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Marginalized Communities and Climate Change

Gazdhar Bandh

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Introduction

Slums in Mumbai can be seen from various perspectives. Each perspective has its positive side and perhaps huge possibilities in cross learning for it to enable the urban inclusion in planning, policy and practice. The larger question is how new methodologies of research and formats of representation of informal settlements support their recognition in urban design, planning, political and policy-making processes. How could these processes in turn contribute to the sustenance of informal and formal aspects of the urban form.

The Site: Gazdhar Bandh

The formation of Gazdhar Bandh, a large pocket of self-built-sustain model of slums resulted from various parameters. Largely it owes its origin to the generic problem of state body (MHADA) for not being able to provide affordable housing at the city level along with the absence of policy not being able create housing stock for the urban poor. These two issues are coupled with large scale land speculation in the open market and market driven real estate resulting in unaffordable housing in Mumbai.

Quality of life is an idea that is often being discussed in various studies as a response to many issues and complexities that have recently emerged within our cities in the process of transformation. It is also connected with the question of vulnerability and resilience. The city of Mumbai is vulnerable to projected climate change related disaster within given social, economic and environmental stressed conditions coupled with population growth, informal housing, and unfair land distribution & planning mechanism.

Preliminary Findings

The case study of Gazdhar Bandh reveals the peculiar nature of complexities that are embedded within the site conditions and as compared to other slums in Mumbai. The nature of preliminary findings is as follows:

- Creation of community living (and land) within the land starved condition of the city displaces the development plan initiatives and state housing inability
- The creation of Land comes in direct conflict with the fragile ecology at estuary condition.
- The community has strong economic network with its surrounding and the city. The informality within the city has formal occupational engagement with the city.
- The overall perspective of resilience requires the study of social- economic resilience and its understanding with ecological resilience and finds the balance.

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