup> As per Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/a-city-with-room-for-migrants-if-not-a-roof-over-their-heads/>, accessed on February 29, 2016

<sup>3</sup> In 1991, India adopted New Economic Policy that resulted in economic liberalisation of the economy resulting in the opening up avenues for more private and foreign investment. This was implemented by adopting structural adjustment programmes like decentralisation, devaluation and disinvestment.

## ***Bawana Resettlement Colony: An Aftermath of World-Class Delhi***

Situated on the North-West corner of Delhi towards Delhi- Haryana border, *Bawana resettlement colony* is almost 30 km away from the *Yamuna Pushta* slums. *Yamuna Pushta* was a cluster of slums located in the eastern part of Delhi, near the banks of the river *Yamuna* and housed almost 35,000 working class families and a population of 1, 50,000. Almost 70% of these families were Muslims<sup>4</sup>. The majority of the population residing in these slums belonged to the category of construction workers, who had been brought to Delhi by labour contractors during the Asian Games in 1992 (Bhan & Menon-Sen, 2008). There was also a substantial population of wage labourers and informal workers like rag-pickers, rickshaw pullers, head-loaders and domestic workers, largely migrated from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

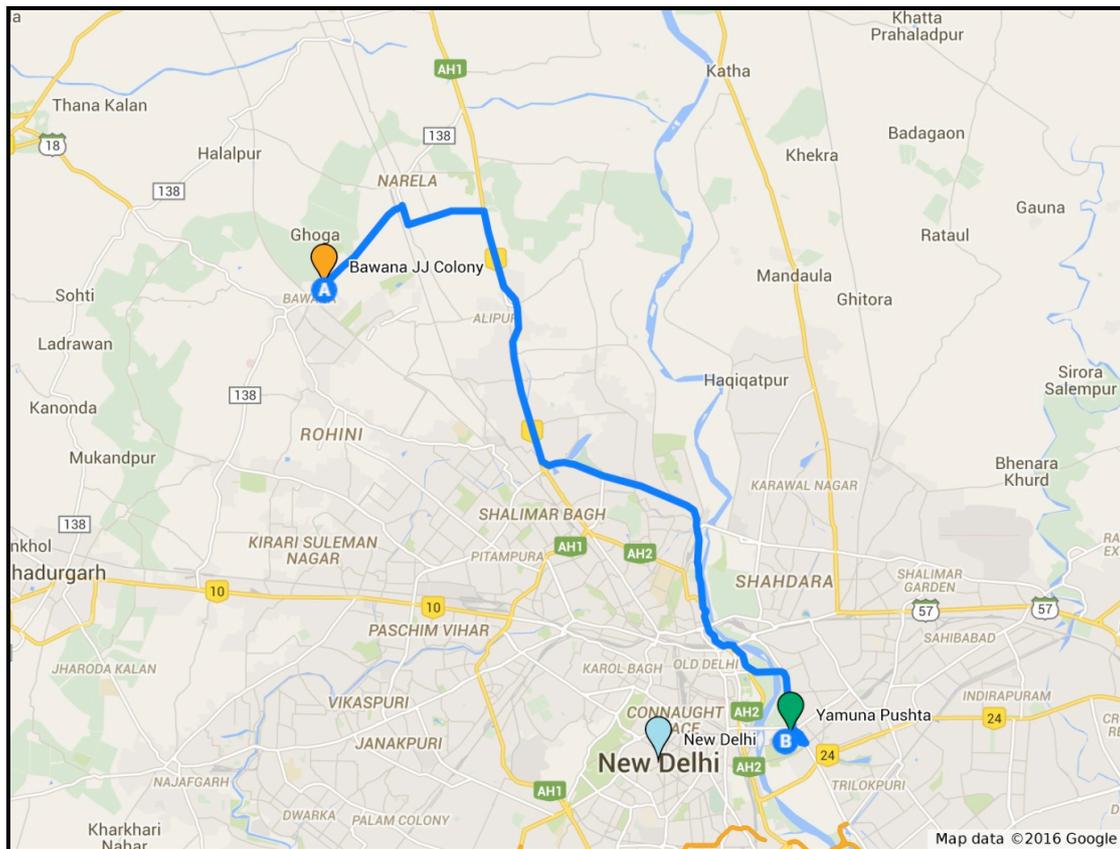


Figure 1 Bawana Resettlement Colony and Yamuna Pushta on the map of Delhi, Source: Google Maps

In the year 2004, these slums were demolished citing various reasons such as illegality of these settlements on the riverbed and being cause of pollution to the river *Yamuna*. However, the fact-finding report by Hazards Centre<sup>5</sup> reported that only 0.08% of waste was generated from slums of *Pushta*. The evictions were also motivated by the petitions from the middle-class groups and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to clean up the *Yamuna* and its surroundings and make filthy images of slums invisible from neighbourhoods. In addition to these, the demolition of *Yamuna* slum cluster was part of the grandiose plan to convert Delhi into the

<sup>4</sup> A religious minority in India

<sup>5</sup> A non-profit organisation set up in 1997 working with the purpose of providing professional services to community and labour organisations. The organisation aims to identify, understand and combat the Hazards that beset communities and workers.

*world-class* city. Pushed aggressively by then Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Jagmohan, the demolitions paved the way for the riverside promenade along the river Yamuna as a major attraction for tourists that Delhi was expecting in the Commonwealth Games to be held in 2010.

Delhi took its first major step towards becoming *world-class* in the year 2003. It was by winning the bid to host the Commonwealth Games. The opportunity was strong enough to provide reasons for planners to remodel and facelift the city and prepare it for the spectacular international event. This required a preparation that demanded the city to look like the modern international cities at least in appearance and infrastructure. Dupont (2011) argues that like Olympics elsewhere, in Delhi, the Commonwealth Games are used by the city's authorities as a 'catalyst of urban change' and an 'international showcase' to enhance the city's global recognition. The preparation for games saw huge investments in the creation of world-class infrastructure in Delhi to attract tourists, boost local jobs and incomes, developing world class transport for tourists, expansion of Delhi airport through a joint venture with GMR-Fraport, a German firm, a makeover of public facilities like revamped bus stops, redesigned dustbins, newly styled street lights and other street furniture. Beyond the infrastructure, there were numerous attempts to improve the public order and aesthetics of the city during games. However, the cost of this aestheticization was paid heavily by the poor. Delhi government made all the attempts to hide the poor as well as other elements (beggars, homeless, dogs, cows) that it considered 'nuisance' from the streets of Delhi. Slum demolitions surfaced strongly on Delhi's urban fabric as part of this process of aestheticization.

Although, the Commonwealth Games marked the beginning of concrete attempts for city transformation, the idea of the *world-class city* in India, or to be specific in Delhi, has its inception in neo-liberal economic reforms and free-market policies introduced in the year 1991. Though the plans aiming to convert Delhi into the *world-class* city do not provide any concrete definition, but general governance perspective defines such city as the one that attracts more foreign investments by showing increased potential for the economic development and improved standards of living for people. Amongst the dominant public discourse, it implies a city that offers leisure living, high-end infrastructure, faster mobility, 'clean' businesses, a spectacular consumptive landscape, and nodal positioning in the global flow of transnational capital and international tourists (Batra, 2010). Slum demolitions and their subsequent resettlement at the city margins appropriately served the purpose of creating spectacular city centre that is devoid of any traces of impoverishment, dirt, and poverty.

### **Locating aspirations in understanding cities**

Cities are inherently aspirational in nature. They are the product of imaginations; imaginations of planners, politicians, architects or dominant class. These imaginations project a future image of the city. Often, these imaginations are reiterated in the planning documents that play a crucial role in transforming the city. But are these imaginations homogenous? Are they uncontested and shared equally by all of its inhabitants? Certainly not, since the urban fabric is heterogeneous and is composed of distinct social identities, it would be a fallacy to assume that city visions are homogenous. This hence points to three major positions that provide a strong

foundation to locate the aspirations while understanding city spaces, specifically in the Indian scenario.

Firstly, Indian urban studies literature has dealt with the question of city imaginations by focussing largely on the middle class visions. It has been seen that city planning and redevelopment practices are often aligned towards the visions of the middle class group. These middle class centred city visions have been critiqued heavily for being exclusionary and alienating for the urban poor (Fernandes, 2006; Srivastava, 2015; Deshpande, 2003) however, parallel visions for the city from the perspective of the urban poor have not been explored.

Urban poor have been viewed as mere recipients of the city transformations practices. Their struggles for survival, issues of accessing basic services, everyday negotiations, and contestations with the state and their claims for rights to the city have been at a centre stage of urban studies. Scholars and researchers (Baviskar, 2003; Bhan, 2009; Dupont, 2008; Ramanathan, 2005) have critically engaged on issues of slum demolitions and associated aspects of illegality, citizenship and rights of poor in the city. Though this has significantly enriched our understanding of the urban issues in the context of the poor, politics of urban development and agency of poor in asserting their rights, there has been limited focus on understanding the imaginations of the urban poor for their city spaces. Hence, there is significant need to bring imaginations of the urban poor for their city and neighbourhood spaces into the existing contours of urban studies.

Secondly, exploring the spatial imaginations of the urban also points to acknowledging their world views, their voice and hence their identity on the urban social fabric. Das (2007) argues that capturing the voice and narratives is not about solving the problem but it is about acknowledging. It is one of the ways to understand the most ordinary and everyday life practices of people. Bringing the voices of any particular group into the domains of research, academic, planning or policy is an acknowledgement of their identity. Taylor (1994) argues for moral cognizance for persons who share different worldviews than us. In a multicultural society, the hegemonic representation of the voices of people from different groups, ethnicities, class, caste and gender puts subaltern at the lowest level and thus amounting to complete neglect of their perspectives. It is not just negligence and silencing the voices from below, but also an attempt to erase the identities of people. Taylor argues that misrecognition is a form of oppression and, therefore, giving recognition is not just a courtesy that we owe to people but it is a human need.

Thirdly, the idea of city aspirations is closely related to the rights of people to their city. Lefebvre (1996) in his famous text, 'The Right to the City', argues in favour of varied city imaginations and considers them as utopianisms. He argues that there is no single imagination, not one utopia but there are utopianisms, *"who is not a utopia today? Only narrowly specialised practitioners working to order without the slightest critical examination of stipulated norms and constraints, only these not very interesting people escape utopianism. All are utopians, including those futurists and planners who project Paris in the year 2,000 and those engineers who have made Brasilia! But there are several utopianisms. Would not the worst be that utopianism which does not utter its name, covers itself with positivism and on this basis imposes*

*the harshest constraints and the most derisory absence of technicity?” (Lefebvre 1996:151)*

For Lefebvre, these utopias are alternate for the present conditions. It is a possibility of tomorrow. He sums this idea as, “*utopia today is possible of tomorrow*”. City imaginations conceived by the urban poor, therefore, reflect their utopias and the alternatives that they envisage as opposed to present city planning practices.

Harvey’s conception of the Right to the City though primarily drawn from Lefebvre yet is more contextualised to present conditions and is rooted in the situations of neo-liberalism. Harvey argues that excessive urbanisation and dominance of capitalism in the cities has changed the spatial forms and has resulted in segregated places, gated communities and privatised public spaces kept under constant surveillance. These conditions have led to the threatening of urban identity, citizenship and belonging in the urban life. He argues that such processes have hugely impacted the poor and underprivileged as they have been removed for the sake of capitalist production and have never been given their rightful places in the city. This can only be combated by democratic control over the process of urbanisation and use of surplus (Harvey, 2012). For Harvey, this ‘democratic control’ lies at the heart of the Right to the City which according to him is both a working slogan as well as political ideal to enable dispossessed to take back the control of the city. This, therefore, calls for the participation of people in the discourses of the urban planning and decide the way they want their cities to be. This kind of participation reflects the need to focus on the aspirations that people have for the spaces around them.

### **A field view of spatial imaginations**

Aspirations of people from *Bawana resettlement colony* are closely connected to the limitations and challenges that they face in accessing the spaces at present. Their aspirations also unravel the middle class hegemony in visualising the neighbourhood and city spaces. People’s aspirations move from the private spaces of their homes to the public spaces in the neighbourhood and larger city spaces.

***Aspirations for housing space:*** An entry into narrow lanes of the Bawana resettlement colony provides a glimpse of limited housing space available to people. People use the same space of house for almost all household purposes with no separations for cooking, washing, living etc. Limited housing space has forced people to construct rooms over one another resulting in the weakly built housing structures.



Figure 2 Vertical rises in housing structures due to limited housing space, Source: Author

At the time of resettlement, plots in two sizes, 12.5 square meters (sq mts) and 18 sq mt are allotted to families depending upon the residence proof they could show. The families, who could prove their residence in slums of *Yamuna Pushta* before January 1990 through documentary evidence, were given plots of size 18 sq mt. And those having proof of their residence after January 1990 but before 1998 were given plots of size 12.5 sq mt.

Allotted size of plots is too less for most of the families as the average family size in Bawana is above five. The small size of the dwelling and people's discomfort with them emerged prominently when they were asked about their aspirations for the space of the housing. In almost all the interactions with families, people asserted that government should re-consider the size of plots allotted. The minimum size of the house that people aspire for in Bawana is between 35 sq mt to 45 sq mt. An old couple living in Bawana with their family of four sons and one granddaughter expressed their concern over the small size of the plot and their expanding family, *"it's just not enough. It is so small. What can you do with 12 sq ft plot? This is the place to live, cook and do everything. You can't do any separation here. It's so small..... It is so difficult for all of us to stay here comfortably. I have four sons. Till what extent will you keep building one floor over other?"*

There has been a gradual decrease in the size of plots allotted to evictees during resettlement in Delhi, from 80 sq mts as prescribed in the first master plan<sup>6</sup> of Delhi in 1962 to 12.5/18 sq mts at present. However, Masterplan 2001 for Delhi prescribes 'a minimum size of resettlement of JJ plot is 25 sq mt which may be reduced to 18 sq mt **with 100% coverage** provided 7 sq mt per plot is clubbed with cluster open space'. This was further revised with Masterplan 2021 that recommends for relocation on built structures (or flats/houses) on at least 25 sq mt in size (DDA, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Master plan is a perspective document that envisions the development of a particular city for a period of upcoming twenty years. Delhi is presently led by the third master plan, *Master Plan, 2021*. It was prepared in the year 2007 aiming for development goals for 2021. First master plan of Delhi was prepared in 1962 with the perspective of 1981, that is, it planned for the development of Delhi till the year 1981. This was followed by the second master plan, which was prepared in 1987 and aimed for Development of Delhi till the year 2001.

Nevertheless, in *Bawana resettlement colony*, in spite of the fact that 100% coverage could not be achieved, the size of plots was 18 sq mt and 12.5 sq mt only.

Living on such small piece of land has deteriorated the quality of life substantially. A survey conducted by Bhan and Menon-Sen (2008) during the initial days of resettlement reported that 56% of households (1,451 families) lived in 12.5 sq mt plots while 44 % lived in 18 sq mt plots (1,126) families. At an average household size of 5.35, this housing space implies that a 5 people share a space of 10\*12 feet, roughly the size of the kitchen in a middle class apartment and about one-third the size of the average size of plot in informal settlements like Yamuna Pushta (estimated at about 33 sq m.). A constant desire for an increase in living space, therefore, appears significantly in the narratives of people.

***Aspirations for neighbourhood spaces:*** People's imaginaries are associated with the physical form, structure, and appearance of neighbourhood places as well as the social values like safety and spaces being free from discrimination and crime. People's imaginations for public spaces and neighbourhood spaces range from material to non-material aspects. Material aspects are related to the concrete appearances of spaces, the way they are maintained, the role of people as well as administrative bodies in maintaining these spaces, basic hygiene conditions, and structures of these places. These aspects influence the access of people to the public places.

Non-material aspects of public spaces are more complex than the material peculiarities. Non-materiality pertains to differential claims of people over the use of space. 'Who uses which space' is a pertinent question within the context of the use of public spaces. For instance, it is usually seen that women and girls desist using public spaces if there is the dominance of men or if women perceive a threat to their safety in these spaces. This results in a limited access of women to public spaces. Also, the instances of harassment, violence, and crime in public spaces determine people's accessibility to these spaces. These non-material aspects are more significant to people than physical availability and appearances of public spaces.

Within the neighbourhood spaces, a first material aspect that appears in the narratives of people is related to infrastructure related to basic services or community infrastructure. Non-availability of cemented roads and streets make people question the administration for the work that has been done in last ten years of resettlement. Apart from roads and streets, community toilet complexes (CTCs) are significant neighbourhood spaces. Due to limited housing space and unavailability of toilets inside houses, these CTCs are essential service resource in the community. However, these CTCs have not been maintained properly resulting in the issues related to sanitation and basic hygiene in the community.

Lack of maintenance of CTCs has direct impacts on the mobility of women and girls in the colony. The majority of dysfunctional CTCs have become waste dumping zones or dark corners used for drug abuse. This has serious repercussions on the safety of women and girls in the community. An instance of sexual harassment around the CTCs is quite common in the colony. Open defecation further makes girls and women more vulnerable to sexual abuse. This further restricts their mobility in the public spaces.

The non-availability and limitations related to basic community infrastructure are not just expressions of their imaginations but it also conveys consistent neglect and apathy of municipal authorities towards the resettlement sites. However, this neglect has not been new. There has been consistent disregard towards developing quality infrastructure in resettlement sites<sup>7</sup>. In a study conducted by Sheikh & Mandelkern, (2014), one of the government officials from Delhi Development Authority (DDA)<sup>8</sup> reflects that 'in the planner's vision, there has been neglect of economically weaker sections within planning.' The planning documents have been critiqued heavily for providing a superficial analysis of the problems of urban poor and issues with resettlement sites and for being silent on the issues of unavailability of the basic services like water, sanitation, health and education facilities at resettlement sites. It has been seen that plan documents have failed to provide any comprehensive strategy for developing basic services in the resettlement sites.

The above discussion certainly points that though fundamental, yet physical community infrastructure is a beginning point in imaginations of people for the places they wish to inhabit. These demands are strongly linked to the limitations that people face in their everyday life.

In addition to basic community infrastructure, open spaces like parks, gardens, and spaces for leisure and entertainment within the colony are exemplars of the desires that move beyond fundamental. People believe that these spaces might not be essential for survival but they have a role to play in improving the quality of life of people in the colony. Interestingly, such spaces appear more strongly in the narratives of adolescent boys and girls. These spaces provide young adults with an avenue for their personal freedom and space for expression for intimate relations. Through such aspirations, they demand non-discriminatory spaces where they can interact freely with each other with being judged or labelled stereotypically. Both boys and girls face restricted and conservative social environment where their intimate relations and communication are curbed. This influences their aspirations for spaces of leisure, recreation, and entertainment that might not constitute as basic and essential but have the potential to enhance the quality of their living by providing them freedom.

Field narratives on imaginations of people about space reflect on the social character of space, relations that people have with the spaces around them and the way they relate to them. Lefebvre (1974) in *The production of Space* argues that space is social. It is socially produced and is rooted in the relations of production. Social space according to him is an outcome of a set of operations and cannot be reduced to a rank of the object. Space is consistently shaped by the human activities and relations. Massey (2009) drawing from Lefebvre argued that space is a product of relations and is a complexity of networks, links, exchanges, connections, from the intimate level of our daily lives. She considers spatial relations within the home as well as outside significant in the production of space. Space is produced by the establishment as well as the refusal of relations. Social relations are central to space and determine the way

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<sup>7</sup> Studies conducted in other resettlement sites in Delhi like *Bhalswa, Narela, Madanpur-Khadar* have shown similar findings.

<sup>8</sup> DDA is an institutionalised body formed under Delhi Development Act, 1957. It is a powerful body which owns almost about a quarter of Delhi's land and is involved in almost all the activities related to land, housing and infrastructure in the city. Major functional areas of DDA are planning, housing, land disposal, land management, horticulture, architecture, sports, landscape and urban heritage. Thus, it incorporates almost all the aspects directly or indirectly related to the development and planning of urban areas.

space is conceived by people. The association between social relations and nature of space that is produced is mutual. While nature of space decides the kind of social relations that are developed, social relations, in turn, influence the production of space. Field narratives exemplify this relation and reflect that nature of the neighbourhood and public spaces has a significant impact on the formation of the social relations of people.

People in the *Bawana colony* make an immediate comparison between the memories that they attach to the place before resettlement (slums near the Yamuna) and at present in the resettlement site. The space of *Yamuna Pushta* furthered the establishment of social relations through the safe, secure and familiar environment, which the space of *Bawana* failed to provide. Instances of everyday violence and criminality due to excessive alcoholism and drug abuse among men makes public spaces of *Bawana colony* unsafe. Lack of safe and secure environment and limited availability of collective spaces has restricted the social relations. These restricted social relations have in turn made the spaces alienated to people with which they do not feel any attachment. The narratives from *Bawana*, therefore, explain that space produces as well as is produced by social relations. And these social relations determine the way people associate with space.

***Aspirations for city spaces:*** For people, city spaces beyond their own habitation are impersonal yet the imaginations for the same are connected to the struggles that they had to face in the city. Aspirations for the city are not as precisely defined as they are for their spaces of habitation as well as neighbourhood spaces. They assess the city spaces in connection with the spaces that they have inhabited.

The changes that have taken place around *Yamuna Pushta* after the demolition of their houses appear in their narratives about the city. During the interaction about the city, people constantly relate to space where they used to live and reflect the changes that have happened there. The dominant discourses of transformations of the city into aesthetically appealing spaces through structures like flyovers, malls, high-rise buildings appear clearly in their assessment of the changes that have taken place at *Yamuna Pushta*. Though, due to their peripheral location and limited means to connect back to the city, people find themselves disconnected to these beautiful places and with the city of Delhi as a whole, yet, these spaces represent the way city spaces should appear.

For the people of *Bawana colony*, the spaces of the middle class and upper-class societies are the benchmark for them in terms of the physical structure of the city spaces. One of the female residents of community expresses this as, *“there are no such parks or places, where we can go and sit. All the parks that you will see around are in bad shape. People cannot go anywhere relax... When I go towards Rohini<sup>9</sup> I see such nice parks where people just sit and chat. Children play there. There are chairs, trees, green grass and those places look so beautiful. We also want such spaces around our homes so that we can also sit and relax for some time and our children can also play. We can also hold some function or ceremony there if we want to. Right now there is no such place around. Whatever empty places are, they are dumped with*

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<sup>9</sup> Rohini is a residential area near Bawana colony comprising of many gated enclaves housed by mainly middle class and upper-middle class population.

*garbage all over. They stink every time and are of no use. The government should do something to clean them.”*

However, in terms of the social environment, people express their aspirations in relation to their own experiences and struggles. For them, liveability for poor in the city is crucial. Not only livability in terms of affordability but in terms of access to jobs is an important concern for having a good city life for the poor people.

However, aspirations of people also reflect a middle class fixation. Their aspirations mirror the middle class discourse of beautiful, ordered, segregated and pure city spaces and neighbourhood spaces. The conception of ‘urban’ is, therefore, constricted and is limited to the dominant ideas of cities as aesthetically pleasing spaces with access to luxury infrastructure. The discourse reflects that a ‘fixed’ idea of the ‘city’ is formed over the period and gets entrenched amongst its inhabitants and shape up their desires. It further reveals that there are no radical re-imagination of the spaces but there are aspirations to re-order and re-structure the spaces according to the dominant discourse.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding a city, its imaginations, and transformation from the perspective of imaginations of poor inverts the vision that has always been projected for the city. It provides an alternative vision for the city, a vision from below. These visions contest the homogenous imaginations of the city and show an alternative vision that emerges from the poor. Interestingly, these visions from below do not radically re-imagine the city spaces rather reproduce the present dominant narratives of ordered and aesthetically appealing spaces to a certain extent. However, for the poor, their aspirations for spaces around them emerge from their everyday encounters and needs. Their imaginations are not an unreal phenomenon, the way they are usually understood but rather embedded deeply into their rights and urge for equal entitlements in the city. They are part of the real world for the poor. Although conceptualised as dreams, desire, and imaginations, but these aspirations have the potential to alter the quality of present life of people to a great extent. For people, however, they are their utopias, but not the unachievable ones. These utopias are rooted in their present and everyday life. They are part of their everyday struggles that they involve in to make these utopias a reality. As Lefebvre, says, these utopias, are their alternatives that they imagine, their visions for tomorrow. They might appear as utopias today but they are the possibilities of tomorrow.

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