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ABOUT THE CONTENTS

Sabuhi Essa: Khas Daes Kay Aam Log

A road, modern agriculture, education and tourism, Hunza had all the appurtenances of development in a short span of 30 years. Sabuhi lived through it in Karimabad. She left for higher education and then revisited her home. She is left with nostalgia. A modern educated person, why is she longing for the traditional past!

Ilyas Chattha: Artisanal Towns: A Comparative Analysis of Industrial Growth in Sialkot and Jalandhar

Chattha brings us the story of the regeneration of Sialkot's sports goods industry in Sialkot and in Jalandhar after the disruption of the 1947 Partition. It comes on as a roadmap for indigenous industrialization based on skill, entrepreneurship and innovation. All it required from state was protection. This model is in striking contrast with the model which focuses on large scale investment and competitive technology.

Bhuvaneswari Raman: Corridor Urbanization: Practices of Urbanizing Land in India

30 km from Lahore India has been farther than the farthest corners of the globe. With increased scholarly contact more recently one is amazed at the similarity of social structure and issues. Raman has researched the rapidly expanding process of land acquisition for development in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. State is now partisan and facilitator on the side of capital and not on the side of the vast atomized majority who vote and fund it.

Jakob Steiner: Neglected Land in Between – The Obliviousness to Small Town Pakistan in the Western Narrative

Where do decision makers in Pakistan and their mentors get their visions from? Steiner shows the world of policy makers is very different from the world of those for whom the policy is made. Small cities do not appear on the map of local or foreign policy makers – breeding an explosive but unknown discontent.

Vikram Das Meghwar and Zaheer Ali: Thar Coal Mega Power Project: Internal Migration, Desertification and Encroachments

Tharis had a way of life and nature on which they survived for centuries. With plans to take over the area for coal mining, big business is threatening not only their survival agriculture and water aquifers but also their self reliant beautiful culture and sustainable livelihoods. Subsisting on livestock Tharis today are seen as an image of the destitute and the famished who need to be provided food, water, medicine, cash. Vikram, who lives in Islamkot, describes how development is encouraging greed and unraveling sustainable nomadic communities.

Fizza Batool, Rabia Nadir and Munir Ghazanfar: Is Modernity Depleting Bhera

Bhera does not have the glamorous trappings of a modern city, yet it is here that the impact of modernity can be studied as the old has not yet been eroded beyond recognition. It still exists in peoples' lives and imaginations. Delving deep into Bhera's life Fizza et al make some bold assertions about the change in Bhera.

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Rabia Nadir is Assistant Professor at the Centre for Media Studies with concurrent appointment at the Department of Environmental Science and Policy. Her research interests include urbanization and study of social change. She has recently completed studies of ethnicity and social change in Walled City Lahore followed by one on Bhera. Her ongoing research includes land transformation in Burki – Bedian area of Lahore and on representations of nature in poetry.

Munir Ghazanfar is Professor of Environmental Science and Policy at the Lahore School of Economics.

SMALL CITIES: A COUNTER - NARRATIVE

This issue is a selection of six papers presented at a conference organized by the Department of Environment Science and Policy, Lahore School of Economics titled, 'Environment of Small Cities of Pakistan', in April 2015. The selection provides historical and socio-ecological accounts of six diverse small cities, most in Pakistan and one in south India. The following discussion highlights key findings from the papers and their relevance to critical debates in urbanization, environment and social change.

Sabuhi Essa brings the intimacy and empathy of a local to tell the story of social change in Hunza Valley which started in a major way with the building of the Karakorum Highway in 1978. However, the impact of the change hit the people only after the flourishing global tourism in Hunza valley was disrupted by the post 9/11 events. Combining her personal experience and research as an architect studying the built and social life of public spaces in Karimabad city her account is a picture of progressive sundering of place and people with the unfolding of various processes of 'development'. The story of infrastructure development, modern education and tourism is juxtaposed with the less reported narrative of the loss of their proverbial longevity, diaspora, inequality, loss of confidence and reduced cultural diversity. The place gained value as a *Khas* (special) place the people lost their value and became *Aam* (ordinary).

Ilyas Chattha narrates an insightful history of the role of artisanal entrepreneurs in industrial development through a case study of the sports industry of Sialkot and Jalandhar. The genesis of Sialkot as a centre of sports manufacture in colonial time was premised on the auspicious ecology of craft manufacture in the small towns and villages in and around Sialkot, including Kotli Loharan, Nizamabad, Wazirabad and Gujranwala. Partition was a major blow to the rising sports and surgical industry in Sialkot and depleted it of capital investment and entrepreneurial acumen of its non-Muslim businessman. In a replay of its role in setting up industry during the colonial period the artisan community (both local and migrant) in Sialkot was able to revive the sports industry with a modicum of state support. In Jalandhar too it was the migrant entrepreneurs and artisans who provided the entrepreneurial and technical knowledge for the rise of Jalandhar as a sports goods manufacturing city almost from a scratch. Chattha is able to make a convincing case of the eminence of high social and technical capital of artisans and small entrepreneurs in the rise of industry versus the currently more recognized role of capital investment. The role of the state in this story lay mainly in protecting the infant industry.

Jakob Stiener writes about a western foreigner's impression of the small cities of Pakistan. He frames his narrative through a rhetorical analogy with two divergent experiences of travel between Islamabad and Lahore, one on the historic Grand Trunk Road and its unruly mix of traffic and passage through small towns versus the other on the sanitized, bypass of the modern motorway. The westerners in the development sector as well as senior local bureaucrats travel the motorway and miss out interaction with local realities. Media is no help as it frames Pakistan through clichéd tropes of terrorism and fundamentalism without independent investigation. He finds the educated middle class youth in small cities frustrated by lack of opportunity and angry with the state. The path they choose is of migration abroad and /or find an identity with a religious organizations espousing political agenda.

A paper from across the border in India by **Bhuvaneswari Raman** provides an empirical account of the acquisition of agricultural land for the new road networks as well as the Special Economic Zones (SEZs). With liberalization, the state policies are now bent towards facilitation of foreign investors rather than social protection of local farmers. The state policies calling for a greater connectivity of small cities mainly help integration of global supply chains. A key finding is that legislative interventions in the form of financial and legal amendments are geared towards accelerating corporate real estate development. She observes that there are losers and gainers in the process but the losers are predominantly the economically weak farmers as agricultural land is lost to SEZs and gated enclaves. The process is pushing people out of agriculture.

An ethno-ecology of Islamkot by **Vikram Das and Zaheer Ali** is the story of change which has preceded actual infrastructure development for coal mining project in the Thar desert. Images of development painted by the government to soften the impact of dispossession by the mining conglomerates promote Thar as an upcoming "Dubai". The dissemination of the 'Dubai' myth has brought land speculation and preemptive migration to Islamkot from surrounding villages attracted by the prospects of a market in land and development of infrastructure. The grazing commons or *Gouchar* have been encroached by the new migrants and even inner city locals were seeking to capture land to gain rapid profits. Islamkot had long sustained as a small town in a vulnerable ecological zone. The project launched through the aegis of state power has disrupted the existing ecology and its historical social settlement. A socio-ecological crisis is now developing given the loss of valuable common pastures, potential pollution of the aquifer and destruction of the famed harmony between the large Hindu population and Muslims.

Fizza Batool et al query provocatively, 'Is modernity depleting Bhera'. The paper is based on a broad ethnographic research designed to know about changes in local livelihoods and daily life across classes and in institutions, both public and private providing essential services in health and education. The findings reveal a picture of decline in all areas of social life and artisanal local production. Yet modernity is reflected in peoples life in terms of technology and modern institutions like the school and the hospital. Posing the question about the role of modernity provides

an historical framework and situates this decline in a broader narrative. We learn that Bhera till the mid 20th century produced a variety of goods for the surrounding hinterland and commanded a niche market in certain items of daily use such as henna dye, combs, wood craft and engraving, earthenware pottery, metal goods and handloom textiles. These small scale crafts of Bhera have virtually disappeared. They did not grow into larger industry. Both the colonial state with its partiality to the metropolitan industries and later the post-colonial state through its support for large scale industrial development and lately import liberalization has dealt a death blow to local production. The decline is equally pronounced in quality of food where the hinterland has moved from agroecological to industrial agriculture. Food is now processed and laced with harmful chemicals. The new motorway has shortened travel distance and has been welcomed by the people but it has also come as a drain taking away local milk and vegetables and inundating the small city with products from large cities. Cheap fizzy drinks have substituted the more nutritious local drinks especially *lassi*. Public education has declined and the privately delivered higher education has expanded especially amongst females but these highly educated females are now working at abysmally low wages. The most critical depletion is that of the quality of local water. The underground drinking water reservoir has been allowed to degrade without adequate support for municipal services and hasty adoption of water based sanitation. The invaluable water commons is fast turning into a commodity as the demand for clean drinking water is increasingly met through a market in bottled water. Last but not least, the diaspora of the educated and the able bodied begs study, is it a social tragedy or cause for celebration.

Fizza et al, this volume, choose to define small city as one where many people know many people. It is such small cities with historicity that we discuss below.

Historically, the small cities of south Asia served as poles of economic and cultural identity for rural hinterlands and flourished under a pre-industrial capitalist urban system. Today they are being incorporated in a planetary urban system through the unchecked flows of material, people and information. For example Karimabad and Islamkot, both small and relatively remote cities of Pakistan show how cities had historically evolved in tandem with their hinterlands and carried unique cultures. These cities had developed an intricate web of livestock and food production system in two divergent but equally harsh arid zones of Pakistan; Karimabad far up north in Hunza valley in the shadow of snow- capped mountains, and Islamkot in the great Thar desert in the south. They are both losing local production and capacity to retain their cultural identity.

Local society born of interdependence in the historical small cities still acts more like a community. It is not to suggest that there are no conflicts and hierarchical differentiation. Sabuhi Essa tells of the traditional spatial segregation in the city of Karimabad according to the social status of the communities but the dominant social ethos developed around the cooperative imperatives of local production. In Islamakot Hindus and Muslims had a history of harmonious living. Migrant non-Tharis arrive motivated by greed for prospects in land and developing infrastructure

and expansion of political /sectarian agendas. This combined with out-migration of locals fails to create conditions for community formation.

The most alarming story from the small towns concerns the pollution of drinking water with unchecked waste disposal into surface water sources such as rivers and streams and mixing of sewage and agrochemicals through seepage into aquifers. The litany of environmental hazards that come with industrialization of agriculture and food processing is also glaring in accounts of Hunza, Islamkot and Bhera. The proverbial good health of Hunza associated with its water and food is now only a nostalgic memory as is *lassi* drinking by rich and poor alike in the small towns of Punjab of yesteryears. One must reflect on the paradox of modernity, there is surplus food in the market and modern medicine but food security has declined (Kamran 2016) and health has deteriorated. The papers report narratives as well as corroborative official evidence.

Modern education and agriculture and crafts are almost mutually exclusive as both compete for time and require apprenticeship at an early age. Agriculture and crafts are also low paying. The new school going generation is fast moving out of agriculture. Culturally too modern education, as delivered to rural people, is designed for middle class urban life and does not inculcate love for rural life. It is thus disruptive for traditional life of small cities and rural communities. Education was considered an equalizer at one time now it is creating inequality. Yet education is fast becoming a new rage in small cities and with its privatization a major new monetary burden. With disappearance of jobs in crafts and change of labour intensive traditional agriculture into capital intensive industrial agriculture education has surfaced as the only hope for jobs in the urban areas or abroad.

The post-Partition policies of the state favoured large scale industry and now liberal imports have let craft based production, an important base for the development of indigenous industry, wither away. The role of the globalisation project to outcompete and shut down local livelihoods, defeat traditional culture and undermine social and environmental stability only highlights the significance of local industry and local production. Sialkot and Jalandhar offer case studies of how small scale industry takes root. Its post-Partition regeneration reveals the deep connection of small scale industry with local artisans and small entrepreneurs. It also shows real industrialization is a cultural phenomenon. It is an endogenous process rooted in the community.

The new urban condition is one of greater global integration achieved through the combined thrust of bigger infrastructure for greater motorisation and digital communication. Historically small cities were part of a system of local production and consumption given the technological limits of communication and uneven nature of development. As Sabuhi shares in case of Hunza, the once localized closed cycle of production had ensured a close knit community. The incorporation into a larger, distant market acts as a drain and produces a global monoculture erasing essential place value. Now the small cities have become part of the global supply

chains and global consumer market. Large cities are magnets for migration while small cities are sending communities and are being hollowed out with the departure of the well heeled, able bodied and educated youth. The flow back to the small cities is in the form of cash and consumer goods. The cash creates the need for permanent separation and long distance earning by the migrants as families back home acquire new cash dependent lifestyles.

The picture of development that emerges from the grounded research papers in this volume is in stark contrast to the mainstream picture built by the media and the state. According to the mainstream view of change in the past 12 years since 2004 per capita income of the people has more than doubled. The consumption of chicken meat has tripled. There are multiple cell-phones in every household and the internet users have grown 7 times. The number of cars and motorcycles have registered a steep rise. Nearly 90 per cent villages are now electrified and a large number of even village households have TVs, electric fans, washing machines, electric irons, water pump and at least a minority have refrigerators. These undeniable economic facts are signs of affluence and prosperity, and a means to better life. So which way has life moved in the extended period since 1980 which includes the last decade? Can anyone claim it has moved downhill? This study does exactly that. The contribution of this volume is it has helped break the surface and expose the real life beneath the development façade.

Small cities are now increasingly moving out of the imagination of the rulers and policy makers. The inquiries in this volume invite us to ponder the paradox between the development narrative reported above and a picture of decline on the ground. The local identities of production and culture are being lost and incorporated into a planetary urban system. Industrial agriculture, use of chemicals leave low or no profits in small scale agriculture and dairy. This is pushing small peasants out of agriculture while people have already accepted the disappearance of craft based production. The price of utilities is impoverishing the general public and the newly structured internet is gradually becoming a heavy burden for the educated youth. Migration and diaspora are hollowing out small cities and peripheral areas. This export of the able bodied and the educated is culturally impoverishing the society in general but the small cities in particular. Speculation in land is dispossessing the farmers of fertile agricultural land more so around big cities but also around small cities and the ensuing speculation has deprived the poor of even hopes of ever owning a house. Contaminated industrial food has played havoc with the health of the population. Chronic diseases like cardiovascular, hepatitis, musculo – skeletal, diabetes and hypertension have increased manifold and the old tuberculosis is returning with a vengeance. There is rampant malnutrition. As per government's own figures and of the World Bank 24 per cent population is malnourished and 44 per cent children are stunted. With traditional labour intensive livelihood like agriculture, dairy and crafts under severe pressure, education is left as the only hope for future. Education supposedly prepares the young for jobs, but where are the jobs. Last but not least the sparkling pure groundwater, nature's gift to the Indus

Basin has fallen victim to the man-made production of nature, stands polluted, and perhaps, is irreversibly lost, as a source of drinking water.

William Cronon, the environmental historian looks at this paradox as ways of building strikingly opposite narratives from the same ground reality (Cronon 1992). He exhorts us to tell the story about stories. The declensionist accounts in this selection seriously challenge the oft told tale of development as promise of a better environment.

Rabia Nadir

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KHAS DAES KAY AAM LOG¹ PLACE AND PEOPLE OF KARIMABAD, HUNZA

Abstract

The Northern Areas² of Pakistan in particular Hunza is known for its spectacular sights and unique cultural heritage. It is home to historic settlements with well preserved vernacular construction and indigenous communities with rich, living traditions stretching back to ancient times. The persistence of cultural heritage provides a sense of identity to the local communities and bestows a sense of place which is tangible for visitors. Non-government organizations (NGOs) have been actively involved in development of Hunza since the 1960's. Development was further spurred and expanded with the opening of the Karakorum Highway (KKH) in 1979. Development helped bring tourism and promoted global interest in the area. The locals increasingly turned to tourism for livelihood options and neglected their traditional farm based work. Then there was a sudden drop in tourism due to security concerns post 9/11 and lingering local sectarian clashes in the same period (Khan 2012). Tourism had pulled people away from agriculture and eventually its own decline forced the young and earning members of families towards larger metropolitan centres. This paper is a study of social change as new 'place value' was created by tourism profits and modernized agricultural production while education promoted cash generation and competition among young people. It argues that tourism stripped Hunza of khas (special) value also the people who were deemed aam (ordinary). It is a story of Karimabad before, during and after the development that came with KKH, tourism and education. It focuses on the social and spatial change and describes routines, consumption, social interaction, physical infrastructure and above all the culture of migration. The research is based on physical survey, photographic documentation and qualitative interviews with people in Karimabad conducted in 2013. The author is a local and actively immersed in the Hunza society, her experience too speaks through the study.

In the span of living memory

I returned to Hunza in 2013 to work on my research for my final architectural thesis project. Karimabad was still home and I felt deeply attached to it. However, living there after a span of many years the place made me sad. Most of my friends and family had gone away from Hunza just as I had for education or jobs or marriage to someone living far off in Karachi or Lahore. My last memory was of Karimabad at the height of its glory as a tourist destination. The streets were full of visitors and locals enjoyed the gaiety and tangible monetary rewards of flourishing tourism. There were endless festivals and musical evenings in many restaurants and hotels that had sprung around. Everyone had work and was optimistic about the future. They were proud to be *Hunzaïs*, people of a place outsiders admired and travelled to see.

In 2013 I found the streets virtually empty. The frequented water reservoirs and ponds had dried, businesses were down or closed, the many local festivals were reduced to one, families were dismembered and there were hardly any young people around for most of the year. Jobs or education had taken them away.

Tourism and construction of Karakorum Highway (KKH) gave rise to the concept of cash income which was little known phenomenon for the locals till the mid 90's. For some 20 years from mid 1980s Hunzai's working with Agha Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and other NGOs because used to well paid jobs much above the prevailing local salaries. This period was succeeded by high incomes from tourism that followed. When NGOs quit and tourism fell following 9/11 education and migration held the only hope for the continuation of that standard of life. The Agha Khan and the government had established a system of educational institutes which were accessible to all. The aspiration for higher education increased the need for cash as only families with a decent flow of cash could afford to send children to metropolitan centres. A major percentage of youth is now living in bigger cities in southern Pakistan for education and livelihood. Hunza, like other remote areas has in a way become a supplier of well educated, cultured and hardworking manpower for the large cities in Pakistan and on a minor scale for the West. Hunza locally cannot compete with salaries offered by jobs abroad or even in the big cities. Higher education however, becomes a one way ticket, few return to their homeland. Every year 20-35 students and youth migrate to the cities and abroad for education and job opportunities. Apart from that some 6-10 middle class young couples relocate to the cities (Essa 2014). In the small town of less than 10,000 persons³ this loss of the better endowed members is significant. It appears this speed will only increase in future under present conditions. Almost 80 per cent of the families residing in Karimabad have a member from their immediate family settled in city and are dependent on the migrant's remittances. The lower income groups of Karimabad with a lower cash flow are still dependent on agriculture and livestock business. They too, end up spending their little amount of cash on education, health and transport.

I frame my narrative through the new lens of valuation. The valuation of landscape and picturesque settlements such as Karimabad as 'commodity' and the devaluation of the sense of belonging and community are two sides of the same coin. The development that came to Hunza with its opening up with the building of the Karakorum Highway privileged the value of the region as a destination for buying the experience of its scenic beauty, historical cultures and crafts. The people who were integral to the very social existence of Hunza, its valleys with terraced fields, watercourses, orchards, architecture, music, food and medicine received value to the extent they too, became a commodity. People of Hunza could only command value if they became actors on the stage for the tourists. I argue that this valorization of Hunza as a '*khasdaes*' (special place) and the locals as the *aam log* (ordinary people) has left Karimabad town with reduced 'place' value.

For long term viability of tourism destinations, sense of place and development must be mutually enhancing and for the assurance of sustainability the preservation of both community and material artefacts is imperative (Binder and Binder 2005). In case of Karimabad rapid social and spatial change came with the connectivity with the outside world through the Karakorum Highway (Kreutzman 1991). Locals divide the recent history of change in Hunza into three major eras: the first, before 1960's when the region was inaccessible to outsiders due to geographical and territorial reasons, second, between 1960- 2000 when NGO's⁴ started and became dominant later in 1979 with the construction of Karakoram Highway (KKH), development projects of the area flourished and there was a high rate of tourist inflow. The third is after 9/11 when the situation changed with the decline in the tourism market. This resulted in economic recession and migrations of local inhabitants towards cities for employment. The changes included agriculture based upon more modern lines, network of schools, health clinics and tourist facilities which all converged into an increased role of market, privatization and diaspora. These ecological changes have been extensively documented by 'Culture Area Karakorum' (CAK) project of a collective of German scholars (Ali 2008). This paper analyses the narratives of the locals regarding the multi-dimensional change they report in their daily life and social environment of Karimabad. This change in the social fabric of Karimabad is affecting the sustainability of both community and material artefacts and consequently its long term viability even as a tourist destination.

The author conducted most of her research during the summer of 2013 while working on her dissertation at the National College of Arts Lahore. It was supplemented and updated by later visits in 2015.

The Long Living Hunza: Life and Terrain

Gilgit-Baltistan is located in the northern mountainous region of Pakistan comprising of Karakorum, Hindu Kush, and Western Himalayan ranges. It is a place of immense biological and social diversity and a variety of ethnic communities forged in its inaccessible mountain valleys. Administratively Hunza is one of the districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Karimabad is the central town of Hunza and was the royal headquarters till the local kingdoms were abolished in 1974.

The area has traditionally depended on subsistence agriculture and transhumance practices. Hunza itself has multiple ethnicities distributed in a complex system in its several valleys (Ochai 2009). Six indigenous groups, collectively known as Baltikut, reside in Baltit region, the old name for Karimabad. These tribal groups are Ayasho (the royal family), Diramiting, Barataling, Burong, Khurukuch and Baricho. The spatial plan of Karimabad reflects the social order with the highest elevation designated for the royals and the lowest class confined to the lowest elevation of the area.

Glacier fed water and limited arable land in the river terraces and moraines perched in deeply cut arid terrain have shaped the landscape and social life of the people of Hunza. Daily routines in Karimabad revolved around the fields, orchards, cattle and

the maintenance of irrigation *kools* or water channels. *Rajaki* or communal labor was done by men from every household for the maintenance of main *kools* and water reservoirs. These reservoirs or community pools were then used for swimming in summers. Major traditional festivals were also associated with agriculture, for example, the *Bofau* festival, celebrated on 6th of February, is the time of spraying of seeds in the farms, *Ginani* festival is celebrated when the crop is ready.

As an 81 years old resident of Karimabad narrated, "*Back then the only business was hunting and farming. For winters we used to store grain, dry vegetables and fruits. The ways of living were serene and simple in nature*".

Most elderly people share memories of a healthy lifestyle and capacity for hard labor of the older generation. This longevity of Hunza people is widely reported. My own grandparents continued to do all their housework well into their late 80's. They both lived above 100 years and my grandmother claimed to have never used any allopathic medication. An interesting empirical account was recorded in 1921 by Dr. Robert McCarrison, Director of Nutritional Research in colonial India.

"My own experience provides an example of a race unsurpassed in perfection of physique and in freedom from disease in general. I refer to the people of the State of Hunza, situated in the extreme northernmost point of India [now part of Pakistan]. Amongst these people the span of life is extraordinarily long. During the period of my association with these people, I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, or appendicitis, or mucous colitis, or cancer" (McCarrison1921).

British India while recognizing the importance of Hunza state in the great game between super powers established the first primary school in 1913 in Baltit (Karimabad) Hunza. All the teachers were brought from down country. The state Mirs (ruling clan) did not allow the children of common people to get education from this school fearing that education will make them conscious of their rights, which could threaten their existing monopolies. Thus the children of royal families and those having high standings in the affairs of the state benefited from this school. However one cannot deny the importance of this institution because this school for the first time produced few primary qualified people who later served the region as teachers. The single-most important factor that transformed the educational scene in Hunza was the contribution of Aga Khan III, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, who convinced the then Mirs of Hunza state to place greater emphasis on education. It was in 1946 that some 16 schools were established. They were called the Diamond Jubilee schools and they set the right momentum for bringing changes to education in Hunza (Siddiqui 2010).

Migration for jobs increased with the creation of the Gilgit Scouts starting 1918 and settlement in the lands outside Gilgit during colonial rule (Kreutzman 1991). However, migration since the opening of the KKH and now after the collapse of tourist business has intensified remarkably.

The New Infrastructure

Modern education was introduced in Hunza with the establishment of the Diamond Jubilee schools in 1946. In 1976 AKES (Agha Khan Education System) started an education programme in earnest. They established 152 primary, 56 middle and high schools in different district of Northern Areas. These and new schools set up by government and the community significantly altered the literacy landscape. Hunza now has 90 per cent literacy rate as against Pakistan's 50 per cent and there is a greater gender parity as well. Many of the locals started to move to larger cities for higher education and took up jobs in down country. Starting from the little known single school of 1913 schooling now has grown into a frenzy and playing a major role in restructuring society.

With inflow of capital, affordability of housing increased and also because of population growth people began moving out of the historical cluster housing and started building on agricultural lands. Changes in the natural and built environment can be clearly seen in the architecture of newly constructed houses, markets, hotels, restaurants and schools. In the historical cluster space integration of closely knitted streets and enclosures within houses triggered social interaction. Now due to dispersal, distances between dwellings have increased and the phenomenon of *place making* in the physical space has decreased. Modern houses are detached and spread far in the landscape.

Many new materials were introduced as well as new spaces for bathrooms with water closets. There were improvements to the *ha* (traditional central space around a hearth under the skylight). The new skylight used glass and allowed the smoke to be expelled and light to come in. The local development organizations came up with useful new amenities such as a geyser that used the heat from the stove in the *ha* to heat water. Technical input for improved earthquake resistant housing, conservation of traditional architectural features and town planning was brought to Hunza through a number of new organizations such as Aga Khan Planning and Building Service (AKPBS) and Water and Sanitation Extension Programme (WASEP) etc.

The more unpleasant *chankang* (old toilet)⁵ was abandoned and people were taught to construct pit toilets and in the cities starting with Baltit fort area in Karimabad a water based sanitation system was constructed. All the waste from the locality was dumped in a large treatment pool and then disposed off in the Hunza river.

Water supply was brought through pipes to each household. After this development, water use went up significantly while many of the communal pools are no longer maintained. Today, Karimabad has only one pool while earlier there were once twelve. This work was earlier accomplished by the participation and cooperation of the community but now fewer young men are available for such voluntary work.

Modern Production and Technology

A major development in Hunza post-opening of the KKH was the arrival of development organizations such as the Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) in 1982. They were responsible for introducing new breeds of animals, such as Australian cows, new varieties of fruits such as apples, cherries and new crops. There was also the introduction of new machines for farming, producing butter, pressing oil and shelling nuts. This led to major changes in the ecology and social organization of work. The new breeds and varieties needed artificial fertilizers and pesticides for protection. The new varieties of cherries and apples needed application of pesticide. The local apricots do not need spraying of pesticide in the same way. Introduction of potatoes also happened in the late 20th century.

The locals were amazed by the quantity of milk produced by the imported ‘*nusahwali*’ (pedigreed) cow. The milk production of the local cows was significantly small. The local animals however were hardy and mostly fed on the local grass and wild growth. While they were amazed and pleased with the quantity of milk there was also the complaint about how much food they ate, it was never enough. Special fodder had to be grown to feed the cows, squeezing out space for other staples such as maize and barley and also demand for dry fodder brought from Punjab got higher.

New technologies of communication and entertainment have entered the life of the people. People know about distant places. They are no longer impressed by people going to large cities and getting higher education. They now want to know about ranking of the university and are well informed even about the foreign universities. Now people are not impressed by someone studying abroad rather they want to know if they are in Harvard or MIT.

Respondents especially the older generation complained of the obsessive use of mobile phones and digital communication; these are deemed socially detrimental. Youth are distracted and uninterested in local affairs. An elderly person said, “*I have told the young men not to bring their mobile phones when they come for rajaki as they spend more time on their phones and contribute little to actual work.*”

Heritage Tourism

Along with the spectacular natural environment of the region, Karimabad is noted for its cultural heritage in the form of indigenous architecture, crafts and intangible assets such as its music, festivals and folklore. The work for the preservation of built heritage was initiated by the Agha Khan Development Network (AKDN). One of the flagship projects was the internationally acclaimed restoration of the Baltit fort in Karimabad. Extensive work was undertaken to document and list all significant buildings and cultural landscapes by Agha Khan Cultural Services Pakistan (AKCSP). The locals showed immense support for the showcasing of their history and heritage at Baltit fort. They participated by contributing their personal collection of traditional wares etc.

The built infrastructure aiming at tourism business became prominent in the townscape of Karimabad. The new landscape included bazars, general stores of foreign food items, souvenir shops with decorated facades and paved streets leading towards preserved old settlement and the majestic Baltit Fort.

“Despite having the main commercial area close to my house, to buy basic food items I have to walk to the other village because the bazaar in Karimabad only has foreign food item stores, tinned fruits and vegetables and gemstone shops, all shopkeepers want to facilitate just tourists”, said Karim Khan a local.

Khan (1996) was apprehensive about the outcomes of tourism induced development and externally influenced designs and expressed concern about the future survival of the integrated settlement architecture of Karimabad. The interest in heritage preservation became tied to tourism. While built heritage and some rituals were preserved for display, intangible culture tied to agrarian production started to erode.

Crafts are now more souvenirs for tourists. Revival of music festivals and cultural events which were long forgotten are also to fulfill the demand of tourists. Historically people of Hunza lived in multiple cosmological frameworks i.e. Shamanism, with a strong belief in supernatural beings associated with snowcapped mountains and glaciers. A better examined ritual is shamanistic *bittan* séance. The ritual involves séances conducted by specially endowed people (*bittans*) who communicate in trance-like states. As Khan (1996) explained they communicate with the supernatural world in order to bring the human world important information or render malevolent forces harmless through (their) intercession.

The ritual is no more practiced in Hunza. There are few *bittans* left in the entire region of Hunza. In particular Karimabad has no original *bittan*. On the festivals or musical shows for tourists they act as fake *bittans*. Similarly on the occasion of *Thumosballing* Festival celebrated on 21st December annually, a celebration on death of a cannibal king Shiri Bidat. The youngsters would dress up as ghosts and witches and go door to door as a gang called *Jatt Hir*, singing particular folk songs and scare children for fun. It was a healthy recreational festivity, which is no more celebrated due to out migration of majority of youngsters to the cities for education and jobs. In school annual functions and musical shows for tourists or locals, the school going youngsters act as *Jatt Hir* which reminds the locals of the most fun filled activity of cold winters. Ibadat Shah a local from Karimabad recalls the festival and said, *“This was the most exciting festival for me when I was a kid, on cold winter night the Jatt Hir always made me excited, their costumes and their scary songs were a great amazement for me and all the kids in the house. Sometimes I miss that time and tell stories to my grandchildren.”*

Sword dancing was meant to be the dance of the brave men on their victory. On designated occasions and celebrations, men in silk gowns and swords danced to a particular traditional tune of music. They were professional sword dancers. In Karimabad today only one sword dancer is left who can dance and do the

professional tricks of ancestors with sword while dancing. Tradition of sword dancing is becoming extinct. Youngsters try to act as sword dancers on the festivals and musical shows to attract tourists but they lack proper training in sword dancing.

Tourism brought a flush of money and development to the city but it collapsed after 9/11. The built space and fields once enlivened with the daily passage and activities of a small agrarian settlement became a playground for those seeking leisure and cultural experience. People of Karimabad paid no attention to their farms and quickly shifted to reap the high profits of foreign tourism but it all disappeared abruptly after 9/11. Since the construction of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) the area had slowly transformed into an active tourist area. For half a century locals were hosting the tourists. After the events of 9/11 and prolonged local sectarian clashes there was a significant reduction in tourist inflow; in 1998, the inflow was 1,13,399 tourists, while there was inflow of 2,000 tourists in 2002, and 2,544 in 2009 (Khan 2012). In the last few years domestic tourism has increased but foreign tourism remains low.

Community and Development

After the Diamond Jubilee schools, Agha Khan decided to start a comprehensive development programme for the area, around mid 1980s. A major NGO named AKRSP was created. The AKRSP adopted a community based participatory approach. AKRSP mobilized people through the local *Jamaat Khanas* to uplift the rural areas. They asked the locals to get organized and collectively decide upon the most beneficial project for the village and contribute a share even if it were just one egg a day.

They were also asked to nominate people who would supervise feasibility, land allocation etc. Professional organizers paid by AKRSP were employed to assist in technical detail, project requirements, project cost etc. They chose local contractors where possible. The work was supervised by local committees and fund disbursement too was monitored by the local committees. Many of the projects aimed to improve infrastructure and increase production of marketable produce. Many personnel were also trained as service and support staff e.g veterinarians, paramedics, masons, agri-technicians for grafting, processing, drying, packing of fruit and repair of agricultural machinery, even school teachers. Every effort was made to kick start participatory development.

AKRSP and AKDN were able to employ well qualified professionals from all over the world and the region. It created conditions for growth of business and equipped people to demand and facilitate education of girls, increase incomes, sanitation of city, preservation of heritage and culture of tourism. All these helped the community to enter the modern world. In this world education accentuated distinction amongst members of the same family and clan and ensured differential material and social rewards. It pulled the children away from farm work and also lowered the value of livelihoods in agriculture.

Karimabad 2015

Place sans People

Human response to natural and built surroundings, geography, history and population seeds sense of place. Over time, that response is woven into a shared consciousness by memory, story and experience ultimately imprinting community with an indelible and phenomenal spirit, unique to itself. (Binder and Binder 2005).

Hunza is seen as a heaven for mountain-lovers, explorers, adventurers and researchers from around the world. Hunza and Northern Areas are imagined only as a place for nature tourism rather than in their full social context (Ali 2014). Even the people of Karimabad have internalized this view of themselves as participants on a stage for tourists.

While Karimabad retains its iconic picturesque setting found circulating around the globe the 'choreography of existence' has lost its rhythm and joy. The streets are empty of the young and many public places languish in disuse. The polo ground or *shabarran* was an important social space where people gathered to see the sport and socialize on the sides. It is now deserted as young men are no longer there to play games and festivals are fewer.

While the people of Hunza still remain deeply attached to their culture and place, there is a drifting away as they physically relocate for jobs and education. This is leading to a gradual hollowing out of community life. There is a race for education but those who become doctors, architects and engineers go far in search of better jobs. According to unpublished findings of a quality of life survey (QOL) undertaken by AKCSP in 2011, 23.7 per cent of men and youth live in cities for education and employment purposes, leaving behind a population of kids between age of 0-15, men above 50 and women above 30. The youth are now exposed to the outside world and think of themselves as global citizens.

Stress and Inequality

There is now less attention to agricultural production and less sharing of work of harvest and maintenance of water channels etc. Higher education degrees have no use in the local environment. Previously there was no concept of unemployment in the agrarian setup and everyone contributed in sustaining the community in some form. Inequality among the various social groups existed in the form of a feudal inheritance and hierarchy but it was not extreme especially within a clan. There was commonality and similarity of dress, language, architecture, transport and food. There were many occasions for shared recreation, festivals and education.

Education has reorganized daily routines. Education is also competitive and stress inducing. There is a pressure to get the coveted admission in an institution of higher

education on a reserved 'seat' or a community based scholarship. The educated young are still strongly committed to community which provides them vertical social capital but the new capital is based on scarcity and part of a wider world of relations. There is extreme competition. The majority are the losers and those who lose are prone to despondency and suicides have gone up among the young. Watching others achievements and quality life style through social media, youth/students become prone to different kinds of inferiority complexes, which added with lack of financial resources, leaves them depressed and helpless.

In the words of a young professional female *"Not being able to fulfill their desires, students tend to harm themselves through indulgence in drugs particularly drinking and in some cases suicide. A recent example is of a student who couldn't get admission in the university he desired for and ended up taking his own life by strangling himself".*

Daily life for most females and males is still structured around the production and processing of food in homes and a division of labour. Members of a family share the work of agriculture and participate in community life, especially volunteering in the *Jamaatkhana*. School routine has been added to the daily life of a typical teenager in Karimabad. Most able bodied men in families are working outside Hunza leaving the females saddled with work and the added expectation of a good education. Everyone tries to provide food and fruit from their own farms as it helps save precious cash for education, healthcare, travelling and clothes but this demands physical labor as well as time, both of which are now in short supply.

Most people keep animals and the routine of the families starts with attending to the animals. A 17 years old described her day, *"I woke up early today it was my turn to attend the cattle and help my mother with breakfast. School is quite far, I walk to reach school with my friends. After school my mother expects me to help her in the orchard to collect fodder for the cow. We go to the nearby Jamaatkhana for prayers in the evening; I am a volunteer in the shoe company also. My sister and I cook dinner for the family before we go to Jamaatkhana. Before going to bed we do our homework, physics and biology are my favourites. I want to become a doctor; I know my father can't afford a private institute and I work hard to get the allocated medical seat for Hunza."*

There is also a problematic consumption of alcohol. Hunza people had traditionally consumed wine, there was no hard liquor or market in alcohol. Homes had wine making equipment and women learnt to make wine from the local grapes. Now cheap Chinese alcohol is available in abundance and there is despondency and competition giving rise to alcoholism.

There was no concept of keeping servants in Hunza except in the ruling families of Mirs etc. All the household work was done by members of the family and relatives helped out on special occasions. However, as some people are now earning higher salaries in jobs they have adopted the practice of keeping servants. People are still very uncomfortable about treating their own village and city persons as servants. Such sharp inequalities are now surfacing in Karimabad.

Language also creates distinction. English medium education is preferred and the standard of Urdu has declined. Urdu was given attention but nowadays the students have no command of Urdu as it is not considered important. The local tradition of command of multiple languages has also declined. Children who move away from Hunza at an early age do not have a rich vocabulary even of *Shina* and communication across generations is being lost.

Declining Health

Once “unsurpassed in perfection of physique and in freedom from disease in general” Karimabad today hosts all diseases of down country. Many diseases which were once unknown to the locals have been increasing over the last few decades, these diseases include gastronomical problems, diabetes, hypertension, iron deficiency and cancer particularly abdominal cancer. Dr Shah Islam a local doctor working since 1986 in the area describes the issue as, *“New diseases which were never reported in this area are increasingly reported since last decade. These diseases are mainly diet related, people consume less fruit because they sell it. Use of vegetables has been replaced by meals of poultry chicken with spices in it, for which the immune system of people in this area is not ready. Most locals consume fat and butter in high amounts as in the past, but due to no physical work in the fields this diet causes different diseases like high blood pressure.”*

The only modern health facility in the Hunza valley remains the hospital in Aliabad and people in remote areas have no access to even maternity care. They have lost their traditional treatment methods entirely and the new ones come at the same price as healthcare in large cities. The students who go to cities for education in medical schools hardly return to the area. *“Despite being the richest in the region in terms of per capita income, almost all Hunza villages are without basic health facilities. Hospitals in Aliabad located 7km. from Karimabad, the two major towns, are hardly equipped to handle complicated pregnancies, major accidents or serious illnesses”* (Beyg 2014).

Discussion

Karimabad now comes alive in summer as families from afar try to get together for weddings and traditional festivals. It is now only a symbolic primary home for their real lives are lived as diaspora in cities of Karachi, Islamabad and further in the Middle-east and Europe. There is increasing disparity in the extended family and many do not share the advanced lifestyle of metropolitan centres that is made possible by new well paid jobs of some.

The proverbial longevity of the Hunza people is now part of the family lore. What was once reality is now a nostalgic perception only. There are new diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart problems and depression among the middle aged and even the young. Suicides have gone up among the young. Modern chemical treatment has superseded the traditional biological medicine. Modern health care is limited, unaffordable and leaves the remote areas completely without health coverage.

The community is dependent and controlled by the market through inducements to new forms of consumption and livelihoods. They acquire education that prepares them for jobs in a market which is not local. Under the current scenario Hunza cannot accommodate its young in a substantial way except through expansion of local tourism, but dependence on tourism distorts the priorities of the host social settlement. It demands the conversion of place into a recreational playground. Tourism is dependent and sensitive to socio-economic developments beyond the control of the locals of Karimabad. It is thus volatile and destabilizes their life as happened after 9/11. When tourism hits a remote area, dependency on cash increases for accessing education, quality life and modern health facilities, while the locals and their culture become a service, to host the tourists, and the physical environment becomes a set designed for display. It creates crisis of identity which deepens when culture becomes a commodity. Tourism arrives in search of the natural beauty and exotic culture offered by the place. But the representation of the place is increasingly the reflection of the societies who are sending the tourists. The locals are responding to this representation and claiming to possess the 'commodity' the tourists' desire.

In the past each activity of public recreation had some significance of time and space, they were tied to seasons, crops and locations. Now the festivals are without proper performers and even spectators; so the many colorful occasions have been merged into one composite festival celebrated in summers when most people return to their ancestral homes. In this, each festival celebrated in the past on a specific date and space is now given a slot of twenty to thirty minutes for the *act*. Thus real time festivals are now presented as virtual enactments.

Similarly, if we look at the traditional dress of Hunza, in the past, all men and women would wear traditional caps from a very early age. After getting exposed to the metropolises they have started adopting the urban culture. Almost no young girl wears the traditional cap anymore. Most clothing and shoes come from Lahore and Karachi.

The wisdom and subsistence of the traditional society are no longer valued. The processes underway are undermining local identity, eroding commons and expanding monetary relations. The realization that community enables the social conditions of labour and resources and is the basis of improvement in daily life, has been lost. This loss of community is acutely felt by the people of Karimabad and shared in interviews. There is apprehension that monetization will leave the infrastructure vulnerable to decay. At the moment there is a flat rate for electricity and water supply but as the systems age, the poor will be unable to pay higher charges needed to maintain and upgrade them. The *chankang* was unpleasant but it helped to use human waste for fertilizer after it was collected under the toilet and did not pollute the water sources such as the river. The new development lacks a sustainable solution.

Diaspora of the young and earning males has left a population of old, very young and females making the town a concentration of the less resourceful members of the community. Unhappiness originates from inequality in migration, in education,

and the inequality of owning a marker of respect (house, car, TV, degree from a reputed university). Locals are in a race for gaining education, jobs, cash and gadgets. Waiting for a tourists or visas train which are not arriving, locals have become passengers in a waiting room. Inequality and instability is not original. It has mostly resulted from job related education, migration and monetized relations and inequality. Training in a modern, universalist model of education takes them away from a culture of farming and local traditions and prepares them to take off from Hunza. People don't help each other after having cash flow but come into competition. There was a time when they were in cooperation and interdependent. The availability of piped water supply is an example; they don't need *rajaki* anymore. There was equality in poverty. Another example is that of girls. When they were all illiterate, girls were at an equal level of intellect. Now there are levels of education leading to intellectual and social inequality. And it makes them unhappy. Those who are left behind are under stress of not being able to get to a better source of income and education which they see only in the cities. While those who are already in cities for jobs and education are nostalgic and sad for being apart.

Food security and the culture of farming is losing primacy in the lives of the ordinary *Hunzais*. While farming is still the major occupation and families with farm land are self-sufficient in food, they are under pressure for cash. As their lifestyle needs increasingly more cash, they may have to sell their own food.

My parents and my generation has gone through this change in a short time. This is a record of the loss of *khas* (special) value which was their cultural identity. Cultural diversity, like biodiversity, flourishes under locally stable conditions. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance had shaped the culture of Hunza and given the place its unique value. Sadly, these aspects of culture have experienced a setback. The linkage created by the KKH has invited broad unchecked development. It has been instrumental in creating inequality and starting a race for status which has grown under conditions of globalization. The people of Hunza were as *Khas* (special) as its scenic geography and architecture. However, the tourists were given a special status and the locals were reduced to a servant role on the stage set for tourists. The empty homes of Karimabad are a testimony to the loss of social value and hence place value despite its scenic location and well preserved built heritage.

Notes

¹*Khas*, (Arabic). Verbal noun meaning distinguished, particular, peculiar, special, distinct, private (kept for the use of a king or master), pure, unmixed, unadulterated, excellent, noble etc.

Daes, (Hindi), Place, spot, country etc. Also a musical raga sung at midnight *Rag Daes*

Aam (Arabic), meaning common, general, universal, public, vulgar, popular, plebian, ordinary, hence *aam log* ordinary people.

Log (Hindi), meaning mankind, people, folk, family, tribe, caste etc. (Platts 1995)

² *Northern Areas* was the official nomenclature for the part of the pre-Partition state of Jammu and Kashmir which won its independence from the Dogra rulers in Srinagar through an insurrection in 1948. It has recently been recognized as the province of Gilgit-Baltistan.

³According to the census of 2009 the population was 7800 persons.

⁴ Perhaps the biggest social interventions in modern times is related to the Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) created by Prince Karim Agha Khan the current spiritual head of the Ismaili community who dominantly populate the area.

⁵*Chaukung* was a specially designed raised toilet which allowed all the solid excreta to be stored below from where it was cleaned by seasonal scavengers from Baltistan. The waste was used as organic fertilizer in the fields. This practice has disappeared in Karimabad and most of Hunza. In Shiger valley people did not give up this system of dry latrines despite the efforts of the development agencies as they are still involved in largely agricultural livelihood.

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ARTISANAL TOWNS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN SIALKOT AND JALANDHAR

Abstract

Sialkot (Pakistan) and Jalandhar (India) have not only become the largest production centres of surgical instruments and sports goods in their respective countries, but have also emerged as world players in these export-oriented products. The two cities have reached this stage after negotiating numerous challenges. Sialkot's industrial clusters had thrived during colonial rule, while Jalandhar's developed impressively after independence. This paper identifies similarities and differences in the development patterns of industrial growth in the two cities in the aftermath of the Partition of India. Drawing attention to the historical success of the Sialkot cluster, this paper shows how the city faced economic hardship in 1947, arising from the migration of the Hindu trading classes to Jalandhar, where they sought to establish a powerful regional competitor. This points to the specificity of local contingent factors—particularly, Sialkot's local entrepreneurial base—as specific features of the city's post-1947 success. This, in turn, reflects on the resilience and self-reliance of the city, which went on to compete with larger urban centres. The emphasis is on the entrepreneurial history of the local artisans. How did they fill the various niches left by the departure of Hindus traders? In the case of Jalandhar, this paper considers the extent to which the input of refugee labour and capital from Sialkot was locally significant in the development of contemporary industry in Jalandhar. This is not merely an attempt to provide historical depth to studies on the development of industrial clusters; such a perspective carries the potential to improve our understanding of how a new class of small industrialists rises through this 'development'. This paper argues that understandings which do not view these processes as interconnected will fail to design appropriate policies to facilitate industrialisation.

Introduction

Contemporary globalisation and problems of de-industrialisation in cities such as Ahmedabad and Bombay have encouraged what Prakash (2002) has termed an urban 'historical turn' in the past two decades. Much of new urban history has focused on metropolitan centres or port cities, where rapid urban expansion and industrial growth generated the 'problems' which occasioned dramatic interventions by governing authorities in the fields of housing, public health and policing (Chandravarkar 2009; Heitzman 2008; Fawaz and Bayly 2002). With respect to India, as elsewhere, the wider themes on the new forms of urbanity and modernity have been marked by interdisciplinary approaches (Talbot and Kamran 2015; Glover 2011; Freitag 2011). In his recent work, *Small Towns Capitalism in Western*

India, Haynes (2012) stresses that the histories of different industries in the informal sector can only be understood by close examination of regional economics in different parts of the subcontinent. In considering the advances of the new urban history and the importance of small towns economics, however, the artisanal cities of Sialkot and Jalandhar should not be overlooked. Not only have these cities become major manufacturing centres of surgical instruments and sports goods, they also have emerged as world players in these export-oriented products, and thereby contribute to the regional, national and, to a lesser extent, global economy. About two-thirds of India's export of sports goods is from Jalandhar alone. Sialkot caters to 85 per cent of the total world demand for hand-stitched inflatable balls, with an annual value of exports over 1.6 billion dollars (Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi 2010). How have these cities achieved this performance? We argue that the explanation to this conundrum can be found by closely studying their intertwined histories through a comparative analysis. .

The role of industrial clusters in rapid industrial development has attracted much attention in the last two decades from development economists and policymakers, because they create ample employment opportunities, generate capital stocks and thereby contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction (Zhu 2012; Sonobe and Otsuka 2011; Roy 1993; Long and Zhang 2011; Schmitz and Nadvi 1999; Porter 1998). In exploring the historical processes through which the 'informal' sector has related to the 'formal' sector over time, Haynes (2012) treats artisan manufacture as part of capitalist development and more critical to the current contours of the regional and global economy. There is a large body of literature that offers relevant insights (Jakobsen 2015; Acs and Audretsch 1990 and Brock and Evans 1989). As for the empirical studies specifically relating to the cities and towns of Punjab, Singh (1994) and Hazlehurst (1966), for example, demonstrate the influence of caste and family background on entrepreneurial success. Singh's (1994) account of Ludhiana's bicycle cluster and Menning's (1997) work of Surat's Silk industry produced similar findings. More recently, some authors have stressed the importance of taking stock of region-specific factors (Sonobe and Otsuka 2011). Others have laid stress on the role of the government, which makes entrepreneurship productive, unproductive or destructive (Baumol 1990).

Given this variety, to what extent is this scholarship a significant factor in the case of Sialkot and Jalandhar? How have the cities' clusters developed? What are the characteristics of their development? The historical growth of the cities' industrial clusters is markedly different from each other. Sialkot's well-defined export-oriented clusters producing surgical instruments and sports goods had thrived during colonial rule. They not only fulfilled the bulk of the subcontinent's requirements, but were also exported worldwide. How did the city develop such competencies? This paper seeks to answer this question through exploring the entrepreneurial history of the local artisans (*mistri*). The Hindu and Sikh commercial and trading classes of Sialkot monopolised the industry, although Muslims largely comprised its workforce. The city suffered widespread demographic shifts and economic hardship at the time of Partition in 1947, as it lost its capitalist classes, traditional markets, and sources of raw materials. It also faced a powerful regional competitor in Jalandhar, where

Hindu refugees from Sialkot sought to establish a rival sports goods and surgical instruments industry. The cities provide a rare opportunity to examine the contrasting experiences of the development of industrial clusters, comprised of the supply of skills brought by the migrant communities and the severe pressures imposed by Partition-related dislocations concerning the loss of Hindu traders.

This paper argues that Sialkot and Jalandhar can be seen as regional exemplars on how to manage demographic change. Although this research is based on source material dealing directly with these two artisanal cities, and informed by a relevant theoretical framework, the insights apply to other cities and towns in the region and beyond. Considering the ways in which the demographic and economic depletion handicapped the commercial activities in Sialkot, this paper provides the key to understanding how the city recovered from its Partition-related economic depression to become a thriving industrial town. It shows how members of the local skilled population responded to the change in circumstances and seized opportunities to start new ventures following the departure of Hindu traders. It examines the extent to which the Muslim artisans' success depended on pre-existing skills, marketing networks, and government assistance.

Jalandhar's emergence as a major production centre is more recent than Sialkot's. The case study of Jalandhar provides an in-depth analysis to uncover the role of migrant communities in the emergence and performance of surgical instruments and sports goods industry. It considers the extent to which the input of refugee labour and capital from Sialkot was locally significant in the development of a contemporary industry in Jalandhar, India's largest production centre for sports goods and surgical instruments. It draws special attention to the ethnic entrepreneurship by certain caste groups, especially the Ad-dharmi and Chamars, and attempts to account for their success as the city's leading traders. The paper argues that the demographic change brought on by Partition significantly impacted the cities' economies and brought new niches for economically-backward communities, which is not fully recognised in scholarship. It not only explains the processes in which small and medium enterprises can develop and relate to the formal sector, and also facilitate upward mobility for the underprivileged classes.

The growth of Jalandhar's industry

Jalandhar has played an important role in India's economic development. Its industrial clusters for the production of surgical instruments and sports goods have developed dramatically since independence, before which they barely existed. How can we explain this impressive growth in the immediate post-colonial period? A survey of the firms producing surgical instruments and sports goods was conducted in Jalandhar in order to gather information on the historical development of the cluster, and the major characteristics of entrepreneurs and their enterprises. The industry in Jalandhar was initiated in 1947 when the migrant communities from Sialkot had resettled in the city following the Partition of India. According to our survey, out of 125 sample firms, over seventy per cent of business people inherited

their businesses from their fathers, who had worked in Sialkot before becoming entrepreneurs in Jalandhar. The most successful of these individuals belonged to the Khatri, Bania and Arora castes. The leading families who dominated the industrial sector included Dutt, Roy, Uberoi, Agarwal, Nanda, Rai and Ahluwalia. They also included Sikh Ramgarhias and other caste groups, namely the Ad-dharmi, Meghs and Chamars. In a short span of time, members of these migrant communities had established many sports goods units in Jalandhar. Their efficiency is clearly evidenced in the fact that by May 1949, they had established about seventy-five large and small enterprises for the manufacture of sports goods, and their monthly production was worth about Rs 200,000. ¹Since then, the industry has been growing vigorously. Although the Sialkot cluster is three times bigger than Jalandhar's in terms of numbers of firms, and eight times larger in value of export (Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi 2010), the development phenomenon is unique to Jalandhar in that the emergence of clusters has not been experienced in any other of the region's cities on such a large-scale and at such a rapid rate.

How can we account for Jalandhar's unmatched rapid industrial growth? What enabled the migrant families to become successful entrepreneurs in the industry? A wide range of studies has identified the impact of refugee skill and capital in the urban regeneration and industrial development of different cities and towns of the Punjab. Notable works include Talbot (2006) on Lahore's post-1947 growth in the carpet industries and Virdee (2008) on the development of textile industry in Lyallpur. Building upon their insight, this paper shows that the previously acquired industrial skills and capital in Sialkot were important factors not only in Jalandhar's rapid post-independence economic growth, but also in individual refugees' success. According to our interviews with traders in Jalandhar, members of these migrant communities utilised their pre-existing family ties and business connections, and transferred their previous experience and skills to the city's surgical instruments and sports goods economy.

This process can be illustrated through the case of the city's well-known Pioneer Sports Goods, which was initiated by a migrant family, the Ahluwalia, in 1948. Prior to Partition, the Ahluwalia Brothers, namely Kirpal Singh and Rajindar Singh, owned Sialkot's successful Pioneer Sporting Goods, which had branches not only in other Indian cities such as Jalandhar, Bombay and Calcutta, but also at 6 Rangoon Street, London by the name of J. S. Ahluwalia.² They were experts in the techniques of procurement, quality control and arrangements for export and marketing network. The family, which migrated to Jalandhar in 1947, utilised previous trading experience and emerged as one of the most successful business families of the city. Moreover, their success also played an important role in establishing a major rival to the Sialkot sports goods industry in India. The firm mostly employed refugee labour. From this pioneering enterprise, a number of spin-off entrepreneurs emerged who established their own firms in the city. It is also important to note that some of Sialkot's Hindu traders, who had earlier opted to resettle in Delhi and elsewhere, subsequently shifted to Jalandhar because of the concentration of refugee workers in the city, totalling at over 26,000 in 1951 (Chattha 2011). As revealed through interviews, Hindu entrepreneurs freely acknowledged the technical mastery of refugee labour.

Academic literature on the theme shows that clusters tend to foster more clusters (Zhu 2012; Sonobe and Otsuka 2011). The Jalandhar industry grew rapidly in the early years of independence. Practically all the prominent refugee manufacturers of the surgical instruments and sports goods industries had modest beginnings. Small units have traditionally dominated the industry. There are three types of enterprises connected with one another in the production system and marketing network: (1) registered firms; (2) unregistered workshops; and (3) subcontractors. These industries depended on the skills, capital, connections and networks of trust amongst the refugee communities. The example of an Aggarwal businessman illustrates a success story. His family business has grown from small beginnings to become one of the biggest sports goods operators and dealers in Jalandhar. As explained in informal interviews, the family was engaged as middlemen in the sports goods industry in Sialkot prior to migration. According to our respondents, community support from people who came from similar localities and ethnic backgrounds was another way to set up a new venture in Jalandhar. One success story is Shinder Singh; the Sikh Ramgarhias, whose family came from Sialkot and now live in Jalandhar's Basti Nau. Like other respondents, his father was also able to secure assistance in setting up trade because of pre-Partition connections. *'My father owned a tonga (horse-cart) in Sialkot and mainly got labour of delivering raw material and products one place to other. He personally knew many traders...these contacts helped in setting up business in Jalandhar'*. This account highlights that 'being known' from before was an important element in enhancing social capital and developing a business for an otherwise underprivileged individual in the post-47 climate.

Economic mobility of refugees: From 'untouchables' to entrepreneurs

This paper argues that the demographic transformation in the wake of Partition brought new opportunities for both locals and refugees in different sectors of the economy. Many refugee workers achieved upward economic mobility in Jalandhar through their own efforts, and in particular because they brought trading experience, skills and contacts from Pakistan. Members of the scheduled caste groups, namely the Ad-dharmi, Meghs and Chamars, were a part of a larger group of people who migrated to Jalandhar from Sialkot in 1947 (Chattha 2011). These caste groups formed about forty per cent of the population of Jalandhar. In many ways, they benefited from the opportunities created by Partition-related dislocation. In actuality, they were not traditionally business people; their groups were customarily limited to trading professions such as the handling and processing of raw hides. As revealed through interviews, members of these lower caste groups have experienced social, economic and political mobility through entrepreneurship largely by diversifying their traditional caste occupations. Possessing skills and practical experience, combined with the favorable business environment provided by the Indian government, many succeeded in establishing themselves as independent producers. They monopolised the sector of surgical instruments and leather-based industries during its earlier years. According to Jodhha (2003), the Ad-dharmi and Chamars controlled approximately up to an astonishing 70 per cent of the big units, and about 80 per cent of the medium and small units producing surgical instruments

in Jalandhar by the 1960s. Their presence was also quite significant in the sports goods and leather industries in the city (Bal and Judge 2010).

Aside from trading experience, one of the primary reasons for the Ad-dharmi and Chamar's success in the business is their extensive kinship network in Jalandhar. As evinced in informal interviews, they, like those of many other migrant business communities in the city, are a closely-knit group, bound tightly by trust and cooperation. These flexible networks give them access to community resources, and allow them to adapt to market fluctuations and avoid bureaucratic restrictions. Some cluster studies have stressed the role of social capital in industrial development (Nadvi 1999; Weiss 1991). Our informal interviews with the migrant groups of entrepreneurs in Jalandhar indicate that their kinship and social ties with people in the same industry helps them gain access to trade credit and important business-related information. Many of the traders are connected with each other either through kinship, or are acquainted because of their previously shared locality (Sialkot) and collective memory of the 1947 mass migration.

As revealed through interviews, location is also vital in influencing individual access to market potential. They reside in close proximity and are also related as neighbours and as kin, and such kinship bonds are socially reproduced through socio-economic interactions and intermarriages. It emerged, through interviews, that informal contacts and previously-shared community values were two of the reasons that led to joint action, co-operation, and the success of migrant communities in the surgical instruments and sports goods trades. Nonetheless, in these communities, like in any other, cooperation and support coexist with gossip, competition and rivalry.

Lack of credit was cited as a major initial constraint by most of the refugee entrepreneurs in Jalandhar. Despite the Indian government's schemes to fund refugee businessmen, the theme, which emerges from informal interviews, is that most of the capital which was raised came from their own family funds. The capital assets, which they had carried with them in the migration from Sialkot, constituted an important source of their investment. The other source was the compensation they received for their 'claims' of various kinds of immovable properties that they had abandoned in Pakistan. The state was, of course, involved in overseeing this process, but refugees regarded it as part of their 'right'. Therefore, they tend in interviews to play down any notion of state assistance in their success. In reality, the Indian government's assistance in creating the conditions for small-scale capital accumulation among skilled sports goods and surgical instruments workers was a key element in Jalandhar's economic dynamism. The government's policies towards the refugees in the 1950s, in terms of loans at a low rate of interest and raw material quotas, encouraged them to start new ventures. The government also provided assistance to small-scale units under the Freight Equalisation Scheme of 1948 (Singh 1994). The cost of transport of raw material to the factory decreased significantly in Punjab because of this scheme. Certainly, Jalandhar's industry was one of the beneficiaries of this assistance. The city's strategic location ensured a prominent commercial position in the Punjab. From here, goods could be easily transported to

many big inland cities, such as Amritsar and Ludhiana. Jalandhar also had an advantage in terms of access to raw materials like willow and mulberry wood. The former was found chiefly in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, and subsequently, the Indian government made efforts to grow willow wood on the banks of the Beas River in the Kulu Valley of East Punjab (Tyagi 1958: 160)

Indeed the Jalandhar industry, like many others in the country, took advantage of the new state structure associated with Nehruvian socialism, which regulated factory production. In as early as June 1948, to help develop the sports goods industry of Jalandhar, the Indian government banned the illegal flow of Sialkot-made sports goods into the country. After Partition, a great number of unfinished sports goods had been smuggled into India through 'illegal channels'. Some indication of the scale of this activity can be found in the fact that the Indian government had seized over Rs 2 million worth of 'Sialkot sports goods' by June 1948.³

Most importantly, factors associated with the global economy were no doubt influential in shaping the artisanal manufacturing industry of Jalandhar. In one instance, Jalandhar benefited greatly from the devaluation crisis and began competing with Sialkot's industry. The crisis, which occurred in 1949 following the devaluation of the sterling, threatened to ruin the Sialkot industry as its export prices increased.⁴ Pakistan's refusal to devalue its rupee resulted in a great financial loss to all the exporters of the country. Sialkot's industry, as a part of a global market, was especially adversely affected. Its goods were successful because of their lower prices, so a sudden increase of 44 per cent in the prices of sports goods forced many European, and Commonwealth firms to cancel their orders. Amidst this crisis, Jalandhar's industry took off, as international demand for the city's sports goods increased considerably in Britain, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and the West Indies. Now 100 Pakistani rupees were equal to 144 Indian rupees. This imbalance priced Sialkot's goods out of many markets. Facing the threat of being wiped out by the currency crisis, the local trading communities and government of Pakistan took a series of collective measures to save the industry, as we shall see.

The development of Sialkot industry

Sialkot's experience of post-independence industrial growth stands in stark contrast to Jalandhar. This is chiefly in terms of the role of locals rather than migrants. In part, Sialkot's geographical handicap of being on the border, particularly with the disputed areas of Jammu and Kashmir, provided opportunities for local communities, as the city failed to attract refugee workers and entrepreneurs in the wake of Partition. Refugees in Sialkot chiefly came from the Jammu region. The 'Kashmiri refugees' migration experience and pattern of settlement was sharply different from their East Punjab counterparts. Despite the central government's sympathy for the Kashmiri refugees, Pakistan's claim over the disputed territory of Kashmir not only excluded them from permanent settlement schemes for a long time, but also omitted them from inclusion in the 1951 Census.⁵

Sialkot suffered serious hardship from the migration of Hindu trading classes, capital flight, loss of financial expertise in the banking and business sectors, and loss of access to traditional markets and raw materials. Hindu and Sikh traders had started shifting assets and capital out of Sialkot weeks before the formal Partition happened. It took decades to overcome the 1947 depression as its industrial production and export declined by 90 per cent.⁶ Out of fifty-three registered factories working in 1946, only twelve factories remained in partial operation after Partition. The year before Partition, Rs 149 *lakhs* worth of capital was invested in Sialkot's factories, but this had decreased to Rs 14 *lakhs* in 1947 (Abdul 1953: 61-67). The continuing closure of industries rendered over 90 per cent of the labouring classes without employment. More than five months after Partition, over 35,000 former workers were still 'sitting idle'.⁷

How did Sialkot's labour respond to this hardship? Source material shows, despite demographic doldrums and economic depletion, the city's local entrepreneurial base and pre-existing skills were important for the post-1947 recovery. Its existing artisans and investors not only utilised the pre-existing global marketing network to their advantage, but also saw an opportunity to take over as owners in the entrepreneurial vacuum, which was created with the departure of the Hindu traders. Though they were initially slow to make any headway, with the assistance of the government, they began to gain ascendancy and contributed greatly to Sialkot's economic dynamism. Before turning to this theme, it is important to take stock of the local skill, which was central to the city's post-1947 success.

Sialkot—the University of entrepreneurs

This section proposes an explanation of the historical success of industrial clusters in Sialkot by exploring the artisanal origins of Sialkot's contemporary industrialisation. Some cluster studies have attempted to explain the processes that lead to certain industrial clusters growing faster than others. Nam, Sonobe and Otsuka (2009), for example, find the advent of modern industrial clusters as arising from traditional villages where time-honored products, such as silk and agricultural tools, have long been produced. Sialkot lends support to this view. Famous for its local initiatives, Sialkot had long ago developed industrial clusters formed by small workshops. It is interesting to ask why clusters in Sialkot managed to grow successfully. Historically, the city was on the invasion route from Central Asia. As a result, it developed a specialised expertise in manufacturing metal-based weapons over the centuries. The city's small-scale iron manufacturing was intertwined from its inception with the expertise of local craftspeople, namely the Lohars and Tarkhans, along with the Sikh Ramgarhias, who possessed similar metalworking and carpentry skills. Locally known as *mistri*, the groups had long been famous as technical innovators and had made their mark on Sialkot's trade scene through the centuries. They had a long-established reputation for making agricultural implements, household items and ironworks.

Research on artisanal industry (Haynes 2012; Roy 2007) shows artisanal production was a phenomenon associated with smaller cities and towns. A large chunk of the ironworks were situated within Sialkot and its satellite localities of Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Nizamabad and Kotli Loharan. In these artisan localities, there was a high level of geographical mobility (emigration) and trade activities. The case study of these localities provides a good opportunity to trace the development process of industrial clusters, and to identify the factors affecting their transformation from traditional to modern sectors. A large cutlery industry cluster had developed in Nizamabad, where around two hundred families of Lohars plied their craft in about twenty-five workshops, from where their products were sent all over India. In 1881, John Lockwood Kipling, then the Principal of Lahore's Mayo School of Art, described the Lohars of the locality as 'the better class of artisans'. Similarly, the nearby village of Kotli Loharan, about three miles northwest of the Sialkot cantonments, was famous beyond India for the ironwork of its artisans. These skilled artisans introduced innovations and supplied their artisanal goods all over the country and beyond. According to Kipling, 'The smiths or koftgars of Kotli-Loharan, near Sialkot, produce[d] a large quantity of caskets, shields, salvers, and other articles of ornament'. The articles manufactured in the village were found all over India and even in some parts of Europe. Kipling noted that the hawkers of Kotli Loharan were 'frequently seen in the streets of Calcutta and Bombay; and the writer is acquainted with one who has included Italy, France, and England in his travels'. The articles made of 'Kotli' found their way in 'considerable quantities to Europe and America' (Latifi 1911: 127-31).

Sialkot's early role as an emporium for artisanal manufactures left a strong imprint on the local culture of enterprise. It continued to influence the city's commercial life and resulted in its renewal as an industrial centre. Many of its 'unique' characteristics were, in Chandavarkar's terms (2009), 'incidental' rather than 'generic'. Sialkot was immensely affected by the colonial impact on the Punjab, as the city's strategic location led to the construction of one of their largest cantonments, the opening of the railways, and the settlement of 'civil lines' for Europeans. While migrants were drawn to the city to construct and service the European population, this period was especially important in increasing the mobility, technical skills and capital of the local artisan communities through the development of the city. By the turn of the twentieth century, both Lohars and Tarkhans employed in Sialkot and Gujranwala combined numbered over 13,000 (Chattha 2011).

Given the *mistri*' traditional specialisation and initiatives in the ironworks and carpentry skills, it is not surprising that they were among the early pioneers of the surgical instruments and sports goods industry in Sialkot. How did this transition happen? The demands of Westerners and their styles of consumption provided a good opportunity for shifting from traditional to modern sectors. Sialkot's rapid urbanisation was intrinsically linked with the strong European presence in the civil lines and cantonments. In the immediate aftermath of the events of 1857, the number of European troops had increased in the city, along with the arrival of a large number of Western Christian missionaries. This led to a rapid growth in commodities trading

and the creation of new markets. In less than five years, with the construction of cantonments, the population of Europeans exceeded 1,800 in the city, nearly half of them being civilians (Chattha 2011). In 1870, for the first time, some *mistri* of Sialkot repaired surgical instruments for the American Mission Hospital. Encouraged by the hospital staff, they gradually started manufacturing replicas of the originals, and subsequently a new industry steadily grew in Sialkot. In a similar manner, a British missionary in the Sialkot cantonment went to a carpenter's shop and got a badminton racquet repaired for two rupees. Soon afterwards, a swarm of imitators emerged, and the city hawkers started visiting cantonments and the British quarters, near and far, where they supplied and repaired sports goods.

While the actual stimulus for this manufacturing came from the Europeans and their style of consumption, Sialkot's modern industries owe their emergence to the existing stock of artisan classes. With the passage of time, they moulded their traditional skills and entered the newly emerging modern sports goods and surgical instruments industries. It was not until 1908 that Sardar Shiv Dew Singh founded Sialkot's surgical instrument sector. It was initially a scissors and small surgical equipment concern, which chiefly supplied 'private practitioners'. In 1911 another firm, Uberoi Surgical Industry, emerged, which employed foreign machinery and Sheffield steel for the manufacture of its equipment (Latifi 1911: 234). These pioneer enterprises had significant influence on both acquiring industrial skills and the production of equipment. They started supplying surgical instruments to Missionary hospitals.

The large demand of orders during World War I for the British Indian Army was the catalyst for a significant expansion of clusters in Sialkot. This period saw the burgeoning prosperity of a set of artisan groups who adopted novel product lines with new forms of technology. In time, around 26 medium factories arose, which were producing surgical instruments annually worth Rs three million. After the war, Sialkot made instruments for export to all parts of the subcontinent, as well as to Burma, Afghanistan and Egypt. The Second World War brought further 'blessing for industry,' and many new firms sprang up, as there was an industrial slump in the UK and the USA. On the eve of Partition, the annual export of the surgical instruments was worth Rs 5 million.⁸ These industries were Hindu-owned, but they were destined to be taken over by Muslim artisans after the migration of Hindus and Sikhs in 1947.

The emergence of the modern sports goods industry is owed to the Uberoi Brothers—Jhanda Singh and Sardar Ganda Singh—who, in 1894, started manufacturing badminton and tennis racquets with only half a dozen workmen. With rising demands from the European population in the cantonments, production was expanded to include polo sticks, cricket bats, hockey sticks, footballs, golf clubs and apparatuses for gymnastics. Marshall (1890) indicated that the development of an industrial concentration was dependent on available physical conditions (i.e. raw material resources and transport conditions). Sialkot benefited from its location at the intersection of the Chenab and Jhelum rivers, and the proximity to the states of

Jammu and Kashmir and Chamba. The easy access to natural resources like timber was vital for the production of goods.⁹ Sialkot's sports goods industry was the main consumer of the Kashmiri willow. The combined benefits of raw materials, technical labour resources and the naturally favourable climatic conditions ensured the continued growth of the city's modern sports goods industry.

The development of Sialkot's industry is markedly different from the larger cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad, where some of India's early composite textile industries sprang up in the 1850s (Ray 1992). Sialkot's industry grew out of small household workshops. It was competitively disadvantaged in technology, labour quality and skills, access to credit and materials through official channels. The first turning point in the development of Sialkot's sports goods industry came in 1911, when Ganda Singh Uberoi imported, for the first time, the English willow, power machines, and English experts. By the end of that year, the Uberoi Limited initiated a system of apprenticeship, and under a European foreman, workmen were contracted and trained to follow English methods. They tested new innovations and became experienced with new forms of technology and organisation. At first, the workers were taken on for two months to judge their suitability, and were paid 4 *annas* a day. Their parents were then approached for their consent that the boys could enter into a five year 'indentured contract'. They initially specialised in light work such as stitching balls, and as they improved, they were pushed into higher-grade work in the same line. In this way, a large number of workers obtained industrial skills that subsequently created a pooled market for a workforce with similar skills. Technical efficiency was certainly a critical factor behind the city becoming a seedbed of entrepreneurs and skilled workers.

The Uberoi, as the university of entrepreneurs, not only fostered the growth of a skilled workforce, but also played a crucial role in encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting a culture of drive and thrift in Sialkot. From this pioneering enterprise, a number of spin-off entrepreneurs emerged who established their own firms while imitating what they had learned from the Uberoi. The existing literature suggests that imitation is rampant in industrial clusters. In this way, an industrial cluster is formed, though the key to success depends on 'multifaceted innovations' (Snoden and Otsuka 2011: 5). The industrial training of Sialkot's workforce at the Uberoi was certainly an advantage over neighboring towns such as Wazirabad and Gujranwala.

How did Sialkot's products expand to broader domestic and worldwide demand? The outbreak of the First World War stimulated the demand for Sialkot products because of the stoppage of the corresponding European industries. The buoyant market led to the emergence of some new firms and the mass entry of imitators. Soon, there were some twenty new firms and numerous cottage industry dealers. Among others, the most famous firms were Ali Shabier's Ali Trading Sports and Kishan Chand's joint venture, the Phillips and Co. They were set up by workmen who had learnt their trade while working with the Uberoi. The latter was the only innovative enterprise, at that time, which employed power machines and the 'latest appliances,' whose production capacity was such that much larger orders could be

fulfilled in a shorter time period. By the end of the war, Sialkot had become the centre for sports goods. The city's products were exported to Japan, America, Australia, Africa, and other countries, chiefly within the British Empire, and the output of goods amounted to Rs 10 million in value annually (Chattha 2011).

Amidst rising world demand for the Sialkot products, the city was electrified in 1928, and within two years, it had supplied electric power to the leading industrial concerns. By the end of British rule, the surgical instruments and sports goods industries of Sialkot had become two of the most important export centres in India. In 1940, when the Governor of Punjab visited Sialkot for the purposes of raising money for the War Fund, he recorded that 'Sialkot is an industrial city of considerable importance.' He hoped that the government's 'Supply Department' would place orders from the town.¹⁰ On the eve of Partition, in 1946, the average annual export value of the city's industry stood at over Rs 35 million. Its products found their way throughout the empire, the USA and Europe. As have already noted, while Hindus owned the factories, Muslims supplied the skilled workforce. The city's continued prosperity was badly hit by Partition. It took decades to overcome the 1947 depression. The economic dislocation proved, however, to be ephemeral. With the birth of Pakistan, a new chapter was opened in Sialkot's development, and the city rebuilt itself as a new industrial capital by shaping its clusters. But like in the colonial era, it was to build on pre-existing skills and capital development to usher in a period of rapid economic growth. Government assistance in transforming and diversifying the local skill base and shaping the modern industry of the city was crucial.

Government assistance for Sialkot's industrial development

The post-independence development of Sialkot was seen as central to the national interest, because the city's industrial clusters were regarded as important generators of both foreign exchange and employment. The state's assistance in Sialkot's industrial recovery was, therefore, speedier and more substantive than for any other city in the Punjab. In early 1948, the Punjab Department of Industries surveyed 'the special difficulties' of small-scale manufacturers of sports goods and surgical instruments in Sialkot. In this survey, the main difficulties were pointed out in relation to credit, industrial organisation, and power infrastructure. The department recommended to the Central Ministry of Commerce and Industry the necessity of taking consistent measures to restore the city's banking sector. In 1949, to help provide finance, the Small Scale and Cottage Industries Development Corporation was set up, with an authorised capital of Rs 5,000,000.¹¹ In April 1950, Pakistan National Bank was opened in Sialkot. In the ensuing year, five leading banks were operating in the city, including the Central Exchange Bank, Habib Bank and the Central Co-operative Bank, Sialkot. The latter agreed to advance long-term credit to small manufacturers engaged in local industries. In addition, the Pakistan Government persuaded the Bank of Turkey and Bank of Egypt to open branches in Sialkot as well.¹² The Punjab Board of Industries also persuaded the Pakistan Industrial Finance Corporation to relax its rules in favour of small-scale industries,

and to open a branch in Sialkot. The small-scale manufacturers and traders were granted loans at the interest rate of 3 ¼ percent annually, and the loan's repayment period was fixed at ten years.¹³ Such monetary efforts helped considerably in solving the problem of credit, which was often the main problem of industrial enterprise. The manufacturers received assistance from the government in the form of tax reductions and the issuing of import licences and subsidies. From 1951 onwards, sports goods were completely exempted from the sales tax and customs duty on raw material. Freight charges were also reduced. Some measures were adapted to control the smuggling of semi-finished sports goods across the border.¹⁴

In 1951, the Export Promotion Bureau studied the export problems of Sialkot's sports goods industry and took some 'drastic actions' for the uplifting of production. It tried to solve the raw material problems by substituting 'Afghan willow' from the forests of Hazara and Swat for the 'Kashmiri willow.' A new willow was also introduced from the state plantations in Changa Manga and the NWFP.¹⁵ The flexibility of the small manufacturers had been demonstrated immediately after 1947. For example, the Trumans Enterprise's speciality before Partition was shuttlecocks, but it successfully switched to making sports gloves, balls, and apparel because of supply problems with the imported raw materials of goose feathers and cork used for the shuttlecock. Similarly, the well-known firm Centre de Commerce shifted from manufacturing cricket bats and tennis rackets to wooden hockey sticks because of the unavailability of willow from Kashmir (Weiss 1991: 127).

The other raw material items were glue and nylon gut strings. They were mainly imported. A leading artisan of Sialkot was trained in gut manufacture in Japan.¹⁶ Subsequently, the manufacturing of gut strings started locally and it proved 'as good as any foreign made'. Some steps were also taken to standardise sinew gut manufacture to enable it to compete with the nylon gut. The availability of raw materials led not only to the mushrooming of small establishments, but increased the production as well. This fact, along with rising world demand, enabled the volume of exports in 1951 to exceed the 1947 figure by over 400 per cent.¹⁷

'Made in Sialkot': a drive to patronage sports goods

The government adopted a variety of export-enhancing devices and schemes for the promotion of Sialkot's goods. In order to provide adequate markets for the city's products, the central government, while entering into trade pacts with other countries, took 'special care' to include sports goods as one of the important items of export. With a view to attract increased demand for the products in other countries, the State Bank of Pakistan increased the rate of commission granted to the 'lobbying agents in the foreign lands'. The United Kingdom Board of Trade was also successfully persuaded to raise the import quota of Pakistani sports goods by a substantial margin.¹⁸ The government also publicised the goods worldwide. In this regard, diplomatic and trade channels were used for 'greater publicity' in foreign countries. 'Special Arrangements' were made for the display of 'Made in Sialkot' goods at the British Industrial Fair in London, and other international, commercial,

and industrial exhibitions in such cities as Lille, Milan, Izmir and Prague. A couple of American business magazines were also used for publicity. Sialkot's industrialists were persuaded to open branches of their business offices in foreign countries, especially in London, which imported more than half of the output of the sports goods industry. By the early 1950s, one such office had already been established, while more were expected to open shortly thereafter.¹⁹ In the ensuing years, a number of Sialkot firms opened overseas offices and entered into collaborative arrangements with overseas retailers.

In the economics literature, most studies attribute the quality upgrade to market competition and exportation (Cozzi 2007; Schmitz and Nadvi 1999). How did Sialkot upgrade its manufacturing industry to achieve competitiveness? The success of the city's sports goods industry in the colonial era depended, firstly, on its low prices, and secondly, on the quality of its products. After 1947, the quality of sports products decreased considerably as per international requirements. Many international firms and buyers started complaining about sub-standard products. This became especially important when the city was facing fierce competition based around improvement in the quality of the products from Jalandhar. Quality control and meeting the rising international requirements had become a very high priority in the government's policies. To address this issue, in 1951, the government prepared a scheme for the registration of 'bona fide manufacturers and exporters'. From March onwards, the same year it became mandatory for the exporters of sports goods to register with the Punjab Department of Industries, and a certification of quality was required for export. This meant that only 'approved manufacturers' were allowed to export goods and were required to quote their registration number on consignments so that exporters responsible for 'malpractices' could be traced. The authorities also categorically warned of the cancellation of the registration of any exporter who was found 'guilty of supplying goods to foreign markets below standard'.²⁰ Other measures included the opening of a Development Centre for Standardization and a Metal Works Institution, for the enhancement of skills courses in the various manufacturing fields. The UK government was approached to provide a sum of Rs 500,000 for the purchase of modern electrical machinery.²¹

Government policy in terms of promoting the industry was very clear. Towards the end of the 1950s, and especially during the early 1960s, different Pakistani governments adopted a number of export-incentive schemes and bonuses. The most important was the introduction of the Export Incentive Scheme in 1955. It encouraged the establishment of large industrial firms. At the time, three types of enterprises existed in Sialkot: the big establishments, generally geared to export; small manufacturers, who catered to the domestic market; and finally, numerous unregistered home-based units in the urban pockets and rural areas, which were usually run by family members. The first two groups produced finished products, while the last group only produced parts.

In 1959, perhaps the most significant move made was the Export Bonus Voucher Scheme, which stimulated new industrial entrepreneurs and exporters. Under the scheme, the exporters received a fixed percentage of their exports in terms of

entitlements to imports. They were entitled to receive the import entitlements to the extent of 20 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, of their export proceeds. The government received the foreign exchange earnings, and, in turn, gave the exporting firms an additional percentage share from the hard currency transaction. The scheme encouraged firms to boost productivity by using their hard currency vouchers to import machinery. Such measures facilitated access to imported capital equipment and gave rise to a new class of small industrialists. The introduction of the new machinery not only increased production but its quality level as well. The economist Shahid Javed Burki (1974: 1132) has pointed out that the Bonus Voucher Scheme ‘reduced the monopolistic profits of big industrial houses and ultimately resulted in the emergence of a large number of medium and small industrialists. These newcomers to the industrial sector were responsible for creating the now important Lahore-Lyallpur-Sialkot industrial triangle in the centre part of the country.’

By the end of the 1950s, Sialkot’s traders had captured the most important foreign markets. The main market was the UK, with over 60 per cent of total export sales. In 1959, the overall value of the export of sports goods from Sialkot had grown to over Rs 14 million, but the city was to wait another decade before it matched the 1946 export amount of Rs 30 million. This reveals the setback to the industry caused Partition and the length of recovery time that was required, despite government assistance and the stock of local entrepreneurial skills. The loss of Hindu expertise and capital, the non-devaluation of the rupee, and most importantly, the migration of former Sialkot owners to Jalandhar, where they established a powerful rival in the business, were all important factors to this slow recovery. It also arose from infrastructural problems, which were the bane of all of Sialkot’s post-independence industries, as elsewhere in West Punjab. Nevertheless, the achievements were by no means inconsiderable, given the huge problems arising from Partition. We shall now turn to the role of the local skilled population in this industrial recovery, as this has seldom been demonstrated statistically. Special emphasis is placed on how they filled various niches left by the exodus of Hindus.

Economic mobility of locals: from artisans to industrialists

A former trustee of the Uberoi Cooperative Society exclaimed during the course of an interview, *“Who benefited from the migration of Hindus? Those who had got skill, experience, information, and family background... Look at the Sublime Industry [presently one of the most successful firms of Sialkot]... Father of the owner of this big enterprise had worked in the city’s oldest firm the Uberoi Sports Goods”*.²² At the very outset, Sialkot’s industries were organised along cooperative lines of kinship and community. By the mid-1950s, about thirty co-operative societies had been established in the city.²³ They were formed on occupational grounds, corporate linkages, family networks and kinship basis.²⁴ Initially, working as the interlocutors, they filled the gap created by the departure of the Hindu middlemen. They supplied not only the raw materials to household manufacturers, but also in return, arranged to export their finished and unfinished products. In this way, at the outset, small units survived without investing much capital.

While the co-operative society enterprises spread across a number of industries, they were most influential in the sports goods sector. The biggest and most important were the Pakistan Sport Co-operative Industrial Society and the Uberoi Co-operative Sport Society. The former was the main source of procuring and supplying raw materials to small and home-based manufacturers at cheap rates. The latter mainly furnished the common arrangements for marketing. These societies not only gained credit on easy terms, but were also granted export-import licences on a 'more liberal scale'.²⁵ The Central Co-operative Bank of Sialkot earmarked an amount of Rs 2,000,000 to advance loans at concessional rates. The society provided valuable marketing information and technical expertise for the small-scale producers in the period immediately following Partition.

In the 1960s, the Sialkot industry entered a new phase. Many concerns changed their ownership structures from cooperative-owned and joint liability units to private-owned family enterprises. Almost all of the workers who had worked in the Uberoi opened up their own firms. Some succeeded in gaining access to credit and became joint-venture units. The reorganisation of these factories helped them enhance competitive capacities and enter global markets. Informal interviews with the entrepreneurs in Sialkot attest to the importance of previous experience and kinship networks in establishing business activities in Sialkot (Chattha 2011). These findings are similar to the case of sports goods producers in Jalandhar, as highlighted earlier. In both cases, the workers' previous trading experience proved to be compatible to the economic expansion of the cities.

During the first decade after Partition, while a few newcomers entered the industries, the departure of Hindus simultaneously provided new opportunities for the population already associated with the industry. Indeed, a new artisan-cum-industrial class had begun to gather considerable economic power during the 1950s and 1960s. As evidenced from interviews, most of the owners of Sialkot's leading firms described the state's Export Bonus Voucher Scheme as the first major incentive for modern industrial development. In the 1970s and 1980s, further government patronages boosted the industry due to the establishment of joint ventures and the transfer of technology.²⁶ In this period, some new communities such as Arains, Sheikhs, and Jats with no previous occupational experience and practical skills entered the industry. In the age of globalisation, as Sialkot and its industry grew, new forms of socio-economic cohesion rose. Older practices of connotation dispersed as individuals competed in the new environment, in response to shifting business trends and threats. At a time when the dynamics of the global economy are leaning more towards China, both Sialkot and Jalandhar are facing competition from Chinese producers using machine-stitched equipment.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis adds to our knowledge of the aftermath of Partition regarding industrial development in the cities of Punjab by contrasting the experiences of Sialkot and Jalandhar. The patterns of development highlight the dynamic character

of artisanal manufacture in the cities. As the evidence shows, both cities experienced different sets of problems and opportunities in terms of their industrial growth. Sialkot had been the pioneering city for the production and promotion of surgical instruments and sports goods. Because of its pre-existing economic base and entrepreneurial drive, the city managed to overcome the 1947 economic depression and the handicap of its proximity to a volatile international border, along with the emergence of an Indian economic competitor. In that sense, Sialkot can be viewed as a local model on how to overcome economic depletion. The evidence presented also shows that Jalandhar, by contrast, is a beneficiary of the Partition-related dislocation. One of the secrets of its success was a system of ethnic entrepreneurship in which refugee labour and entrepreneurs relied on trading experience and previously acquired skills and capital, as well as on informal networks based on ties of kinship, caste and place of origin. Despite these inheritances and regenerations, the study has shown that the contemporary success of the two cities also depended on timely government action and financial assistance.

Jalandhar and Sialkot could be presented as 'gainers' from the events of 1947, as were the cities of Ludhiana and Lyallpur (Virdee 2008). In one way, Sialkot's experience of post-independence industrialisation stands in contrast with the experiences of these cities, not only in terms of export-led growth, but also the dominant role of existing locals rather than migrants. Moreover, the city's development differs not only from other border towns such as Amritsar (Talbot 2006), which never fully overcame the handicaps of their new geographical location after Partition, but also from larger cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad. The formerly dominant textile economics of the latter cities have shrunk (Prakash 2002), while Sialkot's industries have flourished.

This study also explicates the demographic change at Partition as a means to economic affluence for the underprivileged communities, whether they were the artisan Lohars, or non-artisanal background caste groups such as the Ad-dharmi and Chamars. They saw an opportunity to take over as owners in the commercial situation, or entrepreneurial vacuum, which was created in 1947. They utilised the pre-existing marketing network, experience, skills, capital and mobilised ethnic resources to their advantages. They also proved to be compatible with the economic diversification of the cities and, in return, gave rise to a new class of small industrialists. In many respects, the development model of Sialkot and Jalandhar could be presented as a benchmark for other cities and towns to follow.

Notes

¹ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 3 May 1949, p. 7.

² An Unpublished Autobiography of Dr. Kishan Chand of Sialkot, p. 70.

³ *Inquilab* (Lahore) 9 June 1948, p. 3.

⁴ On 18 September 1949, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, announced a 30 per cent devaluation of the pound from 4.03 dollars to 2.80 dollars per pound. Almost immediately, the European and Commonwealth countries, including India followed suit, but the government of

Pakistan refused to devalue its rupee. The main reason put forward for this course of action was that Pakistan had not had an unfavorable balance of payments mainly because of its agricultural economy.

⁵ According to the 1951 Census, Sialkot's population showed a decrease nearly 2 per cent, which was due to exclusion of the Kashmiri refugees. See for example Population Census of Pakistan, 1951, Vol. 1, pp. 11–20.

⁶ Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates (PLAD), from 29 February to 15 March 1952, Vol. III, pp. 663–8.

⁷ *Inquilab* (Lahore) 8 February 1948, p. 3.

⁸ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 25 November 1957, p. 3.

⁹ Timber was also vital in the furniture-making trades, not only in Sialkot, but also in neighbouring towns. According to an estimate, during 1934–5, approximately 2,031,717 cubic feet of timber in logs and sawn form was annually floated down from the two states through the Chenab River into the Wazirabad Depot. The Punjab Government's Forest Department was earning Rs 18,000 in annual rafting fee from the trades.

¹⁰ Craik to Linlithgow, 19 February 1940, L. Carter (ed.), *Punjab Politics, 1940–1943: Strains of War* (Fortnightly Reports) (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), p. 76.

¹¹ First Five Years of Pakistan, 1947–1952, File E1 (9), A 82 (2), p. 34, PSA.

¹² PLAD, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, Vol. III, p. 812.

¹³ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 22 December 1951, p. 5.

¹⁴ PLAD, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596–7.

¹⁵ M. Anwar, 'Sialkot Strives for Trade Revival', *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 18 February 1950, p. 6.

¹⁶ PLAD, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596–7.

¹⁷ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 July 1951, p. 3.

¹⁸ PLAD, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596–7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 26 July 1951, p. 3.

²¹ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore) 4 December 1956, p. 3.

²² Interview with Khalid Mahmud, Sialkot, 21 January 2007.

²³ Finance and Industry Minister, Chaudhary Nazir Ahmed Khan, to the Governor of Punjab, Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar, 2 December 1949, (Ministry of Industries, Government of Pakistan), File No. 5, pp. 2–3, NDC.

²⁴ Uberoi Limited Record, Uberoi Co-operative Sports Society, (Uberoi Building, Paris Road, Sialkot).

²⁵ PLAD, from 29 February to 15 March 1952, pp. 596–7.

²⁶ On Sialkot's sports goods industrial development during the 1970s and 1980s see Weiss, *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan*, pp. 120–45.

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CORRIDOR URBANIZATION: PRACTICES OF URBANIZING LAND IN INDIA

Abstract

The Government of India's strategy for driving growth and urbanization in small towns revolves around the formation of transportation corridors or networks linking small towns and metro cities. Connectivity infrastructure and corridor formation constitutes a key component of the newly promoted "Smart City" vision since 2015. In theory, this strategy is expected to stimulate growth along the lagging small towns and villages along the transport corridors. This paper examines the dynamics of land transformation in the town of Sriperumbudur situated along the Bangalore-Chennai corridor in the South Indian state of Tamilnadu. Sriperumbudur is hailed as "India's Shenzhen" and regarded as a successful case of urban agglomeration (WDR 2009). Besides, investments in transport infrastructure, the State Government set up special economic zones to facilitate inward flow of foreign investment in economy. All these projects emphasize on public-private partnerships and involve assembling large tracts of land. To support this, several policies were put in place namely the Special Economic Zones Act, rehabilitation and resettlement policy, and land pooling. In Sriperambudur a large tract of land was notified for acquisition for the formation of the corridors or setting up special economic zones, which led to conflicts between agricultural land owners, land occupiers and the State. The paper illustrates the speculative nature of real estate developments benefitting large developers and /or large investors. The high cost of land influenced many farmers to take their land out of agriculture. Risks and benefits are disproportionately distributed, with the majority of small land owners and retail investors bearing a greater share of risks. The conflicts that accompany the patterns of land consolidation and development is discursive and manifests as intra-caste conflicts, legal battles and party political struggles.

The paper seeks to contribute towards knowledge gaps with respect to land transformation in small towns. Further, it suggests that conceptualization of urban transformation process need to move beyond the questions of acquisition. There is limited research on other critical aspects – viz., land assembly and land development, to which this paper seeks to contribute. A conceptual focus on practices of different actors involved in the process is useful to gain a comprehensive understanding of the politics of land transformation.

Background

This paper explores the process of land transformation along the transport corridors linking small towns and villages in India. These sites are experiencing rapid transformation of their demography and land. A growing share of India's urban population lives in smaller urban centers with a population above 10,000 and below 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (Denis and Marius-Gnanou 2010; Srivastava 2005;GOI 2011; Pradhan 2013). Further, areal images from different parts of India generated under the India polis-SUBURBIN project also show a consistent pattern of transformation of agricultural land for urban use and an increase in the built up area in the fringes of small towns and large villages (IFP 2013). Drawing on an ethnographic research in a small town and the surrounding villages along the transport corridors in the South Indian State of Tamilnadu, the paper illustrates that the new forms of spatial strategies such as the corridor development and the SEZs (Special Economic Zones) creates a favorable milieu for large developers and institutional investors, while pushing out small land holders and retail investors. It skewed the pattern of land development in the form of gated housing, large educational institutions or international ware houses. Further, the risks faced by small land owners and retail investors are accentuated due to a combination of factors including the flexible land regulation strategies and the channeling of institutional savings into highly risky real estate projects.

The economic corridors promoted by the national and the Regional Governments of India, since the mid-2000, is promoted as a new and comprehensive approach to urban development. These corridors are designed to link metro cities that are of production and consumption, promoting cluster development and agglomeration in a series of nodes along a passage-way to a sea or airport gateway and thereby integrating the sub-region into the global supply chain (Roy 2014). In general, the policy approaches to smaller urban centers is founded on the assumption that their growth is dependent on metropolitan cities. Projects for developing designated economic corridors were rolled out to enhance the connectivity of smaller urban centers to metropolitan cities. This strategy can be viewed as an extension of other forms of spatial interventions such as the Special Economic Zones and the transportation corridor to attract the Foreign Direct Investments for stimulating economic growth. In theory, the corridor strategy is expected to stimulate growth along the lagging small towns and villages along the transport corridors connecting metro cities.

Several questions arise about the manner in which the corridor development influences the patterns of urban transformation. The setting up of corridors requires the assembly of large tracts of vacant land and its financing is premised on tapping land value gains for infrastructure development. Moreover, the announcement about the mere intention to form a corridor or a SEZ is often accompanied by an escalation of land prices and the sale of agricultural land for other urban uses (Chakraborty 2014; Balakrishnan 2014).Who really benefits from such real estate driven growth strategy? How do land holders in different contexts

respond to the State's interventions to acquire their land and why? The economic corridors may be designed to include a few SEZs and set up either by the State or under the public private partnership arrangements. Who enters into such partnership? Under what terms? What are its consequences? This paper examines these questions, which has not been researched extensively.

Urban scholarship on India is metro-city centric. There are very few research studies on the process of land transformation in small towns in the Indian context (Raman et.al 2014).As Balakrishnan (2014), notes the process of land transformation has been predominantly conceptualized via the lenses of conflict (Levien, M. 2012; Sampat 2008; Seshadri 2012; Jenkins 2007; Bannerjee-Guha 2008).. While these studies are very useful in bringing out the violence, Balakrishnan (2014) study suggests that some land holders may be willing to alienate their land voluntarily. With the exception of Balakrishnan (2014), the focus of research in other studies on SEZs is not on the conditions under which land holders alienate their land without any overt conflict. Further, besides the State, the process of land transformation is influenced by a range of actors including the land holders, developers and investors. There is little information about the role of various actors in the private domain. This paper aims to address some of these gaps through mapping the patterns of land transformation and the practices of different actors in the State institutions and the private domain.

The rest of the paper is divided into three parts. The first provides an introduction to the small town and villages researched along the two economic corridors and lays out the analytical framework for inferring about the process of land transformation. The second examines the practices of land assembling and transformation and the manner in which environmental and social risks and benefits are distributed. The concluding section argues for reviewing the institutional and legal frameworks undergirding urban development and growth strategies for ensuring a more balanced development.

Introduction to Research Context and Analytical Framework

The paper draws on an ethnographic research undertaken between April to July 2013 in the South Indian State of Tamilnadu. The research mapped the dynamics of land transformation in a small town called Sriperumbudur, located in close proximity to Bangalore Chennai corridor and nine villages abutting the corridor.

Sriperumbudur is located at a distance of 40kms to the Southwest of Chennai Metropolis and is nicknamed as India's Shenzhen (WDR 2009). Sriperumbudur originated as a temple town. The town's population is employed in a variety of small business, factory employment and rental income. The other occupation includes construction work, retail trade, and lower level employment in factories. Agriculture is the dominant occupation in the villages around the town. The town and the villages covered for this research is dominated by households from a variety of caste backgrounds viz., the Brahmins, members of the backward and other

backward caste communities' the Telugu speaking Naidus, Naickkars, Vanniyars, Scheduled Tribes and Dalits. A majority of resident land holders from these communities owned between one to 7 acres in which they cultivated food crops (rice, maize, groundnuts, cereals) predominantly for their own consumption.

The town and villages around its vicinity is expected to develop as a manufacturing hub. Of the fourteen SEZs planned in and around Chennai metropolis, six are located at Sriperumbudur. Besides, investments in transport infrastructure, the State Government set up Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to facilitate inward flow of foreign investment in economy. The setting of SEZs is expected to provide an impetus to the real estate in the town and the surrounding villages. Sriperumbudur and the surrounding villages are preferred sites for large township projects.

We argue that conceptualization of urban transformation process in smaller urban centers need to move beyond the current dominant theme of land acquisition. Land transformation is constituted to two main components viz., land assembly and land development. Land acquisition by the State is one, albeit a critical component of the land assembly process. The State strategies for forming economic corridors have revolved around public private partnerships for land and infrastructure development. Under the public-private partnership, the State's role is to facilitate the land access to private players. One of the challenges that large developers faced is the assembly of land which involved negotiation with several small players. The outcome of the land acquisition process has varied across different contexts (Balakrishnan 2014). In other words, fluidity of outcomes is a key feature of the politics of land acquisition. It is suggested in this paper, that a focus on the practices of multiplicity of actors, state agencies, land owners, land holders, land developers and investors - their strategies and institutional alliances is useful to conceptualize the process of urban transformation.

In the following section, I trace the practices of different actors viz., the State agencies, the land holders and the land assemblers & developers.

Practices of Territory: Actors, role and outcomes

Practices of the State and Implications for Land Development

The formation of economic corridor hinged on two mega transport projects namely – Bangalore-Chennai Highway and the Bangalore –Chennai Dedicated Expressway. Besides as mentioned earlier, three SEZs were set up by the State in the researched localities. The institutional and legal framework undergirding these projects is a critical aspect shaping the dynamics of land transformation in the researched locations. Thus, it is useful to map the nature of the institutions involved in formulating or implementing the different components of the project for forming economic corridors with or without SEZs.

The feasibility study for forming the Chennai- Bangalore corridor, the master plan of the corridor and its execution was undertaken by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project implementation was with an agency called the Tamilnadu Corporation for Industrial Infrastructure Development (TCIID) formed in 1992-94, by merging two other agencies responsible for promotion of small scale industries in the city viz., the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamilnadu (SIPCOT) and Tamilnadu State Industries Development Corporation (TIDCO). The TCIID was involved in acquisition of land for the expressway and setting up SEZs. The metropolitan planning agency had a negligible role in the process. The formation of corridors and SEZs marked a shift not only in the policy towards industrial development but also the manner in which urbanization is regulated by the state.

In the case of The State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamilnadu (SIPCOT) and Tamilnadu State Industries Development Corporation (TIDCO) are the key agencies involved in acquisition of land for the expressway and setting up Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The organizations were formed in the seventies to promote industrial development in the State through providing financial support, tax incentives, and land, predominantly to the small and medium scale industries. The economic corridor was promoted to attract foreign direct investment in real estate and manufacturing, predominantly automobiles. It paved way for led by corporate developers and capital markets to enter the land and housing real estate markets.

Large tract of land was notified for acquisition for the formation of the corridors or setting up special economic zones, which led to conflicts between agricultural land owners, land occupiers and the State. Further, the public private partnership component of the project was designed to favor large private developers in land development. To support the land acquisition process, several other policies were put in place namely the Special Economic Zones Act, rehabilitation and resettlement policy, and land pooling.

The Process of Land Acquisition and Impact on Land Prices

The setting up of three SEZs in and around Sriperumbudur and the transport corridor set in process the State actions to acquire large tracts of land. For example, the three SEZs in the researched location led to acquisition of 3400 acres spread along nineteen villages. Land was acquired in different phases for the three SEZs – the first round for Sriperumbudur SEZ in 1995-96, followed by the acquisition in one the villages called Irungattukottai in 1996-97 and the third, from another village called Oragadam between 2004 and 2005. The acquired land was allotted for the automobile SEZ. Two companies namely, Hyundai and Nissan are located here. The third SEZ houses diverse firms including glass manufacturers, chemical plants, tyre manufacturers, automotive testing, electronic music system, multi axle trailers and construction equipment. Besides, land along the highways was allotted to foreign investors for real estate development.

Land acquisition was initiated in Sriperumbudur by SIPCOT and effected by the office of District Collector and Revenue Administration. The request for land acquisition was sanctioned by the Government of Tamilnadu via GO.Ms.No 61 of the industries department in 1997. The order evoked emergency provisions of the land acquisition Act to neutralize dissent from below (Rao 2014). Agricultural land, porambokeⁱ, and settlements were notified for acquisition. The acquisition order was implemented in 1996-97, when one of the two dominant regional political parties viz., the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was in office in 1997-98. Information about the plans for acquisition before the notification order was published and the initial negotiation started with the office of District Collector mediated by party leaders. The mobilization of land holders consent to alienate their land was attempted via the cadre structure. The practice of political parties, especially leaders, mediating the negotiation the State and citizens is not new in Tamilnadu contextⁱⁱ. What has changed over the years is the shifting priorities of the party leaders and the fracture in their interests between the leaders and their cadres.

The intervention for promoting growth and urban development had the following effects viz., accentuation of conflicts over territory described further in next section, rise in land prices, and entry of corporate developers. Land prices skyrocketed in the villages around the land earmarked for acquisition. For example, when SIPCOT started to acquire land since 1996, a centⁱⁱⁱ of land along the main road was sold at Rs. 1000 (INR) in Sriperumbudur, which increased to 60000 per cent in 2008 and 180,00 per cent^{iv} in 2013. In 2010, SIPCOT announced another round land acquisition for which the following prices are fixed: 80000 to 1 lakh per cent for agriculture dry land (undeveloped) as compared to 3700Rs (INR) per cent in 1996; 3 lakhs to 5 lakhs per cent for agricultural land that is leveled and converted. The rates of residential property in Oragadam have appreciated by over 70% during the last three quarters of 2012, from Rs 2760 (INR) per sq. ft. in the second quarter to Rs 4720 (INR) per sq. ft. The prevailing rates in the area are around Rs 5000 (INR) per sq. ft. The fear of losing land from further possible acquisitions and the perception of securing higher prices from private developers accelerated the conversion of agricultural land and formation of layouts on land held under individual or common tenure.

Practices of Land Holders: Owners, Leasers and Occupiers

Responses of land holders were twofold: in the villages where land was targeted for acquisition, the process resulted in a prolonged conflict, much of it was not overt and in other villages, land owners sold their agricultural land to private developers or entered into partnership for subdividing the land for sale as house plots. We describe these processes below.

Land Alienation and Compensation: Winners and Losers

The new legal regime (Land Acquisition Act) is built on the assumptions of ownership model of property and that compensation based on market value would

ensure that part of the land value gains is transferred to land holders. The experience of land holders in the research field raise questions about both these assumptions. First, land is held under different tenure forms, especially by small farmers. Second, the fixing of market value for land unlike other resources prove to be difficult. Third, the interests of land owners to alienate their land, in lieu of compensation differed depending on the size of land holdings. The compensation regime benefitted largely the developers and large land holders at Sriperumbudur.

Interviews with farmers suggest that the office of the district collector informed them orally, in 1995, to produce the relevant land documents and identity documents for securing any compensation. Although there were rumors about the imminent acquisition and oral communication from the Collectors Office, the notification for land acquisition was published in 1997 via a Government Order of the Industries Department (GO MS No 61) and the order was implemented by the District Collector's office and the Revenue Administration. The order was implemented by the SIPCOT, as observed earlier. Land holders negotiated with SIPCOT via the party political channels. During this negotiation, the then ruling party fixed the compensation amount at 300Rs per cent.

Among the eight villages researched, only in one village, land holders surrendered their land without much resistance. The compensation fixed by SIPCOT was premised on the fact that the acquisition targets predominantly dry land. Farmers whose wet land was also taken over stated they received the same amount of compensation as that of dry land. Land owners from other villages did not respond to the first two notices. The SIPCOT served two notices to land holders to surrender their land voluntarily. SIPCOT announced its move to acquire the land compulsorily in its third notice. At this time, the SIPCOT fixed a value of 20 lakhs per acre for land abutting the main road and between 5-16 lakhs for land in the interior and started the process of compulsory acquisition.

Land holders attempted to delay and if possible, subvert acquisition order, through a variety of strategies including – dragging, negotiation via party conduits and protests. Land holders with varying sizes of land holdings and tenure forms mobilized under the leadership of a panchayat president and the town councilor of Sriperumbudur. They organized regular protests against SIPCOT, drawing on the support of a trade union of construction workers and another trade union affiliated to the left party. The protest was put down on the ground that the organizers did not take permission for assembling in public place. The organizers were arrested and criminal cases were booked against them as a way to dissuade land holders from protests. Following the protest, land holders across ten villages resorted to legal recourse to the subvert acquisition.

The legal battle prolonged for nine years. Although the interests of land holders differed in terms of compensation vis a vis alternative land, the legal dispute was framed as an issue of compensation. This is because very often the regional Governments evoke emergency provisions in the Land Acquisition Act to facilitate

compulsory eviction. This in effect meant while the terms of acquisition may be contested, the act itself cannot be disputed.

The case was first heard in 2001 at the Reference Court. The landholders were presented by an alliance of lawyers from the neighboring towns and a Member of the Legislative Assembly. The reference court judgement pronounced in 2004 stipulated SIPCOT to raise the compensation amount to 3700Rs, which was appealed by the Revenue Department in the Madras High Court. In their appeal, the Revenue Department pleaded that the market value of land cannot be considered as it had already artificially escalated by speculative real estate development. Around the same time, the Madras High Court heard several other cases filed by retail investors who had purchased land in Sriperumbudur region against the Special Compensation officer and the Revenue Department. The various court cases lasted till 2010 and their judgements upheld the judgement pronounced by the Reference court in 2004. These judgements forced SIPCOT to increasing the compensation amount from 300Rs (INR) to 3700Rs (INR). Who really benefitted from the enhanced compensation?

The compensation regime benefitted land holders with freehold titles to land. Among those owning land and possessed documentary evidence, only a few large landowners^v in each village were able to secure the enhanced amount. The other group who benefitted from the enhanced compensation were the land assemblers and medium developers who had invested in this area since the seventies. Land owners who surrendered between 5-7 acres to the TIDCO were informed about the enhanced payment but did not receive it. Many small farmers, who owned between 1 and 2 acre or less than an acre, stated that the compensation amount they received was too little for starting a small business. Since their land was located in the interior parts, very often the acquiring agency fixed a low amount. This group of land owners was interested in alternative land rather than financial compensation. The actual amount they received was relatively small in comparison to the investments small farmers needed to start a small business. The new factories were not willing to recruit them.

Members of historically disadvantaged caste groups, i.e. the Dalit caste households, who are among the poorest group, in the researched localities depended on common land for their livelihood. At Sriperumbudur, the temple and different agencies of the State and parastatals hold a sizeable proportion of common land, called poramboke in Tamilnadu. Besides, there are vacant land administered by the village panchayats that are not surveyed and recorded in the official registers of the Revenue Department. Often, the regional governments target the common land for compulsory acquisition, as it is relatively easier to acquire and the question of compensation does not arise. Very few households from the Dalit caste background gained access to land under free title schemes or through the Bhoodan movement and had documentary evidence (i.e., the title paper). There were also instances where although Dalit households were allotted land under the land reform programme, they could not gain possession or the allotted land re-occupied by

members of backward caste communities. In addition to land tenure, small and marginal farmers from Dalit caste backgrounds were also disadvantaged in their negotiation with the State, as members of backward caste communities controlled the local politics.

Conversion of Individual freehold, Lease Land and Common Land for Urban Real Estate

The fear of compensation together with the prospects of higher prices as compared to compensation influenced the actions of land owners to convert their agricultural land into plots for sale as housing layouts in the surrounding region. This phenomenon could be observed in villages within 15 Kms radius from the sites of the three SEZs. Farmers with medium to small size holdings and with land documents sold their land to retail investors and real estate developers. The investors came predominantly from the nearby metropolitan city of Chennai and the neighbouring small towns discussed further in the next section. While transactions relating to land sale (prices, year and size) between small farmers residing in the villages and land developers was easy to trace, it was difficult to trace it for land held by the upper caste households who controlled the temple land or had relatively more acres. Many of the upper caste households were absentee land lords who lived outside the researched localities. Their negotiation with land developers / investors happened in the Chennai metropolis.

Small and middle farmers from backward class caste backgrounds predominantly invested their compensation amount in developing rental housing within their villages. Although the villagers were promised a job in the companies at the time of land acquisition, it was not followed through. The tenants are migrants from North Eastern States, Orissa and Bihar. . A room: thatch hut from 1000-1500Rs (INR) per month; tiles 2000Rs (INR); RCC with one bed ranges from 3000-5000Rs per month.

Practices of the Land Assemblers and Developers

The practices of land developers and the manner in which State interventions have impacted on their actions. The field research findings show that land assemblers and developers can be differentiated into three broad categories viz., national and international corporate developers, those with a medium scale or mid-level developers and small investors and developers, based on the criteria of geographical scale of operation, physical area of development, clientele, and mode of mobilizing finance.

Post 2000, the number of actors, their characteristics, as well as the organization of real estate development has changed in the researched localities. Previously, until the mid-90s, when the acquisition notification was served, retail investors from Chennai or Chingelpet had been investing in smaller land holdings often upto 1-2 acre at a time. Investors who undertook land development predominantly engaged in subdividing land with planning clearances from the village Panchayats for sale as housing plots. Development of individual plots was by retail investors drawn from

the lower middle to middle income households. The housing layouts developed by small developers provided an avenue for the lower middle to middle income households to invest in an independent house. As noted earlier, post 2000, with the entry of large real estate development firms the scale of land assembly and nature of land development changed. Field research shows that today these activities are organized by a chain of actors including brokers, assemblers and developers with different scales of operation in Sriperumbudur. The PPP (Public Private Partnership) arrangements in land development, allocation of land via the Special Economic Zones policy facilitated the entry of international and national corporate developers. Their entry, though not erased, has managed to push the activities of small and medium developers to the interior parts

The activities and strategies of the various categories of land assemblers and developers are described below.

Corporate Developers

The corporate developers active in the researched localities are Indian companies with a global operation and Foreign Investment and Development firms. These companies are active in the Chennai's real estate market since 2005. Their projects are predominantly townships and gated housing, sprawling over a minimum of 100 acres and are located on sites along the main inter-city highway or within a maximum distance of 1.5 km.

Assembling land for township projects involves both time and cost in influencing farmers to alienate their land and negotiate the prices. A majority of land owners, in the town and surrounding villages of Sriperumbudur hold between 1-5 acres. The few large land owners in the fourteen villages surveyed in Sriperumbudur owned between 10 acres upto maximum of 30 acres. A township project of a minimum area of 100 acres, if purchased directly from landowners, would involve negotiations with several actors. Corporate developers assembled land for their projects in three ways: State allocation under the SEZ policy or under public private partnership arrangement for land development; land already assembled for institutional use (colleges or small industries) and land assembled by small land developers. In short, large developers rarely enter into assembling land. As has been pointed by Chatterjee (2013), the context of amendments to land acquisition act is closely related to the promotion of private led large scale land development. Thus it is not surprising, as early as 2004, the Confederation of India Industries in their annual conference demanded the State to amend land acquisition Act for evening out the difficulties with land acquisition (Benjamin 2008; Benjamin and Raman 2011).

The international and national corporates rely on the capital markets for financing their operations. The national corporates are listed in the Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange and have been accredited by CRISIL Real Estate^{vi} Ratings. The foreign investment firms, in theory, channels foreign direct investment into the local real estate market. Interviews with the management consultancy and

accountancy firms suggest that increasing foreign investments are used as collateral to raise debt from the local capital markets. Besides real estate, several of these foreign investment firms specialize in insurance, infrastructure provision, realty (property management), and consultancy to global investors for investments. The capital market fund inflow into the real estate market is predominantly the mobilization via domestic debt markets (Securities Board of India and National Securities Board). These companies initially invested in high rise luxury apartments targeting the upwardly mobile highly paid executives of multinational firms within the SEZs. However, as a result of the slow turnover of their apartments, the corporate firms are increasing by investing in independent bungalow or town house development for the upper middle income households and single bed apartments for young professions and lower income groups.

The exposure of national debt markets to pose a risk as often domestic savings in banks and what were once safe investments such as the national insurance companies are channeled into high risk corporate projects. The shares of all major corporate real estate development firms have shown steady decline since 2011. Although vast area of land has been developed by large corporate and local developers in the researched localities, many remain unoccupied and with limited demand. The recent collapse of a nationally renowned real estate development firm DLF and the legal conflict between foreign investment firms and an India based developer (the Hiranandani case) highlight the fragility of the regulatory systems in place.

Small and Medium Land Developers

The project developers who identify themselves as mid- level operators range between 15-30 acres and sub-divide land to form housing layouts. Residential colonies – predominantly plots for individual houses – of small and medium land assemblers and developers have mushroomed on land located 5kms away from the main highway and upto a maximum distance of 15-20 Kms. Unlike corporate developers, their projects have a minimal component of construction. They secure permissions to convert agricultural land to urban use, from the village panchayat administration and the Office of the Development Commission (DC), the Revenue Department. Some of their layouts have clearance by the Planning authorities viz., Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP). Their clientele is drawn predominantly from middle income households seeking to invest in relatively cheaper plots.

Small and medium developers assemble land assembly either in partnership with farmers or on their own. Information relating to the sale of land and the purchaser provided by landholders in the interviewed villages suggests the purchase of agriculture land for potential future urban real estate development started as early as the seventies. The pace of transaction increased in the eighties and subsequently post 1998. Their investment started as early as seventies. Unlike the large /corporate developers, this group of developers invested time and money in the incremental assembly and development of land.

Finance is mobilized through private sources or through rotation in projects. When a developer chooses to form layout on their own, they pay the farmers in installment. They rely on investors not defaulting their installment in order to circulate the capital without interruption. The potential risks of conflict for retail investors arise in such developments when land holders demand higher prices and refuse to transfer the title. Field interviews show that such conflicts have increased post 1998, as land holders wanted to re-negotiate the prices.

The practices of land development described in this section raises two questions viz., how are land value gains distributed between different social and economic groups in society? Who appropriates the gains and how are the risks spread? Despite the low take over for corporate townships, SIPCOT announced further expansion of SEZs and a corporate led land development strategy. A new round of acquisition was notified in 2011 especially in Sriperumbudur- Oragadam belt. Unlike earlier rounds of acquisition, SIPCOT notified DTCP approved layouts for compulsory acquisition. Both developers and retail investors face the risk of losing investment. With the policy towards enhancing private developers to develop land, the allocation to corporate developers in SEZs or under the Public Private Partnership arrangement is likely to stay. The corridor project, under way in Chennai, like in other Indian cities, allow for corporate developers capture of high value land. Thus, while the land along the road side, with perhaps the higher land values are appropriated by large developers and land owners, the interior parts is developed by a range of actors of various sizes. With the State planning further land acquisition and investments in mega infrastructure, layouts developed by the middle and small developers are targeted for acquisition. Moreover, the corporate players are lobbying for closing the possibility of planning regularization of layouts developed by the small and medium developers (Benjamin and Raman 2011). There are also lobbies to specify the size of operation under the new Real Estate Regulatory Bill under discussion. The Bill also includes a clause for the FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) to remove their capital easily. Overall, the State interventions via policy, projects and laws are geared towards facilitating corporate led real estate development. This is of concern, both from the possibility of large sections of population getting pushed out of housing and land investment as well as the savings of ordinary citizens being exposed to corporate risk. The emerging risks thus come not only from the policies of land allocation but also from the ways land development takes place via capital markets where the future value of assets, pred land, becomes important for the company's profile to raise capital. The financialisation of land has spread the risk preeminently to retail investors especially the middle class, via the banks investing in real estate, whose shares remain high.

Conclusion

This paper explored the practices of land transformation in a small town and surrounding villages outside the Chennai metropolis. It attempted to develop a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing the urban transformation process. The paper adds to the extensive discussion on the politics of land acquisition, by

bringing to light the covert conflicts between landowners and the State, and the legal constraints imposed on land owners in realizing their interests. Much of the literature discussion in literature focuses on overt conflicts and frame the question of compensation. The cases we discuss in this paper relate to the question of acquisition itself. The institutional and legal framework imposes certain constraints which can influence land owners decision to alienate their land without open conflicts. The ability to subvert is shaped by opportunity structures as much as by the mobilization capabilities.

Further, it suggests that conceptualization of urban transformation process need to move beyond the questions of acquisition. There is limited research on other critical aspects – viz., land assembly and land development, to which this paper seeks to contribute. A conceptual focus on practices of different actors involved in the process is useful to gain a comprehensive understanding of the politics of land transformation.

A key finding highlighted in the paper is the manner by which different forms of State intervention in land, finance and legal amendments are geared towards accelerating corporate led real estate development. The State interventions in terms of legal regimes of land and projects are geared towards promoting foreign direct investment and have favoured international and national corporate developers. These projects –corridor infrastructure, SEZs or township projects of real estate developers are rationalized as public investment and land is acquired evoking emergency provisions. This leaves land holders with limited option to contest it except within the frame of compensation. Land is allotted to corporate developers either on a subsidized basis or on long least at no cost via public private partnerships. They mobilize capital from the finance markets, which in turn shapes the type of development for higher returns targeting nonresident Indians or the resident executives of corporate companies. Neither of these strategies have worked, with the result, the takeover of residential project has been low. Post 2008, with the slow sale of higher income products, some developers have moved into relatively lower markets. This happens at a time when the real estate market shares are also down since 2012. The capital market mobilization thus far in the Indian context has been from the domestic markets. Foreign inflow has remained limited at 10%. The volatility in the capital market together with relatively slow takeover of residences in the townships or the gated communities means that the risk of investment remain a high possibility. This paper argued that the current strategy of financing urban development via land has pushed the risks unevenly onto a wider constituency, comprising predominantly of middle and lower middle income groups. Moreover, the State intervention in land in the form of restricting regularization and acquisition of even approved layouts formed by middle or small developers means that the risk associated with land assembly and development is also passed on to actors down the hierarchy. In addition, common land which was once the avenue for the poor to claim territory for their residence or production is also diverted to corporate real estate projects. The aim of this paper is to move the discussion on urban development and land issues beyond the framework of a specific project such

as the SEZ and their outcomes or the question of compensation and land acquisition. As Harvey (1986, 1985, 2004) has exposed in the urbanization of capital, urban development is increasingly controlled by finance capital and real estate. This paper raises the issues arising from the trend of land financialisation but more research is needed to understand the role of capital markets in structuring land and thereby, the distribution of urbanization benefits in the city.

Notes

ⁱ The common land is locally referred to as *poramboke*, is a category created by the colonial administration when they brought village common land under the control of different administrative agencies viz., the Public Welfare Department, the village Panchayat, the Revenue department of the Government of Tamilnadu.

ⁱⁱ For example, the negotiations relating to land acquisition for implementing metro rail project within Chennai city boundaries between squatter dwellers and the Chennai Metropolitan Development Department and similar between panchayat leaders and a parastatal Tamilnadu State Road Corporation Limited over parting land for ECR road formation and the terms of compensation was mediated by a senior party leader and the then chief minister. Leaders intervened in a manner to protect the interest of their constituencies in the mid to late nineties when mega projects were just being introduced in the city. This relationship changed post 2000, when the leaders particularly the second generation actively promoted mega projects and aggressively acquired land. The party terrain was the site via which the constituencies were coerced into parting with land. Power was centralized in both Dravidian parties often with the leader and cadre based structure render it easier to discipline the constituency. See also, Benjamin and Raman (2006) on the shifting politics and relationship between the poor and the parastatal institutions.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 cent = 435.6 sq ft

^{iv} Based on survey of land holders sale prices of land in eight villages.

^v Interview with DSS (Dalit Sangharsh Samiti) district level organizer, Sriperumbudu and panchayat leaders of Mambakkam and Irungattukottai villages.

^{vi} CRISIL Real Estate Star Ratings is a global Indian company which provides city specific all-round assessment of real estate projects and help buyers benchmark and identify quality projects within their city. Lancor has been awarded a six star by the CRISIL Real Estate Rating

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NEGLECTED LAND IN BETWEEN – THE OBLIVIOUSNESS TO SMALL TOWN PAKISTAN IN THE WESTERN NARRATIVE

Abstract

The Western imagination of human settlement of the Subcontinent has long been limited to two extreme possibilities - the backward but romantic village in the remote countryside versus the bustling megacity. Ideally, as the representation of the 'modern' Pakistan, India or Bangladesh these worlds collide in literary, cinematic or even scholarly representation. The world in between, life in the small town, the urban peripheries of larger conglomerations and the exchanges between these spaces and their influence on urban growth and rural development have been largely neglected. Not only has this resulted in a very biased imagination of these countries but also in inadequate approaches in infrastructure development funded and thought up outside the country and by the NGO sector that often tries to emulate the western imagination. This paper examines some of these deficiencies. It begins with discussing briefly how Pakistan is framed by the foreign eye that had a chance to actually see the place and where these frames likely originate. It is the simple example of travelling between Lahore and Islamabad, a route often taken by decision makers in international organisations and policy wonks that holds as an initial introduction to the dilemma. The route mostly taken, the Motorway, reproduces the bimodal view of Pakistan of megacity vs. rural village. On the other hand, the GT road, which leads one through the whole spectrum of urban settlements in the country, from the historical metropolis Lahore through the largely unmentioned cities in narratives on Pakistan such as, Gujranwala, Jhelum or Wazirabad to the twin cities, with many smaller towns on the way, is hardly known.

That they should be known, and that this framework of settlement be reimaged - both by the West and *for* the West - is what I ultimately argue in this paper. Current Western engagement with Pakistan centers around the notions of 'migrants' and 'militants,' perceived as the most pressing problems growing out of the Subcontinent. The automatic analysis of these groups places them on the simple binary between city and village, while in reality many Pakistanis that the Europeans encounter are migrants from small towns. To truly understand this illegal migrant population, then, an understanding of their predominantly small town background becomes indispensable. Beginning with secondary research on this general population, and then leading into interviews with illegal migrants in Austria, this paper highlights the importance of small towns in any serious analysis of the migrant situation. Looking at local and

transnational migration patterns and their underlying motivations helps illustrate some of the social dynamics and economic identities which are often rooted in the structures of small town life. By not fitting neatly into either of the two imagined worlds - the village, the megacity - these migrants challenge the current representation and could influence a future approach in development studies.

Introduction

In this paper I want to outline some observations on how Pakistan is perceived from outside in terms of its urban landscape, how that may be influenced by and in turn have an effect on infrastructural development and finally how this largely skewed perception could actually be challenged by Pakistanis that dominate the formation of a narrative of the country abroad.

While numerous works exist about Pakistan's history, migration and the terrorism complex, conspicuously little critical work is written about how Pakistan is framed in the West apart from the superficial tropes of a failed state¹. Equally little however is available to the English reader on how the country outside the urban hubs is framed nationally.

The two main points of this paper are thus:

- (I) I argue that Pakistan is perceived by many decision makers in the development sector, humanitarian as well as infrastructural and especially where the two overlap, in a bimodal form. There is the megacity, exemplified most and foremost by Karachi, closely followed by Lahore and the twin cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi. On the other hand there is the village of mud houses, which to many lawmakers or international staff in Islamabad is likely most closely exemplified by the reconstruction of a Punjabi village at the city's outskirts (Saidpur village) and the exhibits of village life at Lok Virsa, that lets you gaze at what village life does still looks like today through a glass screen. Urban spaces in between, from cities like Gujranwala that would qualify as a megacity anywhere in the Western World when it comes to population, to towns like Okara that has the population of Zurich, are largely looked over.

This perception is fostered by the fact that in Pakistan these cities in between are somewhat treated with neglect, leads at the same time however to an even more skewed attention in urban development, as decision makers in funding agencies and international NGOs are hardly aware of this bias.

- (II) I counter this first argument with the proposition that if a Western audience would try to understand more (or listen to) those Pakistanis that tend to dominate the news on the country at least in Europe, illegal migrants and militants, the existence, significance and dynamics of these neglected small towns could be much more easily appreciated. Evidence suggests that both groups, and here I will focus only on the former, tend to hail from just this geographical background, rather than coming from a tiny village in poverty or the bustling megacity.

Some work, albeit unfortunately little noticed by a wider audience, is published that helps to support these theses. However it largely is based on non-numerical, rather narrative analysis.

Motorway or GT Road?

Arguing about the feasibility of the M2 Motorway between Islamabad and Lahore and discussing its merits over the centuries old connection via the GT road has been a common pastime among people who frequently visit both cities. There are the rumours about its economic impracticability and how its undoubtedly strange route, taking much longer than the GT road, can be explained by the hometowns of politicians in power at the time of construction. The motorway police on the other hand is often cited as the most decent police force in the country on a road that however often sees little traffic. Conspicuously little however has been written about the significance of these two transport lines for an urban Pakistani commuting between two of the largest urban areas in the country.

The dichotomies between these two lines will, without letting them become at any point the main topic of the paper, form the initial frame of my two major arguments.

Taking the motorway from Lahore, one leaves the city behind in one of its chaotic outer parts, at Thoker Niaz Baig, and within 10 minutes has the lush countryside Punjab on both sides of the road. The entrance into Rawalpindi or Islamabad is about as abrupt. One gets the idea, that there is not much in between a 10 million inhabitant agglomeration and villages with no more than a score or 50 *kacha* houses. The road is lined by a fence keeping trespassers and animals out, which often prompted local farmers to cut the wire and cross nevertheless (Khan 2006). Many of the foreign staff of international organizations, who travel between the cities for work or because they leave Islamabad for a day's culture trip to Lahore, but also one or the other local, see no more. The motorway is the ideal visualization of how Pakistan is perceived by those who may have been to the country, even extensively, but never really 'saw' it.

The GT road on the other hand presents the complete urban spectrum of the country. Leaving Lahore through Shahdara one passes through lesser known "small" towns like Muridke, Kharian or Gujjar Khan as well as actual large cities – Gujrat, Jhelum – and one of Pakistan's largest that is hardly known outside the country and I argue hence rather understood as a 'small town', Gujranwala. It gives an impression of the historical connectivity of the subcontinent, a cross-section through different trades of the Punjab and upcoming knowledge hubs outside the main cities and a taste of the country's dangerous roads. It was already recognized many centuries back that the G.T. road embedded in the small town landscape was an essential feature of the road itself (Sarkar 1927; Khan 2006). However relatively few of the people who just travel from Islamabad to Lahore or back have taken this road and it has received little attention in coverage of the country (NPR 2011). The GT road is nevertheless the ideal visualization of a large spectrum of the inhabited parts of the country (apart from the mountainous and desert areas).

One could do away with the ignorance of outsiders – foreigners, but I would also count some Pakistanis among them - about ‘small town’ Pakistan, if these were not people who had a say in essential decisions in the humanitarian and infrastructural development of the country.

Defining ‘Small Town’

Two main strands of still ongoing discussion on the urban make it difficult to define what a small town on the Subcontinent is and how it is described. With new forms of urbanism quickly developing there is still a lack of consensus on how cities, towns or urban spaces are really defined (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). At the same time a thorough analysis of the postcolonial town is still outstanding and in Western texts often still extremely biased. Historical analysis is often based solely on colonial records in Western languages and completely miss the view of local inhabitants or scholars (King 2009).

Also in most European countries or in the US there is no clear definition of what constitutes a town. In India a number of factors apply, among them a lower population limit of 5000 (Census of India 2011) while in Pakistan the definition seems to be (unofficially) a population between 10000 and 50000 (Dutt 1994). Even if there would be a clear consensus on the numbers, a direct comparison of those is still hugely problematic as there is no standardized terminology associated with the respective population statistics (Satterthwaite 2010).

While in terms of infrastructure solutions, population size would be an essential parameter, the distinction between city, small town and village seems to be less informed by it rather than a preconceived notion of what is a town and what is a village. With the Western idea of a town, including a public transport system, a defined city centre, an industrial area that developed outside the city’s residential area at a later stage and multi-storey apartment complexes, many towns in Pakistan, where no infrastructure development is obvious and many houses are brick constructions are simply rather perceived as a larger village. For the case of Jalalpur Sharif (Figure 1), this is true even though the population is relatively rich and well connected to both road links, the GT Road and the Motorway. Actual cities, that today have populations surpassing the one million mark and would be a major city in Europe, are regarded as a small town in the western imagination for Pakistan, for a lack of places of public interest and, what would be perceived as rural infrastructure in Europe. In a neighbourhood in Nowshera, a city with more than 1 million inhabitants, where people follow an urban lifestyle and have jobs in the services sector or industry rather than agriculture, drinking water is still retrieved from wells located at numerous spots along the alleyways (Figure 2).

On the other hand, a city like Sialkot, having gained wide media attention with the soccer ball production is readily assumed to be a city not because of its population but since it is strongly connected to the ‘modern world’ through a Western – ‘modern’ - sport.

In other provinces the border between large city, town and village is likely quite different again. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Balochistan, areas outside Peshawar and

Quetta are quickly termed remote and rural, by national as well as international media and people. This is simply so because few outsiders dare or make the effort to go there and appreciate urban space. In an area south of Peshawar where we work since 2010, no electric grid is available, neither is water supply. This is largely because the area is negligible as a vote bank and too poor to be able to provide for these commodities financially.



Figure 1: Jalapur Sharif, ca. 40 000 inhabitants, view towards river Jhelum (2007)

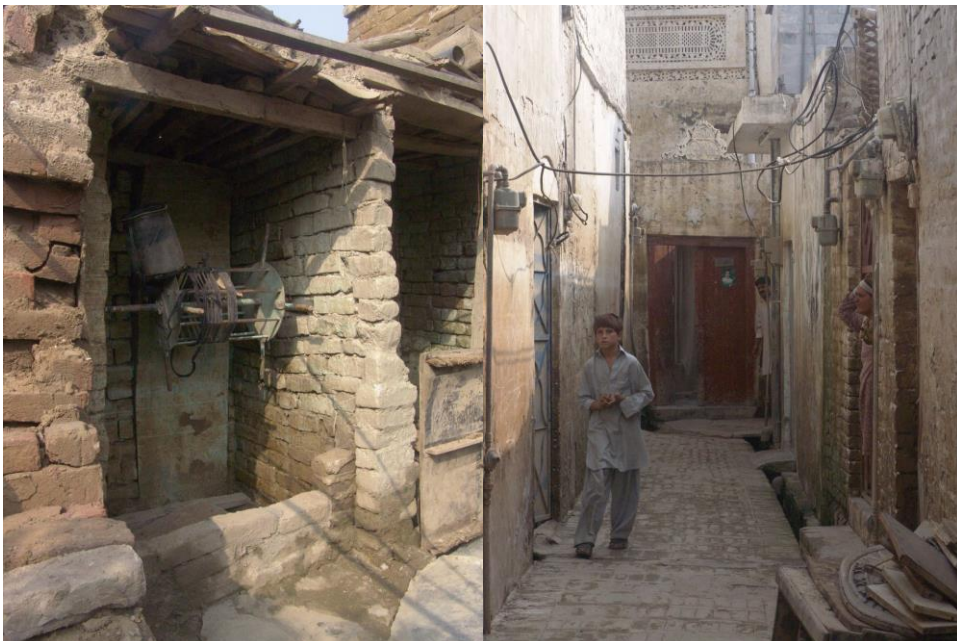


Figure 2: Drinking water Supply in a residential area in the centre of Nowshera days after the 2010 floods.

While the framing of Pakistan in the Western eye is thus limited to the megacity and the village, the people who lie at the basis on how foreigners perceive Pakistan from outside are actually hailing from just the neglected urban areas in between. It is especially the areas along the GT road, rather than the major hubs at each end of it or the villages one can see from the Motorway, that are home to two parts of the society that shape the narrative.

Migrants and Militants²

The narrative on Pakistan, in Europe at least, is shaped by the presence of migrants and the narrative of militants created by the media and other discourse by a selected part of the population. The number of illegal migrants from Pakistan to Europe has increased dramatically in the last years. The large number of young men reaching Europe as asylum seekers from all countries, including Syria, has been an ever-present part of the debate on the topic in recent months. The high percentage of young men from Pakistan, relative to all asylum seekers from that country, is however unmatched until the recent refugee wave from Syria and other countries. In Austria, where interviews were conducted, the percentage of male asylum seekers compared to the total between 2010 to 2012 never fell below 96%. For all nationalities that value was between 68 and 75%. Even for countries where war is often accepted as a reason to leave for Europe, as currently in Syria or Afghanistan, the question is often posed in media, why seemingly many more of the migrants are young men rather than women or children. For Pakistan, where war is apart from a few areas probably not a major reason, so called push-factors need to be found elsewhere.

Scholarship on migration in Pakistan predominately looks at internal migration or labour migration to the Gulf discussing mainly economic push factors and relying on census data. This data however does not cover refugees or people with an illegal status, which applies to most of the Pakistanis who currently migrate to Europe and is at the same time the most difficult to assess (Gazdar 2003).

A definite motivation for young men to leave the country is the vague, luring idea of Europe that was shaped by returnees who themselves had left for Europe years before. In their relatively small urban community these men were able to show off the fact that they had been abroad (even if that did not necessarily mean they could afford the more lavish lifestyle they tried to portray) and fostered an idea of Europe that became tempting for others who saw their prospects diminished in Pakistan. At the same time the growing number of the better educated young men leaving a town turns it into an 'orphaned' town, resulting in even more people wishing to leave the place.

Earlier studies suggest that areas where people migrate from are the same for internal migrants as for emigrants (Hasan and Raza 2009). However no more recent studies exist and only one provides a better insight on people who have actually left the country and are now in Europe (Ahmad 2011).

In this book on illegal immigrants from Pakistan to Europe (Ahmad 2011) the author states that many of the men he interviewed were from small town Punjab. The town he introduces in his introduction, Chot Deeran, is very close and similar to Jalalpur Sharif (Figure 1). As he describes it, “sky-scraping émigré mosque-mansions are often surrounded by poor connecting roads, inadequate sewerage systems and brick-kilns worked by entire families”, describes well the ambiguous infrastructure of the small town discussed earlier, where rural infrastructure meets the urban demand.

Two generations of migrants to Europe, which correspond to two waves of migration, are portrayed. There were men, later bringing their families, in the 1960s who came legally mostly to the UK, often from Mirpur and Jhelum. In the late 1990s men came largely alone from all over Pakistan to the UK and specifically from the GT road area, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujranwala, Gujrat or Muridke to mainland Europe. This wave corresponds to the peak that decreases at the beginning of the data available in Scholarship on migration in Pakistan predominately looks at internal migration or labour migration to the Gulf discussing mainly economic push factors and relying on census data. This data however does not cover refugees or people with an illegal status, which applies to most of the Pakistanis who currently migrate to Europe and is at the same time the most difficult to assess (Gazdar 2003).

Since then, the number of migrants has yet again increased once more since 2010, which constitutes the third wave of migration to Europe since Partition. The interviews portray this generation.

Between 2013 and 2014, we carried out a number of interviews with male asylum seekers in Austria, all of them who came to Europe independently. Only one was from Lahore, three from Sialkot, two from Gujranwala, one from Gujrat, one from Swabi, one from Muzaffarabad, two from Mingora, one from Miram Shah, three from Parachinar and two from undisclosed towns around Peshawar. Three more were from different Agencies in FATA. None of the migrants were from Balochistan or Sindh and to the interviewees knowledge there were none in Austria. The same observation was true for subsequent interviews with legal and illegal migrants from Pakistan to Italy.

Some men claimed they were threatened by state or non-state agencies, most however had no concrete incentive. They generally had a good education level, having joined college or even completed a Masters degree.

A number of migrants were from one town from the FATA, Parachinar. The networks they had while still there, spanning across families, now span over Europe. One of the men, like most of them from the Turi clan, recounted where in Parachinar he lived and had given up a new house after a 35 lakh rupee (Rs.3.5 million) investment. He also precisely knew in which towns in Austria other Turis were now waiting for a decision on their asylum application. His account was to have come from the town of Parachinar to the city of Vienna rather than from Pakistan to Austria. This had of course to do also with the fact that they blamed the state for being left

alone in the fight against the local extremist outfits. But a similar focus on the hometown was also given by Sunni Mehsuds from Miram Shah.

A man from Sialkot emphasized as his place of origin a specific *mohalla* of Sialkot. This was essential for his story as he claimed to have fled because of a recent conversion from Sunni to Shia.

A priest from Gujrat who studied at Peshawar University and now sells selfie-sticks on Italian streets showed me Youtube videos from his church in his hometown where he held the mass. This functioned in a way as his 'business card' abroad. Men from Mingora were still active in local politics through their Facebook accounts. Hailing from relatively small political districts they were personally familiar with people running for political posts and what they were standing for. At the same time for some that however also turned into a reason to leave after some political disputes over local power turned ugly.

An important question is what influences the choice of going to Europe over moving to Lahore or Karachi. If a main driver for relocating is the lack of opportunities in small towns and the neglect they are facing from the people in power, why does a migrant choose the much more cost intensive and risky option of moving to Europe over moving up or down the GT road into the prospects of a better education or job in one of the large cities?

Many of the recent migrants however actually moved to mostly Lahore or Karachi before they left for Europe. Some went because they needed to get in touch with the agent who facilitated their route to Europe. Many went to the large city's outskirts because they were internal labour migrants before they left the country. But a job alone was not enough. The frustration with the state because of persecution, insecurity or lack of opportunity was the bigger reason.

For some the safety of their life was the main argument. Threatened by sectarian outfits, unidentified agencies or other community members within their town they saw no other option than to leave their often tightly knit neighborhoods. For others it was the lack of economic security to be able to develop one's own business and the inability of the local government to provide an education that raised frustration.

For all men the identification with the hometown and the people from there was immensely important and superseded the interest in the national cricket team or Pakistani foreign politics. A dense urban area that grew more or less organically over the decades and an experience of local as well as national politics at their doorstep probably facilitates an identification with the town. This is further intensified by the unifying disappointment with the state. Many were highly critical of the state in its internal workings as well as its foreign policy.

The common understanding among Europeans why Pakistani men come to Europe alone is for economic reasons. However nearly all men received money through

money wiring services from home, rather than sending any back. None of them was compelled to take up a manual job somewhere immediately to earn a living. While Austrian media and the men's local supporters continued to draw a picture of men who were from remote regions and under continuous life threat from the Taliban, they themselves, when talking in Urdu, Pashto or Punjabi, were sometimes even eager to try to convey that they were from a similar background as an Austrian from one of the Viennese suburbs. They had jobs in Pakistan but were largely dissatisfied with their situation.

The hub of migrants to Europe outside the UK is, incidentally, the wider area around Gujranwala and here often towns like Mandi Bahauddin or Pasrur. This corresponds exactly with the region where militants of Lashkar-e-Toiba hail from. Using the neglect of the 'lesser cities' both hail from, as a common (de-)motivation, perhaps a link can be found. These towns have an inadequate infrastructure and provide no matching opportunities for what they promise with the existing exposure to education and attractive lifestyles elsewhere, be it in Lahore or London. Leaving to look for an imagined better life in Europe, or by waging Jihad in Kashmir may be just two diverging paths from the same initial motivation, at the base of which lies the life in a small town in Pakistan.

Eventually of course one could turn the whole argument around. The neglect the small towns in Pakistan face since long and seemingly increasingly so, with attention focused on megacity booming and rural development but nothing in between, is fuel to growing discontent that results in militant recruitment on the one hand or increased illegal migration on the other.

Conclusion

There is no singular definition of what makes a town, or put differently what discerns it from a large city or a village. It seems however that in the Western imagination of Pakistan as well as in the discourse on infrastructure, the town hardly surfaces. Everyone is talking about the megacities and on the other hand the rural Pakistan. In between there is a void. To put it in the words of the image used in the beginning of the paper, everyone is driving from Lahore to Islamabad on the motorway. Nobody takes the GT road and gets to appreciate the diversity of urban Pakistan. This is troubling for a number of reasons.

Growth rates of some of those smaller cities or towns are the highest in the country (Vandal 2004) and taken together these urban areas today probably constitute the largest part of the country's population vis a vis the population of megacities and the rural population. At the same time they are neglected in terms of infrastructural and humanitarian development. Construction of water supply, wastewater and waste disposal facilities as well as provisions of commodities such as cinemas are promoted at great expense in the megacities. On the other hand NGOs are largely focused on the rural poor. The towns in between are left out. Institutional development of local

administration is largely dependent on whether those towns brought forth powerful people that have a say in the National or Provincial capital.

It is then pertinent to note that the people who shape the perception of Pakistan abroad, migrants and militants, hail from exactly these towns. As many migrants are from a middle class background and do not necessarily face economic hardship in Pakistan and many also have no record of persecution for sectarian, religious or political reasons possible push-factors could be found elsewhere. Migrants show a strong identification with their hometown but are frustrated with the neglect it faces from the government compared to the large cities. This neglect resulting in a serious lack of opportunities turns into a significant driver for migration itself. As the source of this discontent, the state as a power structure itself, is the same in the large cities but it is these large cities that are attracting all the attention.

The migrants' stories could help decision makers in the development of the country to understand their target better, acknowledge a part of the country that is until today still largely overlooked.

Notes

¹A notable exception, although only a collection of short blog posts would be (Ahmed, 2011).

²This subtitle is inspired by another excellent account of life and dynamics in a Pakistani 'small town', Hyderabad, in the sense of the word as discussed above (Verkaaik, 2004)

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THAR COAL MEGA POWER PROJECT: INTERNAL MIGRATION, DESERTIFICATION AND ENCROACHMENTS

An anthropological Study of Islamkot Town, Tharparkar, Sindh

Abstract

Thar Coal Mega Power Project is one of the largest coal power generation projects of Pakistan and it will directly impact communities in Thar desert spread out over a vast expanse of roughly 9,000 square kilometers. More than 250 villages would be shifted or vacated to make the project an economic success. Apprehensive of being displaced the villagers have started migrating to nearby towns, particularly Islamkot. This project-induced migration is bringing about a series of changes in the small city of Islamkot. This paper highlights the impact of Thar Coal Mega Power Project including migration, land speculation, encroachment of common grazing land (Gouchar) and community conflict in Islamkot. This anthropological study also tells a larger story of destruction of a historically evolved agro-pastoral economy in the harsh desert environment, the mistrust between the local communities of Thar and the state as well as the communities and non-government organizations. The locals do not perceive these institutions to be sensitive to their needs and interests.

Keywords: *Migration, Displacement, Thar coal, Commons.*

Introduction

Thar is the seventh largest and most densely populated desert in the world¹. The desert is divided between India and Pakistan. It has a mixed religious population of which 59 percent are Muslims and 41 percent non-Muslims who live peacefully without any inter-religion or sectarian hostility in 2400 villages and 6 towns (Channa et al 2013). Vast quantities of coal, albeit of low quality² were discovered in the Thar region of Sindh in 1992. The state took a long time in formulating a policy but finally a Thar Coal and Energy Board (TCEB) was created in July 2008 for coordination of Thar based coal-to-power development. The area to be cleared of population to facilitate extraction and power generation spreads over 9,000 square kilometers. As the Thar coal related work started a fear of being deprived of their traditional livelihoods arose among the local villagers of Thar coal area in addition to the pollution of water and land from the mining³. The project has affected not only the areas marked for coal mining but the adjoining town of Islamkot (local name Salamkot or Salankot) has also undergone rapid socio-political change. The

population of the town has increased dramatically, from 10,427 to an estimated figure of above 16,000⁴. While a few studies have been conducted on the impact on demography due to Thar coal project, general demographic and social change in Tharparkar (Channa et al 2013, Hassan 2010 Rajar et al 2007, TRDP 2003) there has been no study of the impact of Thar coal mega power project on the social and ecological life of a small city such as Islamkot. The Hagler Bailey Pakistan (2012) environment and social impact report too only highlighted the issues of the Thar coal field area and did not focus on the surroundings such as Islamkot town. Hassan (2010) is a rare study on social change and migration focusing on the town of Mithi in Tharparkar but did not attempt to relate the town's shifting fortunes to the overweening impact of Thar coal.

According to the above quoted studies significant demographic changes such as migration from rural desert areas towards urban desert areas were noted after discovery of huge coal reserves of Tharparkar District and the population of Islamkot increased appreciably (Channa 2013). Hassan (2012) noted migration and change in livelihoods as the pastoral economy and artisanal production was disrupted by greater connectivity with large cities and need for cash and escape from the crutches of feudal relations. Rajar et al (2007) consider development activities such as roads and schools, health facilities as motivation for local community to migrate from rural areas to urban towns such as Islamkot.

Data for the present study was collected through participant observation method, in-depth interviews, informal discussions and focus group discussions. The researcher's previous observations, being a local of the region have also shaped the overall framing of the study.

Coal mining: An ecological intervention that changes everything

Coal mining is an ecological intervention. It is not just another productive process, it is changing everything. Apart from the expected physical effects like pollution of water and changes to the physical aquifer, it has already set in motion a train of socioeconomic changes with far reaching consequences on livelihood and community.

The need for development and cheap energy is well established in people's minds especially in the context of severe energy crisis faced by the country. In addition there is the state sponsored aspirational discourse of turning Thar into Dubai; some newspaper articles (Arisar 2009, 2013) have raised the concerns of people about consequent threats to local culture and the insensitivity of the companies, corporations and the government to the dislocation and marginalization of the people and the degradation of environment but these are partial and not based on well grounded research.

Apart from reverberatory changes in the town people living in the vicinity of the Thar coal mines fear that open pit mining would disturb the aquifers, resulting in

water scarcity for the people besides, there is a good likelihood of groundwater contamination⁵. Thari villagers, social activists and environmentalists have expressed serious doubts over the coal exploration process set in motion by the government and argue that it is without a holistic plan. They suggest that the indigenous people are being defrauded. They have warned that water scarcity will emerge as a major challenge if remedial measures are not taken immediately.

People's fear of eviction and lack of faith in the political representatives is recorded by the consultants Hagler Bailey in their environmental and social impact assessment report. *'The villagers fear that they will be evacuated forcefully by the Project management. No government representative informed them about the Project. Politicians only contact them when votes are needed.'* (Hagler Bailey 2012)

Thar coal extraction might bring immediate economic gains to certain groups but the cultural and environmental impact on the indigenous people of Thar in general and the dwellers of Islamkot town in particular will be far-reaching and irreversible. This is all the more likely because locals are not involved directly in the projects. Their rights as residents are not guaranteed and the recruitment of outsiders continues unabated in the projects. Till now only wealthy investors appear to benefit from these developments. Fair treatment would involve a more equitable distribution of the spoils and the hazards. Internationally accepted environment policy guidelines are not being observed eg. US. EPA propose that no group of people should be made to bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations.

Changing commons, the *Gouchar*

Gouchar is the land surrounding any village or town and used for grazing animals and especially in *vaskaro* (monsoon season). In the past the *Gouchar* of Islamkot town covered an estimated width between 3 km to 6km on all surrounding directions but is shrinking due to migration from within Thar and from outside of the district. People are encroaching, for their own residence, for their relatives, or for sale at high prices. Most encroachers are migrants but locals of the town are also becoming part of this occupation frenzy.

Before the start of Thar coal Mega Power Project, the town was famous for its trade in indigenous desert crops, cattle economy, and interfaith Hindu-Muslim religious harmony. Now that it has become a coveted place for the people living in its surrounding as well as that of Thar coal project area it is gaining notoriety due to increasing conflicts, particularly over encroachments on *Gouchar*. There have been strikes, to protest outsiders' infiltration into indigenous ecological zones by the local people and civil society representatives.

Economically advantaged people have bought plots in Islamkot, while those lacking in resources are trying to encroach upon the *Gouchar* of the town. Participants narrated that before the announcement of Thar coal project land had a much lower

value as compared to today and there had never been any encroachments on the commons land. According to one participant *“It has been observed that insecurity in the villages is making people migrate to Islamkot. They either purchase a plot in Islamkot or encroach on the Gouchar”*. Further he said *“In Kolhi Paro, Darelo Paro and among other neighbourhoods people have also come due to insecurity and a rise of conflict in the family, community or village”*.

In 2014 people from the villages of *Gorhyar* came and encroached certain areas but the people of Islamkot and village *Mehari Bajeer* resisted and eventually forced them to evacuate the Gouchar. With the increasing real estate value the Hindu graveyard near the town has become a tempting place for encroachers and people from both religious denominations Hindu and Muslim attempt every year to occupy the graveyard land. However, until now they have faced resistance by the other locals and with subsequent support of the government the encroachers have been repelled. As Bheru Lal Meghwar; a respondent told *“This graveyard is not safe, because of proximity to the commercial market, the Thar coal road and high value of real estate nearby. This is the main reason for continuous attempts to encroach it”*.

The local population involved in encroachments includes Dalit Hindu communities of Bheel, Kolhi, Meghwar and Bajeera Dalit Muslim community etc. The Kohli community is playing a leading role in the encroachment activity. Kohlis are natives of Islamkot and few among them are pastoralists. The community is basically nomadic their males work on daily wages in the town, in *vaskaro*, they cultivate fields and in a drought year they migrate towards the barrage areas of Sindh. Their homes are near the commercial market (see fig. 2), the main road of Thar coal field lies to the south of their dwellings and the eastern edge borders grazing lands. Given their proximity to the road and the lands the value of their homes are high. Hence, they have been selling their homes at high prices especially to the Lohana the traditional business community of the town. These relatively affluent group are buying the properties in the hope that the value of real estate will rise in the future due to the socioeconomic changes brought on by the Thar coal power project. Interestingly the Kohlis while selling their old homes at inflated prices are themselves trying to encroach upon *Gouchar* land. Several encroached plots have been sold and further encroachment of the remaining *Gouchar* appears inevitable. Such ‘development’ of *Gouchar* lands is leading to desertification in the surroundings of the town.

Shrinking agriculture

Thar Desert is spread over an area of about 200,000 km². It has a population that ranges between 850,000-950,000) which is spread in small villages across the desert. The rainfall in Thar Desert, is significant (average 350 mm annual) but the capricious and uncertain nature of weather leads to cycles of ample water to drought conditions. Traditionally during the drought-cycle, people of Thar migrate with their animals, temporarily, to other parts of Sindh.

Stabilization of the sand dunes and siltification in the inter-dunal valleys have provided good environment for cultivation and for grazing of goats, sheep, camels, cattle, etc., which is the primary source of living in the Thar Desert. Dunes have vegetation (grasses, shrubs, bushes, and trees) on windward sides up to crests. The inter-dunal valleys are wide and filled with silty and clayey sediments, useful for cultivation where crops are mainly dependent on rainwater.

In Islamkot and its surroundings the dramatic expansion of the town has affected this traditional rain-fed agriculture. Previously, the population was less and surrounding pastoralist and rain-fed agriculturalists cultivated their land in the monsoon season; and the fields were sufficient for their need. Nowadays the situation is different. More and more adjoining fields are being converted into commercial real estate given the price increases. In the past, only the land between the sand dunes was cultivated, the *Gouchar* land remained for grazing on its wild grass. It dried up in winter but in post-monsoon season provided food for the livestock. Nowadays people are cultivating even sand dunes land. This is increasing desertification and the sources of food in winter and summer have dwindled. This is creating pressure for shifting the livestock towards other villages or selling it. This has a highly adverse impact on the livelihood of the locals. The respondents feared that in the future the desertification will increase further and indigenous grasses will vanish. That will even impact the climate of the region (Hanif and Ramey 2014).

A decade ago, almost all the pastoral communities such as Bheel, Meghwar, Thakur and Bajeer living on the periphery of Islamakot depended on pastoralism and rain-fed agriculture; even businessmen and other professional communities such as Lohana, Gurara, Brahman, Suthar, Lohar, Gir etc. kept milch animals. But nowadays these communities have few animals, only for their domestic needs, goat milk for tea and cow milk for dairy products.

Encroachment of *Gouchar* and cultivable land and increased desertification has thus impacted livelihood. Some people have shifted their livestock or sold them and the remainder are facing problems regarding the survival of their animals. Independent peasants have left agriculture or become servants of mercantilist community or daily wage earners and descended further into poverty. It was felt by respondents that unemployment and shifting of occupation is only going to increase in the future.

Socio-political situation of the town

In the past the permanent settlers in the town were either businessmen or professionals. Permanent settlement by others was discouraged. Also the town was not considered attractive at that time. The perception of the town has changed in the recent past. It has become more attractive since then. People of Thar coal field area and surrounding villages now wish to come to the town and are searching for plots. With the supply of these plots not being able to meet the burgeoning demand, encroachments have seen a sharp increase.

As the town expanded the market also grew. The town market had been in the hand of Lohana community but as the town became a separate *Taluka* (local administrative unit) and its importance soared by virtue of its newfound status as an administrative hub of the area this community has been marginalised. Muslims from Thar coal area and surroundings have also opened their shops in the town. Additionally, different ethnic groups, such as Pathan and Punjabi and other Baloch tribes of upper Sindh too have joined the fray. It was noted that people from these ethnic groups were also investing in land and buying land at high price. Since the recent change in perception of future scenarios, some people have made extensive investments in commercial areas, purchasing land near Islamkot on high prices, which in many ways is the basic cause of encroachment. In the past the majority of the people of the town had only heard of Punjabis and Pathans but with recent developments and changes in the town's demography, they are opening their shops and businesses inside the town as well as expanding them in the surrounding area.

The town was a model of interfaith harmony and peace in the past. Hindus and Muslims were living in peace but recently there have been some conflicts between the two communities. These conflicts which had arisen in 2014 were either politically motivated or over the issue of encroachments of shops but were portrayed as conflicts between Hindus and Muslims.

One of the Hindu native respondents of Islamkot town reported that during the encroachment on the Hindus' graveyard Muslims of different areas were shouting slogans of "Allaho Akbar"; this was entirely unprecedented. For now the natives of Islamkot are supporting the Hindus but there are indications that the fragile equilibrium between the communities might be destabilised further in the near future.

In the past Muslims slaughtered cows only on *Eid al-Adha* and not on normal occasions and marriages. Recently some cows were slaughtered, which hurt the religious sensitivities of Hindus. However, they did not protest out of fear. The increasing influence of religio-political parties and extremist behaviours could increase conflicts and feuds in Thar and particularly in Islamkot town which may further cause flight of relatively affluent Hindus to India. While both Hindus and Muslims enjoyed each other's fairs and festivals in the past, now they celebrate their religious festivals in fear and detached isolation.

Previously, members of both the communities knew they were answerable to the *Panchayat* (traditional local council). The panchayat system was feasible as long as people knew each other and believed in a relationship of brotherhood. But as the town is expanding and people from different communities and ethnic groups are coming in people no longer know each other by face or by name. In recent developments, some religious groups also made inroads and established bodies of their parties. Respondents said that some people from these groups were also part of Hindu-Muslims conflicts. One of the participants reported that "*with the increase of population, the numbers of Madrasahs also increased in Tharparkar and particularly in Islamkot, due to which apprehensions have increased in Hindu communities*".

Thar the promised “Dubai”

The Sindh government, the federal government and their ministers are promoting the belief that Thar will become “Dubai” once coal extraction takes off. “Thar will become Dubai” myth is the main reason behind the manifestation of the socio-economic, environmental and communal pressures in the town. Such publicity campaigns are pulling outsiders and pushing out the locals. There is thus a rising wave of land speculation which will further impact future migratory trends.

The town has recently been upgraded to a *Taluka* and the public institutions include one rural health centre (RHU) and a police station. In addition there is one higher secondary school, one girl’s secondary schools and 10 primary schools. The central part of the town has electricity and piped water supply, the peripheries, especially areas settled in the last five years have no facilities. The business community mainly occupies the town centre. The predominant population on the peripheries is poor and they cannot provide themselves any centralized sanitation or water supply infrastructure. Hence they face water scarcity; more than 50% of the population there has no facility of water supply. These people fetch water from the nearest water supply tank, which is 2 to 3km away from their homes. Some people fetch water from the nearest dug wells, such as dwellers of *Jaipal Paro* and *Kolbi paro* neighbourhoods of Islamkot. As the unplanned suburbs expand there is a high risk of flooding in Monsoons as well.

The role of NGOs: Megh Samaji Forum and Thar Coal Action Network (TCAN)

Since Thar coal related work has been initiated, a few small networks and organizations have emerged, such as Thar coal Action Network which is a group of likeminded friends of the town and few locals of the Thar coal area. They put up resistance against Thar coal related issues which negatively affect the locals such as hiring of outsiders, especially from Punjab, and debated land and resettlement policy. They also raised their voice, questioned and rejected the “Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report of Thar coal block II” in its public hearing.

Megh Samaji Forum (MSF) in its platform held a long march from Islamkot to Mithi in 2013 against the issues and problems related to Thar coal field area. Both these forums however never raised their voice against the changing situation of Islamkot and especially conflicts over encroachment on grazing land and the sharpening of religious antagonisms. One of the respondents voiced the opinion that Thar coal Action Network is basically a group of friends comprised of local journalists, NGO workers and shopkeepers while the real ordinary locals of the Thar coal area are absent from the network and are in the dark about the activities of Thar Coal Action Network.

Conclusion

The existing narratives about small towns in Thar do not address the ecological shift that has been triggered by the coal mining and power generation plans in Thar.

The invention of printing press in the year 1500 offers an analogy of how the introduction of a new intervention i.e. printing technology impacted the entire structure of society including religion, culture, education, pedagogy even the definition of history and wisdom (Postman 1994). On a much smaller scale coal mining in Thar area likewise is setting into motion an entire train of socioeconomic changes. The larger Islamkot region of Thar, for good or bad, will never be the same again. The cultural and environmental impacts on the indigenous people of Thar in general and dwellers of Islamkot town in particular will be far reaching and irreversible.

Improved communication and travel facilities have linked Islamkot to the broader region. Many of our respondents see this improved connectivity as negative development with which they associate arrival of outsiders, increase in population of the town, increasing conflicts in the town, breaking of Hindu-Muslim harmony, threats to the ecology of the area and to the overall socio-cultural life of the town. They are afraid all these trends would increase in future. There is clearly a lack of meaningful involvement of the locals; their illiteracy cannot serve as an excuse for the government and other agencies to ignore them in the official dialogue.

Urbanization and modernization are bringing their own values, while replacing the communal life of the locals, People perceive these types of changes as a negative development. In the backdrop of recent development of infrastructure and a surging population, cases of robbery and theft especially the cases of livestock robbery have shot up. Previously, it was easy to arrest or capture robbers but due to the metallic roads, fast transportation and livestock market every Thursday it is becoming easier to abscond. Participants further said that in the future, with increasing population and arrivals of new groups, there would be more street crime.

The ecological changes in the socioeconomic sphere are operationalizing through a series of developments as discussed in this paper. The occupation of *Goucher*, the grazing commons is leading to shrinkage of agriculture, it is changing traditional livelihoods, shifting and selling pastoral livestock. Investment from outside is decreasing the hold of traditional business community and giving rise to inequality, increasing intolerance and extremism. In the physical sphere scarcity of water and desertification of terrain has started. Islamkot is a case study: what happens when development comes to a remote sleepy small town.

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Notes

¹ This ecoregion lies to the west of the Aravalli Mountain Range in northwestern India and includes portions of the Indian states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab, as well as the Punjab and Sindh in Pakistan. A most inhospitable ecoregion it was however, 4,000 to 5,000 years ago home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, the Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. The climate is extreme: annual temperatures can range from near-freezing in the winter to more than 50° C during the summer. All rainfall is associated with the short July-September southwest monsoon that brings a mere 100-500 mm of precipitation. (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/im1304>)

² Thar coal is lignite to sub-bituminous coal based on its BTU values. All coals of this grade have high moisture content and relatively low BTU as compared with high grade coals like Bituminous/Anthracite. But is not low quality as it does not have high sulfur (av.1%), especially in the main coal seam and very low ash content.

³ According to a report by the consultants Hagler Bailey (2013) although weathering processes would occur naturally over extensive geological timeframes, the disturbance by mining accelerates this process. Materials with a high sulfide sulfur content (up to 5.37% by weight) show the greatest potential for acid formation and metal release. There is potential for significant release of iron in addition to zinc, copper, nickel and chromium after continued oxidation. Then there are the hazards of aquifer contamination due to the planned underground coal gasification for energy generation.

The main source of water in Thar is groundwater which is consumed by the local inhabitants by digging tube wells in the region. The quality of the water is brackish to saline; with an unfittingly high concentration of fluoride amongst other trace minerals (Rafique and Naseem 2008). The groundwater is present in three main aquifers at varying depths. There is a strong likelihood of contamination of the aquifer both by the coal gasification plans and the open pit mining.

⁴ The figure of 10,427 is from the 1998 census, since when there has been no census. Ghansham Das, a young activist of Meghwar community of Islamkot quoted this figure.

⁵ In the initial 4-5 coal blocks; there are three water aquifers. The upper aquifer is below the dune sands, at its contact with the Sub-recent. Its slightly brackish and used by the people as drinking water. The second aquifer is within the coal seam (with Total Dissolved Salt (TDS) at about 3500 to 4000); this water can still be used for certain crops with little or no treatments. The third aquifer is below the main coal seam, very brackish (TDS >4000) that can be avoided during mining. The real problem is maintaining the aquifer at drillable depth during refilling of the pit after exploitation of coal.

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IS MODERNITY DEPLETING BHERA

Abstract

This paper analyses and condenses numerous individual and focus group interviews about life and social trends in Bhera. Our findings paint a declensionist¹ picture of Bhera. Food has deteriorated; there is no industry but industrial food produced with agrochemicals a la Green Revolution abound. Women are getting higher education in much larger numbers, but in Bhera it has only brought their wages down; private college female teachers work for Rs.3600 per month. Cell phones and increasing internet connectivity are draining precious family resources. Flush based modern sanitation is a convenience but there is no proper integrated disposal and the effluent permeates through the soil to the aquifer. Sanitation, therefore, has become the main cause of groundwater pollution; the other is the liberal use of agrochemicals in the surrounding agricultural land which too permeate to the groundwater. The new nearby motorway is a big convenience, but has also started to drain away local milk, vegetables and fruit to larger and more affluent markets. Emigration of the able bodied and the educated is celebrated by both family and state for its remittance but like osteoporosis it is hollowing out the social skeleton. While Bhera is experiencing modern gadgets and products, the effect is depleting not adding value that was once offered by the project of modernization. The indigenous batteries of agricultural surplus and craftsmanship have dried up and while the state has rolled back, the small town Bhera is not attractive for large scale investment from without. The current remittance economy is at best covering up the process of depletion.

Introduction

Bhera is a small city of north central Punjab, Pakistan. The past of many small towns in Punjab has similarities, including, a long history, riverside location on a trade route, well-developed crafts², an urban island surrounded by a vast hinterland, a mixed Hindu- Muslim population characterized by harmony, and last but not least a strong sense of belonging and security³. As for the scale of a city there are many ways of looking at it (Bhagat 2011). It could be relative, what is small for Pakistan may be big for Europe. It could be officially classified on the basis of census population but such official classification is not available for Pakistan where the last census was held about two decades ago. It could be administratively defined in the line of metropolitan corporation, municipal committee, town committee etc or it could be defined in a social context, a place where many people know many people. We favour this last definition; it incorporates historicity. Bhera is a small town from this point of view as well.

Bhera was there when Alexander invaded India in 326 BC (Cunningham 1871). Some mounds in Bhera's vicinity and on Bhera's old site (Burarian mounds, Elliot and Dowson 1869) contain archaeological remains but have not been properly investigated. Cunningham has identified the ancient site of Bhera with the unnamed capital of Sophytes – the King of Salt Range at the time of Alexander's invasion of Punjab (Gardezi 1993). Old Bhera located on the right bank of River Jhelum was destroyed and the present city was founded by Sher Shah Suri in 1540 on the left bank (Imperial Gazetteer 1908). Its location at the intersection of two major trade routes, one north-south from Kashmir via River Jhelum and the other east-west to Kabul and further onwards to Central Asia was a major advantage for Bhera and it flourished as a trade centre (Rehman 1997).

The colonial District Gazetteer of 1897 describes the riches of the city and its sumptuous architecture built by the trading community. However, like many small cities of colonial times Bhera's fortunes altered with the introduction of new communication infrastructure of railways and roads which disrupted trade by river or by camels (Grewal 2013). Perhaps the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 played an even more important role in ending trade with Central Asia and many local traders suffered huge losses (Rehman 1997).

Contemporary Bhera is largely confined to the footprint of the ancient walled city. However, today a circular road instead of the wall marks the city limit. Eight of the ancient gates are extant, however they are colonial period reconstructions, few have been recently rebuilt. The total area of the walled city is some 400 acres and the current population is variously estimated between 80,000 and 100,000 including some settlements outside the old city limits. Upto the time of partition in 1947 the city had a mixed religious population who lived in harmony with each other (Ahmad 2012). The Hindus were fewer but carried a bigger weight by way of business and wealth.

The people of Bhera somehow, have a deep attachment to the soil, a euphemism for community. The abandoned and deserted *mohalla* Khwajgan, a posh residential neighbourhood of pre-partition days, is a sad commentary on the decline of Bhera. The Khwajgan residents of those homes left Bhera many decades ago but they could not find the heart to sell off those grand properties lest their connections with Bhera breaks for good. Likewise the departing Hindus continued to have a strong nostalgia and deep longing to revisit the place. One Hindu even sent his ashes for burial in Bhera. While in India they set up an affluent neighbourhood in Delhi called Bhera Bhawan. Many have written articles and memoirs and some had the opportunity to revisit their beloved city.

According to these memoirs post-partition Bhera did not live up to their nostalgia and later visitors from India reported on the poor condition of Bhera. *"In the 1950s and 1960s visitors reported a depressing picture of Bhera as a declining town ... The impression I got from Balraj Sabni's brother Bhisam Sabni a senior colleague of mine at Delhi College, was that Balraj ji had found large parts of the town in a state of utter desolation and ruins"* (reminiscence, Gian Sarup). In fact Bhera flourished to whatever degree only upto the time of partition. Today one can see a palpable attachment and pride of the

people of Bhera to their past. This pride in Bhera's history has also been kept alive by religious institutions like the Bugvi caretakers of the Shahi mosque, which was built in 1540, as tradition has it, by Sher Shah Suri, the short-lived emperor of India.

This is a study of the social impact of modernity as looked through Bhera's lens. In order to appreciate social change. We looked into people's life, routines, institutions, education, health, perceptions and visions. During our visits to Bhera and partly to its twin city, Namak Miani during 2013-15 we had meetings with teachers and the Principal of the Government Degree College, a private girls college, some Bhera students of Sargodha University, teachers and the principal of Government High School, the Head Teacher of a school for special children, a few teachers and students of the two major madrassas, a group of businessmen in Miani, an agricultural family on the outskirts of Bhera, a focus group of small farmers in village Rakh Charagah and visited some working class and middle class households, meeting housewives and other female members of the family. We also interviewed two surviving craftsmen, a weaver and a potter and saw their working arrangements. We visited government offices and had a long meeting with the *naib-tehsildar* (revenue officer) and the local *patwari* (the local land and revenue record keeper). We visited the city dispensary, the new Tehsil Head Quarter Hospital and a private charity hospital and discussed staff, facilities and patients. We also visited an outreach milk collection centre of Nestle Corporation in Miani. All interviews were transcribed. We visited the small Bhera Information and Research Centre set up at Shahi Masjid by the Bugvi caretakers and met Mr. Abrar Ahmad Bugvi, the current chief imam. The Bugvi family have looked after the mosque now for over 150 years. We met the Assistant Commissioner who regretted that some of the Municipal records were at the old Tehsil Head Quarter Bhalwal and some had been destroyed alongwith the library during the great flood of 1992 but allowed access to the births and deaths registers of 1881 and later. At the Municipal Committee the Water and Sanitation staff briefed us about the unfortunate history of water supply and sanitation. A brief visit was made to the migratory *Pakbimas*⁴ community on the outskirts of Bhera. We have also gone through any available literature, memoirs, blogs etc. on Bhera.

Meetings with college teachers were useful in giving us a perspective especially on education but they lacked depth in other fields like agriculture, healthcare and the working class. They were proud of Bhera's long history but their narration lacked detail and critical perspective. Not all doctors or government officials are equally erudite but we found one Naib Tehsildar and one particular government doctor very involved and informed. Interviews with working class families, with peasants in a suburban village, and with two master craftsmen were rich with empirical experience.

There is an acute paucity of published surveys and documentation with the government agencies about Bhera. The colonial period Gazetteers have been the most widely used source of information about late 19th and early 20th century picture of the city. One available post-partition account of the city is a baseline study for development planning carried out in 1993. It is useful in providing a mapping of the

city landuse and demographics but is generally of poor quality. It carries erroneous information about neighborhoods and limited information on economic activity. Another government document, the Punjab Small Industries Corporation Survey of Crafts, on the other hand, is a well researched publication. It proved useful in corroborating the narrative of the local surviving craftsmen regarding the presence of extensive craft based local production such as *khais* and *lungis*, earthenware and *Mehndi*, etc. It also shows that there used to be a vast local craft based production of items of daily use.

Col. Zahid Mumtaz a retired army officer is an active and enthusiastic amateur local archivist. He has collected hundreds of photographs, more than a dozen video recordings, letters, memoirs by old residents and miscellaneous newspaper articles on Bhera. This archive was a useful pictorial record of social life and built heritage. Most of his material was part of a website³ on Bhera now defunct. This website was created by late Dr. Gian Sarup a pre-partition Bhera resident who had migrated to United States and retired as a sociology professor at North Illinois University. Information about residents of Bhera enclave in Dehli and other information about the migrants were also gathered from this archive.

We have not defined the period for which we studied social change which after all is in one big continuity. However, the past for the people is the period of their recall. It starts in the 70's which is as far as their recall goes and may be termed the period of globalization or the New World Order. Globalization we note has been no abstract idea for the people. Through the agency of technology, consumerism and diaspora it has transformed their lives in the last 40 to 50 years.

Education: A mirage

According to college and school teachers public sector education continues to be popular at least for now, in Bhera. One reason is affordability. Another is that, it is reasonably good. Education fever as seen in big cities, is not yet atop the imagination of the business and agricultural classes of Bhera but is picking up. Many businessmen want their children to enter business after matriculation. Government schools in Bhera are producing fairly good results. Old students feel teachers work hard, not for any incentive but as part of tradition. At least for Bhera, it appears, the NGO and media propaganda about the unacceptable standards of public school education and quality of its teachers is baseless, it is just creating a market for private schools. Young Muhammad Arshad is a welder now. He said, *"I studied at a government school. Our teachers were regular, worked hard and taught us well, repeat, taught us well. Private schools are now a fad (bberchaal)."* Tariq the affable dispenser at the city dispensary had a similar view, *"I studied at Government High School Bhera, the education was good and well grounded; students at private schools have weak handwriting. One reason why private schools are successful is their readiness to take children at very early age. Mothers like it. Govt schools, on the other hand, do not admit below 5 years of age."* However, education is changing. It is more and more competitive now, cheating has become more acceptable and teacher-student relations have degraded.

More and more girls have access to higher education. Modern education is geared towards jobs but there are no jobs, except teaching at exploitative wages (between Rs.3600 to 7000 per month for private school and college female teachers). According to the UN Status Report 2016 “The percentage of women with BA and MA/MSc who earn below minimum wage of PKR 10,000 is unacceptably high” (Zaidi and Farooq 2016). Induction of females into productive labour has definitely lowered the wage. *“Yes they pay very little. Some pay only Rs.2000 a month but when there is no alternative, you accept. When my sister did her MA in 1997 she started in a private school at Rs.300/-, said a middle class woman from mohalla Shah Naseeb Daryai. “I teach in a school, my mother died, my father is ill. They give me Rs.1500 a month”, another told us. Interestingly, lack of jobs, pushes students to do a higher qualification like Masters or MPhil which then tends to become a minimum condition for worthwhile jobs or even matrimony, “with a master’s you may hit a job or a good match”. The boys however have lagged behind creating a new type of imbalance. A doctor at the hospital said, “when you ask a girl her education she might say she is an MA and when you ask what does her husband do, in some cases the reply might be, he is a street vendor”. In a class conscious society that would be truly shocking.*

The College Principal gave us a long diatribe on the state’s education policy from Zia’s time, 1979. He said, *“privatization has been a death-knell for education. Education was now restricted, socially segmented and quality education kept only for the rich... the rich tradition of public education was deliberately destroyed to promote the business of education in the private sector. Public sector these days has no guidance, hardly any budget and not even bare essential teachers to teach core subjects. We have not had anyone to teach biology and chemistry for two years. The state does not care. The policy makers know our plight but they don’t care. Their own children don’t study here and they are in collusion with private colleges. Even the present day examination policies like the ratio between objective and subjective questions are horrendous and destructive.”*

He said, *“I know you come from a private school but candidly I am all praise for Bhutto’s nationalization of private education. The grand narrative of public education was great. It brought equality, security, and respect to teachers and it provided a much better education to the majority children.”*

“Above all”, he pointed out, “it provided vertical social capital to the poor children and helped them integrate in the social set up. I have a number of class-fellows in important official and non-official positions. They come handy in all difficulties. Today’s segregated educational set-up has deprived rural students of this network advantage.”

There is a trend and a pressure among the college teachers for higher degrees, a number of college teachers were currently registered for MPhil or PhD programmes. However, the objective, it appeared, was not to create scholars but to add degrees and meet career requirements.

Use and Role of Media and Internet

Children’s upbringing and discipline is a good indicator of the social difference between small and big cities. In Lahore, people complain they have lost control over

their children's access to the internet. In small cities there is less atomization and social hierarchy still exercises some control. Parents, teachers and society together are able to prevent children from excessive screen time and restrict access to the internet. All the complaints that you hear in the big cities, where media and the internet have already broken parental control are also mentioned by parents and teachers in Bhera but on a lower note. They said it had affected children's study, discouraged socialization, decreasing physical play and led to bad behavior. Outdoor physical play had definitely declined and the one major reason was screen time.

Parents and teachers in multiple interviews complained that media and internet especially mobiles are having a strong negative impact on children's education and upbringing. Their interests have changed. *"A large number of students perform very poorly, why? Because students these days are attracted to cell phone and internet, listening to music, downloading films, engaged with facebook"*, (a college teacher). Some teachers, however, continue to believe it was for the individual to safeguard himself, *"We are not using these facilities wisely. It is up to us, the fault lies with ourselves, not technology, which is our need."*

Use of internet has greatly increased but it is not as much accessed through laptops as through smart phones. Now many middle class children have smart phones worth Rs.8000 to 10000 (\$80 to 100) which can access internet and 'Google'. Use of 'facebook' etc has negatively impacted children's education and grades. Use of radio tape-recorders in the past was still tolerable. *"We use to listen to radio songs and still learn our lessons or do maths but you can't study while watching, children, adults, all sleep late now. Even more important, technology has atomized us, now everyone wants privacy. Watching TV while washing clothes might be interesting but even that replaces socialization in the home or neighbourhoods."* said one school teacher.

TV dramas, films, events, and social media have replaced traditional stories and narrations by grandma, affecting morality, imagination, and relationship with grandparents. *"Grandmas' stories of princesses and fairies are considered frivolous these days"*.

Mainstream visions of development

Interestingly incomes, roads, cars, private schools, hospitals, glamorous hotels and restaurants have come to define the mainstream vision of development and good life while breakdown of relationship, family, inequality, disease, pollution, degradation of water and soil do not seem to matter. Contrary to small peasants, craftsmen and working class persons the middle classes including school and college teachers were oblivious to the declensionist change and uncritically proffered the mainstream visions of development wherein means become the end. They were asked how did they perceive Bhera 20 years from now; some said, surely there would be more recreation spots, good restaurants, quality schools, universities, and quality hospitals. Already they said, *"there is more fashion, modern beds have replaced charpayees and people have moved from eating two meals to three meals a day. Bhera is advancing in every way. Motorway has increased rents. Some shops fetch a hundred thousand a month"*.

Where do college teachers place themselves in social hierarchy? Seventy years since partition feudal political pressure still haunts the teachers. There was a clear resentment about the still persisting feudal hold, *“you cannot cross the path of an MPA. They cannot tolerate a common man wearing clean white clothes. They consider them their servants.... They don’t come to the hospital, the doctor must attend them at home”*.

Even when the weaver *baradari* (tribe, kinship based community) united and got a *julaha* (weaver) elected as Chairman of local Union Council in the last election, the feudals were so furious they punished the *baradari* by withdrawing the local cleaning staff from their area.

When shopkeepers close down at Isha prayer time some go to the motorway to eat at KFC etc and to see the Lahore – Islamabad passenger crowds. It was recreation. The college teachers lamented there were no recreation spots in Bhera, not even parks, yes, there is the riverside. The one cinema house had closed down in the 1980’s.

Bhera has few manifest developments associated with the lifestyle aspirations of the middle class. A gated housing development was introduced outside the old city, it has been very slow in developing but recently the construction has picked pace. As Bhera has not sprawled through modern housing colonies the price of urban land has gone up three to four fold in the last two decades. Another prominent marker is an elite private school, the Hafsa National School, which opened in 2015, on the same Jhawarian Malakwal main road. The school has a well developed facebook page and is trying to acquire the characterization of a modern elite school. Interestingly both the colony and the school are the initiative of the local spiritual, feudal and political family of Pir Karam Shah (deceased) owner of the Saudi funded Islamic madrassah and would be University, Darul uloom Ghausia Muhammadia.

Glimpses into the life of working class

Working class faces different realities. A maid with a local feudal family talks about her own household, *“We live in chaos and crisis, but hunger must be satisfied. If there are no men to work it is difficult to survive. While trying to organize other’s household our own household is totally deranged, “Bahar di wasson, tey ghar di ujaar”. Hunger makes us leave our home. Our own household chores are left unattended, clothes are not washed, floor is not swept, dishes are left dirty...”*

Pre-partition locals still consider themselves the real owners of land and language. Their women generally do not engage in domestic or agricultural labour. Mohajir [1947 migrants from India] women engage in labour, they carry a lesser burden of feudal oppression *“and those muhajar working women who engage in agricultural labour in the field might pick peas and with a day’s hard labour might be able to fill one small sack and earn a wage of Rs.150 [§1.5].”*

She tells about her own family, *“I had four daughters and four sons. The eldest has lost his mind, the second has died, a third one is addicted to drugs and the fourth works as domestic servant for the feudal household to which we are attached. All four of my daughters were married, two of them have lost their husbands, one leaving behind 7 children and the other five. They were all*

brought up in this household. Of these children of my daughters two daughters are yet to be married. Now my working son also has four daughters and one son and there is a son and a daughter from my son who has died."

"I am ill, have respiratory problem. When I am out of breath I pump a dose from the inhaler into my mouth and start working again".

To a question whether *lassi*, a milk drink, is available she said *"yes, lassi was freely available in the past. Now people sell all their milk and there is no lassi to be had or shared with others"*.

Another interview was conducted in the shack like home of the low-caste Muslim Sheikh family in the outskirts of Miani. *"My husband died 2 ½ years back. This land on which this house is built we got in Bhuttos time when he granted 5 marlas (1250 sq ft) land to each homeless poor [in 1975]. Most of the allottees now [after 40 years] have moved but we are too poor to move. We have lived here for generations". To a question about livelihoods she said, "labour, manual labour. But our men are not ready to undertake what they consider dirty work. No wonder we are hungry. The cost of living has greatly increased, in the past we had lassi, milk and even butter. We had two buffaloes. There was plenty to eat we churned milk in earthenware.*

We drink our water from the handpump which is polluted now because the toilet is just besides. This village is like a city now, the markets are open till late at night. We ourselves sleep late 12 a.m or sometimes even 2 a.m then get up early. There is so much tension in us we cannot sleep for long.

"What are you photographing. It's a poor household. Had there been pretty rooms you could have made some nice photos and would have been pleased to see them."

In the empty part of a graveyard on the outskirts of Bhera the migratory 'Pakhival' community had camped. A few claimed they had been there for over 10 years, others had arrived from Multan only a year ago. They said the state land was decreasing and it was difficult for them finding places to set up camp. Their children collected mainly paper from waste dumps in the city and a child could make Rs100 to 250 a day. Some assisted on vegetable and fruit vending carts and some added by begging. The household we visited was remarkable in the sense it had nothing except two charpayees with two small tied up bundles of clothes placed on them and a wood fire with a pot of daal cooking. There was no other furniture, no crockery, no stores of food and no electro – mechanical items. They offered to entertain us with coke and when we refused they offered to bring tea from a nearby shop which we again gratefully refused. It was an experience showing life was possible at that minimal level. We asked them why didn't they try for maids' jobs at middle class homes, *"we do if offered, but the wage is low, the treatment harsh and allegations of theft too easy"*. It is easy to be suspicious of those who have no permanent address. Most of those who gathered looked emaciated and weak, not strong. We didn't see many old people around.

For the poor apart from wage labour and domestic help job prospects are very limited. There is hardly any industry except brick kilns, kinnoo polishing and

packing while mechanization and agrochemicals continue to cut jobs and self employment in agriculture.

Healthcare, sanitation and water pollution

In stark contrast to the days when Bhera was known for its hakeems and Ayurvedic treatment, modern health facilities in Bhera are poor. There is a city dispensary and a relatively recent Tehsil Head Quarter hospital. The city dispensary is the remains of an old hospital with dysfunctional indoor facilities and a rusting, small operation theatre, more akin to a museum piece. Today it is manned by an affable paramedic who was disappointed at the lack of response and support from the government for the appointment of a qualified medical officer and other facilities. Between 50 and 100 patients visit the rundown facility every day. The Tehsil Head Quarter hospital is much larger with facilities for indoor patients. It has medical, surgical and gynaecological wards, laboratories, an operation theater and budgeted positions for 9 doctors. However, some positions remain vacant, *“There should be 4 doctors for the morning and 4 for the evening.... But there are only three altogether, one of whom is on leave. So there is only one for the day and one for the night, for outdoor, indoor, and for the emergency”*. A lady doctor who chose to commute from Sargodha found that very expensive and quit. There are no proper systems to service and maintain the expensive equipment and once out of order it may remain out of service for a long time. The local feudals find it below their status to visit the local hospital and get free treatment at par with the ordinary people. They call the doctor at home or go to private hospitals in Sargodha. There are a few private doctors but people mostly go to Sargodha for any major ailment. Although there is a public sector District Headquarter Hospital in Sargodha but only the poor go there who cannot afford private treatment, the rest consult public sector doctors and professors in their private clinics in the evening. Sargodha, people say, has become a city of private hospitals and consultants.

Hypertension and diabetes and gastrointestinal diseases including stomach problems, ulcers and liver problems are ubiquitous. Hepatitis-C is on the increase and is locally ascribed to water pollution⁵. TB is not so common probably because people still manage to get some adequate nourishment being relatively closely connected to the relatively less monetised moral economy of the rural hinterland but it is coming back and is becoming resistant. We managed to get some records for the Tehsil Head Quarter Hospital from the Punjab Health Department. The OPD forms show the number of reported cases against selected diseases. The THQ hospital data however, must be read with many qualifications. Many who are ill do not report at the THQ hospital. They could go to private facilities and doctors, they could go to hakeems and homeopaths or not go anywhere. There could be other statistical errors, too, like same patient counted more than once. The records might give us a general idea only. Although accidents requiring immediate attention like burns, dog bites, snake bites fractures and road accidents are at least partially or mainly reported some like depression may not be reported for social reasons. Ischemic heart disease patients are probably taken directly to or referred to the

District Headquarter Hospital at Sargodha through emergency and do not show up in the THQ OPD register.

Gastronomical diseases, diabetes, hypertension, acute respiratory infection, asthma, tuberculosis, urinary tract infections and malaria are the main reported diseases at the OPD. In general the diseases show an increase between 2010 and 2015. Some like gastrointestinal, UTI, dermatitis increased many times. Of course the population also increased during this period but the increase in disease is disproportionate. Data before 2009 – 2010 is not available and for that people's recall is the only source.

Local people report one or two generations back people in Bhera had a much healthier and longer life. They quote many instances of their fathers and grandfathers. To a question about changes in life expectancy Muneer Ahmad, a peasant of Rakh Charagah said, *"my grandfather lived to be 130, my father died 4 years back at 115. He could recognize people upto his last moment I am 70 now but I don't think I would live beyond 80. Average age has decreased"*. The connection between modern (industrial) agriculture and disease is now firmly entrenched in peasants mind, Munir Ahmad continued, *"We use chemical fertilizers to grow wheat the old ata was nutritious not the present one, the agrochemicals are one hundred percent disease. And how much cancer and heart disease we had before? Thirty, forty years back we had hardly heard of these, now every other person reports either high blood pressure or low, heart disease or cancer. I matriculated in 1957. We didn't have that type of incidence then. Why? It is all because of our contaminated food and polluted water. We grow our vegetables on gutter water, that produces disease, there are chemicals in tea, chemicals in ghee highly injurious to human health. In the past I took half a bread and a glass of lassi. I could live on it till evening. Now I take two breads at breakfast, three at twelve noon, 2-3 in the evening but remain hungry. There is no nutrition. True, productivity has increased but these chemicals have destroyed us"*.

However, one college teacher had an opposite outlook on food and lifestyle. *"In the past we had Katcha houses, you will hardly see any today. We had (woven net) charpayees at home, people had little sense of (proper) dress no desire to visit places. Some people would eat their one meal with home made chatni (sauce) now they take breakfast in the morning and two meals, lunch and dinner. What if we don't have desi ghee now, our standard of living is definitely better today. Like Lahore many women don't cook at home. We have Sheeda's naan chana here and McDonald, too."*

Another teacher said lifestyle had changed, *"Physical exercise has finished Only those take a walk who have some constraint"*.

Flush based sewerage system has gradually become the norm since the 1980s, because it is a great convenience. Although there is a lot of propaganda against the unhealthy effects of open defecation people in Bhera do not recall dry **latrines** or open defecation to whatever extent it was there, caused any disease or epidemic when Bhera had more open spaces and had closer access to the countryside. In fact, they think it was healthier because it involved walking to the outskirts or the fields and for the crops it was natural source of fertilizer. Cities do need sewage disposal but the modern water based flush system without sealed sewers or with leaking household sewers have contributed to the pollution of underground water. In the

words of a doctor at the hospital, *“Let me talk of the hospital. Sewerage is a big issue. There is no drainage. We have a drain at the back but it remains permanently blocked.... Our water is not potable. It has a strange colour, you can't drink it.”* So with modern sanitation and flush systems, disease has actually increased.

Modern sanitation and sewerage system have been promoted for convenience and safety from disease but because there is no functional integrated sewerage local effluent drains into ponds and ditches or flows out of broken drain pipes and eventually seeps into the groundwater below becoming the main cause of water pollution and water borne disease⁶. The other main source of groundwater pollution is the liberal use of agrochemicals in the hinterland. Use of bottled water is increasing but the majority of low-income population use water from handpumps or motorized pumps besides the canal on the outskirts or delivered home by local vendors @ Rs one/l in large cans. A few use deep bore handpumps (>240 ft) within the city.

Changes in the hinterland and depeasantisation

Now a Lahore based party has set up a big milk farm comprising some two thousand imported cows in Bhera where compared to 12 to 14 litre per day yield of a good local buffalo the imported Friesian cows are said to produce 20 to 25 litres of milk per day. A heifer starts milching at two years age, a buffalo may take more than twice as long. Again a buffalo offspring of one year sold for Rs 20000 (2015) while that of cow sold for Rs.40000. The Tehsildar thought buffalos were on their way out and will gradually be replaced by imported breeds of cows. The common peasants in village Rakh Charagah thought otherwise. They said some people in the village had already experimented with the new high yield breeds but found them uneconomical and a failure.

Wheat, rice and sugar cane are the three main crops. Potato is grown mainly on the river floodplain. Then there is corn. The Tehsildar said in the revenue subdivision mozea Bhera had 2600 acres of agricultural land and except for one holder with 25 acres most were small peasants. But agriculture and dairy farming today both needed capital input if returns were to be had. Tractor is for Rs.7 to 8 lakhs, ploughs another 1 ½ lakhs. This was bad news for the small farmer who stood to be eventually depeasantised and replaced both in farming and in milk production. Agriculture according to the Tehsildar needed yet another input today, education. You have to be educated and internet savvy to reap the gains of modern agriculture. Both education and capital input go hand in hand. In future the skill of the peasant gained over countless generations was to be discounted and ISO led farm management would count more. This was a slippery road to corporatization of agriculture which requires large scale depeasantisation to meet the demands of technology and capital.

What about productivity and return on agriculture? Wheat crop costs in 2015 were about Rs 20000 per acre while a good crop yielded Rs.45000 per acre in sales leaving some 25000 per acre as profit. The land rent was about 25000 to 30000 per acre for a year which meant one crop was sufficient to completely pay off rent and input

costs while the second crop of the year produced some Rs 25000 in profit. According to this calculation a ten acre farm would leave some 250,000 per year in income for the tenant/contractor or Rs 20000 per month.

In a focus group in Rakh Charagah a peasant commented on increased productivity under industrial agriculture, *“yes, productivity has increased but disease [in crops, humans and even animals] has also increased while the [net] income has declined. Whatever we produced in the past belonged to us, no other person had a share in it; now one part goes to medicine [pesticides], one part to fertilizer, one for seed and so on. [In the end] when we take our crop to the market we are spurned, we beseech them, sometimes offer to leave it on credit or on any price. That is the change. Fifty years ago in a family of 10 one earned, nine lived on that; now nine have to earn to sustain the same family. The past was better.”*

Crafts: a stifled industry

Bhera was an agrarian city with craftsmanship and trade. As trade flourished crafts followed providing the needs of the city and of the surrounding countryside. Over time Bhera engaged in a large variety of local produce (Gardezi 1993) which included woodwork especially wood carving, weaving, namdas (unwoven woolen rugs), carpets, metalcraft, shoe making and last but not least mehndi. Many of these crafts showed great promise and growth at one time, yet failed in the end.

Mehndi, a cosmetic dye, became a particular specialty of Bhera and a large number of people were engaged with its growing, picking, grinding and packing. Mehndi production was a labour intensive agroindustrial craft and its productivity was considered higher than that of wheat. However, since about three decades mehndi production has been declining, first because mehndi production in Sindh is cheaper because of cheaper labour cost and second and perhaps more important, because of the introduction of chemical dyes which colour the skin faster and deeper. The industry has collapsed yet a few factories are still engaged with its production. Mehndi was one of the area's most important crops and its sturdy seed could be cultivated on a poor sandy soil. However, official agencies played no role in the development or improvement of the crop.

In the groundfloor living room of a small two storied house sits 85 years old master craftsman Bashir Ahmad a majestic old man cross-legged on his charpayee with a pillow against the wall. He is the head of the only surviving weaver family in Bhera. Two of his 3 married sons live with him along with their families. His 3 sons and one daughter-in-law sit with us. She is hardly 40 but has lost her 3 upper front teeth already. They offered to make tea more than once though a bit hesitantly every time, and we declined with thanks. Bashir Ahmad tells us the story of his apprenticeship with Amrit Laal a Hindu master craftsman in Jhang. It was 1945 two years before partition. Amrit Laal hated to use cotton thread imported from Britain. He would rather dye local cotton thread himself. After moving back to Bhera Bashir taught the art to scores of other people. According to Bashir Ahmad as recently as 1993 some 200 weavers worked in Bhera. Gardezi, (1993) on the other hand, puts the figure at 50 (and quotes the craftsmen's own estimate of 1000 units 40 years earlier in 1953)

but in 2010 there were just 5 to 7 and today Bashir Ahmad's was the only surviving family. His grandchildren were now studying at school. They didn't want to take up weaving. For one thing weaving was a craft which was considered low and menial, *julahas* being the caste name for the trade; for another on the handloom you could hardly make one *kbais* (heavy woven cotton bedspread) in a day while the machine made 15. One was sold for Rs.1000 to 1200 in which they hardly made a profit of Rs.400 to 500, the rest was cost. So they did not make even a day's minimum wage (Rs.500) through weaving. They were merely going through the motions because they loved the work and were used to, but it was now, in the days of large scale industry, clearly unsustainable and everyone else had left already. The family took us around their handloom and related implements to prepare the thread for weaving on the loom. They had set up two other small machines one for shelling rice the other for grinding wheat on which they worked in the evening to make up their daily living expense.

Bashir's reflections on the craft and society showed great insight. Such wisdom could only come from the holistic nature of his work.

Just outside Bhera, closer to River Jhelum is the workshop of potter Ehsan Ilahi. He was of senior years and had two younger persons working with him, one of whom was his son. It was a brick built enclosure with covered work place and two pits for storing raw clay in the courtyard. On one side of the courtyard was a *bathbi* wood fired furnace. At the moment he made only *kunalis* (shallow flat clay trays) for kneading flour or making yogurt. A number of processes were involved. He brought raw clay from the river bank and stored it in the pits in the courtyard, one for raw, the other for semi-processed. In the covered workshop on a turn-table deft hands moulded the clay lump into any desired shape. The *kunalis* were glazed on the inside, sun dried and put into the *bathbi* for firing. Earlier it was fired with freely available dung but now with glazing it needs a higher temperature for which wood is used. Wood is more expensive, raising costs. His vocation, *kumbar*, too was considered lowly. At one time family labour was freely available, now hired labour makes it more expensive. He, too said, on average he could hardly make a labourer's wage in a day. It was not sustainable. According to Ehsan Ilahi of the 150 families in this field some 25 years back (Gardezi 1993 reported 42) all but two had left the trade. His grandchildren, now in school, did not want to do it. The little ones called him '*baba ganda*' (the dirty old man). He was a serene person and again his broad understanding came not from education but the holistic craftsmanship he was engaged in.

Its location on the bank of river Jhelum gave Bhera the special advantage of availing cheap timber from Kashmir. Over time Bhera became Punjab's most important wood craft centre especially known for its wood carving which had a unique style. According to Gardezi (1993) there was hardly a mohalla or street which did not have rows of multistoried houses with carved wooden façades. The most used wood was *deodar* brought from Kashmir in the north and *sheesham*, a hard wood, from the plains of Punjab, in the south. Carved doors, balconies and wooden facades have disappeared today, the affluent trading communities have left and antique dealers

have since bought massive carved doors and woodwork in the deserted homes at Rs.50000 to Rs.150000 a piece. Cheaper substitutes have replaced expensive wood as building material and intricate carving has become unaffordable. In the 1993 survey of crafts in Bhera, one master engraver was still living. Today there is none (Dar and Ali 2010).

A major wood craft was combs, an item of daily use needed by everyone. Bhera was one of the three centres in the Punjab, the other two were Dera Ghazi Khan and Lahore. It was first hit by the departure of Hindu capitalists who provided the raw material, then by the arrival of plastic combs. Today the master craftsmen have all died, no one wanting to learn the craft anymore.

In its heyday Bhera was quite famous for its metalcraft which included swords, knives and cutlery. Latif in 1911 recorded 20 cutlery workshops in Bhera whose product was sent to markets in Peshawar, Multan and other areas. The metalcraft was mainly engaged in by Ahmadis, a sect declared non-Muslim in 1977. Since then most of the community have left Bhera and with their departure the craft has largely died.

Shoes are a basic need. Traditionally they were made of pure leather and were of a type called '*desi jutti*' worn by both men and women. Those engaged in this craft are called *mochis*, who like other skilled workers were considered low caste in the feudal society. Gardezi (1993) recorded 30 *mochis* in Bhera who reported that a few decades back 150 households were engaged in this trade. Because of the low prestige and better jobs for the educated, the younger generations have gradually moved out of this vocation.

Hand-woven carpet-making, at one time widespread, has also died except in mohalla Saithian when women work for measly wages of just over Rs.100 or one dollar a day. Here a Lahori financier who has moved to Bhera taps the still existing art by providing looms, raw materials and design.

The nearby Sheikhpur Kohna in pre-partition Bhera had developed a reputation as a healing centre because of its hakeems. When we went to see hakeem Ataullah Shah Hashmi he said "*these days only discerning people believe in Hikmat, the common folk want quick relief. They don't care for long-term damages to the body so hikmat for all practical purposes has died*".

Analysis and discussion

Bhera does not have the glamorous trappings of a modern city, yet it is here that the impact of modernity can be studied as the old has not yet been eroded beyond recognition. It still exists in peoples' lives and imaginations.

Since around 1980 an increasing use of modern technology have invaded the traditional society of Bhera. The demand for cash has increased and young men are increasingly leaving Bhera to earn cash in big cities and preferably abroad.

Imperceptibly the families and the society have both been disintegrating on a permanent basis.

Modern education has not uplifted Bhera. Only few go for higher education and those few are misfits for the economy of Bhera. Education has hardly created any jobs but it is considered a conduit for moving people to jobs, which are hard to find, at least in Bhera. The modern 'quality' education not only does not teach any practical skills, it does not even leave time for the children to learn any skill on their own. Modern education is universal in character not related to local needs or resources. Moreover it deprives children of their language, culture and history. It is urban in nature and makes them contemptuous of both craftsmanship and agriculture. Most of those who acquire higher education leave Bhera never to return. After all modern education is about producing people for the market. If Bhera is now connected through roads and internet why should the educated stay back in Bhera. They move in search of greener pastures. This is, however, not the story of Bhera alone. The best educational institutions in the country aim to assume the role of export processing zones.

While middle class intellectuals keenly support internet technology; madrassah teachers not to be left behind are even keener. Madrassa teachers too now look at development as a technical issue not a political issue. Schools, colleges, madrassahs all proudly display their computer labs and try to excel at it. In the words of a professor at the Jamia, *"we do believe in technology. How can we isolate ourselves while the world goes global. We must join in and benefit"*.

Bilal Ahsan Malik a student of Graduate School of Education at Harvard University while doing his PhD on Islamic revivalism and modernity based his research in Jamia Ghausia, Muhammadia of Bhera. The experiences and narratives of his interlocutors at the Jamia showed a struggling engagement with globalization and accommodative stance towards secularization. The economic and political power of its backers and the magic of technology is too much to resist and determines which will be the subset: globalization or an alternative value-based world view held by the madrassah students. Keenness on technology is meant to win recognition as a place for advanced learning not to develop a deeper understanding of the issues at stake (Malik 2008).

A college teacher said access to education has increased. Has it? In some ways, yes, because education has become a commodity and is being advertised. *"There used to be just a government intermediate college here. Only around 2003 these private colleges and Universities started to arrive in the region. Now two bus-fulls of students go to the [nearby] Bhalval every morning"*. Sargodha University is 70 km away and Gujrat University has opened its Campus at Mandi Bahauddin only 40 km away. Set up by the government both these Universities offer paid education. Two generations back Feroze Khan Noon (later Prime minister of Pakistan) did his schooling from Bhera Government High School (Noon 1966) where rich and poor all studied together. In Noon's words it *"was a public school like the grammar schools of England."* Today only the

rich can afford quality education, others have to sell their assets. Education was one way of bridging inequalities. Now it is increasing inequalities.

What is new about Bhera's education. The present centralized western education was introduced after the fall of Punjab in 1849. It changed the ownership of the programme from community to state and objective from literacy, language and grooming to preparing to undertake jobs. More recently the state has become disinterested in its constitutional obligation of providing school education to all and is shifting the ownership of state schools to private businesses. The content has shifted to the technical and the medium of instruction encouraged to shift to English⁷.

Under capitalism in the west women labour participation has been used to keep a downward pressure on wages (Bruegel 1979, Humphries 1990). We now see the same phenomenon in Bhera where rather established schools were paying a salary of Rs.3500 to 7000 to Masters degree holder teachers. But this is the norm for other small cities and for many private schools even in Lahore. For example we found in 2014 that the wage being paid to MA qualified female teachers at a government primary school by an NGO in Sooter Mandi, Walled City Lahore was 3600 per month. When we asked the teachers why they didn't move to other private schools they replied many actually paid Rs.1500 to 2000 per month. A study conducted by Dr. Baloch at the Lahore School of Economics (talk on 2016) also found the government itself was paying the same wage to qualified teachers employed to teach children of bonded labour working at *bathbas* or brick kilns. Another study found the wages of the private schools were found to be one fifth the wage of the public school teachers (Andrabi et al 2013). Men are obviously not ready to work at this low wage so there are hardly any men teaching at the primary level in private schools. Men teach at the secondary level and above especially in government schools where they are paid more.

In India, Deuchar (2014) noted that the youth in a small city are not finding employment that can sustain their class position and there was widespread disillusionment with higher education, they also lose the capacity to do manual work. There is also relentless fetishisation of the large city through advertising and media. These finding could easily be applied to the youth in Bhera.

The small city of Bhera is surrounded by an agricultural hinterland where subsistence farming has been abandoned in favour of market, production is mechanized and chemical inputs have replaced the home grown inputs of organic subsistence farming. Demand has become tied to global market speculation and prices highly volatile. This year (2015-16) the paddy price fell to one third, the contract tenants have all been devastated. Such price volatility is the result of making rice heavily dependent on international market. In this profit and loss equation small scale agriculture is no longer viable, on many occasions the revenue does not meet the input cost. Some members or whole of the small peasants families have to sell their labour in cities or sell whole or part of their holding to emigrate from the country. The tehsildar said, *"I know from my personal experience poor peasants sell their one or two acre holdings in village Moria Pul to go to Saudi Arabia or Europe"*. The observations

from our interviews are supported by the more extensive research of Shah and Harris White in India (2011) where unviable small farms are leading to semiproletarianisation. With jobless growth in the formal sector those dispossessed from the agricultural sector find it hard to get alternative forms of gainful employment in the formal industrial sector So the “reserve army of the dispossessed” increasingly find refuge in the growing informal sector where the possibility of getting a decent job is highly impossible (Yadu and Satheesha 2016). Our limited work points to the build up of an explosive situation in the rural economy as in India.

The Lahore Islamabad motorway passes pretty close to Bhera. People have welcomed the access provided by the Bhera interchange. It has decreased time to Lahore and Islamabad; even time distance to Sargodha has decreased where majority of higher education and healthcare facilities used by many people in Bhera is located, and it is now possible to commute to and from Sargodha on a daily basis. The same, however can also be looked at from a different angle if we look at the relationship between Bhera and big cities. The latter stand to benefit more. There is a core-periphery relationship and it is the periphery that is feeding the core; like other small cities Bhera is providing human resource, vegetables, fruit, agricultural produce and milk and in the process is being depleted. The motorway is helping do this more quickly. Everything has started to gradually move out to the big cities or abroad, even *lassi*, the traditional drink, is hard to find; one who produces does not enjoy the fruit of his labour.

Pollution of underground water in Bhera is a major calamity. For sometime people thought it was a temporary problem and would soon be fixed. While it has only increased over the past 25 years. People have gradually moved to alternative sources. As mentioned earlier water pollution is intimately linked to the seepage of sewage from the sanitation system and the use of agrochemicals both modern technological developments. Having tried many sewage drainage solutions the state has abandoned the possibility of a sealed integrated drainage system. The latest solution in Bhera is the setting up of two filtration plants maintained for the Municipal Committee by private contractors who filter as well as add chemicals to purify the water. This is supplied to public at two outlets for a limited 2 hours morning and evening. The next step is bottled water which is already expanding fast in Bhera.

Ideally a sealed underground drainage of sewage should be possible but experience has shown that considering the local levels of technology and management it is nearly impossible. In fact, one discovers, the problem is not confined to Bhera almost all cities are now affected by it. One thing is clear, drinking water has now become a highly profitable business and growth of water pollution is adding to the GDP of the countries.

Cash, gadgets, modern education, sanitation, modern agriculture all are supposed to bring a better life but a brief look at social change in Bhera brings up an ironic situation. Instead of cash and gadgets bringing a better life people are selling better

life to buy cash and gadgets. The medium has become the message. The process has become the end. Cell phones and internet are robbing people of their children, modern education has started to rob children of their culture and industrially produced food has robbed people of good health. Modernity is understood as the forward march of society but we see in Bhera it is not producing exactly the expected results. There is, therefore, a need to go deeper into the issue of modernity and its paradoxical role.

There is a whole set of debates about what constitutes modernity. Modernity may be defined by the period of the Industrial Revolution and the ideas of so called rationality related to that, or it may be defined by the progress of technology. Whichever way we look at it, modernity as ideas or as machines, it has been a fairly continuous process primarily determined by man's struggle for production. The society has been modernizing through the ages and in that sense every age has been modern compared to the past. Colonialism in India, however, perverted the process of indigenous modernization. It started to import modern consumer goods, stifled the emerging local industry and imposed foreign institutions of learning. So India started to become modern without passing through the process of modernizing and without passing through the struggle for production and innovation. This phenomenon was the gift of colonialism and neoliberal times that have followed it. In our society today we have all modern goods, machines, services and education without having a corresponding productive capacity or passing through the process of modernizing. Let us also look at the issue from the people's viewpoint. Modernity is better understood viewed against its opposite. For example allopathic medicine vs Hikmat, western education vs madrassa education, industrial agriculture vs subsistence and the modern information and communication technology vs books or the still earlier oral tradition and English vs local or mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Even diaspora has emerged as modern means of livelihood in a globalised world, as against local jobs.

It is this malignant growth of consumption-based modernity that is producing paradoxical results in education, agriculture, industrial production, health and even governance. Our present day modernity of consumption goods, services and processes is ahistorical, out of context and totally out of synch with the old receding traditional set-up. It is, in fact, helping to destroy the very tradition and specificity which is the soil that should have produced it.

Today modernity in Bhera has the shape of ecological destruction. For example in Bhera, water, a primary resource, is being irreversibly polluted, soil is being destroyed, agricultural self-employment is being reduced, jobs are being lost, communities are disintegrating and food and crops are being poisoned in the name of technology and productivity.

In a presentation at the Lahore School of Economics in 2016 Harris-White highlighted the gross issue of waste and pollution in India through the lens of Bellamy Foster's concept of 'metabolic rift'. In Bhera we do not observe it in a big

way but the direction the present state policy of liberalization will take informal waste, supply of drinking water, etc is worth further study.

Modernity is also a new more liberating social and productive structure born out of the old traditional, the moribund and decadent social order. Such a new social structure was born in Europe with the advent of industrialization. In Pakistan a different type of modernity has born out of the old moribund semi-feudal traditional social structure. It looks modern because it uses all modern products of industrialization even of post- industrialization but it has brought in a new equally moribund and decadent social order without industrialization. It is more decadent because it is more dependent compared to the previous.

In Bhera we discovered the use of new products and technology has not been liberating as the social structure emerging with industrialization in Europe was. The new products and processes including healthcare and education have not emancipated peoples minds they have instead enslaved them. It is a new type of modernity, very different from Europe's. it is gagging (in loss of language), it is blinding (loss of critical ability), it is weakening (osteoporosis of society through diaspora) and it is eroding capacity (loss of local manufacturing base and its replacement with trade). No wonder the past appears better than the present.

Structural adjustment

Electric powered gadgets TV, fridges, washing machines, clothes iron, water motors, cell-phones and the motorcycles are now part of a large number of households. One needs cash to buy these, to access education, healthcare, as well as for the agricultural inputs in the hinterland. Over time people's lives have structurally adjusted to generate that cash, so the quest for jobs.

In Bhera we can see how market dependency has replaced the food autonomy of the farmer households and how large scale industry has replaced the local autonomy of small scale production. We can also see how closed cycle autonomous farming has changed into open-cycle total dependency for both inputs and outputs. Structural adjustment is a process whereby self-reliant production and consumption in Bhera has changed to a dependent mode in which market cash transactions have become the need.

Globalization has played a major role in this structural adjustment of societies making new needs the anchors of new life, for example, urbanization, bigger cities, inequality, demand for specialised quality education, industrial agriculture and a breakdown of security are making people run for destinations, for status, for competition for healthcare and what not with cash in hands. Its not a matter of choice, life has been made impossible without these. Few years back society was functioning fine without cell-phones, today it is hard to imagine life even without internet. Breakdown of security, job market and even interaction with the government all demand mediation by the new technology. Creation of need is the structural adjustment. Need is not autonomous, it is policy. Again people of Bhera

have been satisfied so far with public education but increasing inequality in education is going to increase the demand for private education. Through inequality, loss of jobs, increased competition and free trade in agriculture, globalization is generating a structural adjustment which creates new needs, - ever exacerbating the dance of life. Harris-White (2016) showed consumption choices in India do not prioritise basic necessities such as food or sanitation durables. According to her it is the social pressures that mediate consumption and these are extensively networked through TV, telecommunications and internet.

Like milk and vegetables, human resource too is now eagerly being exported abroad where it earns a much higher return. Many people from Bhera are working abroad, others are in the queue. 100% households of village 'moṛea' Boola have scions working abroad. The nearby city of Mandi Bahauddin which is bigger than Bhera has hardly a household who is not represented abroad. There is a trend among small peasants to sell land to buy a visa for the Middle East or Europe.

Diaspora is the scourge of globalization. It is the osteoporosis of the society. Like human bones the social structure weakens through depletion and in the long term the society moves towards a collapse. People can already feel this progressive collapse but they feel helpless. In the words of a peasant in Rakh Charagah, *"If our family had sustenance here, I ask you, would you or I send our children even to Lahore. Today some are working in Saudia, some in Dubai or in other foreign countries Parents die in the meanwhile, they cannot come even to their funeral, they are abroad just to earn a sustenance. I have two sons in Saudi Arabia, they hardly send anything."* A social revolution or confrontation is no longer in people's imagination. They think in terms of escaping and continuing to make a living for their immediate family. Migration is an obvious choice. There is no other alternative. So the family celebrates the remittance and the state celebrates an export. Both are celebrating the depletion of society as growth. In the name of an arguable individual benefit the social is destroyed.

Hikmat, the practice of traditional medicine, is generally not included among crafts. But hakeems fulfilled a basic non-agricultural need of the society and it wasn't just service, as the present day practice of modern medicine is. Hakeems engaged in the production of medicine, getting and choosing their ingredients direct from nature, then selecting, curing, preparing and combining them in suitable proportions to create medicines; many of them were great innovators, studying the effects then changing and improving them. Hikmat was practiced as an art. It wasn't a monoculture of commercial mass production. This art was not allowed to flourish and develop into its modern version but was declared unscientific, superimposed and stifled by another system.

Like so many other cities of Punjab Bhera showed seeds of indigenous industrialization especially in pre-partition days when Bhera was relatively isolated, big industry was minimal anywhere around and not linked to Bhera's market and hinterland. With increasing linkages to big cities Bhera lost its manufacturing capacity and small scale indigenous production started to be replaced by large scale production from outside and more recently by liberalized imports from China and

elsewhere. Crafts had generated a huge employment in the urban areas as subsistence farming did in rural areas. According to the report titled, “Future of Charkha in the Punjab” by the Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, there were 138000 handlooms in the Punjab in 1951 which were supplying two-third of the total cloth requirement of the province and providing employment to 350,000 persons (Yasin 1951). Services are now replacing manufacturing crafts. Now one finds instead beauty parlours, motorcycle and cell phone repair shops and potable or filtered water delivery services.

The widespread nature of industrial crafts even in pre-British India has been recorded by many (Roy 1999, Haynes 2012) in small towns especially those located by a river on a trade route. One of the Soviet Union’s leading historian Vladimir Pavlov (1958, 1973, 1978) noted that by the end of the 18th century trade capitalism had emerged in feudal India in the form of small industries set up by artisans, but a developed form of capitalism had not emerged. At the developed state of crafts a large and growing technical population was engaged in innovation. Development of crafts and the availability of a market had been the route to industrializations in Europe. The social development of parts of India had at least reached a level where they were ready for a take off into industry while India had a huge local market. However, colonial occupation derailed the process of industrialization by taking over both the local market as well as the raw materials of India. Thus in Bhera crafts did not give birth to industry and jobs, rather large scale industry elsewhere or abroad destroyed crafts the buds of future home grown manufacturing.

Role of state

Modernity, including its thought and culture was the result of industrialization in the West. The industrialization took place in a capitalist paradigm based on exploitation of the working class. As the number of working class grew and political consciousness developed class contradictions sharpened and the state helped develop alternative institutions to temper the negative social fall out from the breakdown of traditional institutions. The state could not ignore the interests of a growing and politically restless working class. However, now especially in the Third World Countries, the restraining role of the state has been thrown overboard and in the name of growth and technology capitalism is developing explosive contradictions with nature on the one and with the people on the other.

In the past the state had safeguarded though in a limited way the interest of the community against the interests of capital. That type of state has rolled back while a new type of state has emerged. The old state had protected the private but also promoted the commons. The new type of state has disowned commons, it is selling these to private capital, which is segmenting markets according to purchasing power.

The Tehsildar tells us the role of the state at the local Tehsil level. Policy and planning at local Tehsil level has suffered. Even the routine functions of administration and adjudication suffer because of frequent crisis management like dealing with floods, with dengue, vaccination campaigns, elections etc. Even the

maintenance of security has suffered. *“I have a small administrative unit but I have too many multifarious assignments. I and my patwari issue land ownership certificates, appear in the court, make domicile certificates for children, deal with all petitions regarding land, disaster, amount of compensations, extent of property damage, conduct surveys, investigate, keep records, settle disputes. It all involves fieldwork but I have been given no transport”*. Where is the time for reflection and policy it is non-stop routine and crisis management.

Reminiscences

It is remarkable to note how people loved the soil, a euphemism for community. Some of their oral and written memoirs eventually found their way on to the internet. Some have even documented Bhera’s history episodes in fiction (Sahni, 1988).

Most of these reminiscences talk of a period between 1930 and 1960 and express nostalgia, a longing for the good old times. Writers have taken note of the importance of river transport for Bhera, which gave it a uniqueness and centrality lost with roads and railways in colonial times.

The majority population was Hindus who dominated trade and business yet there was great diversity marked by a commendable religious harmony with the inhabitants participating in each other’s religious festivals.

One issue is how reliable are these reminiscences as record of the time. Nearly all are nostalgic, expressing a longing for the past and do not record problems, difficulties or misery. However, we should take them as personal impressions of Bhera’s society as it was in the decades before partition.

The memoirs give us a healthy and prosperous picture of pre-partition Bhera which contrasts with the conflict, ill-health and poverty of today. However, even the memoirs talk of a decline in the fortunes of Bhera in the 20th century. Many reasons have been speculated upon for this decline. These include first the end to trade with Central Asia consequent upon the socialist revolution in Soviet Union, second the arrival of railway and roads which replaced river transport, making transportation costly, third, the withdrawal of its Tehsil position by the British and finally the Partition in 1947 which removed the long accumulated social, cultural and business capital breaking community and damaging culture.

We cannot be dismissive of the nostalgia in people’s lives. Work in Bhera helps us understand the apparent paradox in peoples lives. They are trying to reach out for the modern but are nostalgic about the past. It is because the modern promises a better life but has delivered worse. People are now running after an illusion but it has become a struggle for existence, a struggle for survival; the process has become the end.

Endnote

We have investigated the life and people of small town Bhera and discovered it all adds up to a declensionist picture. But is Bhera alone?

Notes

¹ William Cronon (1992) used the term 'declensionist' to describe the settlement of the West (US) and presents it as a picture of decline and loss versus another 'progressive' narrative in which historians celebrate it as a story of heroic effort and progress. He considers all narratives to be constructs based on the historians attitudes and values with respect to past events, people and episodes. The declensionist view of the settlement of West counts the human contribution in the destruction of the soil and water (the creation of a dust bowl) that aggravated material conditions through industrial farming and dams. The story, in his opinion, was not of heroic effort and progress but man made decline which was the result of greed and violence towards the natives who lived and occupied the land prior to the white settlers.

² Hassan (2011) writing about small cities of Pakistan identified their ancient past as a product of geographical location near rivers and or additionally on intersection of major trade routes.

³ Ahmed (2012) documents narratives of inter-communal harmony in Bhera and other towns of Punjab. The various memoirs available about Bhera found on late Dr. Gian Saroop's website (www.bhera.com disabled in 2014) also testify to the absence of any communal conflict.

⁴ *Pakbivas* are local nomadic tribes who take their name from the temporary fabric and stick shelters or *Pakhis* they set up as homes on available open land.

⁵ There is no scientific link established between groundwater pollution and Hepatitis C. World Health Organization (WHO) lists Hepatitis A and E as waterborne disease. (http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/diseases/hepatitis/en/). It is a popular misconception and even some doctors in Bhera ascribed to this view.

⁶ The development of water supply systems without disposals increases sanitation related problems (Hassan 2006, Water Aid/BPD 2010). The water policy document of PHED (www.punjab.gov) envisions a reform programme which will be based on rationalization of tariff, reduction of inefficiency, cost and improvement of service delivery encouraging private sector and non-governmental organizations to develop and implement service delivery models.

⁷ With privatization the burden of education has increased on the people. It is becoming increasingly competitive and is now considered a family investment rather than a community or social investment. Throughout the country the media, the NGOs and even the state itself have been pointing out deficiencies of public education and people have been consequently shifting to private schools. In Bhera most people have been satisfied with the quality of public education so far. Only recently private schools are stepping up their presence and the trend is changing with all its implications in terms of exclusion, inequality, segregation and loss of social capital.

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Memoirs

Allama Nazir Ahmed, Mohallah Fazil Imam – Bhera

Dr Rashid Nisar

Headmaster (Retired) Manzoor Piracha, Mohallah Pirachgan – Bhera

Headmaster (Retired) Ali Hassan

Iven Anwar (2013, January 1)

Khawaja Bashir Ahmed, Mohallah Sheikhanwala- Bhera

Malik Sher Muhammad Awan, Mohallah Hidayat Shah- Bhera

Malik Muhammad Nawaz Awan, Chak wala darwaza

Riaz Fatima, Zianpur (Miani) – Bhera.

Syed Iftikhar Hussain, Mohallah Sahiniawala- Bhera

Tufail Piracha, Mohallah Pirachgan-Bhera

Dr Gian Sarup