# INTEGRATING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN SUSTAINABLE CITIES: CASE OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN THE PLANNED CITY OF KHARGHAR, NAVI MUMBAI

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**Abstract**
Planned cities, like Navi Mumbai, have the potential to integrate elements of sustainability in their zoning and other components of city development plans. But sustainability cannot be restricted to environmental considerations only. Sustainability is a multi-dimensional concept that should incorporate social sustainability in form of equal opportunity and access for poor and marginalized communities. In a planned city this is possible because of the discretion and authority held by the planners. It is in this regard, that a study was conducted to understand how a planned city treats its poor and marginalized communities. The node of Kharghar, located in the planned city of Navi Mumbai, was selected for the study. A field survey was conducted to understand whether the poor and marginalized communities get equal opportunity and access to basic amenities in the city.
The study found that there are highly vulnerable communities that are living without the basic amenities. The paper provides a comprehensive profile and analysis of the life of these communities. These communities engage in informal labour and thereby contribute to the economy of the city but they are not easily integrated and assimilated as formal citizens of the city. This shows a lack of integration of the development needs of these communities in the city planning and execution. The paper thereby challenges the sustainability of such a planned city and highlights the need for integration of social sustainability.
*Keywords: Sustainable cities, marginalization, planned cities, sustainable development*

## 1. Introduction

India's urban population is growing day by day. As per the literature, more than 50% of the country'spopulation is living in cities by 2030. The population growth is a major challenge for the government because due to the growing population people are facing a lack of basic needs. According to UNDP More than half of us live in cities by 2050, two-thirds of all people 65 billion people will be urban. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without significantly transforming the way we build and manage our urban spaces. The rapid growth of cities, a result of rising populations and increasing migration has led to a boom in mega-cities, especially in the developing world, and slums are becoming a more significant part of urban life. Making cities sustainable means creating career and business opportunities, safe and affordable housing, and building resilient societies and economics. It involves investment in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving urban planning and management in participatory and inclusive ways.

A sustainable city can be defined as a city that can provide the basic needs of the people along with the necessary infrastructure, health, and medical care, housing, education, transportation, employment, good governance, etc. The target of the UN in Sustainable cities and communities also focuses on an inclusive approach and enhancement of capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning. It also aims to provide access to safe, inclusive, and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.The government of India has recognized the challenges of urbanization and that is why it established various programs and schemes such as Smart Cities Mission in 2015. The missionaims to make sustainable cities that could provide quality of life, infrastructure, and a clean sustainable environment to the people.

According to NITI Ayog, by 2030, India is expected to be home to 6 Mega-cities with a population above 10 million. Mumbai is one of the big cities in India. Globally the importance of the city is

most. Mumbai, prominently known as the city of dreams has been a major commercial and financial backbone of the nation. Each one of the Indians wants to stay here. The perception of the people is no one leaves here with an empty stomach. For all these reasons the population of Mumbai is increasing day by day along with the transportation and housing problems. The government planned to extend the city and develop the Navi Mumbai. The government gave the authority to CIDCO to develop the city. According to Census, Navi Mumbai has grown at an incredible speed of 88%. Before the development of the city there were two major industrial clusters are existence here one is TTC Kalamboli and CBD Belapur, the industry is developed at Mahape and the wholesale and retail market is developed at Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

Navi Mumbai is an extension of Mumbai and it is home to educational institutions as well as businesses. Many migrant people come to Navi Mumbai from various socio-economic backgrounds. There are various reasons for migration such as looking for a job, Education, business, etc. It is also found in many studies that poor people come to Mumbai in search of Livelihood. The majority of Migrants belong to the scheduled caste and Schedule tribes, those who are socially and economically deprived. They stay wherever they get a place; they do whatever they get for work.

Navi Mumbai is a planned city and is also called the twin city of Mumbai. The linear city of Navi Mumbai is an urban plan drawn out urban formation. The built form revolves around a canter of business development accommodating all the innovative and recreational spaces for commercial, political, and social activities. The nodal planning is segregated based on the income groups starting from lower-income to progressing towards higher groups. The architectural concepts outlined in the draft development plan were based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophical reasoning and Modernism's functionalist approach. While modernism advocated for single-use zoning and patterns based on economic factors, Gandhian ideas advocated for cultural diversity and mixed-use zoning (Ananthakrishnan, M., Browder, J., Jacobson, W., and Knox, P., 1998).

The social aspects of city planning were given significant emphasis, with considerations of employment opportunities, housing requirements, utilities, recreation, and commercial needs all receiving special attention.

## 2. Literature Review

A city can be defined as a permanent and densely settled place with administratively defined boundaries whose members work primarily on non-agricultural tasks (Caves, R. W. 2004). In general, a smart city is a city that uses technology to provide services and solve city problems. A smart city does things like improve transportation and accessibility, improve social services, promote sustainability, and give its citizens a voice.

The concept of smart city was first developed by French sociologist Henri Lefebvre in his 1968 book Le droit à la ville. He defines the Right to the city as a right of no exclusion of urban society from the qualities and benefits of urban life. In the text, Lefebvre writes about socio-economic segregation and its phenomenon of estrangement. He refers to the "tragedy of the banlieusards," people forced into residential ghettos far from the city centre. Against this backdrop, he demands the Right to the city as a collective reclamation of the urban space by marginalized groups living in the border districts of the city. In the 1990s Lefebvres' idea was taken up in the fields of geography and urban planning and became the slogan for many social movements.

Today, the market-centric city is the focus, including new methods of production and new forms of segregation and exclusion. There is an absence of participation in shaping the city for those who have been excluded from economic development, those who have been displaced through gentrification, or those who are suffering from exclusionary immigration policies. Social theorists David Harvey and Margit Mayer outline the demand for the Right to the city as a kind of request for all the people who live in the city.

According to Harvey "The Right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective

power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."

"Right to the City is relevantan important element in the policy for rehabilitation of slum dwellers". It relied on the policy paper, Right to the City and Cities for All, brought out in the build-up to Habitat III and cites its definition of Right to the City as the "right of all inhabitants present and future, to occupy, use and produce just, inclusive and sustainable cities, defined as a common good essential to the quality of life."(Mathew Idiculla)[1]

According to Anjali Dhigra, it is not clear whether smart cities will be inclusive of the population that is on the margin of the environmental, social, or political frontiers of the previously existing cities or whether their success will be based on whom they exclude, whether the substantial lower-middle class and poor populace in India will fit in smart cities and if these technology-based innovations will be useful to them. The tech interventions (smart city missions) can create or magnify exclusions and may simply be irrelevant for the critical issues of poverty and inequality (including spatial forms) as mentioned above. The harsh reality is that India is far from achieving "inclusiveness" as various factors come into play (caste, class, gender, religion) when it comes to accessibility of resources or public utility services in India.

Because of the growing importance of Mumbai, various development projects are being undertaken. This development does not seem to take into account the environment as well as the socio-economically disadvantaged people. They are being raised from their place, new places are being given, and these places are mainly far from the city. The government provides a lot of development funds but does not seem to be providing any kind of sustainable livelihood in return. People who have been living in slums for 30-40 years live slums but without any documents in their name they are considered unauthorized, they steal electricity, steal water from big pipelines. For that, they have to give bribe to the police and the administration. There is a need to provide consideration to the poor people in the planning towards sustainable cities

## 3. Research Design and Methodology

A study was conducted to understand the aspects of social sustainability in a planned city like Kharghar. The main objective of the study was to understand whether and how the most vulnerable and poor communities of the city are integrated in the socio-economic life of the city. The main research question was to whether the poorest people in the city get equal access to the amenities and services provided by the city. The study used survey method to document the profile of the poor and understand their living conditions. The study used non-probability sampling. The sample size was 35. The sample was selected on the basis of the living conditions that represented the poorest families living in the city. The survey included interviews based on a questionnaire which was also followed by focus group discussions. The data was compiled in excel and was analysed to develop the profile and living conditions of the poor. The specific site of research is represented in the below map of the city of Kharghar.



*Figure 1. Research Site (Blue boundary shown in the below City Map of Kharghar)*

**Elitist Socio-economic Profile of Kharghar**

Kharghar was a village before the project of developing a new city in form Navi Mumbai was undertaken to decongest the main city of Mumbai[2]. Kharghar is one of the highly developed nodes of Navi Mumbai with world class amenities like a golf course. It boasts to have one of the largest parks, called Central Park, spread over 80 hectares and also the largest of the ISCKON temple. The city has seen rapid real estate development with premium housing prices crossing one crore rupees. A BKC-style corporate park is planned to give boost to the commercial real estate in the city. Overall, the city has become attractive for the elite class which has been settling for over last two decades. (Nayak, 2018)

Apart from the original inhabitants in form of the villagers, all other residents of the city have migrated from various parts of the country. Hence, there are two main communities in the city, viz., the semi-urbanized village community and the urban migrant community. The village community is economically well-off because of the benefits trickled down from the urbanized economy. The urban migrant community occupy the prime residential complexes in the city.

**Marginalization of Poor Migrants**

The elitist socio-economic profile of Kharghar has led to marginalization of the migrant informal labourers. The survey conducted showed that these migrants are living in fringe areas of the city without any legal housing rights. They are living in shanty houses made of waste material like plastic, clothes, pipes and metal sheets. Some of them are living below the metro bridges without any shelter or roof apart from the protection of the metro bridge. Some of them are living on road side with shanty houses made of plastic. Others are staying on barren lands owned by government.

In the survey of the migrant labourers of Kharghar, it was found that almost 80% of these labourers are illiterate.
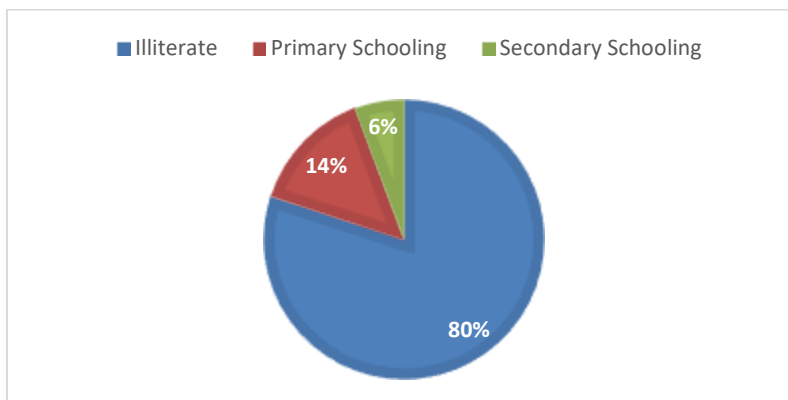


*Figure 2. Educational Status of Migrant Labourers*

It is clear that they lack education and skills to get good jobs without which they cannot afford the high prices houses in the city. There is no place for such uneducated people in the city. Over 50% of them live either on the road, either road side or below the metro bridges. They live without proper shelter and make use of old furniture dumped into garbage by the elite of the city.

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[2]History of Navi Mumbai and Kharghar (https://www.nmmc.gov.in/navimumbai/history1540201195; https://mumbai.fandom.com/wiki/Kharghar)
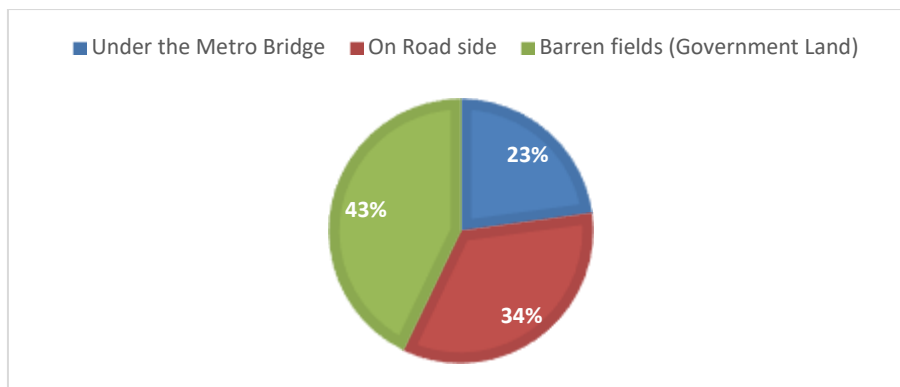
*Figure 3. Location of the Shanty Houses of Migrants*

These poor communities have migrated from within State as well as from other States of India. The internal migration, within state, is mainly from Marathwada region of Maharashtra, which is highly drought prone and does not offer opportunities of agriculture labour. This shows the level of deprivation that these people face. The external migration from outside the State is mainly from Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and a small percentage from Karnataka. This shows that the phenomena of uneducated labour migration to the Kharghar city is pan India.
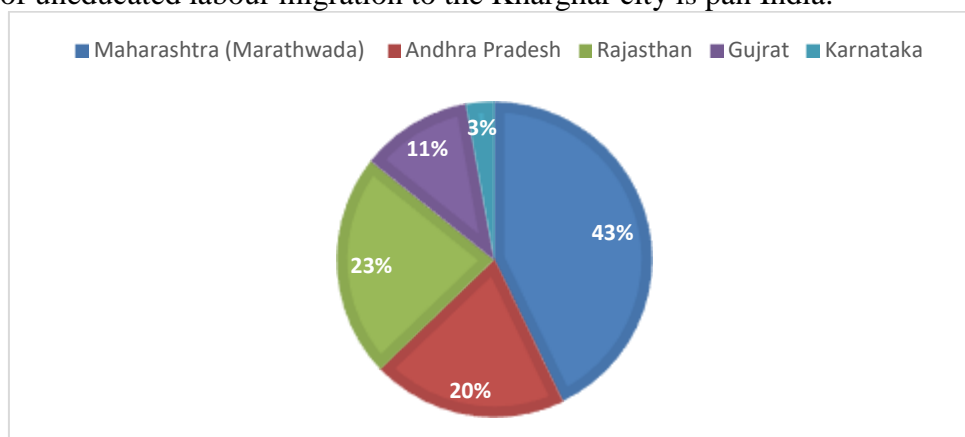


*Figure 4. Migrant's Native State*

**Unequal Treat to Labourers Contributing to Informal Economy**
In the survey it was found that the migrant labourers in the city of Kharghar are contributing to the informal economy of the city but are not treated as equal citizens of the city. The migrant labourers are engaged in providing various type of labour services in the city. About half of them are contributing to the construction industry in form of casual laborers or helpers. The informal economy of the city also benefits from the variety of the goods that other laborers sell on the streets. Very few have some salaried job in form of security guards. Some of them are also involved in begging.
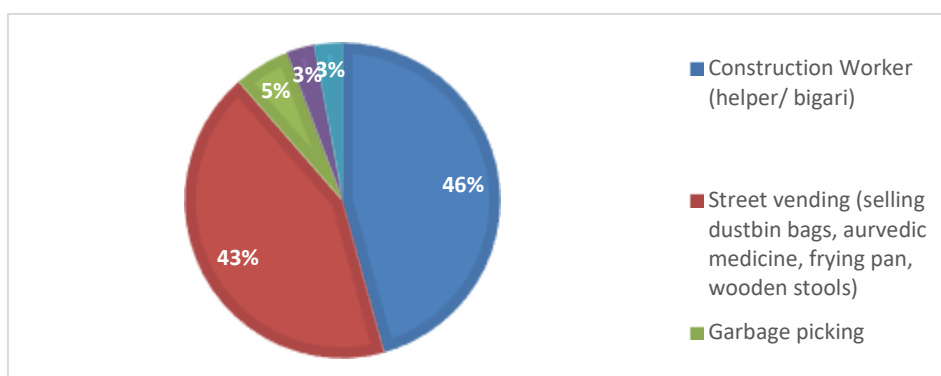


*Figure 5. Occupation of the Poor Migrant*

The survey showed that the elite citizens of the city get access to all the basic amenities as well as advanced amenities like the Golf Course. But the poor migrants are not given access to even the basic amenities like water and electricity. None of the labourers had any formal connection or access to water and electricity. There are no public water taps in the city which can provide some public access to these poor migrants. The people also lack access to toilet and sanitation facilities. If we look at safety from a health angle, people especially pregnant women and children do not have a proper bathroom, and water facilities which can directly impact their health. They live around the stream that flows in Kharghar. People wash clothes and utensils in that stream. They use the stream as a toilet place and eat the fish found in the same stream. They get sick constantly due to the huge mosquitoes that breed in the stream. In summer, this stream subsides. For the drinking water, they depend on a water pipe of the municipal body that they use illegally. Sometimes they have to give a small bribe to the local governing body for accessing water from that pipe.

Due to the condition of the house, they do not have strong walls to protect them from the heavy rains, and sun in summer. It is not safe especially for the children as they are staying just near the street. They have to be very alert, especially at night time as they always have fear of some accidents. They wear used or thrown clothes given by the people.

The majority of youths are working as laborers but they are not getting work regularly. They are cleaning drainage (*Gatar, Nale)* in the city, especially in the summertime. The children are selling flowers, plastic bags, *and Nimbu* and *Mirchi* on the signals. While working they do not get proper treatment from the people. They always get comments from people likebeggar (*Bhikari)* or dirty children *(Gande Bacche)* which shows that it is very easy for people to comment and go but the children are living with feelings of ignorance and no respect from the society in which they live.

Kharghar boasts to be the hub for educational institutes. But the city is not able to provide access to basic education to the children of poor migrant labourers. The concept of education is very far away from children of these migrant families as they are struggling to fulfil their basic needs daily. They are facing various issues to access education which is the basic right of every child. The children have to earn food, and money for themselves and their family for daily survival, parents take children with them to work, they insist to beg on the street, sell some household things, clean the cars on signals, collecting the garbage, and taking care of the siblings. It is also found that children do not have the required documents to take admission to the school.

**Social Unsustainability of the City**

The marginalization of these migrant labourers is evident from the fact that the planned city of Kharghar caters to the need of the elite but has not catered to the vast poor population in the country which migrates in search of livelihoods. It is said that the Kharghar node is one of the most beautiful cities developed by CIDCO with wide roads, premium housing complexes, golf course, huge park, and metro rail. But the city is not able to provide housing, water, electricity, sanitation, education and other such basic facilities to the poor migrants coming to the city in search of livelihoods. These migrants contribute to the economy of the city but are not provided adequate access to proper citizenship. These poor migrants end up occupying the streets of the city and using the local water bodies for toilets. They are just vote banks for local politicians, cheap labour for the construction industry, and sometime criminals at the hands of the local goons. They have to live a life that is below human dignity. This makes the city socially unsustainable in its planning and execution.

**4.  Conclusion:**

**Integrating the Poor Communities in Sustainable Cities**

Sustainable cities cannot be built only by integrating environmental sustainability. The study of poor migrant labourers in the city of Kharghar showed that the cities have to consider social sustainability to ensure well-being of all its residents. There is ignorance of the planners, architects, and engineers who are developing the cities towards the needs of the poor labourers that would like to migrate to the city in search of livelihoods. If these communities are not integrated into the planning of the city, then the social sustainability of the city is threatened. These communities are the poorest citizens of the country and they the right to earn livelihood to overcome poverty. It is the responsibility of the

city planners and governance officials to consider their demands and provide for them as a priority. Water and electricity for all, affordable rental housing, public toilets and bathrooms, easy education enrolment, free health facilities, and such amenities should be the priority of the planners and architects. These poor communities should have equal rights over the cities along with the elite and the middle-class people. The study shows that this social sustainability is the most neglected aspect of our city planning policy.

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