Abstract
This paper regards inclusionary and exclusionary decision situations as contingent upon specific contexts made up of specific social processes, spaces and times. It is argued that inclusion should be examined as rigorously as exclusion to secure empowering urban planning practice. The author views empowerment as the ability to bring about social transformations for the benefit of the dominated and dispossessed, disempowerment seen as maintenance of the status quo in the interests of the dominating. To embed theoretical formulations in concrete situations, disempowering work of urban planning is discussed in order to highlight that inclusion does not necessarily lead to empowerment. Similarly exclusion is disempowering many times, but it would erroneous to assume that exclusion always leads to disempowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Different empowerment practices have been brought into play by different world leaders. Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent movement greatly contributed to the independence of India. The principle of non-violence was based on the fact that people should withdraw consent to govern if they feel that the ruler is unjustly ruling the masses. According to Gene Sharp non-violent movement underscores the point that “people in society may be divided into rulers and subjects; the power of the rulers derives from consent by the subjects; non-violent action is a process of withdrawing consent and thus is a way to challenge the key modern problems of dictatorship, genocide, war and systems of oppression” (Martin, 1989: 213). In that non-violent movement is progressive and broader in scope. Stellan Vinthagen explains: “Non-violent resistance can therefore generally be understood as a behavior that includes endurance of violence and oppression, while creating alternatives and hindrances, as well as new definitions and evasion of both subordination and violence - in an attempt to undermine power and the legitimacy of violence and create conditions of reconciliation and dialogue” (Vinthagen, 2006: 19). Empowerment in Gandhian thought is believed to be internal to the agency, for example power to voluntarily endure violence with the aim of bringing about ethical social transformations. This principle of non-violent disobedience and non-cooperation was effectively used by Nelson Mandela to fight against apartheid in South Africa leading to racial equality and democratization of the country and Martin Luther King against racism in the United States of America, profoundly...
affecting social structures and practices not only in their respective countries but also throughout the globe.

Other political leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, firmly believed that India could be empowered through large scale industrialization led by the public sector. In order to realize that vision of empowerment, large scale industrialization was carried out by government for several decades after independence, even after his demise. Public sector led large scale industrialization acted as unshakable foundation and proved to be the harbinger of economic stability and sustainability during the comprehensive economic collapse in many Asian countries in the recent years. Empowerment of the excluded and discriminated social classes was relentlessly sought by Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the father of Indian Constitution, through advocacy and fructification of the policy of affirmative action by government. Many present day examples could be cited on empowerment strategies deployed by leaders and activists such as Meda Patekar for unsuccessfully fighting for land rights of the farmers and others, and Sunderlal Bahuguna’s efforts to save forests by successfully launching the Chipko Movement.

Most of these empowerment practices focus on inclusion in decision making processes for creating empowered citizens or communities or collectivities. Inclusion in a decision situation is believed to be empowering, and therefore it is hoped that it could bring about societal changes benefiting the excluded and marginalized individuals and groups. In many cases inclusion is indeed empowering but this is not the universal principal for bringing about empowerment. How far this is true in the case of town and country planning in India needs to be explored. This paper is an attempt to answer some aspects of this question. In this paper an attempt is made first to understand the concept of empowerment generally. With the help of illustrations relevance of empowerment to planning is explored by discussing disempowering work of planning. Some concluding remarks are made as a reflection on how planners could empower the disempowered.

2. EXCLUSION IN INCLUSION

While exclusion is treated as lack of enjoyment of certain rights as humans and also cause for further deprivation. Amartya Sen convincingly argues that social exclusion causes ‘diverse capability failures’. Sen argues that ‘being excluded from social relations can lead to other deprivations as well, thereby further limiting our living opportunities. For example, being excluded from the opportunity to be employed or to receive credit may lead to economic impoverishment that may, in turn, lead to other deprivations (such as undernourishment or homelessness). Social exclusion can, thus, be constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures (Sen, 2000: 5). Other philosophers and thinkers have also treated exclusion as an inhibiting factor for development. But B.R. Ambedkar identified this relation between exclusion and inclusion more profoundly.
He succinctly noted that there is “no caste without outcasts”. Inclusion has exclusion inbuilt.

In planning also exclusion is regarded a cause of non-reflection of peoples’ desires in the development plan policies. This takes away right to participate in decision making processes. Inclusion on the other hand is treated as opposite of exclusion, and is taken as morally right thing to do by involving people in planning and decision situations. Thus peoples’ participation in public decision making with regard to policy framing and implementation have been taken seriously in planning theory as well as planning practice. Public participation has been regarded as one of the prominent planning orthodoxies by all planning theorists from advocacy planning to collaborative planning. Inclusion of people in decision situations has remained central to public participation in planning. In planning practice throughout the democracies of the world, public participation has been treated as an integral part of the planning process. In Delhi, the Delhi Development Act, 1957 made a remarkable beginning by including specific provisions for public participation during the preparation of the master plan, the tradition now being followed in all other states.

In her classical paper Sherry Arnstein supports the belief that public participation does contribute to empowerment of people. Sherry Arnstein defines public participation as “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future” (Arnstein, 1969: 216). She argues that lack of public participation, among other reasons, leads to social exclusion. Social exclusion in this paper is understood to be “a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live” (Silver, 2007: 7; also see Sen, 2000).

Public participation therefore is regarded an essential element in successful inclusive planning. Social and economic criteria are devised to create communities. Those who are able to secure socially mandated conformity as per given criteria get included in these communities. Others may not be actively pushed outside, but mechanisms are devised as natural processes which keep certain groups outside the boundaries of these social collectivities called communities. In this way inclusion of certain people in certain communities proves to be exclusionary for others. These collectivities could be based on religious affiliations such as Jews or caste affiliations such as the caste Hindus and the outcastes who remain on the spatial margins of the Hindu society. In both cases, progress towards inclusion cannot be made as it is religiously and socially prohibited. Inclusion therefore is not innocent moral proposition; it is ideologically driven and has costs of exclusion.

However, exclusion of immigrants from Maharashtra’s economic life does not fall in the above category because sustained efforts are made by political parties and
their ideologues to keep these migrants outside of the state boundaries. Political compulsions act as levers for restructuring of the cities and regions. Similarly keeping out Muslims from the economic life of the state remains outside of the above categorization. At the same time one must not forget mentioning outing of the rural poor by organized gangs and armies from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for obtaining their own territorial hegemonic ends.

Thus the question of exclusion should not be posed as if inclusive planning and politics is always morally right; its exclusionary consequences must also be kept in sight for they deserve sustained attention of society in general, and politicians and policy makers in particular. Is inclusion always good for people in question? For example, to be counted as a squatter in economically rich Delhi would be hazardous and dangerous leading to continual displacement from one place to the other. Is it fortunate to be included in a group, which remains disempowered whatever the nature of law? Belonging to a dalit community is one such example where unacceptability of the Caste Hindus is complete and converts any advantage into disadvantage for the people situated outside the caste system. Nature of inclusion therefore is important before any conclusions about inclusion leading to empowerment could be made.

In order to demonstrate the relevance of the theoretical framework outlined above, I am aware that it is yet to be fully developed, let me move to the area of economic planning first, before I consider spatial planning and exclusion by inclusion. My question is: could inclusion really lead to empowerment?

Inclusion and cooptation are close cousins. For example, in the case of Maharashtra’s Employment Guarantee Scheme, Sujata Patel has argued that “the programme is unique among all the poverty alleviation schemes because it is designed to ensure empowerment and mobilization of people to demand work and over the course of its implementation it has become coopted by landed interests” (Patel, 2006: 5126). Another longstanding issue is that while there is a greater focus on policy formulation processes, there is a likelihood of eclipsing the policy implementation processes. Even excellent policies, plans and programmes cannot bring about desired results without their implementation through appropriately inclusive policy processes embedded in empowering institutions. Illusion of inclusion created at the planning stages kept going even during the implementation stages; no fresh attempts are made to rethink about inclusion at implementation stages. Even planning law makers leave such considerations to the framers of detailed rules.

3. EMPOWERMENT AS ABILITY TO CHANGE

Inclusion has moral and material salience only if the act of inclusion leads to enhanced capability of social agents to seek desired changes which they deserve as human beings. Such changes are meaningful only if dominated groups are able to successfully negotiate even in conditions of relative domination by the dominant
groups. All individuals and groups are competent and capable of bringing about changes that they deserve. Therefore, ability of individuals’ or collectivities’ to make societal changes for their own well being and the well being of their communities should be regarded as ‘empowerment’.

Empowerment or ability to make a difference is part of human existence. Giddens (1984) points out that placing systematic and permanent limitations on one’s ability to exert power is a negation of one’s very humanity. Human existence without having any influence on matters of concern to an individual or community is disempowerment. It is in this context that empowerment becomes an urgent issue to be addressed because India is increasingly turning into an unequal society in spite of the fact that concerted efforts are being made by the government to address social and spatial inequality.

There are a number of individuals and communities who feel disempowered and their human agencies are disabled by social structures and institutions, which were set up to empower them. Remember the photograph of Qutubuddin Ansari in tears with folded hands during the Gujarat riots, a picture of complete and total disempowerment and dispossession. Likewise families condemned to living in squatters and those economically better off social classes which are compelled to live in self imposed ghettos, feel alienated and disempowered. Planning as a modernist enterprise set out to plan for every family, class and community, but ended up in creating slums and squatters for a majority of the city dwellers today. One significant planning issue before the nation is: could we reverse this trend and handover the city to the majority of the population by creating spaces which are more like livable communities rather than slums and squatters where humans endure life rather than enjoy it.

Elisheva Sadan in the book titled “Empowerment and Community Planning” captures the essence of the term ‘empowerment’. Empowerment is a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one’s life, destiny, and environment. This transition can manifest itself in an improvement in the perceived ability to control, as well as in an improvement in the actual ability to control. Empowerment is a transition from this passive situation to a more active situation of control. The need for it is part of the realization of one’s very humanity, so much so that one could say that a person who is powerless with regard to his life and his environment is not realizing his innate human potential. Since the sources of powerlessness are rooted in social processes that disempower entire populations, the empowerment process aims to influence the oppressed human agency and the social structure within the limitations and possibilities in which this human agency exists and reacts (Sadan, 2004: 144). Similarly empowerment is defined as a process whereby people, organizations, and communities gain command over their affairs (Rappaport 1981, 1984, 1985). For example, self determination within constitutional bounds in a democratic set up or democratic participation of individuals in the life
of a community or society at large. In the case of town and country planning, general public could feel genuinely disempowered when it is seen that no substantive changes could be made in planning policies even after regular interventions in the planning process.

Empowerment process is multidimensional, taking on different forms in different people, contexts, and times and it is also multilevel that is individual, organizational and community. Empowerment processes could be conceptualized at individual level, community level and within the professional context. All three processes of empowerment are not only related with each but also complement and contribute to each other.

4. DISEMPOWERING WORK OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Empowerment and inclusion have become integral part of the lexicon of the policy makers in India. From Right to Information Act, 2005 through to the Right to Education Act, 2009, these statutes make repeated references to empowerment. Current focus on inclusive urban planning could be also assessed by the fact that various ministries of the Government of India are actively engaged in framing policies for the uplift of the urban poor such as affordable housing policies and slum free city policies. Specifically, apart from framing the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, has organized National Consultations at New Delhi on 21st July 2008.

The Ministry has also been attempting to promote high quality high impact research on urban issues particularly on inclusive urban planning through the establishment of centers of excellence in various planning schools of the country. While there is a greater focus on policy formulation processes, there are no independent monitoring mechanisms to oversee the workings of such research centers. No one really knows how such research is getting produced, and how far it is ideology driven and how far it is based on empirical evidence. Throughout the country a number of centers of excellence are established. But there is no collaboration between these centers of excellence and within an institution such centers of excellence resemble with centers of exclusion as research sharing and academic interactions with other faculty are kept to a minimum. There is also a likelihood of eclipsing the policy implementation processes in a hurry to frame better policies. Even excellent policies, plans and programmes cannot bring about desired results without their implementation through appropriately inclusive policy processes embedded in empowering institutions. Even if it is presumed that such centers of excellence are likely to produce great research results, the questions about their relevance to the outside world remain unanswered as they do not speak with the outside world. University community interaction is not an idea that is welcome in the case of these centers of excellence.

However, it must be maintained that there is nothing epistemologically wrong with the idea of inclusive urban planning. But it may not be treated as a Trojan horse.
Realistic inclusive policy frameworks could result in large scale empowerment of the excluded and dispossessed. But there seems to be a danger of inclusion of this idea in the neoliberal vocabulary; they have already co-opted. Many publications of the World Bank and IMF are one testimony to this cooptation. This could make inclusive urban planning a utopia, like many other planning policy utopias, if it is allowed to be appropriated by the dominant neoliberal governing elite. To avoid this kind of policy appropriation, Government of India should aim at empowering those academics who work and care for societal transformations for empowering the urban poor.

Empowering planning policies and policy processes are uniquely suited for putting an end to urban poverty and fulfillment of the needs of the urban poor. Empowerment is not only about participation and having accesses to those arenas where important decisions about the urban poor are being taken by the planning agencies. It is also not about formulation of egalitarian policies and plans and allocation of sufficient resources for implementation of these policies. Empowerment could be realized only when the urban poor begin to feel that they not only have a stake in the city and therefore would be allowed to participate in decision processes, but are capable of bringing about desired changes in the delivery systems resulting in access to housing and critical infrastructure on their own by having sufficient influence on the decisions of government authorities.

By now it has become clear that empowerment and inclusion are of course related to each other because inclusion in any discourse and decision situation is vital before any social transformation could take place whereby the poor and marginalized are able to gather and apply some influence over issues important to their lives. Inclusion with empowerment is cooptation, which is disempowering and harmful to the agency of the urban poor.

4.1 From Colonial Government to Bureaucratic Dominance

When the British Government of India could not handle mounting political pressure, it introduced representative local government through various statutes. Obviously, the Indian politicians began to be elected to these local bodies. This was touted as the big concession to those fighting for representation and participation in government. But on the other end significant functions of local government were being moved away from elected local bodies to the appointed institutions controlled by the imperial government officials. For example, major public works became the responsibility of improvement trusts, cantonment boards and other such appointed organizations with clear purpose of subverting control of elected representatives and participatory decision making processes. All major cities such as Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Chennai had improvement trusts. Improvements in terms of sanitized housing and office areas were however meant for rulers rather than the Indian public. The British Government of India built the entire new capital city of New
Delhi without a shred of peoples’ participation. But then one does not expect citizen participation from the imperial government.

However, after independence, the Indian Government quickly adapted to this style of non-participatory local government. Although improvement trusts were largely abolished and some faith was placed in local government, it was not until 1992 that 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution of India were passed to accord constitutional status to local government. It took 45 years to put full faith in the ability of the people to manage their own affairs locally. It is a happy reality that peoples’ representatives have been elected in large numbers, but as far as government of our cities and more particularly urban planning is concerned; these areas are still looked after by unrepresentative organizations such as development authorities, industrial development corporations, etc.

As an illustration, let us discuss the case of NCR and NCT Delhi. Two different but related statutes i.e. Delhi Development Act, 1957 and National Capital Region Planning Board Act, 1985, govern the National Capital Territory of Delhi and National Capital Region respectively. Both Acts have given birth to a system of planning, hierarchy of plans and some scope for public consultation. At the same time, as a direct consequence of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution of India, state governments have changed their local government statutes to conform to the provisions of these amendments. Consequently uniform three tier system of directly elected urban and rural local governments apart from the provision of establishing indirectly elected district planning committees and metropolitan planning committees have been introduced in all states including those whose areas fall within the jurisdiction of the NCR. However, NCT Delhi is an exception where constitutional amendments are partly implemented due to its special status of national capital housing diplomatic offices of all nations of the world. This is a strange argument. While we tirelessly show to the world community that India is the largest democracy of the world, we have no inhibitions in scuttling local government’s participatory planning and decision making processes in front of the same diplomatic representatives of the world.

In the NCR and NCT Delhi, public participation in this planning system of tall hierarchies of plans and organizations is marred by exclusive regimes of decision-making, and has become extremely complex task. But another significant issue that must be raised is whether direct citizen participation is likely to achieve much at regional and sub-regional level covering areas as big as 33,000 sq km (Table 1).

Given this context, the main issue is that who should participate and for what purposes participation should take place. At the present moment, public participation gets reduced to negligible as one moves from city level to sub-regional and regional levels. There is hardly any participation of the citizens at these levels. No provisions for participatory and inclusive planning exist even for sub-zonal and
Table 1  Public Participation and the Planning System in the NCR and NCT Delhi, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Plan</th>
<th>Geographical Level</th>
<th>Area and Population</th>
<th>Public Participation Provisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>National Capital Region Plan, 2021</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>33578 sq km and 3,71,00,266 persons</td>
<td>Consultation on draft Regional Plan preparation and its modifications as per sections 12, 13 (1) and 14 (2) and 15 (2) of the NCR Act, 1985; Rule 25 of the NCRPB Rules (1985) allows participation of local authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sub-Regional Plan for Delhi*</td>
<td>NCT Delhi Area</td>
<td>1,483 sq km and 140 lakh persons</td>
<td>No provision in the NCR Act, 1985; but referred to the NCRPB for conformity with the NCR Plan and Board’s approval under section 19 of the NCR Act, 1985.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Master Plan for Delhi</td>
<td>NCT Delhi Area</td>
<td>1,483 sq km and 140 lakhs persons</td>
<td>Consultations for plan preparations under section 10 of the Delhi Development Act, 1957 with the general public and similar provisions for modifications to the plans are made under section 11A (3) of the same Act; For information seeking, civic surveys to be carried out by the DDA under section 7 of the Delhi Development Act, 1957.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Zonal Plans</td>
<td>15 Zones of NCT Delhi area</td>
<td>Area and population may vary</td>
<td>Consultations for zonal plan preparations under section 10 of the Delhi Development Act, 1957 with the general public and for modifications under section 11A (3) of the same Act; For information seeking, civic surveys to be carried out by the DDA under section 7 of the Delhi Development Act, 1957.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sub-Zonal Plans</td>
<td>A sub-division of a Zone</td>
<td>Area and population may vary</td>
<td>Delhi Development Act makes no provision for public participation as it is not a legal document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Implementation or Layout Plans</td>
<td>Much Smaller Areas</td>
<td>Area and population may vary</td>
<td>Delhi Development Act, 1957 and Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 make no provision for public participation as it is not a legal document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Development Act (1957) and National Capital Region Planning Board Act (1985).
Note: Sub-Regional Plan for Delhi was never prepared.

layout plans. As far as the process of Master Plan for Delhi is concerned, it is merely limited to consultation with people after the draft plan is made ready. Some public participation occurs when surveys are conducted by the DDA for collection of data but this is limited, as all surveys would be about informing and securing information from the public. Similar process of public participation is
followed when zonal plans are prepared. There is no scope of public participation during implementation of various planning proposals. Effectively the public is excluded from planning system by the appointed authorities and this indeed is disempowering. But this is not to suggest that the elected body like the Municipal Corporation of Delhi does better. During application and enforcement of development control regulations, particularly building byelaws, there is hardly any space in decision making processes for public participation because the entire process from receiving applications for building permissions to the final decisions is highly bureaucratized.

When the Master Plan for Delhi, 2007 was being prepared, attempts were made to include the public in the planning process by way of public consultations. Suggestions, objections and comments were invited from the public. People were even invited for discussions before the duly constituted and authorized committees: duly constituted within the existing rules and duly authorized by the state apparatus being led by appointed Vice Chairman and Lieutenant Governor and not by the duly elected Chief Minister. Here, the primary issue is not that of democratic subversion but unaccountability of bureaucrats to the general public. “Nothing is really going to change” was the general comment of many people who participated in these consultation processes because they felt disempowered or incapable of bringing about any real change in the Master Plan policies. It is not very clear whether it could have made much of a difference if the Chief Minister of Delhi constituted committees for hearing peoples’ grievances on the draft Master Plan for Delhi. One time elections to state assembly or the parliament is not a substitute for day to day accountability of local politicians and senior bureaucrats including planners to the public. This deficit of accountability has led to disempowerment and loss of confidence in the public servants.

Thus partial inclusion is not sufficient for empowerment as full inclusion also leads to exclusion in the absence of the ability of the public to bring about desired policy changes. Inclusion in the presence of cooptation is disempowering and could lead to long term indifference and apathy of the public.

4.2 Spatializing Immigration and exposing those demonizing the Poor

Immigration and empowerment are closely connected as poor immigrants generally remain disempowered. Delhi received nearly 2.2 million migrants in 1991-2001 and only 0.45 million people migrated out of the megalopolis. Thus net immigration to the city amounted to 1.7 million during 1991-2001 as compared to 1.3 million during 1981-91. Major sources of migrants were Uttar Pradesh (0.88 million), Bihar (0.42 million) and Haryana (0.17 million). Immigration was generally male dominated (673 females per 1,000 males) adversely affecting the sex ratio of the city. Most of the migrants left their homes to look for work (Census of India, 2001: 24). Cities being economic magnets, migrants are expected. As we will show, master plans
make legal provisions for their shelter and other needs. But in spite of legal planning provisions, nearly 30 to 35 percent population of Delhi has to live in squatters and slum settlements.

Evictions of poor households located on marginal spaces such as along drains, railway lines, rivers, unprotected government or private land and other such places with or without the provisions of relocation are a common policy response, which local planning authorities adopt in cities of developing countries. Delhi is not an exception. In Delhi authorities have stated various reasons for such evictions including beautification of the Yamuna River, reduction in the pollution levels of river Yamuna by squatters, etc. But illegal squatting remains the central provocation for eviction of the poor families from otherwise hazardous places. Sporadic rule of nationalistic political parties in India have also led to evictions of suspected Bangladeshi Muslims who they argue have illegally immigrated into the country. When they went back to Bangladesh, their government has treated them equally badly (Ramachandran, 2002). Bad treatment of immigrants (their own citizens) is the common response across the developing world.

Large scale evictions and displacements normally attract attention of academics and the media but day to day evictions remain hidden from any scrutiny. For example, displacements during partition of India in 1947, evictions during the Emergency of 1975, riots against Sikhs in 1984 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the 2002 Gujarat riots against Muslims and the Operation Pushback about illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Delhi in 1992 are few examples of large scale displacements and evictions, which have led to closer scrutiny due to their national and international political ramifications (Nussbaum, 2007; Mitta, and Phoolka, 2007; Tarlo, 2003; Ramachandran, 2002). However, less noticed but equally devastating evictions remain in force year after year. Over 200,000 people were evicted from Delhi’s Yamuna Pushta squatter located along river Yamuna between 2004 and 2007. Many deaths including those of children and adults were seen at Yamuna Pushta and relocation sites on the borders of Delhi. National newspapers quickly flashed these news and hastily forgotten.

The poor flee from hunger and unsafe environments created by the caste lords and religious bigots. Poverty and out migration has strong positive relation with each other as it is evidently shown by the figures on migration collected by the government (Census of India, 2001). Most of the immigrants have come from what is euphemistically called BIMARU states an acronym for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (see Table 2).

For example, Delhi received nearly 2.2 million migrants in 1991-2001 and only 0.45 million people migrated out of the megalopolis. Thus the net immigration to the city amounted to 1.7 million during 1991-2001 as compared to 1.3 million during 1981-91. Major sources of migration were Uttar Pradesh (0.88 million), Bihar (0.42
Table 2 Reasons for Immigration to Delhi, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for immigration</th>
<th>Duration of migrants from 0 - 9 years</th>
<th>Percent Migrants (Duration 0 - 9 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>8,16,174</td>
<td>767,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved with household</td>
<td>7,99,231</td>
<td>284,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>2,99,856</td>
<td>2,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>58,146</td>
<td>46,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved after birth</td>
<td>51,084</td>
<td>26,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11,818</td>
<td>10,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1,36,451</td>
<td>85,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,72,760</td>
<td>12,23,746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India (2001: 29).

million) and Haryana (0.17 million). Immigration was generally male dominated (673 females per 1,000 males) and hence it upset the sex ratio of the city. Most of the migrants left their homes to look for work (Census of India, 2001: 24). In general, the contribution of migration to the population growth of the NCT has been consistently significant although reducing now.

As far as rural development is concerned, huge sums of money earmarked for rural development in successive five year plans notwithstanding, has not reached the people. Rural poverty is stark and the economic distance between the city and the village has increased through time. For example, during 1991-2001, 38 percent immigrants were poor who came to Delhi in search of work (Census of India, 2001: 29). However, once in the city, the immigrants feel safe and secure even if they have experience of living conditions worse than what they had back in the village. They are able to secure work in various informal activities such as construction work, rickshaw pulling, hawking, etc. Since they are unskilled laborers, they are unable to earn enough to afford to build a shelter or to rent a legally authorized place for living. These forces compel these people to house themselves on public spaces formally called squatting in government policy arenas.

The poor settling in urban areas generally occupy marginal spaces, which are either lying ideal for long time without any use being made of such lands or few users utilize such spaces even for their allocated uses due to non-conformity with the needs of the formally identified users. But as soon as the poor settle down in these spaces the process of demonizing them starts. The public policy makers take the first pot shot. The policy makers make the first attempt by calling them squatters and therefore violators of the planning law. This is not only written down in the form of policy statements but equally forceful verbal assault is mounted through public discourses. Easily persuaded planning consultants and academicians who are greatly dependent on these agencies for regular consultancy projects join these
public discourses. Sometimes, planning consultants are hired to legitimize planning policies required by the governments to serve certain interests. At a later stage, middle and higher income residents of the concerned areas, helped by the global media, also join in this large scale condemnation of the poor, whose only fault is that they have made their own efforts to provide shelter for themselves when all else including the government efforts have completely failed.

In this entire process of demonizing, it is clear that there is no place for the poor to argue their case. Public planning agencies actively exclude them by taking away their fundamental rights as citizens by branding them as squatters and violators. Instead of facilitating their participation in the planning process, these very government agencies become active agents for the exclusion of the poor from any public discourse. Public and private media houses pursuing neoliberal agenda do not really care to involve people in these predominant discourses. ‘The current practice of mass communication confirms the dominance of a private, commercial agenda in a democratic culture that has failed to deliver on the promise of participation, which seemed to have been intended when mass communication - in the language of the confident middle class - stood for liberation and represented the road to enlightenment and freedom’ (Hardt, 2004: 3). Furthermore, discourses for the poor, which are led by the third sector, are generally muted, weak, occasional and of doubtful integrity. The poor simply do not feature in this spectacle of city lords: middle and rich classes, public agencies, the global media, and the private sector among many others.

Matter does not end with demonizing discourses. The state and its agents in the name of city beautification and urban planning take devastating actions against these families. Consider the forcible removal of families settled along the banks of river Yamuna for many years. These people were displaced and compelled to accept new spaces on the periphery of the city, where they could be considered to be invisible and non-existent. Not only these poor die during the displacement campaign but also their children continue to perish long after they have been compelled to stay outside the city. The process of demonizing the poor ironically has been completed: starting from the periphery of the village to eventually ending on the periphery of the city remaining no less vulnerable now than they moved from the villages. Thus demonizing is pursued by the state as a policy to unsettle the urban poor. This process of marginalization goes completely against the stated orthodoxies of town and country planning.

4.3 Religious Bigotry and Despising the Lower Castes

Religion has caused partition of the country in 1947. Hundreds and thousands of people died during the partition. Debilitating impact of the partition still remains. But religious fundamentalists of various shades continue their divisive politics. Demolitions of the Babri Masjid by the Sangh Parivar, the burning of Mumbai by
Muslim goons, and the recent riots in Gujarat led by the Hindu chauvinists have caused much dismay throughout the country. Distrust of one religious community of the other has led to exclusion and disempowerment. But endless exclusionary processes are being pursued by all political parties. For example, under the ‘Operation Pushback’ illegal immigrants were identified and some of them deported to Bangladesh.

Unsettled by this sweeping tide of Hindu chauvinism, a hurriedly enforced “Action Plan” to locate and identify these undocumented immigrants was followed by brisk efforts under “Operation Pushback” to deport them from New Delhi — India’s capital city and locus of bureaucratic, political and financial power. Haphazard and sporadic in implementation, Operation Pushback, while unmasking partisan dispositions coursing through the Indian bureaucracy, also exemplified Congress’ belated attempts at redeeming its enervated standing. It is also worth noting that the highly circumscribed material realities of the Bangladeshi immigrants residing in Delhi’s numerous slums made them easy targets of these perverse politics, and that subsequent opposition, internally and from neighboring Bangladesh, to the gratuitous brutality displayed towards the first groups of deportees contributed to the Operation’s abrupt truncation (Ramachandran, 2002).

Similarly lower castes have been despised for centuries, and caste is used as an exclusionary mechanism to keep people of these communities away from any benefits of the public policies (Gupta, 2007). Take a look at some of the latest instances. India’s erstwhile Railway Minister and former Chief Minister of Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, a long time Lok Sabha Member of Parliament was denied membership of a prestigious social club because he did not fit the social profile of its members. A dalit president of a panchayat of a village in Madurai district in Tamilnadu was auctioned and sold for Rs.25, 000 to a higher caste person of the same village for daring to become peoples’ representative. Breaking 300 year old ban when dalits entered a Jagannath Temple at Keredagada village of Kendrapada district in Orissa, angry upper caste villagers purified the shrine with the full support of the priests who went on strike. Four of a dalit family were tortured and murdered in Khairlanji village of Bhandara district in Maharashtra. A dalit colony in Haryana was burnt with the sanction of a caste panchayat because a dalit youth had an altercation with a higher caste photographer who made some indecent remarks about his wife. It was also in Haryana that dalit youths were slaughtered for false suspicion of killing a cow. Out of numerous such incidents throughout the country, these are only those cases, which get highlighted and reported in the media. Why this happens? To begin with one might argue that these law enforcement problems, but in the end these are social problems of lack of trustful interactions between diverse communities. Laws may bring few individuals to the book, but developing India’s dream of becoming a multi cultural country could be achieved only if communities interact with each other on a regular basis under the conditions of mutual respect.
and trust. Planning arenas where decisions on construction of physical spaces and by implication social spaces are taken could contribute a great deal by creating inclusive in opposition to exclusionary spaces such as the India International Center from where the central minister was barred.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Exclusion or inclusion of individuals, families and collectivities from planning and decision making processes on their own are not important for empowered planning. What is important is the nature of inclusion or exclusion and the context within which such ideological steps are being taken. Neither inclusion nor exclusion of individuals and entities is always morally right. Exclusion and inclusion are not opposites; they are enabling or disabling depending on the context, space and time.

Most of the case studies clearly inform that participation without participants’ feeling as agents of change is mere tokenism at best and cooptation at worst. Inclusion in important decision situations may be a beginning of the process of empowerment but it is not an end by itself. The process of empowerment could be advanced by making individuals and communities capable of advancing their own concerns through their own efforts and abilities. Accountability to the participants is an absolutely necessary condition for empowerment. As it is seen that there is no accountability of what happens to objections, suggestions, and comments made by the public during the process of consultations on the draft of a master plan. This is not only discouraging for participants who spent their valuable time and energy in the hope of bringing about changes in the nature of master plan policies, it is equally disempowering for people as well as government planners, as many on the other side may be seeking similar policy changes. Empowerment is the change in the interests of the poor, discriminated, excluded and the marginalized. Planning must do everything in its power to bring about that change.

REFERENCES


Census of India (2001) Data highlights, Migration Tables (D1, D1 (Appendix), D2, D3 Tables), Director of Census Operations, Delhi.


