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Socio-Ecological Resilience of Peri-Urban Coastal Areas

Climate Change and its implications on urban peripheries of Mumbai

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Introduction

"Thirteen of the world's 20 largest cities are located on the coast, and more than a third of the world's people live within 100 miles of a shoreline" (World Bank 2010). Coastal areas face multiple risks related to the climate change crisis and allied bio-geo-climatic variability thus affecting a large population. Vulnerability of coastal areas to climate change is an issue that has gained attention globally. Peri urban areas have peculiarities and challenges which are different from urban cores and these needs to be addressed while dealing with issues of ensuring resilience. They are often characterized by communities whose existence and livelihoods have been traditionally dependent on the environmental resources which are undergoing rapid change with time.

Objective

To understand and illustrate systems and methods involved in ensuring socio-ecological resilience of peri urban communities of the global south using various techniques of documentation (both digital and analogue) and analysing the effects of climate change related transformations on three peri-urban land-water edge settlements of Mumbai each with a distinct relationship with the water's edge- Coastal Edge settlement, Settlement on an estuarine island, a settlement on the Riverine Floodplain.

The focus of the study centres on the threatened communities, their vulnerable habitats and their environment dependent livelihoods which may be affected adversely by the frequent and erratic climatic events. The study intends to explore possibilities of imagining methods for coping and adaptation to these climate related changes.

Preliminary Findings

The case study sites are unique in their physical geographic locations, communities inhabiting those areas and the way the communities and settlements interact with the larger landscape:

- The unprecedented urban growth of Mumbai Metropolitan Region in the last 30 years had an impact in all the three sites. There has also been a steady migration of workers from inland regions.
- The increase in the pace of urbanization (the unregulated and ill-informed choices) have made them more vulnerable to the increased frequencies and intensities of climatic events.
- The recent developments in all the three sites ignore the natural processes of the site.
- These communities are also vulnerable to everyday threats and hence the idea of resilience needs to take this aspect into consideration.

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