CITIES OF DELHI

RESEARCH REPORT

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India's capital is marked by different settlement types, defined by diverse degrees of formality, legality, and tenure. As part of a larger project on urban transformation in India, Cities of Delhi seeks to carefully document the degree to which access to basic services varies across these different types of settlement, and to better understand the nature of that variation. Undertaken by a team of researchers at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, the project aims to examine how the residents of the city interact with their elected representatives, state agencies, and other agents in securing public services.

Through three sets of reports, the project provides a comprehensive picture of how the city is governed, and especially how this impacts the poor. The first, of which this is one, is a set of carefully selected case studies of slums, known as jhuggi jhopri clusters (JJCs) in Delhi, unauthorised colonies, and resettlement colonies. The second set of studies explores a range of different processes through which the governing institutions of Delhi engage with residents. The third focuses on selected agencies of governance in Delhi. All reports are made public as they are completed.

Limbo in Sangam Vihar

Delhi's Largest Agglomeration of Unauthorised Colonies

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Introduction

The unauthorised colony is one of seven types of unplanned settlements in Delhi, built on land which is either not zoned for residential use by the Master Plan or which has not yet been included in the development area. These colonies are most often situated on land zoned for agricultural use that has been illegally subdivided into residential plots. As a result, residents of UACs face two broad challenges: poor service delivery and the inability to legally buy and sell the land on which they live. The most recent population estimate counts four million[1] people in Delhi's unauthorised colonies, about a quarter of the population living in the city's urban agglomeration. Over the decades, Delhi's governing agencies have outlined a process for moving unauthorised colonies out of their marginal legal status through 'regularisation'.[2]

UACs are often confused with jhuggi jhopri clusters (JJCs). These are, however, two distinct types according to the seven categories of 'unplanned' settlement defined by the GNCTD. Unlike a UAC, a JJC is located on "public land"—land owned by a public agency such as the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the Railways, the Central Public Works Department, or a department or agency of the Government of National Capital Territory

of Delhi (GNCTD) or the municipal government. A UAC, on the other hand, is located on land zoned for a non-residential purpose, land which may be private or public. Residents of UACs enjoy slightly more secure land tenure than those of JJCs. It might be said that UACs exist in a liminal legal space: while they are not perceived as "encroachments" like JJCs, they are also not considered to be part of the 'planned' city.

This report presents the case of Sangam Vihar, a settlement in South Delhi that had been considered a single UAC, but is now a collection of several blocks, each of which is a distinct unauthorised colony. Today, Sangam Vihar is the largest agglomeration of unauthorised colonies in Delhi, housing an estimated one million people. Although some of the blocks in Sangam Vihar have made progress towards regularisation, the majority remain unauthorised colonies and their residents continue to experience poor basic services and rent-seeking by state and non-state actors.

This paper is the result of extensive field visits to various blocks of Sangam Vihar, by a team of six researchers over seven months, between April and October 2013. A research protocol was framed in the form of an open-ended questionnaire with specific themes for collecting qualitative primary data from respondents identified using a snowballing technique. Respondents included residents from different blocks of Sangam Vihar, members of the area's residents' welfare associations (RWAs), and elected representatives. Respondents were balanced across gender, and information provided by individuals was corroborated with other residents. In a number of cases, information provided by respondents was inconsistent and is reported as such. All the other findings we present are based on multiple responses that were consistent across respondents and that we judged, following the standards of qualitative research, to be robust enough to be reported as such.

The Place and its Evolution

Sangam Vihar is spread over an area of nearly five square kilometres in upscale South Delhi and houses one million people, about a quarter of the total population of the city's UACs.[3] The settlement contains at least 30 unauthorised colonies, divided largely along the lines of blocks, although some are subsections of blocks. 30 of these colonies, which are unique blocks in Sangam Vihar, had applied for regularisation.[4] Sangam Vihar's north side is marked by the Mehrauli-Badarpur road; to the south and east is the Asola Wildlife Sanctuary; on its western edge are the rural villages[5] of Tigri, Deoli, and Khanpur.

Sangam Vihar came into existence in 1979, although it grew most substantially during the 1980s. The settlement sits largely on agricultural land, which originally belonged to the villages of Tigri, Deoli, Tughlaqabad, and Khanpur. One of the colony's original residents, who still lives there, explained that, "the colony was like a coming together of the four villages". Those who bought plots in the 1980s recall that they were sold either by the original land owners, who belonged to the Gujjar or Jat communities, or intermediaries, referred to as "property dealers". One of the residents explained that, "The DDA had put out a notice in 1979 that they will acquire this land but it never did. Some private dealers bought the land from farmers, cut it into several plots, and sold them to people." Residents estimate that by the end of the 1980s about 100,000 people were living in the area.

Plots of 50 and 100 square yards were cut in a neat grid with spaces demarcated for roads and lanes, and included hand pumps, presumably provided by plot sellers. These plots were sold for between Rs 30 and Rs 50 per square yard in the 1980s. This rate increased to about Rs 2,000 per square yard by the mid 1990s; today, prices range from Rs 20,000 to Rs 100,000 per square yard.[6]

Existing literature[7] on the emergence of Sangam Vihar in the 1980s identifies early settlers as labourers who had come to Delhi from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, and Rajasthan. These labourers migrated to Delhi to work on construction for the 1982 Asian Games and in the Okhla

Industrial Area, and needed affordable housing. The DDA, responsible for creating affordable public housing, had been unable to meet demand.[8] Plots in unplanned settlements like Sangam Vihar filled part of this gap.

Today, the population living in Sangam Vihar represents migrants from across India, although those from Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar form the majority. An elected representative from Sangam Vihar explained that the settlement's name reflects this diversity: "*Sangam* [is] the point of confluence of three holy rivers – Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. In a similar manner, Sangam Vihar is a confluence of people from all over the country."

Since the beginning of the settlement, plots have been 'bought and sold' through general power of attorney (GPA). The GPA was originally designed as an instrument through which an individual could give another the power to manage his or her affairs, but the GPA has been widely used by individuals with property of "imperfect title who cannot or do not want to execute registered deeds of conveyance".[9] In 2012, the Supreme Court made very clear that this use of the GPA is extremely limited, clarifying that the "power of attorney is not an instrument of transfer in regard to any right, title or interest in an immovable property".[10] Although the GPA serves as documentary proof of land (and any built structure) transfer, it is not a proof of the property title, which remains with the original owner of the land.

Property 'dealers' continue to operate in the settlement, and are proficient in the paperwork necessary to facilitate transactions of plots and built-up houses. Although most residents are aware that GPAs do not give them clear title to the land, a 'buyer' routinely refers to him or herself as the "owner" of the plot. Second and third storeys of built-up houses are often rented.

Presently, two main *pucca* (paved) roads — Ratiya Marg and Mangal Bazaar Road — run north-south through Sangam Vihar from the Mehrauli-Badarpur Road. These roads are lined with shops selling household goods. All interior roads in the various blocks of Sangam Vihar start from one of these two main roads. During peak

hours traffic is very heavy, and it can take an hour to get from anywhere in Sangam Vihar to the main Mehrauli-Badarpur road. No public buses run inside Sangam Vihar and the closest bus stops are near the entrances of these two main roads. Residents use cycles, cycle rickshaws, scooters, motorbikes, autorickshaws, and private cars to navigate in and out of the settlement.

Most of Sangam Vihar is multi-storeyed, and some homes have basements. While the inner lanes of some blocks are *pucca*, others remain *kutcha* (unpaved). The first blocks to be settled—A, B, and C—are on flat ground, while the more recently-settled blocks—L, K, I, and J—sit on land located in the Aravalli foothills. Walking through the settlement, one observes that housing has been built incrementally over time, and range widely both in size and quality. Some houses are *pucca* and very large, spanning plots of 200 or 300 square yards and reaching up four or five storeys; others are small and *kutcha*, built on plots of only about 25 square yards, and resembling *jhuggis*. This range in size indicates that plots have been both combined and subdivided. In the inner parts of blocks, one can find a few vacant plots. Almost every block[11] of Sangam Vihar has a residents' welfare association (RWA), and these are key political actors, representing between a few hundred and several thousand households. The presidents of these RWAs are often referred to as *pradhans*.[12] Most of these associations were registered in the 1990s or early 2000s, in what office bearers describe as a relatively simple registration process. These block-wise RWAs were preceded by a single body, the Pragtishil Welfare Association of Sangam Vihar, formed in the 1980s to represent the whole of Sangam Vihar, then considered a single UAC.[13]

RWA officials are selected differently across blocks, in processes ranging from open elections—complete with committees, party symbols, campaigns, and secret ballots—to simple consensus. Very few RWAs have any female officers. Association officials from across the settlement explain two key roles. The first is voicing residents' concerns to elected representatives and government officials. The president of one RWA explained, "We can only put up issues. ... Wherever we go

we raise our voice, but in the end the work has to be done by the elected representatives." The second key role filled by RWAs is facilitating the process of 'regularisation', explored in detail in the Negotiated Citizenship section of this report. Office bearers view this as their most important function.

Sangam Vihar's blocks are split between two Delhi State assembly constituencies (ACs): Sangam Vihar AC (number 49) and Deoli AC (number 47), with the majority in the former.[14] Each assembly constituency contains four municipal wards. Three of the four municipal wards (numbers 186, 187 and 188)[15] in the Sangam Vihar AC include blocks of Sangam Vihar, with each ward having six to eight blocks of Sangam Vihar; two of the four municipal wards (numbers 177 and 178) in the Deoli AC include blocks of Sangam Vihar.[16]

During the period of our fieldwork in the area, the Sangam Vihar AC Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) was from the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), and Deoli AC MLA was from the Indian National Congress (Congress); three of the five municipal councillors belonged to the BJP, while one of the remaining belonged to the Congress. The other was an independent. Residents and political party workers estimated that the two ACs contain about 200,000 voters from Sangam Vihar.

Service Provisioning

WATER

Water distribution varies across Delhi's UACs in terms of source, frequency, cost, quantity, and quality. Residents of UACs access water from a variety of sources, including Delhi Jal Board (DJB) water tankers, private or public bore wells in the settlement (known as 'borings'), public taps in neighbouring areas, water tankers from private companies, and bore wells[17] in neighbouring areas. GNCTD's planning documents reveal that the GNCTD has incurred expenditure over the last few years to provide services including water supply to unauthorised colonies;[18] it is difficult, however, to find information on the results of this expenditure. The only information on actual water service delivery for unauthorised colonies available from the GNCTD is that, as of 31 March 2013, "water has been released" in 606 of the 895 UACs found "eligible for regularisation".[19] It is unclear what this means.

Delivery should be overseen by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB),[20] the nodal implementing agency responsible for water supply to areas under the jurisdiction of Delhi's three Municipal Corporations, including UACs. Indeed, the DJB has made a commitment that any settlement, regardless of its legality, would be provided with water,[21] but the mechanics of this provisioning are not detailed in any policy. In the absence of any formal structure, the DJB's local staff have put in place a range of mechanisms to manage water distribution in UACs across the city.

Today, residents in Sangam Vihar receive water largely from government and private bore wells. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, hand-operated wells from which residents had accessed water went dry and the government began installing bore wells (also referred to as tubewells) at the behest of the MLA at the time. Finding the supply of water from the government bore wells to be insufficient, residents began investing in private wells and established an informal distribution network, a process documented by Dasappa-Kacker and Joshi (2012).[22] The authors describe the perverse incentive created by this arrangement, in which a group of residents become invested in the continued poor provision of services by the state.

In 2013, the DJB website reported 82 functional bore wells for the blocks of Sangam Vihar in the Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency and 74 in the blocks located in the Deoli Assembly Constituency.[23] In the Sangam Vihar AC, the number of bore wells per block varies between one (in cases of blocks J-2 and J-3) and eleven (in case of block H). In the Deoli AC, the number of bore wells varies between one (in the case of of block M-1) and fifteen (in the case of block L). It is unclear which of these 156 bore wells belong to the DJB and which are private. Residents disagree about whether government bore wells provide clean water. Some feel it is potable; others use it only in the absence of alternative.

Walking through the blocks of Sangam Vihar, one cannot miss the nest of privately laid water pipelines running at or just below ground-level from bore wells to individual houses. This private water infrastructure is expensive, involving both capital and recurring costs that dramatically outweigh the cost of accessing government bore wells. In addition to laying the pipes—the cost of which varies based on distance—residents pay between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,500 each month to receive water from private wells. This compares to between Rs 50 and Rs 100 for water provisioning from a government borewell.

The frequency of water supply from private borewells varies and depends on the arrangement arrived at by a household after negotiating with the concerned 'operator' of the private borewell. Government borewells offer a consistent supply, but it is very infrequent, arriving reliably for one hour every 15 to 20 days.[24]

Residents allege that both government and private bore wells have been 'captured' by supporters of the MLA who share profits with him; and in turn, the MLA "protects" the 'capture'. One respondent, while explaining this arrangement said: "Mafia log hain; dabang log hain who aur apnee hee chalwate hain". ("They are mafia people, they are powerful people and what they want happens".) A few residents also claim that 'owners' and 'operators' of private bore wells fill tankers and sell water to those ready to pay for it.

DJB water tankers—a key element of water distribution in many unplanned settlements—do not represent a regular water source in Sangam Vihar; we did not see a single tanker during visits to the settlement. Residents report occasional visits from DJB tankers, but suggest that these only serve those who are close to the MLA. One woman claimed, "DJB Tanker wahaan aata hai jahaan [MLA se] sifaarish hai." ("The DJB tanker comes where the resident has ties [with the MLA]".)

Another woman explained that though the MLA listened to their water woes, he did not do anything to improve the situation. "When we went to the MLA's office and spoke to him about our water problems, he said call me anytime. When we called he never took our calls." Yet another woman spoke of a signature campaign regarding their water problems. 1,200 residents signed a petition that was delivered to the MLA, but, no action was taken by the MLA in response.

Although the DJB has laid trunk water pipelines linking Sangam Vihar to the Sonia Vihar water treatment plant, no network water pipelines have been installed within the settlement to serve its residents. When they face serious water shortages, residents who work in the Okhla Industrial Area carry water home from their places of employment.

SANITATION: TOILETS, DRAINS, AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Construction and maintenance of sewer lines across Delhi is the responsibility of the DJB, but it is not obligated by law to provide sewer lines in unauthorised colonies. It is not, however, restricted from doing so and the DJB has installed sewer lines in selected UACs. GNCTD's planning documents reveal that the GNCTD has incurred expenditure over the last few years to provide services including sewerage to unauthorised colonies.[25] It is difficult, however, to find information on the results of this expenditure. The only information on actual service delivery related to sewer lines in unauthorised colonies available from the GNCTD is that, as of 31 March 2013, "work [was] completed" in 98 of the 895 UACs found "eligible for regularisation".[26] It is unclear what this means.

Unlike JJCs, unauthorised colonies are not provided with community toilet complexes (CTCs). Instead households often construct individual toilets, which are connected to a network sewer system if one is available. In the absence of sewer lines, sewage is flushed to the outside storm water drains or collected in septic tanks, which are routinely cleaned by private bowsers. Storm water drains are constructed alongside some roads in UACs by departments and agencies of the GNCTD such as the Irrigation & Flood Control Department and the Public Works Department, and are maintained by the municipal corporations. Solid waste management, as in the case of rest of Delhi, is the mandate of the respective Municipal Corporation of Delhi (North, South, or East).

There are no sewerage lines in Sangam Vihar, but most households have built individual toilets that empty into what residents call "septic tanks". These "septic tanks" are often not true septic tanks, but rather simple cesspools with no protection against seepage. Residents are aware of the sanitation risk inherent in the arrangement. One told us that:

> Here everyone's toilet's septic tanks are below our houses. If there is an earthquake, we will all fall into an underground swamp [of sewage]. We have our bore wells underground and then the septic tanks are underground too. The groundwater must be soaking up the contents of the septic tanks and getting polluted.

This groundwater is, of course, the water that supplies the settlement's bore wells, which is used for drinking and household tasks.

Residents who do not have toilets in their homes defecate in the neighbouring Asola Wildlife Sanctuary. During field visits, we also observed children defecating in storm water drains.

All *pucca* roads in Sangam Vihar have drains running alongside, although they are often clogged with garbage or overflowing. Residents give varied accounts about how frequently the drains are cleaned by MCD *safai karamcharis* (cleaning staff): while a few residents claimed that the *safai karamcharis* were only seen cleaning the drains if the councillor or MLA was scheduled to visit the area, others said that the drains were cleaned once every few days.

Most residents report that an MCD garbage truck ("tipper") comes to the main lanes of various blocks to collect garbage, but never enters the inner lanes. Residents of a few blocks have engaged a private contractor for door-to-door garbage collection for a payment of Rs 30 per month, while others throw their garbage in vacant plots in the inner parts of blocks or in the neighbouring sanctuary.

ELECTRICITY

In 2002, private participation was brought into electricity distribution in Delhi, and the government's distribution agency, the Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB), was divided into three companies. Fifty percent control of each of these was auctioned to private players, resulting in three joint venture distribution companies (often referred to as 'discoms'): Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL), BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL), and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL).[27] The remaining fifty percent of each is still owned by the GNCTD.

By the second half of the 1980s, residents in Sangam Vihar had begun tapping illegally into the main electricity lines running along the northern border of settlement, a practice known as 'hooking'. During these years, the Pragathishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar made requests for the colony to be formally electrified. At the request of residents the MCD councillor from Tughlaqabad ward wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking (DESU) in January 1987:

> [Sangam Vihar] came into existence in 1979 and at present there are about 25,000 dwelling units. Without electricity, people are suffering a lot. I shall be grateful if you kindly look into the matter at your personal level and arrange to get the needful done, at an early date.[28]

In November 1988, the DESU replied, informing the Pragathishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar that the area of Sangam Vihar that existed on 1 January 1981 (according to the layout submitted by the Association in its application for electricity supply) had been deemed eligible for electrification.[29] Further, it stated that an electric sub-station would be established, for which the Association would have to make a plot available.[30] Since the cut-off date of 1981 excluded a large number of residents, the practice of hooking continued.

Formal electrification was extended to most blocks of Sangam Vihar in 1999 when the DESU began implementing the Single Point Delivery System (SPDS) in several blocks of the settlement. Residents explain that under this system, the DESU collected a "development charge" from each block, between Rs 140 and Rs 160 per square yard. The minimum charge came to around Rs 350,000 per block. In addition to this block-wise fee, every household that wanted an individual electric connection paid a few thousand rupees. After collecting these fees, the DESU installed an electric transformer (the 'Single Point') in the block. The local RWA then appointed a contractor to manage the transformer and provide electricity connections. This contractor and the RWA agreed on usage charges, and installed individual, metered electric connections for households. Residents report that SPDS bills were in the range of a few hundred rupees, and they were mostly satisfied with the service.

In the late 2000s, BSES Rajdhani, the private electricity distribution company for South Delhi, extended their formal network to Sangam Vihar and required households to move from the SPDS to this new system. Another round of 'development charges' and individual connection charges had to be paid by residents. While residents acknowledge that the supply of electricity is now more reliable, they believe they are being overcharged.

IDENTITY CARDS

An array of identity cards are an essential tool for anyone living in India, necessary for daily processes from getting a gas connection or mobile phone to accessing government benefits. Cards are needed to satisfy both proof of identity and proof of address requirements. In settlements with uncertain tenure, such as JJCs, it is this latter proof that is most difficult and important to obtain, a challenge that directly impedes access to basic services.

Three main forms of identity are accepted as proof of residence:

Voter ID Card

Any resident or non-resident Indian Citizen above 18 years of age is eligible to vote and receive a voter ID card.

Aadhaar Cards

In 2007 the Indian government began issuing multi-purpose national identity cards with a unique 16-digit identification number (UID). In theory, an Aadhar card can be used to establish a bearer's identity and to provide him or her secure access to benefits and services. A 2013 Supreme Court ruling, however, held that the UID card could not be a mandatory requirement for any service.

Ration Cards

These are cards for accessing food grains and other essential commodities from the Public Distribution System through a network of Fair Price Shops at subsidised prices. Different ration cards are distributed to people according to income.

Residents referred to the voter ID card as a relatively "easy" card to obtain, and for which they did not need to pay a bribe. The experience of obtaining voter ID cards, however, was different for house "owners" and for tenants (or renters). Residents explained that if a tenant (or renter) was to apply for a voter ID card, he/ she would have to submit a residence proof. This would mostly include an electricity bill of the house which he/ she is renting and a letter from the house "owner" stating that the tenant is staying at the address mentioned on the electricity bill. Such letters were often difficult to procure for tenants due to hesitation on part of house "owners" to give such letters, hence making it altogether difficult for the former to apply for a voter ID card. It is significant

to note that the root cause of this hesitation was lack of clarity on land tenure: the house "owners" spoke of a "fear" that they had: that if they gave such a letter, the tenants might later claim to have a right to the land, or house, and/ or resist to leave.

During our field visits to Sangam Vihar in mid 2013, residents explained that those who had applied for an Aadhaar card, had receipts stating that they had enrolled, while only a few had received the Aadhaar card through post. A few residents expressed that they needed to make "payments" to the people who delivered the Aadhaar cards to their home addresses. Though residents did not explain the benefits they were already receiving from having an Aadhaar Card (or an enrollment receipt), they hoped that it would be useful for receiving direct transfer of subsidies in the future.

In September 2013, observations at Sangam Vihar's MLA's office revealed that the MLA told the residents that only those who had a Voter ID card, or those belonging to families wherein one of the members had a voter ID card, could get an Aadhaar card. He spoke of the voter ID card as a pre-requisite for applying for the Aadhaar card.

As with other informal settlements where we carried out fieldwork, we heard varying narratives relating to ration cards (and availability of ration) in Sangam Vihar. On the process of getting a ration card made, some residents explained that they followed the government application process which needed them to get the requisite application forms "attested" from their MLA before submission, while others expressed that a new ration card could be made by paying a bribe to a 'dalaal'. A resident of K Block who had conducted a survey with an NGO on the issue of ration cards remarked that, "The people who are actually poor do not have BPL cards.

PUBLIC FACILITIES
As mentioned earlier, no public buses ply within Sangam Vihar. Bordering the colony, on the Mehrauli Badarpur Road, there are two bus stops from where most residents take public buses to commute to their places of work. Within Sangam Vihar, residents either travel on foot

or by auto rickshaws, e-rickshaws and cycle rickshaws. While entering Sangam Vihar from either of the two entrances: at the Mangal Bazaar road or at the Ratiya Marg road, one observes several of these rickshaws. Both these entrances are within a few metres of the bus stops. Residents who have access to private means of transport such as cars, scooters and motorbikes, use their vehicles to navigate in and out of Sangam Vihar.

There are no public hospitals in Sangam Vihar. Residents explained that if a person's health is in a "bad" condition, they usually take the patient to one of the two major public hospitals in South Delhi - the Safdarjung Hospital or AIIMS (both located as a distance of about 12 kilometres from SangamVihar). Those who can afford it, visit Batra Hospital, a private hospital located to the north of Sangam Vihar, across the Mehrauli Badarpur road. While residents spoke of a public dispensary located in Sangam Vihar, they also told us about the many quacks who operate within the colony.

While a few "MCD"[31] schools, which are government-run public schools, are present in the colony - only a small proportion of children go to these schools. These "MCD" schools provide primary education, and there is no public school providing secondary education in Sangam Vihar. Many children go to private schools located in Sangam Vihar. These private schools are of two kinds: schools which provide primary and secondary education, are large in size and are "recognised", as well as affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE); and small, private schools which are "unrecognised". The small "unrecognised" private schools are more affordable in comparison to the larger "recognised" private schools, which ironically, have "public school" in their name - such as the Jagriti Public School and the KSK Academy Public School. The nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya (school run by the Central government) is located in the neighbouring area of Tughlaqabad, a short walk away from the entrance of Ratiya Marg. Residents explained to us that in the initial years, several students go to the smaller, private schools and later transfer either to the "MCD" schools or to the larger, private schools due to the "connections" that the smaller schools have with these schools.

Negotiated Citizenship

The hierarchy of unplanned settlement in Delhi might seem to place the unauthorised colony on the edge of legitimacy, just a pen's stroke from becoming 'regular' (planed). The reality we find in Sangam Vihar, however, is one of systematic neglect by the state in which any gains have been incremental and the result of concerted local effort. Residents in the settlement remain extremely vulnerable to rent seeking from state actors, especially when they want to build or expand homes.

This rent seeking is facilitated by an unusually robust police force, one area in which the state is eminently present. There is one police post at the entrance of Ratiya Marg and a police station on the Mangal Bazaar Road. Residents observe that five or six policemen are allocated to each block and make regular rounds. Police routinely negotiate payments of between Rs 10,000 and Rs 30,000 from residents who want to expand their homes. The penalty for non-payment is demolition.

Over the past five years, MCD officials have also started routinely monitoring adherence to building norms and extracting rents for violations. A former RWA officer with whom we spoke alleged that policemen and MCD officials have an arrangement with builders, contractors, and shopkeepers who inform them when any construction is being undertaken. In an interview, the MLA of Sangam Vihar accepted this as a fact of life in any UAC. He explained that, "Ideally [according to plan], in unauthorised colonies no construction can be done", but acknowledged that residents must "extend their house to have adequate shelter for themselves. ... If I am strict and I tell the police and MCD not to collect money, they will not allow any construction at all."

REGULARISATION
The RWA members we spoke with understand regularisation to be the best way to both reduce rent seeking and improve service provision. This is in line with the expectations of the master plan: the Master Plan of Delhi 2021 states that regularisation of UACs must result in physical and social infrastructure, as well as minimum necessary services and community facilities, and adherence to planning norms.[32] Over the last few decades, Sangam Vihar's RWAs have spent considerable time and energy in pursuit of regularised status.

The first efforts by residents of Sangam Vihar to pursue regularisation began in the mid 1980s, spearheaded by what was then the single RWA for the colony, the Pragtishil Welfare Association of Sangam Vihar. In 1987, in response to the association's applications and petitions, the MCD councillor from Tughlaqabad ward (a rural municipal ward at the time) wrote a letter to the Minister of State for Urban Development:

> [Sangam Vihar] situated on the right of Mehrauli Badarpur Road and opposite Hamdard Hospital came into existence in 1979 and at present it has population of more than one lac.[33] Without regularisation the Colony is lacking in basic amenities like water, electricity, Post Office, Bus Service etc. I shall be grateful if you kindly get the matter looked into for necessary action.[34]

By the first half of the1990s, residents had received no concrete responses and experienced little or no change on the ground. They began preparing block-wise applications for regularisation, effectively splitting the unified Sangam Vihar into the collection of smaller, block-based UACs that stand today. Although the RWA had not received a clear response to the request for regularisation, residents understood that one obstacle to regularising the unified UAC was the variety of land types on which it stood. Long-time residents of the settlement recall the division of Sangam Vihar by block primarily as a strategy to overcome this obstacle.

Many of the smaller UACs that emerged from this process formed RWAs and began preparing fresh applications for regularisation. The president of one of these new RWAs explained that for decades residents have seen regularisation as a path to civic inclusion and improved services. "We are ready to pay house tax, water tax, and all other taxes because we will get government services easily, such as a sewerage system, water, school, and

roads," he told us. But the process has been a frustrating experience. "Since then [the block's first application in 1994] our RWA has been trying for regularisation but all efforts are in vain. We talk to our elected representatives about regularisation but it remains fruitless talk."

In this context, it is necessary to recall the history of regularisation of unauthorised colonies in Delhi. Many UACs were regularised in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. Although the exact conditions and parameters for this wave of regularisation remain unclear, it appears that the process was based on resolutions taken either by the DDA or by standing committees of the erstwhile Municipal Corporation of Delhi. In 1993, however, when the GNCTD was considering regularising more than 1,000 unauthorised colonies, an NGO called the Common Cause Society approached the Delhi High Court to question the process. In response, the Court embargoed the regularisation of any more UACs, until the government could prepare clear guidelines for the process. In 2007, the Government of India put Guidelines before the Court, followed by Regulations in 2008.

In 2008, when the GNCTD resumed its call for applications after a 15-year hiatus, 30 individual, blocks of Sangam Vihar applied for regularisation.[35] 29 of these received a "Provisional Regularisation Certificate (PRC)"[36] fairly quickly after submitting applications. In hindsight, office bearers of the RWAs in these blocks believe that the PRCs were only distributed to garner votes in the 2008 Delhi Assembly Elections and did not translate into much tangible improvement in basic services. The former president of the B Block RWA explained that, "PRCs were distributed … by the Delhi Government, but the distribution of PRCs was just a way to get votes. … No funds for undertaking development works were given to us after giving us the PRC."

RWA office bearers and other residents believe that since 2008 the government has made a concerted effort to stall efforts to regularise UACs across Sangam Vihar. They see this most clearly in a redistricting that split blocks in Sangam Vihar across the Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency (AC) and Deoli AC. In

2009, RWA leaders answered this division by forming a new, unified body: the Sangam Vihar Vikas Samiti Mahasangh. The Mahasangh (confederation of RWAs) was established to share concerns and help associations navigate government processes, especially application for regularisation. Originally created by 13 RWAs, by 2013 the Mahasangh included 18 associations from across Sangam Vihar.

In 2012, a GNCTD order listed five as "eligible for regularisation".[37] All five of the blocks[38] that moved forward in the regularisation process sit in the Deoli AC, whose MLA at the time was a member of the Congress majority in the Delhi Assembly (the MLA from Sangam Vihar AC at the time was a member of the BJP). Residents see a clear political bias. One office bearer of an RWA in the Sangam Vihar AC told us that:

> The reason why our block has not been regularised by the Delhi Government is because the MLA from here is from BJP and the Congress-led GNCTD does not want to regularise colonies which are under BJP MLAs. You can see – blocks K, K-1, G-2, H, G and D are all under this MLA and none of them have been regularised. … The blocks of Sangam Vihar which have been regularised are blocks like A and B which come under a Congress MLA.[39]

The MLA of the Sangam Vihar AC shares this office bearer's frustration:

> I don't think this colony will ever be regularised. Unless they amend Master Plan [of Delhi] 2021, there is no chance of regularisation of this colony. Today, I am not bothered about regularisation. I am bothered about provision of basic government services for the people like roads and drains.

Regularisation aside, he told us, he has been caught in a bind, restricted from allotting funds for development work in UACs. He reports that he raised the issue in the Delhi State Assembly, saying "My voters are authorised, but I am unauthorised … MLAs cannot spend their

funds in unauthorised colonies and my entire assembly constituency is an unauthorised colony".

While the RWAs of many blocks are committed to regularisation, residents are often not engaged in this process. They are, however, eminently aware of their settlement's status as a "*kutchi* colony" (unauthorised colony) and the resultant poor level of service delivery. Residents' focus on the symptoms rather than the technical evolution is actually reflected in policy: a careful reading of the regulations governing UACs shows that regularisation is not indeed a prerequisite for improved services. The Regulations for Regularisation of Unauthorised Colonies 2008 state the "GNCTD may commence the development works and augmentation of infrastructure facilities in colonies soon after the receipt of layout plan if it is satisfied that the colonies or part thereof fulfil the general principles contained in the Revised Guidelines 2007".[40] In other words, the government can provide services before the UACs have completed the regularisation process. Failure to achieve 'full regularisation' is not a viable excuse for failing to deliver services to UACs whose application materials have been received by the GNCTD, including 30 of those in Sangam Vihar.

Even though the RWAs of Sangam Vihar have achieved limited success with regularisation, some of their officers have engaged with the state agencies and representatives in other fora to articulate the issues of insufficient and unreliable levels of basic service delivery in their colonies. For instance, a few RWAs have associated themselves with the Bhagidari Scheme of the GNCTD,[41] while others have interacted with the District Development Committee (DDC).[42] Office bearers of these RWAs have invested significant time and money on attending the associated meetings, but mostly feel that their expectations of 'getting work done' were not met. A former RWA president explained that, "There hasn't been much advantage of being a part of the Bhagidari scheme. Nothing happens during the meetings. We used to go there and drink tea and eat something, but no work would get done." While another RWA president questioned the effectiveness of forums like Bhagidari,

claiming that once he asked the then Chief Minister of Delhi, "Bhagidari for what? No one even talks to us." Further, the MLA of Sangam Vihar AC admitted that the DDC was "a toothless committee". These comments reflect the fact that even though the state has created avenues to engage with residents of unauthorised colonies, residents have not found real engagement around the issues that matter to them.

Elections

The run up to the Delhi Assembly elections in 2013 provided us an opportunity to understand what the residents of various blocks of Sangam Vihar consider to be important election issues, to observe their electoral loyalties, and document the campaign strategies of political parties and candidates in the colony. The following reporting is based on 40 field visits across 25 days to blocks of Sangam Vihar, spread across the two assembly constituencies of Sangam Vihar and Deoli, by eight researchers between 30 October 2013 and 17 December 2013, as well as meetings with workers at party offices of the AAP, BJP, Congress, and BSP.

It is important to mention that 17 candidates fought the MLA election in Sangam Vihar AC, an unusually competitive field. On the other hand, only five candidates contested the election in Deoli AC, which is a constituency reserved for candidates from Scheduled Castes.

The issue of insufficient and unreliable water supply is overwhelming in Sangam Vihar, and both political party workers and residents believed that the election in both constituencies would be fought on this single issue. The campaign of one MLA candidate from Sangam Vihar AC in particular demonstrates this attention to water. He had been the MLA from the erstwhile Tughlaqabad Assembly Constituency[43] between 1993 and 2003. Supporters of this candidate distributed pamphlets outlining his success in bringing improved water infrastructure to the area. The campaign literature centred on an exhaustive table listing the number and cost of an array of infrastructure installed during his tenure. The detailed accounting

included tube wells, reborings, deep bore hand pumps, underground tanks, new water lines, replacement of water mains, development of tubewells and water mains.

Residents, in particular RWA officers, recall that regularisation of UACs had been a key election issue for at least three consecutive Delhi State Assembly elections, including the December 2013 contest. During each election cycle, representatives promise to ensure regularisation of their blocks. This year, residents are sceptical. In the run up to the December 2013 elections, one office bearer of an RWA said, "they [the government] have just made us a vote bank they can rely on. They are just saying all this about regularisation, but nothing will happen." Another resident said:

> Just before elections they give us lollipops, such as water, hospital, cleanliness, and promise all the things that are impossible to do. The political parties don't make any new promises to us. It is the same old stuff that they talk about: they will regularise the colony, they will lay sewer lines. … but then, you can see, nothing has been done.

In October and November 2013, just before the election, we observed construction of roads and drains in blocks C, I, and J of Sangam Vihar, none of which appear on the list of 895 UACs found to be "eligible for regularisation" in September 2012. While some residents credited the MLAs at the time for this progress, others maintained there was no MLA involvement, that the work was done by the Irrigation & Flood Control Department of the GNCTD. A few residents and supporters of candidates who were contesting the election against sitting MLAs were more sceptical of the timing, identifying it as a simple attempt to swing voters in the last days of campaigning.

When we interviewed RWA officers six months before the election, most maintained that they were not political, describing their main mandate as simple community service without political alignment. Prior to the elections, however, office bearers of few RWAs claimed that they could easily influence the voters in their blocks with promises of better service provision from a given candidate. We witnessed very different strategies from RWAs in the two constituencies. In the Sangam Vihar AC, RWAs worked to mobilise voters for the candidate or party that they believed would deliver on promises of better service delivery. In the Deoli AC, on the other hand, RWAs did not actively campaign, but rather met a few days prior to the election and made a collective decision.

Campaign activities began in blocks of Sangam Vihar a little more than a month before elections and included a wide range of campaign strategies. Techniques included door-to-door campaigning, *galli* (street-level) meetings, *padyatras* (campaign processions), and *jan sabhas* (public meetings). Most of these interactions were organised block-wise, although the *jan sabhas* were constituency-wide, publicised through pamphlets on the preceding days.

AAP candidates won both constituencies, although the pattern of the election result was quite varied. The election in the Sangam Vihar AC was close: the margin between the winner and the runner-up, the incumbent BJP MLA, was only 777 votes. The block-wise voting results showed this close fight as well: in F-2 Block, while 29.65 per cent voted for the BJP, little under 28.68 per cent voted for AAP; similarly, in the J blocks, while 30.53 per cent voted for BJP, a little more than 32.24 per cent voted for AAP; in the K blocks, 27.79 per cent voted for the BJP and a bit over 28.45 per cent for AAP. In the Deoli AC, on the other hand, the AAP candidate won by a substantial margin of 17,108 (the 11th highest margin among all 70 ACs in Delhi), receiving nearly 44 per cent of the vote.

Conclusion

Sangam Vihar houses one million people and has stood for more than four decades; it is nominally well represented, with two MLAs and five municipal councillors; its communities are relatively organised and its residents express a desire to pay taxes. This, however, is not enough to bring piped water or sewerage to the settlement or bring 'regular' status to the majority of its blocks. In the absence of public water provision, private distribution networks have become the norm, creating

the perverse incentive identified by Dasappa-Kacker and Joshi (2012): poor servicing in Sangam Vihar is more than exclusion, it is an opportunity for profit. The fact that the colony has not been regularised creates another opportunity for profit, providing fertile ground for an array of rent seeking by state and other actors.

As elections come and go, politicians promise 'regularisation'. But these promises remain largely unfulfilled, despite elaborate efforts made by RWAs to prepare documents and follow a complicated application process. We witness a situation in which certain parts of the state gain from repeatedly broken promises. Every unregularised block of Sangam Vihar represents both prime venue for rent seeking and, every five years, an opportunity to secure votes with electoral promises. In the meantime, the residents of Sangam Vihar remain in limbo.

NOTES

1.   Public communications of the GNCTD prior to Delhi Elections 2013 and various media reports quoting the GNCTD.

2.   Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda, 'The Thin Line between Legitimate and Illegal: Regularising Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi'. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (April 2014).

3.   Public communications of the GNCTD and various media reports quoting officials of the GNCTD.

4.   Based on the list of 1639 unauthorised colonies that submitted applications for regularization to the GNCTD. While some are complete blocks including blocks A, D, G and L, a majority are sub-blocks (such as M I, M II, F-1, F-2, F-3), while the remaining are blocks within sub-blocks (such as J2B, L1A, L1C).

5.   Rural village is a settlement category distinct from 'urban villages'. Over the years, rural villages in Delhi have been notified under Section 507 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act 1957, shifting the settlements into the urban ambit and designating them as "urban villages", also sometimes referred to as "urbanised villages" in policy documents.

6.   Various residents of blocks of Sangam Vihar, during field visits in 2013. The exact rate depends on location, availability of basic services,

7.   Vedeld, Trond and Abhay Siddham. Livelihoods and Collective Action among Slum Dwellers in a Mega-City (New Delhi). 2002. IASCP conference 2002. The Commons in the Age of Globalisation. http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/1380/vedldt120402.pdf ?sequence=1. Accessed 25 August 2014; and Gupta, Pradeep Das and Swati Puri. 2005. Private Provision of Public Services in Unauthorised Colonies A Case Study of Sangam Vihar. Working Paper, Centre for Civil Society, New Delhi, Research Internship Program. http://ccs.in/internship_papers/2005/12.%20Private%20Provision%20of%20Public%20Services.pdf. Accessed 28 August 2014.

8.   See Shahana Sheikh and Ben Mandelkern, 'The Delhi Development Authority: Accumulation without Development'. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (December 2014).

9.   Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana - (2012) 1 SCC 656

10.   Suraj Lamps & Industries v. State of Haryana - (2012) 1 SCC 656

11.   And in some cases, sub-blocks, within blocks.

12.   The pradhan is an unelected, widely recognized, informal representative of a significant number of residents in a community

13.   Based on documents submitted as part of applications for regularisation by different blocks of Sangam Vihar.

14.   At least eighteen blocks of Sangam Vihar (such as blocks D, F-1, F-2, K, K-1, G-2, H, I, I-2, J-1, J-2, J-2B) are included in the Sangam Vihar AC, and about ten blocks (such as blocks A, B, C, F-3, L-1, L-2, M, N) are a part of the Deoli AC.

15.   Ward no. 185 is Tughlakabad Extension, which does not include any block of Sangam Vihar.

16.   According to the 2012 MCD electoral rolls data, there are 187,730 voters in Sangam Vihar UAC, assuming polling station area marked as Sangam Vihar is Sangam Vihar UAC. Just to give it a perspective, there were 13 million electors in Delhi during this election, which means about 190,000 voters per constituency. Thus, Sangam Vihar UAC, in which case is equal to one AC. Source: Data on MCD elections (2012) released by the State Election Commission, Delhi.

17.   Same as tube wells.

18.   According to the Economic Survey of Delhi 2014-15, about Rs. 521.7 billion had been incurred till March 2015 for this purpose.

19.   Excel workbook on status of development works and summary in unauthorised colonies downloaded from the GNCTD website on 31 August 2013.

20.   For details refer to The Delhi Water Board Act 1988: Chapter III 'Functions of the Corporation'

21.   Interview with top DJB official, 5 July 2013.

22.   Dasappa-Kacker, Suneetha and Anuradha Joshi. 2012. In the Pipeline: From Clientelism to Customer Service

— The Governance of Urban Water Supply in Informal Settlements. Sixth Urban Research and Knowledge Symposium 2012.

23. Source: "Details_of_Tube_wells_29.05.2013_(2013-14). xls" downloaded from the DJB website on 31 December 2013

24. Though in some blocks residents reported they only received water from the government borewell for 20-30 minutes every 15-20 days.

25. According to the Economic Survey of Delhi 2014-15, about Rs. 521.7 billion had been incurred till March 2015 for this purpose.

26. Excel workbook on status of development works and summary in unauthorised colonies downloaded from the GNCTD website on 31 August 2013.

27. The private partner in Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) is the Tata Group, and the private partner in both BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) is the Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG).

28. Letter dated 30th January 1987, written by Kishan Chand Bainiwal, Deputy Leader, Congress (I) Party in MCD, Member, Standing Committee, Municipal Corporation of Delhi to Kuldip Singh Gujral, Chairman, DESU, Shakti Sadan, New Delhi.

29. Letter dated 15 November 1988, written by R. K. Gupta, Commercial Office – II, DESU to Pragathishil Welfare Association Sangam Vihar, New Delhi.

30. Ibid.

31. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was trifurcated in 2011 into North Delhi, South Delhi and East Delhi Municipal Corporation(s).Sangam Vihar falls under the jurisdiction of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, however, in interactions; residents continue to refer to it as "MCD".

32. Delhi Development Authority. 2007. Master Plan of Delhi 2021. Approved by the Government of India under Section 11A(2) of Delhi Development Act 1957 and notified on 7 February 2007

33. 1 lac (lakh) = 100,000

34. Letter dated 30th January 1987, written by Kishan Chand Bainiwal, Deputy Leader, Congress (I) Party in MCD, Member, Standing Committee, Municipal Corporation of Delhi to Dalbir Singh, Minister of State for Urban Development, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi.

35. Based on the list of 1639 unauthorised colonies which submitted applications for regularization to the GNCTD. While some are complete blocks including blocks A, D, G and L; a majority are sub-blocks (such as M I, M II, F-1, F-2, F-3), while the remaining are blocks within sub-blocks (such as J2B, L1A, L1C).

36. An addendum to the DDA's 24 March notification, on 16 June 2008, empowered the GNCTD to issue a PRC to those unauthorised colonies whose RWAs had submitted requisite documents, including land details, certificates, layout plans, and undertakings to abide by approved layout plans and provide land for social infrastructure (requirements under Clause 4 of the earlier notification). The PRC for a given UAC mentions the name of the colony, the name of the RWA president, and file numbers for earlier applications for regularisation submitted by that colony, and is signed by the then Minister for Urban Development of the GNCTD.

37. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. 2012. Order. F. No.I-33/UC/UD/Policy/2012/549-553. Urban Development Department. September 4.

38. Blocks A, B, B-1, G, and L-1.

39. This office bearer reveals a confusion common in discussion of regularisation across Delhi. The five blocks of Sangam Vihar—including A and B—designated as "eligible for regularisation" appear on a GNCTD order that assigns similar status to 895 UACs. Even as it released this list, however, the GNCTD began referring to these UACs as "regularised." An in-depth discussion of this ambiguity can be found in: Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda, 'The Thin Line between Legitimate and Illegal: Regularising Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi'. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (April 2014).

40. Delhi Development Authority. 2008. Regulations for Regularisation of Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi.

Under Section 57 of DD Act, 1957. March 24. (The Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II-Section 3 Sub-section (ii) No. 389 vide S. O. 683(E))

41. Bhagidari (partnership) was a scheme launched by the GNCTD in 2000 which aimed at participatory governance by establishing a dialogue between various stakeholders: departments of the GNCTD, citizens groups like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and Market and Traders Associations (MTAs) to work out solutions to common civic problems.

42. District Development Committees, established by the GNCTD, were intended to encourage decentralized decision-making and to provide responsive and responsible administration by involving elected representatives of the area (MLAs and Municipal Councilors), RWAs, Deputy Commissioners and district level officers of the various GNCTD departments and civic bodies.

43. The erstwhile Tughlaqabad Assembly Constituency included several blocks of Sangam Vihar. After the delimitation exercise in 2008, part of the Tughlaqabad Assembly Constituency became part of the then newly formed Sangam Vihar Assembly Constituency.