

Urban Development & New Localism



Sudha Mohan

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Urban Politics in Mumbai

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E200603880



RAWAT PUBLICATIONS

Jaipur • New Delhi • Bangalore • Mumbai

ISBN 81-7033-918-9

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Published by

Prem Rawat for Rawat Publications

Satyam Apts., Sector 3, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur 302 004 (India)

Phone: 0141 265 1748 / 7006 Fax: 0141 265 1748

E-mail: info@rawatbooks.com

Website: www.rawatbooks.com

New Delhi Office

4858/24, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002

Phone: 011-23263290

Also at Bangalore and Mumbai

Typeset by Rawat Computers, Jaipur

Printed at Chaman Enterprises, New Delhi

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Dedicated to my father

Preface

Development has always dominated human thought and action. It has been a dynamic and inclusive concept directly impacting the lives of millions of people. It is both a philosophy as well as a reality. Broadly speaking, this study is concerned with the problems, promises and prospects of urban development. For too long, macro politics and the institutional, administrative or organisational discourses have been the essence of politics. But, the micro or local urban aspects have not been emphasised. An attempt, therefore, is made here to examine changes taking place in the urban domain, and also to examine issues of urban development and new localism with reference to Mumbai.

My interest basically stems from my doctoral thesis that examined development from the people-centred perspective, which to me was and still is very important because democratic attempts at development, more often than not, relegate the 'people' from the agenda, making the entire exercise a top-heavy, bureaucratic, formalistic attempt to 'development'. However, whether this attempt actually made a 'difference' to the large majority for whom it is meant or intended, was beyond the purview of this 'formalistic' exercise. This study, therefore, makes a modest attempt to go beyond the formal or

procedural attempts of the state to the substantial interaction and interface between the democratic state and non-state actors. This process is examined with focus on collaborative and partnership alliance meant essentially to bridge state power and civic activism to bringing about change. Whether this alliance politics or new civic-coalition building is significant, especially, to usher in, not only people-centred but also sustainable urban development, is examined with special reference to the megacity of Mumbai.

Any research work is impossible without the help and cooperation of many individuals and institutions. I sincerely acknowledge the assistance of each one of them in the completion of this book. I owe my special gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) Marina R. Pinto, my Supervisor, whose encouragement, constructive criticism, meticulous attention to details helped me in my work immensely. I consider it my special privilege to have been associated with her. Very valuable insights and interpretation from friends are gratefully acknowledged. I specifically wish to mention my former teacher and M.Phil. Guide, Prof. P.M. Kamath, my former colleague, Prof. Lionel Fernandes, Prof. Ajit Karnik, Director, Department of Economics, Prof. Sharit Bhowmik, Prof. of Sociology, Prof. R.N. Sharma, Head, Urban Studies Unit, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, my friend Dr. Maneesha Tikekar, Head, Political Science, SIES College.

I thank Prof. Surendra Jondhale, Head, Department of Civics and Politics, for his support and encouragement in this endeavour. My thanks to Prof. Jose George for his help and support in this project. My special thanks are also due to my department colleagues Dr. Rajesh Kharat and Dr. Venkatesh Kumar for their support.

I wish to also express my sincere thanks to my friend Maj. Manohar Shivangi for helping me locate the places I had to reach in Mumbai. My thanks are also to Mr. Vinay Rao for helping me with my computer problems.

I am specially grateful to the library staff of Jawaharlal Nehru Library of the University of Mumbai, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, American Information Resource Centre, United States Information Service, The British Council Library, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Centre for Education and Documentation, All India Institute of Local Self-Government, and many such organisations, for facilitating the collection, updating my resource materials.

I sincerely appreciate the help and cooperation of all the bureaucrats, politicians, activists and specially the slum dwellers in providing the information and input towards the empirical components of my work. I owe a big thank you to my good friends who were my constant source of support.

Above all, I wish to sincerely thank my parents, particularly my father who encouraged me and wanted me to bring this out, but could not be with me to see this. This book is a dedication to him. I also wish to thank my daughter for patiently bearing with a busy mother. I wish to particularly say a very big thanks to my supportive husband who has been a constant source of encouragement and help in the pursuit of this endeavour.

Sudha Mohan

Abbreviations

AMM	Annapurna Mahila Mandal
BMC	Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation
BEST	Brihanmumbai Electricity and State Transport
CIDCO	City and Industrial Development Corporation
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CDSs	Community Development Societies
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CEHAT	Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes
HUDCO	Housing and Urban Development Corporation
IDSMT	Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns
IMY	Indira Mahila Yojana
LISP	Land Infrastructure Servicing Programme
LOGFAS	Local Government Finance and Administration
MMRDA	Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority
MUTP	Mumbai Urban Transport Project
MHADA	Maharashtra Housing Area Development Authority
MM	Mahila Milan
NMMC	Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations

NSDF	National Slum Dwellers Federation
NPPFs	Non-Party Political Formations
NRY	Nehru Rozgar Yojana
PMI UPEP	Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme
PCD	People-Centred Development
PCS	Partnerships and Community Sanitation
PDS	Public distribution system
R&R Policy	Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy
RKS	Rationing Kruti Samiti
RMK	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
RSDF	Railway Slum Dwellers Federation
SUME	Scheme for setting up Urban Micro Enterprises
SUWE	Scheme of Urban Wage Employment
SHASU	Scheme for Housing and Shelter Upgradation
SAP	Structural adjustment programme
SUP	Slum Upgradation Programme
SRA	Slum Rehabilitation Authority
SPPL	Shivshahi Punarvasan Prakalp Limited
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centre
SJSRY	Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana
TMC	Thane Municipal Corporation
TATE	Technical Assistance, Training and Equipment
UBSP	Urban Basic Services for the Poor
VAs	Voluntary Agencies
YUVA	Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ULBs	Urban Local Bodies
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	UN Centre for Human Settlement

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Introduction

The concern of the present work is to examine urban development and new localism with special reference to Mumbai. It views urban development in the present context as development taking place in the urban realm, with special emphasis upon people-centred development (PCD) in Mumbai. This study traces the evolution of the concept of development from its growth-oriented approach to the present approach of PCD. In fact, development in general and urban development in particular with emphasis upon PCD received scant attention in both the policy pronouncements as well as the programmes and plans made after Independence. So, the emphasis is laid upon participatory politics and partnership alliances. The effort made in this study is to develop the argument that urban development, of the people-centred kind, lends itself to sustainable cities, where government collaborates with the people through their civil society organisations to bring about change that is not only positive but also sustainable. This study therefore, makes a modest attempt to examine the issues associated with development in general, and PCD in particular, and tries to see if the development efforts have attained their goals.

The aims and objectives of any government are to ameliorate the problems faced by its populace in general and

the marginalised in particular. In order to accomplish this, it introduces certain policies, plans and programmes to specifically tackle the problems of those sections of society, that are marginalised. However, despite these measures, problems at the urban level still persist. The fundamental question that can be raised would relate to the examination of these measures and to discern if these measures have been truly centred on people, with their involvement, participation and partnership. The study will try to examine the criticism that these measures have seldom centred on people, have been at best half-hearted and at worst sidelined them.

Cities generally have tried to cope with crises whether political, administrative, or environmental, by adapting to the changed scenario by their own ingenuity or unique strategies. Since the focus of this study is the city of Mumbai, an attempt will be made to examine changes that have occurred in this city, and the challenges, crises and the dilemmas especially from the 1990s. The 1990s seem important as this decade saw new processes and changes challenging the government. These were, among others, the liberalisation of the economy with immense repercussions for the polity. Globalisation, the other important development, was threatening to make the governments too big and too small. Too big for small things, occurring at the urban local level and too small for problems emerging at the global level. These fundamental changes challenged the role of the government, compelling it to redefine, reorient and refine its role and relevance. There has also been a realisation that the government was becoming increasingly both incapable of and unwilling, to unilaterally handle issues at the urban level. This has been the rationale for the collaborative strategies and coalition partnerships with other groups working towards the amelioration of problems at the urban level. However, it is in the urban local realm, that small but significant 'churning' processes have been taking place. As a corollary and collateral to these changes, especially at local level, what is evolving is a new kind of civic activism, the rise of civil society and the

emergence of what has been termed 'new localism', especially in a megacity of Mumbai.

With this as the socio-economic and political background of the present work, an attempt will be made to look into ways and means by which the political system, especially at the local level has been moving towards the partnership, collaborative and coalition era for realisation of PCD at the urban level. More importantly, the ways in which it actually brings about change to the intended group, namely the marginalised sections of the people at the urban level and help in their involvement and empowerment will be examined with the help of a case study.

However, the present study does not cover localism efforts in other urban centres but only concentrates on the megacity of Mumbai. Secondly, it perceives development in the urban realm because, though we believe that "India lives in its villages" (which is true in one way), there is another 'truism' that India lives in its urban centres too. In fact, one out of every three Indians is an 'urbanite', a fact borne out by the census of 2001. This work therefore, purports to examine urban development from the people-centred perspective and intends to look at those elements and characteristics that make PCD possible in the megacity of Mumbai.

The development agenda has attracted far more attention than any other issue. This is mainly due to the fact that development no matter how it is conceived, is a live issue, in both the developed and the developing countries. However, from the survey of available literature, it can be stated that development thinking gave prominence to growth and this had permeated the policy making levels of most countries in the developing world including India. The critique of growth-oriented development approach is found in the scholarly works of Rajni Kothari, David Korten and David Preston.¹

The paradigm shift in thinking and policy change is noticeable from the 1990s, and the focus of debate shifts from capital/growth centred to PCD. This need to create, evolve and

practice an alternative development paradigm has given rise to the conceptual construct of PCD. This shift is clearly discernible in the writings of Amartya Sen and Mehbub Ul Huq among others.²

Thus, scholarly writings on development started focussing on people and wanted all development matters to be 'centred' on them. PCD started increasingly to refer to governmental efforts and policies that help create an enabling environment within which people can effectively meet their needs like shelter, education, health, etc. Interestingly, there was a shift in the focus from the national to local initiative and diversity. More importantly, urban development, which was paid scant attention, came to be increasingly focussed upon. This was mainly because urban areas had become a very important part of the country's demographics, economy and polity. There was a strong feeling that there has been no clear-cut policy or even philosophy of urban development. It had taken a back seat until the 1980s in both the writings as well as the policies of governments.³ But the situation altered due to the changes that engulfed society and polity almost everywhere that lead to a rethink of major paradigms of both development and democracy.

Thus, social and economic turmoil in many parts of the world, and especially in India has been responsible for causing a rethinking of the importance and meaning of democracy itself. Democracy, it is now realised, is not just about periodic elections and the right to vote. It is most significantly about the accountability and responsibility of the state, citizen's right to basic rights and information and the right to have a voice in decisions that affect them. It entails both political freedom and economic equity. Applied to development, these principles would amount not to structural adjustment but to social transformation, based upon the needs of the people.

It is also pertinent to point out that the political writings from the 1990s did move beyond the typical parameters of the discipline and started emphasising upon the need to combine

the collective strengths of both the state and civil society organisations. Under certain circumstances, it is now realised that state and groups in society can mutually empower one another.

What could be discerned from the main issues raised in these works were the fact that it is only when different development actors come together for a common cause that there is the necessary interface and mutually beneficial partnership or synergy created.⁴ Synergy is therefore mutually reinforcing relations between governments and groups of engaged citizens founded on complementary division of labour between the government, non-governmental and community organisations. Thus, voluntary associations, social capital and institutions of civil society became subjects of scholarly examination in the late 1990s.⁵

Aims and Objectives of the Present Study

This study broadly speaking has to do with the problems, promises and prospects of urban development. For too long, there has been an obsession with macropolitics and the emphasis upon institutional, constitutional and organisational discourses. But, the 'urban' was either ignored or relegated to secondary significance. An attempt therefore, is made here to examine the important changes taking place in the urban domain (in the megacity of Mumbai). It is also true that urban political development, from the PCD perspective, is one of the relatively neglected areas in the field of political science. Urban development, contrary to popular perception, was seldom given the attention it deserved, by both politicians and policy makers.

Secondly, it is apparently clear from the review and analysis of literature that the concept of 'development' has generally referred to the economic growth aspects. Seldom has development been perceived in terms of it centring on 'people', their problems, demands and lives. More specifically, how development thinking and development strategies shifted their

emphasis from the attainment of growth per se to a more comprehensive development paradigm, centring on people, is examined.

Thirdly, an attempt is made to analyse and interpret how far the Government of India has been sincere and committed in its endeavour to promote PCD. The macro frame is sought to be covered by examining briefly the various plans, policies and programmes of the government.

Fourthly, the study shifts its focus from the Government of India to the Government of Maharashtra, more specifically to the megacity of Mumbai. It purports to examine the kind of attention that has been paid to the city in general and PCD in particular, in this very important megacity of the country. There seems to be a clear anti-urban bias in both the policies and mindset of the government and this could have been one of the major reasons for the burgeoning growth of the urban slums and the marginal groups in the city of Mumbai. This work addresses these issues and also examines the responses of this vibrant, spirited city to combat urban crisis in the form of viable alternatives and workable solutions. These interactions have in some way opened up certain theoretical possibilities and practical, operational processes at the local level. The practical discourse at the urban local level is linked to a series of deliberations among various actors. Such democratic deliberations and experiments at the urban level are sometimes referred to as 'deliberative democracy'.

There is an attempt to examine and interpret how new localism is not only a theoretical construct, but also an operational and pragmatic process. The efforts and interfaces between state and civil society, are the main highlights. New localism, however, is not to be misconstrued as narrow parochialism. It is fundamentally a new development (that has found a place in many countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) that encompasses local sensitivities and global demands. Thus, how new localism enables the megacity of Mumbai to cope with the ever-changing dynamism affecting