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City as site of social engagement: People perception of man-made boundaries

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Abstract

The process of urbanization has brought with it expanding liveable spaces for the growing population. Over a while newer townships, housing projects and mushrooming colonies have encroached upon once-green belts often extending to urban peripheries. This has created a situation of worlds co-existing one living in unhealthy environments as they lack resources be it houses access to clean water to that matter sanitation facilities other living in Urban paradise.

Keywords: Population, urban paradise, environment

Introduction

It is relevant to comment here that political boundaries in the globalizing world are essential to be seen within a social context as a passage from the formation of nation-states until its present juncture. Social to that matter political changes need to be analysed through various themes such as:
i) Networked communities
ii) Mobilities

According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse "With the realm of global sociology, we are advocating notions such as:
i) Border zones
ii) Border crossings
iii) Diaspora.

Borders have been studied about 'Networks and networks have been further exemplified by stating metaphors such as:
a) Flows (Information flows) as stated by Manuell Castells
b) Scape Ethnoscape Technoscape as stated by Appraudi

Networks' vision overcomes territorial borders but at the same time restriction to access these networks can be termed as a bordering strategy. At the same new borders are being caved in through "Terror attacks as 26/11 in Mumbai" which question the issue of space and territorial power as stated by Bauman. Similarly, Borders can be conceptualized as physical barriers that continue to exist between nation-state territories adopting stringent controls such as the art of surveillance technology being installed for matters such as repeated security concerns to check illegal migration as in the case of Bangladesh to India, that matter South Asians to Europe and America. With the emergence of knowledge society communications networks are being used by outlawed groups for that reason ID proofs are required at internet cafes to access communication networks. (Rumford;155-157) [2]. Rob Shields deciphers the notion of the term Border which owes its origin to (Portuguese and Spanish via Old French 'bordeure' - 'Edge' presently devoted to territorial cases or the state border. On the other hand, boundaries mark a border. [Bourne - marker store] whatsoever the Broader term be it material or virtual originates from Latin 'BODINA'.

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We can also state in a sociological sense by referring to Boundaries as limits of fields and classes and Borders as expressed in terms of Physicality traced on land in case of mapping or terms of Juridical texts or specifically referring to Governmental practice or Cultural symbols thus what emerges is (River, mountains (Physical) + plus political rhetoric) Pp -225.

For social thinkers like Anthony Giddens Borders are key apparatus for any nation-state. The more intense control at borders is an expression of state power. In the present context, they have become centres of tourist attractions or Border tourist destinations such as Wagha border, Hussainwala in the case of Punjab that matter Suratgarh border in Jammu region (Rumford; 167) [2].

At the same time, Borders are acquiring 'new spatiality' as is obvious from recent protest movements in the Middle East. Poly centricity: - Forms of territorial politics emerge from these multiple sites overcoming dictatorial regimes Ulrich Beck (2004: 184) as stated in Chris Rumford's work.

a) Inside/outside
b) As/ then
c) National/ International
d) Borders are being created Gated communities
e) State capacity to regulate borders through active arrests.

In this paper following framework has been used quite often taking into account the issue of spaces, values that matter social practices to understand the city in its real sense. Boundaries as spaces/ bifurcations between civilized and uncivilized. e.g. Abstract economic destructions value spheres. According to Jenkins Boundaries are the points where group similarities end and differences begin, For Cohen, Boundaries emerge through a continuous process of inclusion and exclusion by way of social practices, attitudes or values which come to be affirmed and reaffirmed through continuous interaction.Thus the process of typification orders self and social into requisite categories thus these boundaries help in defining us (Asi) and excluding them (Tusi).

For this paper, three frameworks have been used interchangeably

a) Socio-economic - social position
b) Cultural frameworks
c) Moral frameworks

Dale Southerton (2002) [3], boundaries of Us and Them: Class Mobility and Identification in a Town whereby issues such as Housing, Physical decay, Social decay, Rough areas or that matter family and community responsibility all can be discussed. Pp.(172-176). The work examines the ground realities of the poor which they encounter in their daily lives by using phenomenological perspectives as to how they place themselves vis a vis the others (middle class, neo-rich) who are perceived as adversaries in the whole planning process and within the developmental debate. The basic proposition which is being analysed is how different groups articulate their position on issues affecting their daily existence which have a bearing on quality of life. The author takes into account the existing facilities be it health, education and basic services which exist in the slums of the city. The slums were earlier villages that came under municipal corporation long ago, however, still are at the receiving end of accessing basic services which have a

bearing on the quality of their life. This paper is based on an exhaustive field study undertaken among the slums at the urban periphery of the city during October, and November in 2012 in Amritsar city. In light of these considerations, it becomes important to understand people's perception of the state's role in providing them necessities of life. It is important to understand how they are forced to live in given situations because of poverty and ignorance or this denial is on the part of the state, which ignores them in the planning process.

Amritsar city since its historical past was a specialized city as it performed multiple functions commercial and economic as well as being the centre of religious pilgrimage for Sikhs since the establishment of Darbar Sahib by the fourth guru of Sikh guru Ram Dass ji Over the period synonym with *sfiti da ghar* however on the whole this has been second metropolis in the state with million plus population. The number of metropolitan cities with a population of 1 million and above has increased from 35 in 2001 to 50 in 2011 further increase has been to the tune of 87 by 2031. The expanding size of Indian cities through a process of peripheral expansion, with smaller municipalities and large villages surrounding the core city becoming part of the large metropolitan area. (http://niua.org/projects/hpec/finalreport-hpec.pdf pp. xxii). The proliferation of slums is not just confined to big metros like Mumbai and Kolkata but has afflicted smaller metropolitan cities like Faridabad Kanpur, Lucknow, Patna, Amritsar etc. The development of these villages has not been through proper planning thereby they have become part of urban areas as unplanned and haphazard settlements or slums.

A study by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India (2009b) finds that 23 million children below the age of 14 in urban India are at risk from poor sanitation. The same study finds that 8 million children in urban areas are at risk from poor water supply. Infant mortality at 42 deaths per 1000 live births, though lower than in rural areas, continues to be unacceptably high (IIPS 2005-06). Economists like Jayanti Gosh in one of her articles in Frontline reiterates that the rapidly growing urban population lacks adequate facilities and emphasises upon live able conditions. The provisional results of Census 2011 indicate that the proportion of urban residents has increased from 27.81 per cent of the total population in 2001 to 31.16 in 2011. This has been to the tune of a 3.35 per cent increase, However, one can see that the decadal increase in the size of the urban population (by 90.99 million people over 2001-2011) was greater than that of the rural population (by 90.47 million). Even the planning commission has indicated that problems of urban transformation need to be part of its agenda for the next five-year plan. The component of life has been important in this whole exercise. Thus, a fresh look at urban areas and their issues is important.

The settlement is considered urban if it contains a population of 5,000 or above, has a density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre, and where 75 per cent of the male workforce is employed in nonagricultural occupations. It is then defined as a "Census town ". From the data available in the tables one can see there has been more than a threefold increase in their numbers in Bihar, Kerala, Punjab and U.P.

Urban settlements in 2011					
	Per cent urban population in 2011	Total urban settlements in 2011	Increase in number since 2001		
			Statutory towns	Census towns	Total
India	31.16	7,935	242	2,532	2,774
Jammu & Kashmir	27.21	59	0	2	2
Punjab	37.49	217	4	56	60
Uttarakhand	30.55	116	0	30	30
Haryana	34.79	154	-4	52	48
Rajasthan	24.89	297	1	74	75
Uttar Pradesh	22.28	915	10	201	211
Bihar	11.3	199	14	55	69
Assam	14.08	214	8	81	89
West Bengal	31.89	909	6	528	534
Jharkhand	24.05	228	-4	80	76
Orissa	16.68	223	0	85	85
Chhattisgarh	23.24	182	93	-8	85
Madhya Pradesh	27.63	476	25	57	82
Gujarat	42.58	348	27	79	106
Maharashtra	45.23	535	5	152	157
Andhra Pradesh	33.49	353	8	135	143
Karnataka	38.57	347	-6	83	77
Goa	62.17	70	0	26	26
Kerala	47.72	520	-1	362	361
Tamil Nadu	48.45	1,097	0	265	265

(http://www.froritlineonnet.com/f12817/stories/201108262817104
00.htmlas retrieved on 22/2/2012).

The areas that were studied by the researcher as settlements these villages have grown in size and started paving the way for a greater proportion of the workforce engaged in non-agricultural activities, largely because of land being acquired for development purposes. The process of creating colonies by agriculturists turned into real estate agents. The individuals dependent on agricultural pursuits have to look for work in other sectors, they lack education and basic skills as a result they are not tuned to better jobs thereby increasing their sense of helplessness to earn a living.

They also face administrative pitfalls due to changes in policy orientation after becoming part of Urban space and declared as slums, they have been denied access to the large number of well-endowed centrally sponsored schemes meant for the rural sector, to name a few such as Bharat Nirman, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) etc. The population in areas that have been studied by researchers have poor or possibly non-existent facilities; no urban planning to speak of to ensure livable conditions; and inadequate employment generation for youth in particular.

Trying to know how far the Municipal Corporation has been playing its part was well judged from the fact that it fails to follow the act of 2000 related to municipal solid waste management and handling. The majority of the respondents were of the view that almost two months have passed since vehicle collecting garbage has been to their area. It became visible before the elections as seen by the researcher during one of his field visits. Even respondents state no fumigation vehicle has visited this area in the past two years. The streets are not cleaned as they are not only kuccha,brick-lined but have been broken at points to laid down underground sewerage. This exercise is being carried out after 30 years since this area has come under the limits of the Municipal Corporation.

In one instance as stated by one respondent when it was a village, the mandi board had the responsibility of roads the condition was better, now as the area falls under the

Municipal Corporation not ready to be made even now when it has come under its coverage. Now the area falls under the Central Amritsar assembly segment. People discuss the indifferent attitude of the ward councillor. He is not well versed in administrative work, as he is a dummy candidate of forwarding caste, who belongs to the S.C community. Lack of approachability along with indulging in malpractices has made matters worse. Through tainted money, he has bought big sand dumpers and constructed palatial houses in nearby areas with good roads.

Some people stated that his name which stands for roshni has not brought any light in their lives thus his name Jagchanan has been Hanera only for residents of this area. Further to make more money, he has sold large *malba* from roads where sewerage is being laid to private contractors. Thus despite one from us as stated by one of the residents, he has not done anything for Us. The state of affairs concerning basic services is not up to the mark in all the areas that were studied by the researcher. For people in one area, the village pond has been used for disposal of waste as sewerage laid down cannot carry out the sullage which often chokes the roads leading to unsanitary conditions. The pond having tall grass has become a bane for animals and children who have fallen to it. As per information provided by residents, it has not been cleaned for ages, only grass is burnt whenever necessary.

The Satellite clinic in this area is a pool of dirty water, its continuous collection has led to seepage thereby spoiling the building and even damaging medical equipment. Doctors working there despite repeated meetings with Civil surgeons and requesting urban bodies have failed to yield any result. According to doctors, there is a lack of coordination between various bodies working in urban areas for instance no sanitary inspector or other workers come from the public health department to clean the water tanks, fumigate the hospital premises, *kudh hire karke pvt contractors tohn kaam karvande haan the bill vi pallio dene pende han*. The doctor was sitting ideally during one of the visits interacting with coworkers such as ANMs and pharmacists having a cup of tea. Ideally, most patients come on Wednesday for immunization and maternal care. As stated by the doctor promotional campaign is a failure in a sense as people identify us with "bacha and jhacha" care only.

To them, for other health-related problems, very few approach us. To cross-check people's responses doctors are nice for the general category only *saanu tha khan nu phende haan* as told by one lady not disclosing the reason as expectant ladies after all antenatal checkups for one reason or the other go for *kothis* deliveries, dais etc. The annoyance is to such an extent that they state that for every disease they give us coloured *tippas* .i.e medicine whenever you go on the other hand women from better households get medicine packs. Even in certain cases women from poor families, do not follow family planning practices even after three or four children doctors abuse them because of this they stop visiting them and instead send children for vaccination with their aunts or mother-in-laws.

In the area under study researcher came across a large number of RMPs, in fact in one area there were nine of them operating in one locality only. Some of them have been operating in the area for the past 30-35 years thus they have strong clientele in the area even though they have good contacts with nearby city hospitals where they refer these patients. Apart from the reasonable rate of 20 rupees for

medicine for three days, politeness approachability, and rapport, all affect patient-doctor relationships as told by the majority of respondents. Patients accessing government health facilities were of the view that government doctors may be nice but they don't give medicines as you have to buy medicine from nearby chemist shops which is a cumbersome process as it breaks your daily routine work and at the same doctor timings don't match with their work timings. These RMPS are available till late hours, some even residing in their vicinity. One RMP even gives concessions to old people by treating them free. The majority of residents suffer from ailments such as gastro-related issues, diabetes, hyperacidity, jaundice, hepatitis-c, skin lesions, Ulcers, and respiratory. The majority of the patients fall in the age group between 30-45 years. Some of these turn up to buy habit-forming drugs as they do heavy work to perform better they require steroids without which they cannot work.

For seeking health care for their childbirth very few go for Institutionalized deliveries at GTB hospital, normally they visit private nursing homes. According to one lady *"Normal vasste hospital jhan di koi lor nahi payandi, which has been reiterated by a large number of women during course of interaction.* The dais which are in the area are many to name a few *Balbiro* in one case was approached as no one came from the health clinic after repeated calls despite all checks done at the nearby dispensary. *The baby doctor* runs her practice in one area, a small dingy room when approached she is not willing to interact. Doctor Darshan, Bebo, Pinder take the cases to nearby hospitals as they get hefty commissions depending upon the nature of the case at the same time they do get money from the government also for institutionalised deliveries they take some cases to (sarkari) government dispensary. There have been instances when so-called populist measures like eye checkup camps have gone wrong when they have been carried out by local religious organizations or trusts. One chronic patient opines that getting treated at a civil hospital was costly as everything is to be paid except bed charges what kind of treatment is this? Concerning education institutions of basic learning were largely attended by children from poor and S.C families, Not many children from the general category are enrolled in these schools as they go to these private schools. The infrastructure of government schools has improved but largely there is an undue burden on government teachers to carry SSA and other Syllabus in primary Sections. The urban schools lack space for recreational and sports activities. There have been instances of absenteeism among higher-grade students because of poverty they want to add to the household income, hence they go for waiter or DJ work during the marriage season. Some of them at the same time fall victim to alcohol and other vices.

Overall what the state government promotes largely remains on paper as only one-third of students may get scholarships or Uniforms. Even Health checkups if they are carried out happen once a year or twice and are largely confined to eyes, dental or providing iron or folic tablets as supplements. In the case of children below the age of five years what they get under ICDS is not a nutritional supplementary diet but packets of snacks (*kurkre, biscuits or chips)* rather than a staple diet of (dalia) porridge or milk which is never available or missing. The in charge of running these Anganwadi centres raised a matter of concern that getting good accommodation is a weak possibility as

rents are too high to get decent rooms, as in urban slums a meagre amount is given to them by district managers.

In one instance the shopkeeper stated how preferences and consumption patterns have changed for the S.C population about say rice consumption. Earlier they used to consume *bhujha quality, ttute chawl, sabat permal, basmati totta and now when the guest comes they buy sabat ones.* Now the state has delivered some basic needs they have money even to buy motorized vehicles, in some cases, shagun schemes by political leaders or mass marriages have not gone well with the general category as earlier they were dependent on *us* (the general category) for carrying out these responsibilities now within this changing situation they don't bother and mostly prefer urban colonies of salaried and business people rather than working here. Thus level of interaction has decreased to only a few old ladies or those who don't want to travel large distances because of old or young ones at home prefer to work in a village setup.

For small farmers whose landholdings were marginal, it was very difficult to survive and educate the children. The private schools advertise themselves as smart edu.com schools so that children can be placed in big city life. It has become a nightmare for many parents as they fail to provide a decent education, the only available work was the cultivation of vegetables for the city market. Only Seven families are there in the village that has more than seven acres of landholding. Other land has been acquired or some have moved to nearby villages to buy new land from compensation received in place of land acquired. Compensation in 1975 was 29,000/- in 1996 it was around seven lakh for those whose land was acquired. This land was still lying unutilized as only a health centre had been constructed by the government which hardly people access. For farmers vegetable rate needs to be fixed as in the case of rice or wheat crops. The farmers practising vegetable farming require a nearby depot for fertilizers. Even though no veterinary doctors were available the earlier one shifted to other village as the Municipal Corporation came into existence. A large number of diaries have come on another side of the village for a large number of people contentious issues have been (ruris) dump yards, common village land i.e (*shamlat)* have been taken by politicians and property agents because of its prime location. The village community centres (*barat ghars*) meant for the masses need to be utilized for better purposes as people prefer marriage palaces to arrange social functions here. Land meant for the disposal of dead animals (*hadarori*) has been non-existence. For some of the areas where agricultural land has given way to colonies no availability of wood for the kitchen and vegetables for consumption.

In certain cases, village ponds have been filled up to make them into parks which are used by antisocial elements and drug addicts for playing cards. Even school compounds are being used. As a large number of colonies have come up the social fabric of the area has changed even nearby small hutments have emerged such as Kudi Pind largely inhabited by women from the S.C community who have come back to their parents' home because of better work opportunities rather in their in-laws villages.

Conclusion
For people belonging to the general category moving to new places is a better option as land has gone slow degradation of living environment along with various vices but they can

afford to leave their communities which provides them a strong sense of solidarity which is missing in urban spaces. For the poor who live in concrete surroundings has become a boon to start working within city space. However, in some cases, they do not have tenure rights on the property as they were made to settle by property owners who were able for better prospects in gated communities. Thus, the poor if they want to move out cannot because of obvious reasons. Therefore we can very well observe how social constructs are given shape by political class and the indifferent attitude of government towards the welfare of its citizens who are denied life chances which curtail their life prospects and force them to live with issues of denial of accessibility availability affordability, approachability and adaptability.

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