

# PREVENTING URBAN VILLAGES FROM TRANSITIONING INTO SLUMS

Project Progress Report 2/3

Best Practices, Research Planning and Onground  
Study Report

*December 2020*





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# 1. Introduction

This document serves as **Best Practices, Research Planning and On-ground Study report** of the project 'Preventing Urban Villages from Transitioning into Slums', which is led by WRI India with the support of the Ford Foundation. Building on from the Existing Situation Analysis and Issue Identification covered in the previous report, this document covers the following project stages and related activities (Annexure 1):

- **Benchmarking Good Practices:** Documentation of international and national case studies for best practices
- **Research Planning:** Formulation of study intent, research methodology and criteria for site selection for on-ground study
- **On-ground Study and Community Workshops:** Detailed summaries of on-ground study and findings from stakeholder engagement and community workshops in urban villages in National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT Delhi)

The project is contextualized against the current state of the discourse on urban villages in India in the face of rapid urban transformation and resultant pressures. The project maintains a focus on urban villages in the National Capital Territory of Delhi that continue to undergo change as Delhi's metropolitan region continues to expand. Village settlements that were once vibrant and self-sustaining often face a bleak and uncertain future when they transition into urban peripheries, following the loss of traditional occupations and farmlands. For villages within inner city regions, rapid change often means further densification and unregulated development. WRI India's research seeks to better understand and thereby impact this transition in ways that ensure more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

## 2. Acknowledgments

WRI India is grateful to the Ford Foundation for its generous grant and continued support to make this project a reality. The project commenced on 1 December 2018, and will conclude by 31 December 2020, a period of 24 months.

## 3. Project Team

This report has been prepared by the following team members at the WRI India Ross Center for Sustainable Cities:

- Rejeet Mathews, Director, Urban Development- Cities Program, WRI India helmed the project and overall implementation
- Neha Lal, Senior Research Analyst, WRI India anchored the project and research study

Additional support was provided by members mentioned below:

- Tintu Sebastian and Rohit Khandelwal provided case study inputs
- Prayash Giria and Akanksha Gupta provided inputs and support to the on-ground Village Design Charrettes
- Anil Achar designed illustrations and supported development of visual aids for the Village Design Charrettes



Strategic guidance was provided by Madhav Pai, the India Director for WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities and O P Agarwal, the CEO of WRI India.

## 4. Benchmarking Good Practices

### 4.1 INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES ON BEST PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN VILLAGES – CHINA AND VIETNAM

This section documents two international case examples featuring emergence of and development responses towards urban villages across different parts of the world. Using the case studies of China and Vietnam allows for understanding how urban villages were dealt with in countries located at different points within the trajectory of urbanization and spatial transformation. With distinct approaches to land management and urban development, these international case studies provide a means to capture challenges and best practices from a global perspective.

#### Urban Renewal as Economic Stimulus: Land (Re)development and the Fate of Urban Villages in China

China has close to 813 million people residing in its urban areas (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2018) with population rates escalating at a rapid pace. Urban villages dot the landscape of these rapidly urbanizing regions, often becoming pockets of low- cost migrant housing and informal economies. Given the high value of land in urban metropolises in China, urban villages or “*chengzhongcun*” (‘villages in the city’) are being considered a potential site for land redevelopment through a demolish- and-rebuild approach. Municipal governments across many cities in China are opting for eviction and subsequent demolition of existing village settlements to develop large scale housing and commercial projects. This approach significantly alters the present and future of urban villages and its resident populations.

Given China’s unique history of urban development, this case study looks at the emergence and present scenario of urban villages in Chinese metropolises. The following sections provide a contextual background on urban growth and related changes in land and housing in China. Subsequent sections elaborate on examples of innovative responses which have diverted from the demolish- and- redevelop approach to accommodate the identity and vibrancy of existing settlements.

#### Contextual Background

China depended on an agricultural economy and remained predominantly rural as late as the 1970s. As people lived in the countryside and engaged in agriculture in a societal context that valued self-sufficiency, the role of cities and towns as marketplaces was not strongly established (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). However with the initiation of economic reforms in the late 1970s, there was a reversal in China’s perspective of its urban centers, which ultimately aided the country to become the world’s second largest economy by 2011 (Zhao, et al. 2014). The rate of urbanization in China accelerated from 17.9% in 1978 to 39.1% in 2002 (Song and Zenou 2011). Between 1979 and 2008, the urban population increased nearly four times the rate of the pre-reform era (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). In 2018, close to 813 million people resided in China’s urban areas (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2018) and this number is expected to reach 1091 million by 2050 (United Nations 2018).

During the post reform period (after 1978), cities expanded physically and many rural villages adjoining the cities were annexed into municipal limits. In most cases, city governments acquired only the farm land from the rural communities to avoid paying compensation to evicted communities for their housing

and relocation (Song and Zenou 2011). Compensation for the residential settlements and other rural properties were higher than costs of acquiring the farmland and hence the settlements were left intact during the acquisition process under urban expansion (World Bank 2014). While the city government facilitated development of the farmlands into factories and other urban facilities, residual rural settlement of the native farmers became islands- cut off from emerging landscape surrounding it. These rural areas engulfed within the cities became urban villages, also popularly known as “*chengzhongcun*” in Chinese which means villages in the city (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman 2010) (Zhan 2018).

Thousands of ‘urban villages’ have proliferated as new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and metropolises emerge across China (Zhan 2018). In 2000, Shenzhen had 241 urban villages spread over a land area of approximately 43.9 sq.km. with 24% of its population residing in these urban villages (Song and Zenou 2011). This figure has escalated dramatically over the last two decades. The 320 city villages of Shenzhen are touted to house close to 7 million residents (Shenzhen News Network 2016). In Guangzhou, more than 1 million rural migrants are currently living in over 200 urban villages and Beijing has more than 100 urban villages in and around the city which accommodate roughly 4 million rural migrants (Zhan 2018). While urban villages have emerged as hot spots of low-income housing options for working class families and migrants, there exists a larger history to the story of land use and rights. The emergence of urban villages as a spatial form and its resident population is closely linked to policy reform and subsequent urban transitions abound in cities across China.

### **Growing urban orientations**

With a strong centralized control, policy initiatives and reforms have had a significant influence on the growth trajectory in China. Between 1949 and 1978, China witnessed only 4.6 percent increase in the level of urbanization, translating into an overall increase of 114 million in the urban population over 29 years (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Most of the increase in urban population happened in the first decade after 1949 when the country prepared its first five year plan that involved the launch of industrial and military modernization projects (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Post this decade up till 1978, political movements disrupted domestic production and construction, thereby slowing down economic development especially in cities.

China’s urbanization took off after the initiation of economic reforms in 1978, which reoriented the country as a market-oriented economy. In the following decades, there was increase in the number of cities, increase in average city size as well as in the urban built- up area. In the post –reform period between 1981 and 1999, annual expansion of urban built-up area was around 800 square kilometers (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Overall, there was a fivefold expansion of built up area between 1981 and 2001. According to Yeh, Xu and Liu, China’s post reform urbanization was broadly divided into three domains- rural urbanization driven by industrialization (1978–1987); urbanization driven by land reform (1988–2000); and urbanization driven by the service industry (from 2001 onwards) (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011):

- **Rural urbanization driven by industrialization (1978 to 1987):** During the period between 1978 and 1987, farmer communities initiated the rural reform with the intention of dividing the communally owned farmlands into individual plots (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). This movement resulted in the estab-

<sup>1</sup> *The hukou system which is China’s household registration system, distinguishes between rural and urban citizens and imposes restrictions on rural residents’ mobility to settle in urban areas and gain access to urban social security and public service. Citizens with urban hukou were given a social security system, whereas the rural population had the land which guaranteed their basic livelihood.*

lishment of the Household Responsibility System (HRS) in 1978 and relaxation in the agricultural hukou system that controlled the movement of rural population.<sup>1</sup> Regulation on Hukou Registration of the People's Republic of China promulgated in 1958 was designed mainly to restrict migration from rural to urban areas and later on became a tool of separating urban and rural areas (Juwei 2010). HRS allowed individual households to take full charge of production on their allocated land plots which allowed them to retain grain surpluses which were earlier restricted under the collective system. According to this system, farmlands that nominally remain under collective ownership could be contracted to individual households for a lease period of 30 years (World Bank 2014). Consequently, by 1983 all the arable land was allocated to rural households. The industrialization of rural areas was realized through state promotion of township and village enterprises (TVEs). The collective force of these processes resulted in industrialization of rural areas leading to influx of migrants into rural areas who found work in these rural industries. This migration to rural regions induced an urban character of heterogeneity and mixing within rural areas (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011).

- **Urbanization driven by land reforms and housing reforms (1988 to 2000):** In the pre-reform era, there was no privately owned land in China and land transactions were banned. Since all lands were publicly owned, the free allocation system could not be challenged. However post the economic reforms initiated in late 1970s and introduction of privately owned enterprises, free allocation of land was no longer appropriate (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Free land use came to an end in 1988, through an amendment in the constitution which made the transactions of urban land lawful. This was a significant urban land use reform which introduced land taxation, requiring all urban land users to pay a land-use tax. It also separated land use rights from land ownership. Land thus became a critical resource for revenue generation. With the establishment of Land Administration Law in 1986, power in land management from various ministries and other units were shifted to the local government (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). When the country faced shortage in housing and had budget constraints to construct housing stocks, gradual reforms in the housing sector were initiated in the late 1980s. This triggered the process of housing commercialization as the work-units started to sell the existing housing units. The direct housing distribution by work-unit employers came to an end, when multiple supply system was established, including state-supported affordable or low-cost commercial housing, and high-standard commodity housing (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Land and housing reforms stimulated the urban economy and led to the formation of a booming real-estate market.
- **Urbanization driven by service sector (2001-present):** The changes from 1970s-90s consequently influenced workforce compositions, industrial diversification and urban economic growth. Service sector grew rapidly in China after the central government proposed strategies to facilitate its development in order to give cities a competitive edge and new growth impetus. It boosted the country's economy and contributed about 40 percent of the GDP during the period from 1995 to 2005.

The different stages of China's urbanization and consequent growth of urban areas, cities and its populations required a simultaneous legal response. In China, the legal landscape and land administration differed significantly in urban and rural contexts. As a result, the governance of land and urban planning was largely influenced by these differences. Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China defined ownership of land, rights to the use of land and provisions for expropriation of land for public purposes by the state government. According to article 8 of this law, all the urban lands in the cities are state owned and land in the rural and suburban areas are owned by peasant collectives, except for state-owned land parcels which were demarcated as such (China.org.cn 2011).



While the law permitted institutional and individual holding of use rights to such land, the sovereignty of land remained either in the hand of the state or rural collectives (Chan 2003) (World Bank 2014). On rural land, regulations favored agriculture use and development was strictly constrained to three major types namely residential plots for farmers, land used for public facilities and land used for township or village enterprises (Huang, et al. 2017). Large scale development such as real estate development and factory buildings were illegal on rural land, except in case that parcel was state-owned land (Huang, et al. 2017). This provision in the law protected the rural collectives and thus did not deter them from constructing additional units above their existing residential houses.

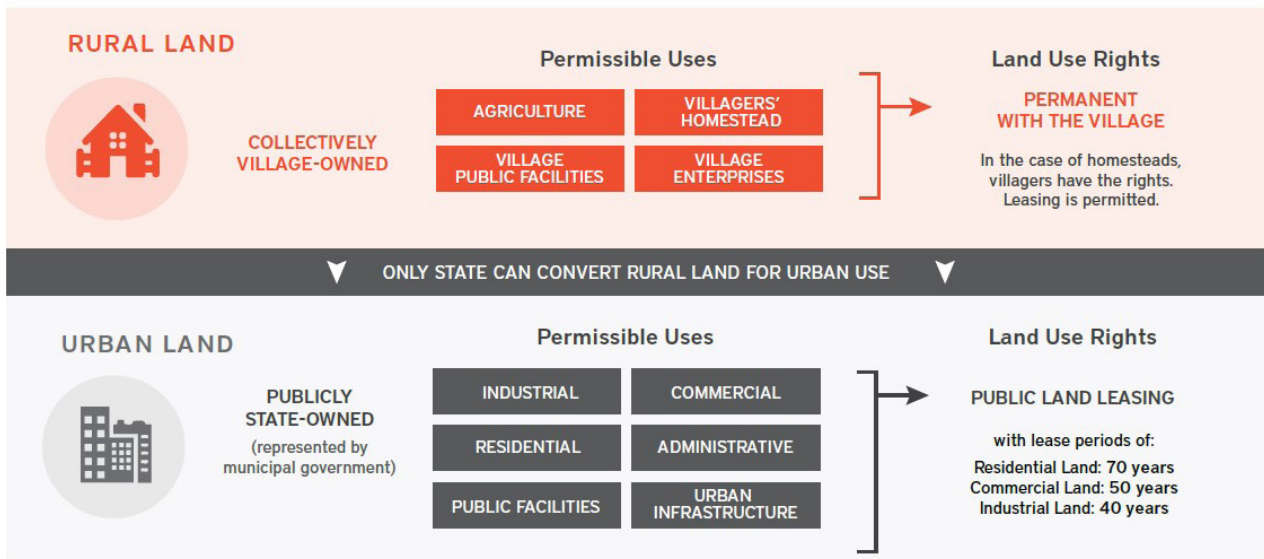


Image. 1 Land use and Property Rights in China (Sun and Liu 2015)

For the urban areas, the Interim Regulations on Allocation and Granting of Urban State-Owned Land Use Rights of 1990 defined urban land rights as-(a) unmarketable allocated rights available for public use and; (b) marketable granted private use rights for a term of 70 years (World Bank 2014). It was these urban regulations which laid the foundations for the development of China's urban land markets. The amount of urban land required for each city was annually approved by the Ministry of Land Resources. Municipal government then allocated land use according to various purposes, leaving about 30% for residential development (Sun and Liu 2015). As a result of limited supply of residential land in the major cities, the price of residential land shot up to 15 times higher than the price of industrial land (Sun and Liu 2015).

With the economic reforms, urban planning agendas to carry out socialist development were largely abandoned post 1978 (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Subsequently, a comprehensive approach to urban planning that included defining size, economic orientation and structure of a city was introduced through a two tier planning system in late 1970s - a master plan for city/region and a detailed plan with municipalities being made in-charge of vital urban planning functions. However, this plan system failed to address the issues of the urban villages which were administratively treated as rural. The dual tenure system, the household registration system (hukou system) and the land acquisition strategies adopted by the Chinese State together contributed to the emergence of the urban villages (Song and Zenou 2011) (Hao 2012). The rural collective landownership rights allowed the native farmers to construct housing projects in their settlement areas.

Urban villages in China have emerged as dense pockets of rental housing within the larger city. Because of the dual landownership system in China, its administrative functioning in rural areas and urban areas are structured differently. In the rural areas, it is collective economic organizations of the village or villagers committee that operate and manage all the land owned by peasant collectives of a village. As a result, the design and construction of buildings and building plans in villages do not require municipal approvals, unlike urban lands which are state owned and can only be used after registering with people's government above the county level (China.org.cn 2011). Thus, related domains of land management, ownership patterns, legal and planning provisions, and migration patterns have shaped the urban environment within which urban villages have initially developed. Today they are increasingly facing threats of eviction and possible redevelopment by state authorities for land value optimization.

### **Current scenario and the fate of urban villages in China**

With the influx of rural migrants into cities after the economic reforms, there was a demand for accessible and affordable housing units in urban areas. Most of the rural migrants did not have an urban household registration and hence were denied access to public housing provided by the government authorities. Native farmers in rapidly urbanizing villages began to substitute their falling agricultural incomes with rental incomes by building rental accommodation for incoming migrants on lands where they had rights to build. By virtue of their affordability and accessibility to education hubs and jobs in nearby city centers, urban villages met the low-cost housing demands for rural migrants.

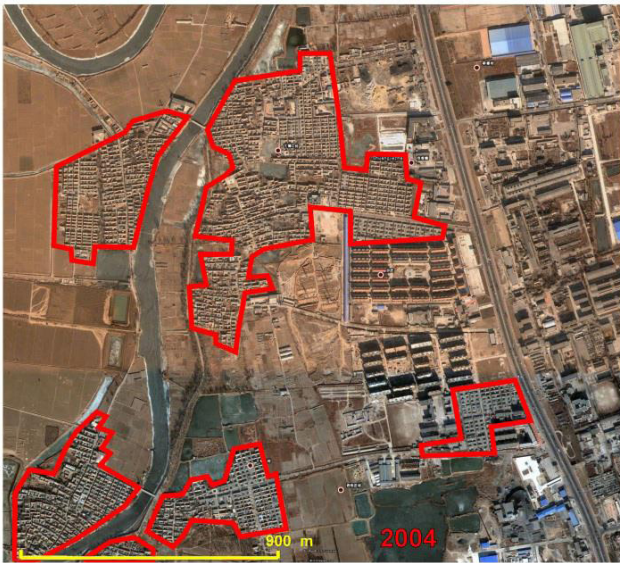
Much like the villages that were threaded through the core areas, pre-existing villages on the peripheries also underwent considerable socio-spatial transformation as a consequence of outward de-concentration of urban core areas (Leaf 2002). The first major change was the acquisition of existing farmlands for urban development. As mentioned previously, villages which were affected by the growing urban sprawl were still administratively recognized as rural; thus landownership remained under rural collectives. This allowed the native farmers to build rental units without seeking permission to build. Rural migrants without a local hukou system who could not access or afford any government supported housing programs often found shelter in these urban villages (Zhan 2018).

The bulk of low-income housing supply provided was outside the formally established government programs in the form of collective housing (such as dormitories provided by employers), private rental units in urban villages or in the city peripheries (World Bank 2014). Apart from housing facilities, the urban villages also provided opportunities for running informal services such as retail stores, food markets and low-cost personal services (Hao 2012). Thus in addition to low cost unregulated housing markets, urban villages became centers of informal economies that could thrive under strict market regulations (World Bank 2014). This often became bedrock for municipal agencies to portray urban villages as centers of poverty, petty crime and prostitution (Schenzen News Network 2016). Their diverse social composition was considered a root of conflict and violent crime, often framed by media and municipal authorities as problem areas for local authorities (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011).

The developments in the urban villages were neither regulated by any centralized urban planning authority because of the rural status nor incorporated within the urban master plans (Hao 2012). Due to this ambiguous nature, many of the urban villages continued to be poorly maintained, with narrow pathways between rows of terraced buildings and overly dense built environments lacking appropriate development control regulations (Yeh, Xu and Liu 2011). Being outside the purview of city governments, the city administrators also had little incentive to extend urban infrastructure and public services to urban village areas.



Area occupied by villages in 2004



Area of demolished villages in 2011 replaced by high rise apartments blocks

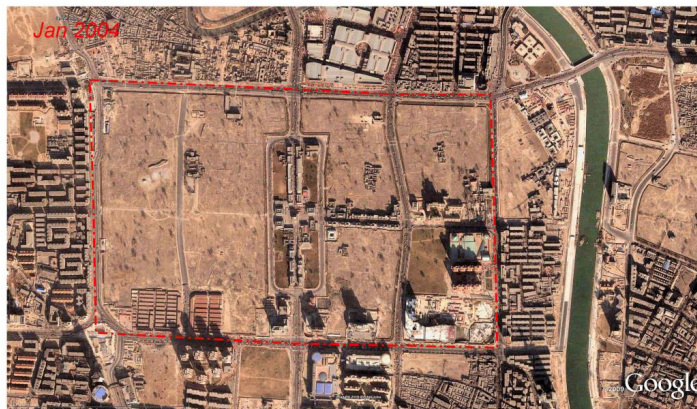
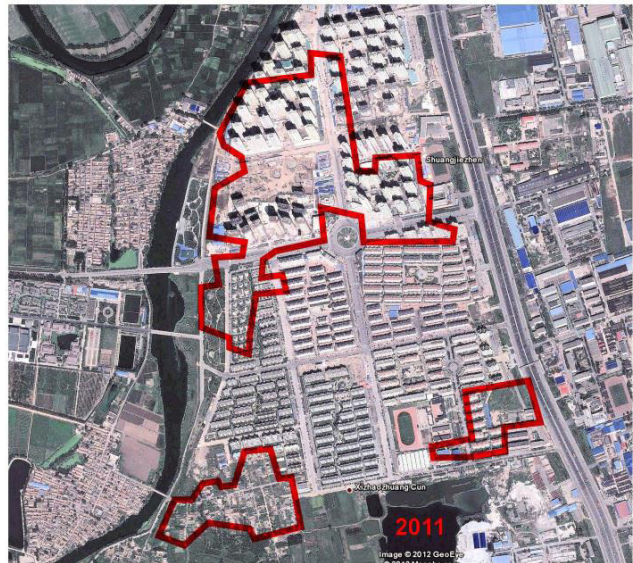


Image. 2 (above) Redevelopment of land parcels across North of the third ring road in Tianjin where urban villages were razed to make room for high rise (Bertaud 2012); (below) Large swathes of land have been cleared and redeveloped across 4 districts in Tianjin's city center (Xi Bei Jiao, Dong Bei Jiao, Dong Nan Jiao, Xi Nan Jiao) (Bertaud 2012)



With rising demands for increasing planned residential and commercial stock, municipal governments have sought to redevelop existing pockets like urban villages to optimize its land value. Alain Bertaud argues that from the “late 1980s to mid-2000s, state authorities and municipal governments have often taken an approach of large-scale demolition and relocation of existing village neighborhoods to feed this demand” (Bertaud 2012) as a result of which millions of residents have been displaced and/or re-located.

Bertaud elaborates that, “In a typical project, the local government relocate current inhabitants, clear the land and allocate or auction the now vacant land to a developer that can be a private company or a state own enterprise. There is a prior agreement over what can be built very similar to a building permit process. However, the developer, whether public or private can propose a project that differs markedly from the master plan and zoning plan. Because, clearing already built land is expensive and because there is an economy of scale in doing so, developers who bid for the land must be large and well capitalized enterprises. These large enterprises financing big scale projects tend to build large mega structures” (Bertaud 2012). Bertaud states the example of Tianjin to illustrate how the ancient walled city with an area of 200 hectare populated with 106,000 people residing in old courtyard houses and running street shops and informal economies was ‘cleared’ in 2004. With the residents relocated to Tianjin’s peripheries, the cleared land in the middle of the city was used to build large high-rise apartment buildings. He points out that, “a massive redesign of the historical part of Tianjin illustrates the power of the local government in managing urban land use, even when it involves displacing more than 100,000 people in the process. The project resulted in a complete transformation of the urban landscape from a dense fabric of small individual lots served by pedestrianised streets to large estates of ‘cite radieuse’ like skyscrapers. The original land use rights fragmented between about 25,000 households in 2000 has been consolidated into about 16 lots of about 12 hectares each auctioned to developers” (Bertaud 2012).

Like Tianjin, land use conversion quotas in urban areas which capped the amount of arable land that could be converted annually and the centralized grip over land use has allowed city governments to develop an approach that favors redevelopment which invariably involves large scale evictions and demolition of existing settlements ( The Atlantic 2012). The removal of traditional courtyard- based alleyways or hutongs in the preparation of 2008 Olympics hosted in Beijing had generated international criticism as it was said to displace more than 5,00,000 residents- a conservative estimation according to some scholars (Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions 2008). Despite this hardline of displacement and redevelopment towards urban villages, a few cases of adopting innovative approaches for inclusive development have also emerged that opted for a innovative or regenerative approach towards urban villages. Some of these are captured in the following section.

## **Adopting Innovative Approaches for Upgradation and Regeneration of Urban Villages in China**

This section encapsulates some innovative approaches adopted for integrated development, upgradation or redevelopment for select urban villages in China which could provide a way forward for learnings for other contexts. Most of these initiatives were implemented under specific projects or schemes led by provincial governments:

### **1. Beijing redevelopment project:**

Reports estimate that over 1,700 urban villages existed in Beijing in 2010 spread across 200 acres of land, housing close to 9.2 million registered residents and over 300,000 migrant workers. In many of

these urban villages, migrants outnumbered residents by 10:1 (Zhen 2019). Beijing municipal government initiated a comprehensive redevelopment and rural-urban integration pilot program in 2010 along with associated policy reforms. As a part of this initiative, 50 urban villages were chosen for redevelopment and integration into the service infrastructure network along with reforms in collective property rights, consolidation of land markets and integration of rural-urban social security system. Village residents were granted urban status along with reform of rural collective property arrangements. In the conventional approach of government-led expropriation and conversion of rural land for urban development projects, just the amount of land needed to fund the redevelopment project is expropriated and converted. However, in the case of this pilot project, it allowed rural residents to finance their transition to urban citizenship (World Bank 2014). Total redevelopment cost thus included cost of demolishing old residential areas and construction of resettlement units, compensation payments and costs associated with hukou conversion and access to urban social security system.

Vertical redevelopment of urban villages allowed for higher land use efficiencies as the residential areas were modernized, concentrated and integrated into the urban infrastructure network. New planning standards for the pilot villages were devised which included 50 square meters of floor space per person for residential units. Pilot villages which had excess rural construction land were divided into reserve land (for conversion and sale for revenue generation), public infrastructure development land, and land for future economic use by rural collective organizations. In contrast, villages within the pilot with insufficient land stocks were oriented towards solutions offered by planning mechanisms such as land pooling.

Ownership rights to the rural assets remained with the residents even as they received urban resident status. Additionally, they were able to retain their status as members of collective organizations and their rights to collective land and other collective assets. The program also permitted the rural collective organizations to trade construction land in the urban land markets within the provisions outlined by the master plan (World Bank 2014) (Zhen 2019). The program created the possibility of converting parcels deemed as illegal property into legally recognized commercial or industrial properties owned by local collective business organizations. Further, it allowed enrollment of residents into urban social security system which is based on voluntary contributions and does not link compensation payments with the enrollment. Hence entry into the urban social security system depends on the employment and income opportunities of residents.

The initiative also lacked in some domains. While the redevelopment program targeted at improving the living condition of the native rural residents, the migrants who constituted a significant proportion of the urban villages were left out in the program owing to its focus on land holders and owners. It failed to take into account the issues of the migrant residents and making room for them to take benefits of the redevelopment programs (World Bank 2014).

## **2.Nantou Old Town Renewal under Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism Architecture in Shenzhen:**

Nantou Old Town, a historic walled settlement is one of Shenzhen's most iconic urban villages reflecting the hybrid and fragile co-existence of Shenzhen's past and the present. From 331 AD, Nantou served as a regional administration center for the Jin Dynasty, which extended across the Pearl River Delta to include Hong Kong, Macau, Dongguan and Zhuhai (URBANUS 2017). Steeped in this historical legacy along with currently being witness to metropolitan development and ongoing densification within Shenzhen, the ancient town has transformed into a highly dense traditional settlement that continues to stand out from the rest of the city with its diverse spectrum of spatial form and social composition.



In 2002, it was designated as a historical city (Wright 2018). Nantou Old Town was chosen as a site of urban regeneration between December 2017 and March 2018 under Urbanist/Architecture Bi-City Biennale 2017 (henceforth UABB) in Shenzhen. The Biennale's thematic intent of "Cities, Grow in Difference," aimed for regenerative surgery for the growing imbalance between urban and rural, rich and poor, formal and informal, as well as the need for more integrated cities where different groups of people can coexist (Hertog 2018) (Wright 2018).



*Image. 3 (top left) Entrance of Nantou Old Town; (top right) View of settlement in Nantou urban village against the skyscrapers of Shenzhen; (middle row) Nantou Old Village before the biennale's urban renovation project; Refurbished common areas such as the 'Baode Square' were made available for public use in Nantou Old Town (URBANUS 2017)*



Due to its distinctive urban form, Nantou Old town settlement was seen as a hotbed of rising violence, drug crimes and prostitution by local municipal authorities who sought to justify the need for urban renewal and consequent demolition of the old town deeming it unfit for Shenzhen's future plans in its present form. UABB's curators saw an opportunity to conserve the heterogeneous urban fabric of the settlement, one of the few "remaining sanctuaries for low-income groups in inner city Shenzhen, which continued to function as spaces for experimentation and as repositories of local collective memory in a fast-changing metropolis" (Hertog 2018). The biennale's curators and exhibitors worked in close cooperation with the residents and villagers of Nantou Old Town "to realize modest changes that improve the community's quality of life while respecting its history and vitality" (Wright 2018) by improving street furniture (such as installing roadside benches and communal laundry rails), focusing on providing new public space to the community where they could gather and hold events as well as offering knowledge about incremental technological solutions that could aid the villagers in improve their own houses. The Biennale utilized the nature and urban form present within the old settlement such as the presence of abandoned factories and warehouses as resources to upcycle and create common access spaces where they could display modular forms of incremental building and regenerative practices through the cooperation of village residents (Wright 2018).

### **3. Rural village improvement program in Jiaungsu:**

Jiangsu located near Shanghai's coast is one of the most densely populated and economically advanced provinces in China with an urbanization level of 61.9%, 10.6 percentage points higher than the national average (Wu and Zhou 2013). The provincial government of Jiangsu announced the initiative 'The Beautiful City and Country Action Plan' in 2011 for advancing urban-rural integration in Jiangsu through improving approximately 198,000 villages (Wu and Zhou 2013).

Part of the 'Beautiful China' policy vision for improved urban-rural integration, it was based on redevelopment approach that focused on incrementally upgrading rural villages rather than demolishing them completely. The program in Jiangsu depended on creating institutional synergy and vision within the governance and administrative authorities by "exploring and utilizing their technical capacities...[.]... to initiate a province-wide cooperation between the planning, design and construction divisions and research organizations to investigate the rural environment and frame strategies to promote the characteristics of villages in Jiangsu" (Wu and Zhou 2013). This included devising and distributing technical guidelines through Rural Village Improvement Technical Guidance module and guidance videos across villages in Jiangsu as well as providing technical training for around 10,000 managers across verticals to build local capacity.

Key features that made the program stand apart was that it focused on voluntary participation and respect for the preferences and practices of rural residents. The program took an approach that was graded and contextually suitable for different kinds and scales of villages. It emphasized on letting cultural practices dictate building redevelopment without disturbing existing landscape features and sites of cultural heritage. It also created a long term and sustainable financing mechanism based on a combination of sources to ensure sustained upkeep and maintenance long after the redevelopment had taken place. The central tenet for the improvement program remained enabling incremental changes and gradual improvement (Wu and Zhou 2013). The program was focused on improving the living conditions of the village residents by addressing the needs identified by residents rather than planners- including services like waste collection, water course maintenance and sanitation services, transport access, everyday management of public facilities and greening the living environment (China.org.cn 2011).

#### **4. 'Three Old Renewal' scheme in Guangdong:**

Guangdong is the most populated provinces of China owing to the huge influx of migrant labor from rural areas who often reside in urban villages commonly located in the peripheries or in city centre. Located close to Hong Kong, Guangdong had a flourishing economy along with a high rate of in-migration due to its manufacturing industry base. The Three Old Renewal scheme was initiated in 2000 by the provincial government to facilitate urban regeneration jointly led by the private players and the resident communities, of which urban villages came to be primary beneficiaries. The scheme had two innovative modes of operation- first, it focused on devising a solid channel of financial support for the project and second, it avoided property rights conflicts by emphasizing a local arrangement based on redistribution of benefits generated from the renewal projects amongst participating entities rather than privatizing properties and untying use rights from occupants.

The scheme allowed village committees to negotiate directly with private developers in order to carry out the village renewal. However, supervision of this negotiation and redevelopment process by the local government ensured that private companies do not exploit rural villagers (China.org.cn 2011). Due to the success of its urban renewal projects and effective land utilization through its implementation, the scheme has offered a blueprint being used by other part of Peral River Delta region in China which is one of the most prized real estate in the country due to its proximity to business centers. Statistics from Department of Land and Resource of Guangdong Province indicate that renewals under the schemes have effected change in over 600km<sup>2</sup> urban and rural built-up area by 2013, which stands at 3.5 times of the total built-up area in Hongkong alone (Li and Huang 2013).

Many metropolises in China have adopted demolish and build approach to redevelop pockets of dense urban villages into sanitized and planned housing and commercial spaces that optimize land value. However, a snapshot of project-based initiatives mentioned above highlight cases where community-built environments have been rejuvenated in order to accommodate needs of the residents and existing settlements within the larger city landscape. However, these innovative projects may remain exceptions to the larger norm of erasure and redevelopment which has been prevalent across cities like Beijing and Tianjin, where traditional settlements and urban villages have been cleared and demolished especially from the urban cores. Unlike China, Vietnam presents a different approach to integrate self-built informal settlements and rural pockets into the urban landscape.

#### **Building diverse urban fabrics by collapsing urban-rural divides in Vietnam**

With an estimated population of 97 million in 2018 and an expected rise to 120 million by 2050 (World Bank 2019), Vietnam is currently one of the fast growing economies in East Asia. Due to multiple succession conflicts and subsequent government policies that limited urban investment and migration, Vietnam was considered a late urbanizing economy with only 30% of the total population living in urban areas in 2013 (UN-Habitat 2014). But this trend has been undergoing dramatic change over the last few years. Vietnam's Ministry of Construction predicted the "urban population will account for 45 percent of the national total by 2020 (including unregistered migrants)" (UN-Habitat 2014).

Despite the rising population across cities in Vietnam, urban growth has largely been concentrated in a few cities. Out of the five major cities in Vietnam, namely Ho Chi Minh City (henceforth HCMC), Hanoi, Hai Phong, Can Thong and Da Nang, HCMC and Hanoi alone account for "33.8 percent of the total urban population" (World Bank 2015). In addition, over "50 percent of urban land in the country as well as 75 percent of new urban spatial growth lies within the city boundaries of these two cities"

(World Bank 2015). These urban growth trends do not merely point to lopsided patterns of demographic change but also indicate a rapidly rising demand for lands, public services and low cost, affordable housing concentrated in cities like HCMC and Hanoi. Increasing suburbanization as well as densification within city boundaries is producing intense urban-rural encounters.

Given this trajectory of change, this second case study tracks urban growth and associated governance measures in Vietnam to examine how recent yet rapid urban growth has resulted in the emergence of a heterogeneous urban form in Vietnamese cities like Hanoi and HCMC. In addition, this case study also covers how state has been attempting to create an inclusive approach towards self-built housing in densifying city pockets and urban villages to deal with the challenges of urbanization.

### **Contextual Background**

Spanning over 3,10,070 sq. km, Vietnam is host to a predominantly low lying topography, with flat deltas in the south (the Mekong River Delta) and the north (the Red River Delta) which are its agricultural bases, mountainous central highlands and a formidable 3400km long coastline. The nation has undergone a long period of political turmoil and foreign conquests from the Chinese incursions, to being part of the French Indochina until the Japanese military invasions in 1941. Vietnam was war ridden from mid 1950s until the fall of the southern army against the Northern Vietnamese Army (NVA) and the National liberation forces under Ho Chi Minh, when it was unified as the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in 1976. This had a major impact on the urban growth patterns and land governance in Vietnamese cities.

While the current urban population is pegged at 97 million, this figure is considered to be a conservative draw as the high rates of rural-to-urban migration and restrictions posed by the national citizen registration system (Ho Khau) have led to under reporting of people currently residing and/or working in cities.<sup>2</sup> According to UN-Habitat's Housing sector profile for Vietnam, "urban population (official and unofficial) is set to increase rapidly over the next 10 to 25 years - almost doubling by 2020...[..]..where about one million people will be added annually to Vietnam's urban areas" (UN-Habitat 2014). But this growth and population implosion has remained spatially restricted to a few cities (World Bank 2015).

As Vietnamese cities have expanded by absorbing rural villages in their periphery and converting sub-urban rural for urban use, densification has not merely impacted rural landscapes and livelihood patterns but also shaped the emerging urban form. In 2019 alone, urban land increased from 2,200 square kilometer in 2000 to 2,900 square kilometers across the country (Labbe 2011). However, expansion in urbanisable areas has not always led to disintegration of rural settlements. Rapid urban growth in Vietnamese cities has created close urban-rural interfaces. In cities such as Hanoi and HCMC, the urban built fabric has developed as a mosaic of "former rural villages, spontaneous neighborhoods, and planned redevelopment zones" (Labbe 2011), which continues to grow in conjunction with erstwhile rural settlements rather than erasing them completely.

Urban villages with rural lineages and street networks have today devolved into small alleyways around which dense neighborhoods are arranged. Urban studies scholars Marie Gibert and Pham Thái So'n estimate that this dense urban network of alleyways still houses about 85% of city dwellers in HCMC and 88% in Hanoi (Gibert and Son 2016). Noting the changing nature of cities like Hanoi and HCMC

<sup>2</sup> Danielle Labbe notes that for census purpose, the Vietnamese government defines an urban place as a city, town, or district with 2,000 or more inhabitants. The urban population thus only includes individuals officially registered in urban places. This definition therefore excludes many rural migrants permanently or temporarily living in urban areas (Labbe 2011).

which are transitioning from low, dense and organic cities into vertically driven metropolises, they argue that “newly urbanized areas are flourishing at the edges (khu đô thị mới)” as the city expands while inner city regions boast of a heterogeneous built fabric. Cities like HCMC and Hanoi stand as thriving examples of a mixed urban landscape where even as “iconic new urban projects and glittering business districts emerge...everyday city production still takes place in the interior of alleyway neighborhoods” (Gibert and Son 2016). The Vietnamese state continues to encourage integration through planning and policy measures as rural-urban encounters intensify and inner-city villages grow denser rather than opt for an erasure-demolish-redevelop approach. This is reflected in their stance to secure self-built and organically grown settlements in order to fulfill the affordable housing gaps that continue to plague Vietnam’s urban centers.

### **Policy changes, Migration and Urban Growth**

Vietnam had a strong lineage of centralized command up until the mid-1980s when it transitioned into a market oriented socialist economy under the Doi Moi program. In Vietnam, much of the structural transformations and urbanization have been a result of these political and economic reforms which restructured market economics of and created vitals shifts in the land use, ownership and governance of the housing sector. Three distinct phases can be identified in Vietnam’s urbanization history: 1975–1986; 1986–1993; and 1993-present (Anh, et al. 2012).

From the reunification in 1975 till mid-1980s, urbanization levels remain stagnant and were largely dependent on natural increase. Migration and mobility were controlled by the *Ho Khau system*<sup>3</sup> that tied a person to their place of birth or homeland, which in the case of Vietnam was predominantly rural for most citizens. The centralized command economy restricted autonomy of the local government as well as private investment as the state maintained a strict control over urban planning, land management and governance. In making an institutional transition from central control to a socialist-oriented market economy, the 1986 Doi Moi reforms allowed for opening the market to attract private capital, initiate administrative decentralization as well as lift significant restrictions imposed by the *Ho khau system* that curtailed migration. Till 1986 no explicit national level policies had been formulated to govern land markets and respond to urbanization. The Doi Moi program was the first step towards marketization and commodification of land. Consequently, economic reforms necessitated upgradation of legal landscape and regulation norms for emerging land markets (Nguyen, Duan and Liu 2018). Thus, the period from 1986 to 1993 saw a significant economic and urban transition.

With the promulgation of the 1993 Land Law, the third phase of Vietnam’s urban growth began as significant relaxation of migration barriers increased migration rates from rural to urban centers within Vietnam and initiatives towards defining land use rights fueled urban expansion and commodification of land use. Nguyen Tuah Ahn et al note that according to Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS), there was a six-fold increase in seasonal migration between 1993-1998 with a significantly

<sup>3</sup> *Ho khau* coupled a citizen’s place of residence with access to social goods and services from education to health and food security, thereby creating impediments for people for leaving their place of registration and maintaining a strict control over a citizen’s mobility. Revised post 2007, the *ho khau* system was codified into four registration categories (Anh, et al. 2012):

- *KT1*: a person registered in the district where he/she resides;
- *KT2*: a person not registered in the district where he/she resides, but registered in another district of the same province/city;
- *KT3*: a person from another province/city who has temporary registration in their place of destination for a period of one year, after which the *KT3* registration has to be re-issued. (Since July 2007 the requirement to re-register has been lifted);
- *KT4*: a person from another province/city who has temporary registration in their place of destination for a period of six months, after which the *KT4* registration must be re-issued. (Since July 2007 the requirement to re-register has been lifted)



large proportion of this mobile population heading to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (Anh, et al. 2012). From 1990 to 2008 the average economic growth rate was pegged at 7.4 percent per annum, falling to an average of 6 percent per annum from 2007 to 2013. This economic growth has accompanied with a reduction in poverty levels, from 58 percent in 1993 to 17 percent in 2012 (World Bank 2015).

Under the centrally planned economy in Vietnam, the state had held all rights over use, development and governance of land; thereby restricting private players from transacting in land markets or producing housing supply (UN-Habitat 2014). While state sponsored and built housing for its workers was largely inadequate in satisfying existing demand, severe housing shortages and poor living conditions were further exacerbated with high rates of in-migration to peri-urban regions of HCMC and Hanoi. Following the implementation of the Doi Moi program, the idea of private property rights was introduced, and housing supply began transitioning from solely being a state provided social good to an asset transacted in commodity markets. Legislative policies from 1993 played an important role to this end. The Land Law of 1993 was the first to recognize and define Land use Rights (LURs) in its provisions. LURs were “granted by the state to individuals, family households, and organizations, for regulated uses and time spans, which are commoditized and may be transferred between land users” (Nguyen, Duan and Liu 2018). Absorbing the Doi Moi principles, the 1993 law recognized land use rights but did not carry “concrete provisions on the process and procedures for transacting land use rights” (Tuyen 2010). With the 1993 Land law, the legal system only recognized the private ownership and possession of housing but not land, essentially functioning on a leasehold system with the state as the sole discretionary power in matters of land ownership. The extent of land use rights granted by the state also differed on the geographic location of the land in question i.e. whether you are an urban dweller or a farmer.<sup>4</sup>

The accompanying legal titling program launched by the state in 1994 remained slow and moderately effective. On one hand the 1993 law’s relaxation of the Ho khau period prompted the widespread migration of laborers and migrants to Hanoi and HCMC, the early indications towards commoditization of land use also resulted in a flurry of building activity and illegal transactions with growth of peri-urban areas around major cities. The next key reform came in with the 2003 Land Law that recognized “land as the property of the entire people and subject to the exclusive administration by the state” (Article 19 of the Constitution, 7th session), hence reasserting that the state remained the ultimate owner and decision makers over land use, land supply and land exploitation. Yet what the 2003 land law did was to build further on the 1993 law’s idea of use rights. Its legal provisions allowed for establishing a system of issuing building ownership and land use certificates (BOLUCs) or the ‘Red Book’ and land use rights certificates (LURCs) also called the ‘Pink Paper’. These became the pillars of property rights and eased market transactions for land development and housing. In 2009, the pink paper and the red book were merged into a unified LUR document called Land Use Rights, House and Assets Attached to Land Ownership Certificate (UN-Habitat 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Peasant and city dwellers enjoy a differentiated set of land use rights. Peasants had permanent collective land use rights while city dwellers are only long lease tenants on the land their dwellings occupy. While peasants only possessed the right to rent it to outsiders not part of the collective, the state could retrieve this land after fairly compensating the involved parties. Urban dwellers who are owners of their housing but not the land on which it was built, they could sell the house to other urban citizens at market prices. Due to collective ownership of land, farmers could sell their collective rights without state mediation. However, they enjoyed greater freedom to build on the parcel of land allocated to them by the village collective. Inhabitants of urbanized villages enclaved within the municipal boundaries were still considered to be farmers in terms of land use rights, even though they worked and lived in urban precincts (Bertaud 2012). Hence within urban villages land use rights were collectively held.

The 2003 Construction law and 2006 Real estate law were enacted as mediums to introduce quality control through nationalized building codes and ease the market deficiencies respectively. While the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) remains the apex body for determining land policies and the key regulator of land management bodies, the Ministry of Construction (MOC) came to play a vital role in physical infrastructural planning and housing, at the central level. Yet the power came to rest in another key site. Guided in principle by the central government, the People's Committees at the local level came to hold real time power in executing vital decisions ranging from verifying land-use rights and issuing certificates to fixing annual land values at the city or provincial level. This directly impacted land taxes, conversion fees, leases and compensations. Since the prices are annually determined where the people's committee had the final say on minimum and maximum prices, the process came to fuel speculative trading and make this local authority a prime site for corruption and bribery within the housing sector by developers and individual parties looking to transact their LURs on the market (UN-Habitat 2014). In addition, significant fissures between 'set price' for land determined by the People's Committee at the local level and the 'market price' (which could go up to 10 times higher than the 'set price') created widespread market distortions (World Bank 2011).

Policy re-orientations, migration trends and emergence of urban economies in concentrated centers had an overarching influence on the way urban forms within cities like HCMC and Hanoi were shaped. Urban growth across major Vietnamese cities was catalyzed through expanding urbanisable areas and taking in rural lands within its fold wherever required. For the rural islands around which cities continued to grow, incoming migrants in search of low-cost housing meant indiscriminate growth and potential for developing low income rental economies in urbanizing rural settlements. Response from the state towards population growth and its consequent requirements has thus been a mixed approach of provision, tolerance and encouragement of self-built housing or intermediate provisioning. In such a scenario, urban villages have emerged as key sites of accessing low-cost rental accommodation.

### **Current scenario and impact on urban villages**

Despite legal reforms and establishment of institutional responsibility, land development and urban expansion in Vietnamese cities has been fragmented and the demand for housing in urban centers has not been matched with adequate supply. This has consequently stimulated the development of self-built housing, informal land markets and unplanned conversion of rural land into urban use, especially in urban fringes of Vietnamese cities (UN-Habitat 2014). Self-built housing amounts for a significant part of the housing sector in Vietnamese cities where incrementally built housing settlements currently provide housing to a predominant part of the urban population. According to some estimates, 90% of the buildings in Hanoi have been built without official permission (Quin 2014) or can be categorized as self-built. On a national scale, self-built housing is being pegged at 75-80% of the total housing stock present in urban areas (UN-Habitat 2014).

Rapidly densifying cities in Vietnam have not just seen the growth of informal self-built units but a more foundational change in the nature of the rural-urban interface within and around the city. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment estimated that between 2005 - 2010 around 27,994 hectares of land has been added to the nation's urban residential land- 27.2 % increase in a period in five years (UN-Habitat 2014). Not only have large swathes of agricultural land have been converted into urban use directly impacting rural villages near Hanoi and HCMC, the need for housing around these industrial clusters has also changed the nature and composition of urbanizing villages which are cashing in via creating rental economies for migrants and low-income groups.

In Vietnam, the village has been the fundamental social and self-sufficient unit for centuries. It was traditionally built on the idea of a lineage name and oriented towards its resident community through a set of localized rules and customs (Thin and Gao 2018). As Vietnamese cities have expanded, subsequent land conversions have altered rural landscapes, social composition and livelihood patterns. However, this has not always led to complete disintegration of rural way of life but created a more heterogeneous urban fabric. Collapsing urban - rural divides are simultaneously leading to emergence of integrative approaches in planning and resultantly diverse urban fabrics.



*Image. 4 As a result of the state's approach and urban growth, most neighborhoods in Hanoi's inner city have mixed built form and high FAR (Bertaud 2012)*

In Hanoi, the built form that has emerged as a result of these encounters boasts of erstwhile rural settlements, self-built tenements as planned redevelopment zones threaded together into one urban fabric (Labbe 2011). The urban form of Hanoi's inner city neighborhoods continue to carry a palimpsest of its rural past with alleyway neighborhoods which may be urbanizing but through development “based on the spatial structure of ancient rural villages (làng)” (Gibert and Son 2016). In her ethnographic work, Danielle Labbe looks at once such village on Hanoi's periphery called ‘Hòa Mục’, that literally translates to “village within the city”, a term that is indicative of its physical and social integration in the city, that set in substantial changes within villages households and their livelihoods (Labbe 2011).

While villages located in the inner city changed in terms of their built form given the densification pressures and loss of traditional livelihoods, the fate of peri urban villages faced with urbanization pressures has been relatively different. Peri-urban frontiers of cities like Hanoi have seen considerable land conversion and peasant protests where agricultural land is being converted to urban or mixed use (Kerkvliet 2014) (Labbe 2011) (Binh 2017). Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh observes that, “post 1990s urban developmental strategy has proceeded with largescale expansion and infilling once the rural region was incorporated into the urban administrative unit” (Binh 2017).

Formation of New Urban Areas (NUAs) has been advanced through land conversion and absorption of existing villages in order to establish industrial or commercial zones and housing enclaves in what were



once wet-rice-growing regions. This has been made possible by using the eminent domain logic of the state for reallocating agricultural land to developers. The compensation for many of the households that have lost their lands and livelihood as a result of this peri urban expansion has been through state determined fixed-rate basis. National estimates for land conversion indicate a sizeable number with respect to land conversions wherein, “from 2001 to 2005 the state appropriated 366,400 hectares of agricultural land; by 2010 the total rose to roughly 745,000 hectares, affecting some nine million farming people, or about 10 percent of the country’s population” (Kerkvliet 2014). This trend is more prominent in the big urban centers like Hanoi and HCMC. Binh indicates that between 2000 to 2004, “5,496 hectares of land was converted within Hanoi in order to launch 957 projects which directly impacted the lives and livelihood of 138,291 households, among which 41,000 householders were classified as agricultural” (Binh 2017).

While loss of agricultural land due to peri urban growth is directly impacting livelihoods for rural households, formation of NUAs through land absorption of existing villages and land redevelopment is not entirely assimilationist in nature and is carried forward through weaving together existing settlements and upcoming projects such that “mega projects and skyscrapers coexist with individual townhouses in preserved but densifying villages” (Bertaud 2012). Comparing Vietnam’s approach to China’s redevelopment strategies, Bertaud argues that the former has pushed for the mega projects on housing and commercial enterprises to integrate rather than erase existing village settlements in the new developmental activity and plans by providing increased access, services and community facilities (Bertaud 2012). While the agricultural paddy fields in the urban fringes of Hanoi may have given way to mixed use spaces such as multistoried housing complexes, industrial clusters or commercial enterprises, their village settlements have a higher likelihood of being integrated and serviced with coming up of new development activities (Labbe, 2011). The Vietnamese government has initiated an effort to attract private players to build capital infrastructure and housing in the peri-urban areas of Hanoi through private partnership model in a land-for-infrastructure mechanism, based on the built-transfer (BT) model (Bertaud 2012).

Like its approach of integrating rather than razing down existing cluster of settlements during land redevelopment in peri urban areas, the state has avoided large scale demolitions within inner city areas as well. Lauren Quinn notes that, despite the high prevalence of self-built housing and indiscriminate construction in urban villages, cities like Hanoi have been able to avoid growth of slums by having a relatively favorable regulatory attitude towards self-built, incrementally growing housing (for plot sizes higher than 20 sq. m.) through provision of semi legal status and necessary civic services to them (Quin 2014). Further by allowing owners of land use rights to redevelop their lots, often not larger than 5 meters wide on a depth of 20 meters in inner city areas and servicing self-built informal housing that provides affordable accommodation to a vast majority of lower – middle working class and migrants in the city, the state has generated a sense of security among home owners that they will not be evicted and incentivized them to incrementally invest in their dwelling units to improve their living conditions (Bertaud 2012).

### **Integrating diverse urban forms and upgrading living environments in Vietnam’s urban villages**

This section lays out the current approaches adopted by Vietnamese cities for integrated development and securing self-built housing in densifying pockets as urban-rural boundaries collapse. Simultaneously, it also focuses on the nature of emergent urban form in cities like Hanoi as a result of these responses which could provide learnings for similar contexts in global cities in the South.

Vietnam has avoided the growth of slums in its cities and attempted to deal with its shortage of low-cost housing by avoiding an antagonistic stand against informal or self-built housing. For urban villages which service a sizeable demand of low-cost housing demand, state initiative to provide universal coverage of civic services improves living conditions within these areas apart from creating a sense of security and incentives for households to incrementally invest towards shelter improvement on individual or community level.

While formation of NUAs has intensified the pace of change for the rural villages on the periphery of cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city, peri urban village settlements have been sought to be integrated and serviced as new mega projects and housing enclaves emerge in their proximity. Rather than rolling out for eviction announcements for village residents to empty out land parcels and planning greenfield development, the state is directing developers and private investors to integrate existing village settlements in the event of land redevelopment of a larger land parcel and provide service infrastructure to villages. In the case of many urban villages, that has resulted in infrastructural upgradation and improvements in access to basic services.

Through their work, Thinh and Gao highlight the examples Dong Da district which was created by threading together several traditional villages like Xa Dan, My Duc, Trung Tu and Trung Phung urban whose agricultural lands, lakes and rice fields have given way to planned commercial development (Thinh and Gao 2018). Yet traditional settlements and their access roads have been improved and internal, circulation inside the urban village continues to be based on traditional alley system. This directly impacts their traditional livelihoods and living conditions while avoiding consequences such as eviction or relocation of settlement residents. A similar observation is noted by Bertaud who argues that while the government authorities in Vietnam auction agricultural land to developers to build megaprojects, contrary to China, they have attempted to “avoid already built village areas and integrate them

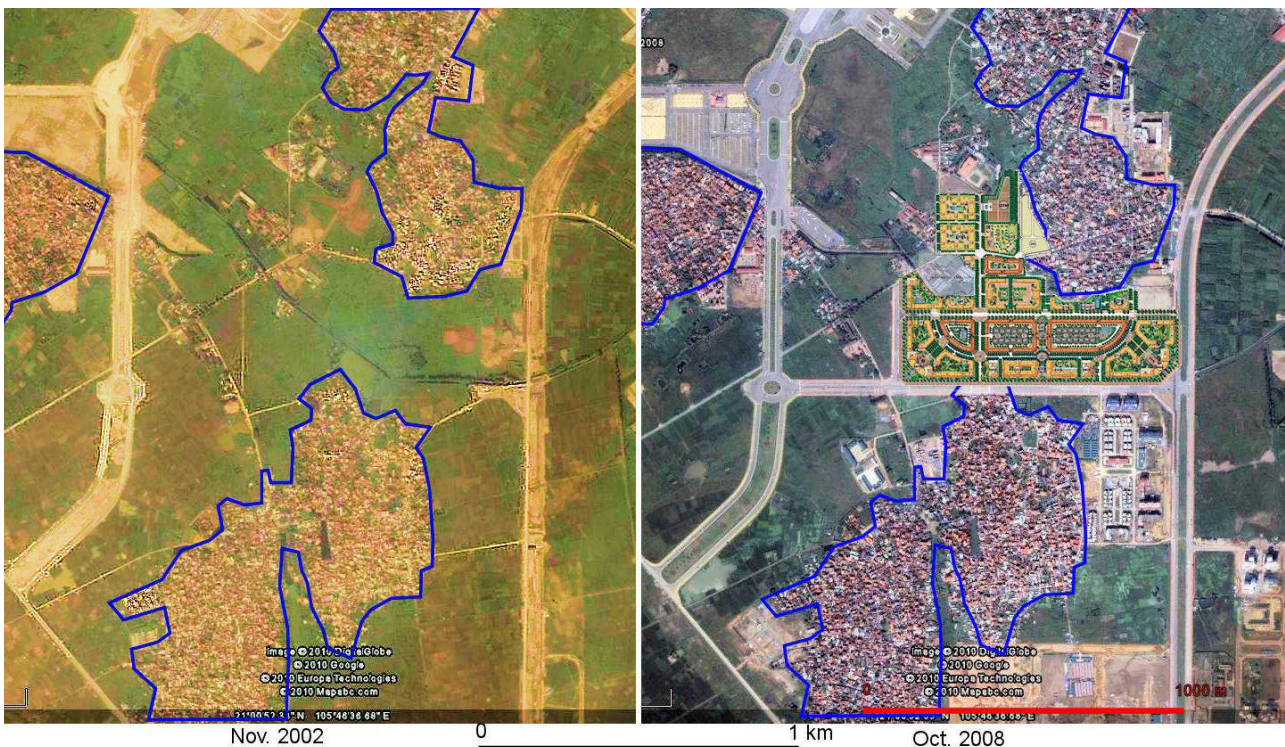
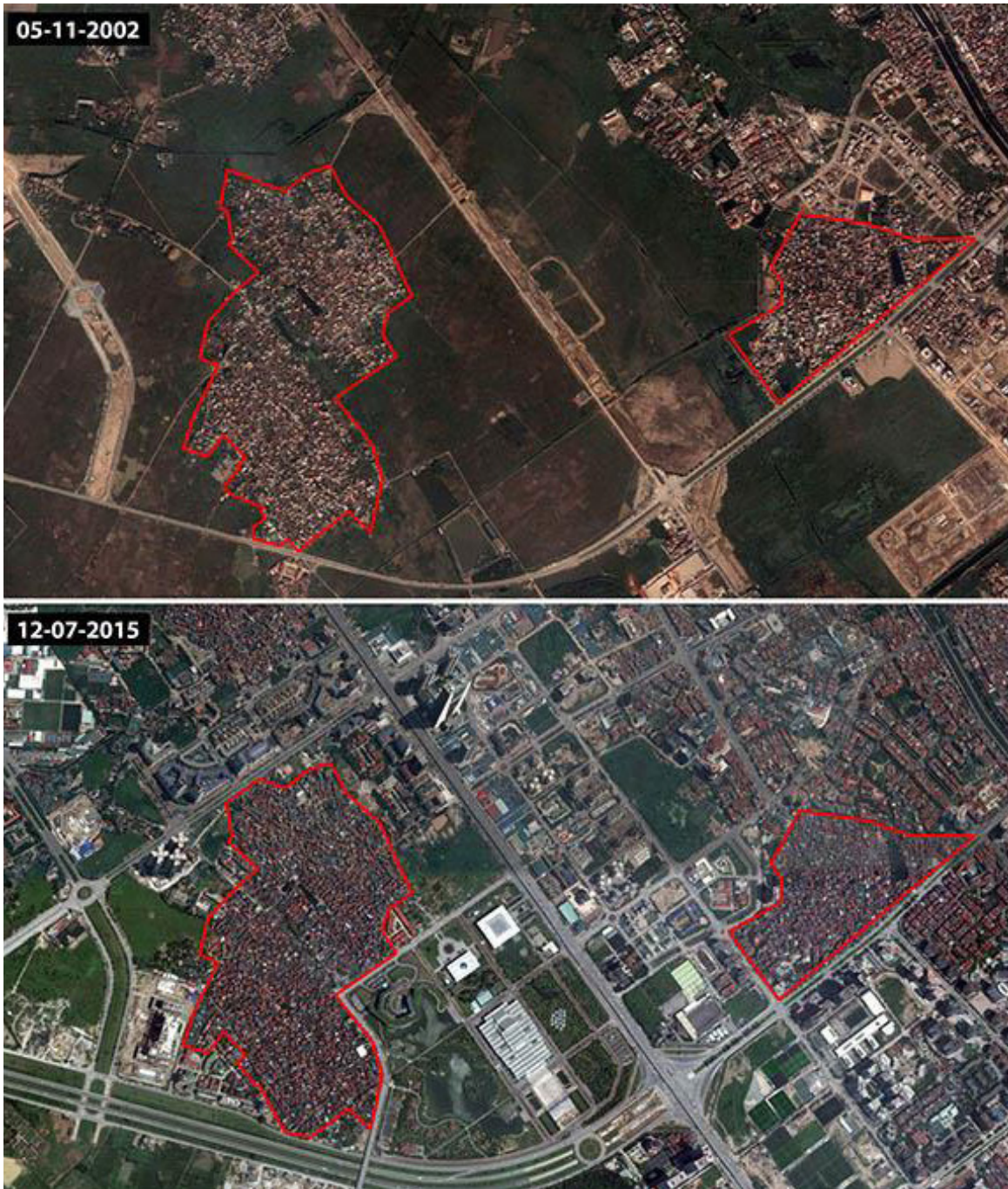


Image. 6 Land development in the western periphery of Hanoi has integrated existing settlements (Bertaud 2012)



in the new development by providing increased access and community facilities” (Bertaud 2012). A similar case can also be observed for rapidly densifying urban village Mei Tri which continues to densify as a result of the development activity in its surrounding areas (Thin and Gao 2018). These have compounded pressures on existing service infrastructure, public spaces and amenities within closely packed neighborhoods within the village and led to further diversification in livelihoods of residents and the urban form of the settlement.



*Image. 7 Me Tri urban village in Hanoi densifying as a result of urbanization where existing settlements have been integrated with the planned colonies and commercial centers (Thin and Gao 2018)*





*Image. 8 (Left) Many urban villages in cities like Hanoi have been upgraded and provided connectivity to trunk infrastructure like sewerage lines as new neighborhoods and mega projects emerge around them, while retaining their traditional settlement patterns (Bertaud 2012); (Right above and below) Densification within urban villages like Duong Noi is compounding pressures on existing settlements and creating a mixed urban form within the village where traditional elements like village gates and shop houses sit next to new constructions and building expansions (Anh, et al. 2012)*

While creation of NUAs in the peripheries of cities like Hanoi have enabled rural settlements to be integrated into ongoing planned development in many sites, simultaneous takeover of agricultural lands and high dependence of such mega projects on PPPs through a build-transfer mechanism is also creating unintended consequences. Completion of many NUAs has overshot their deadlines by over a decade, while many others have failed to make provisions for basic infrastructure. The Duong Noi NUA spread over 200 ha of land was planned to be developed into a mixed-use neighborhood for an estimated population of 25,000 to 30,000 people, which had overshot its completion deadline by over 10 years with only partial construction and absence of public services, such as the schools, park, markets (Nguyen, Duan and Liu 2018).

The slow progress on NUAs has worked as a covert strategy of private developers to keep the land vacant for fueling profits accrued via land value speculation. To address such lags in delivery and quell speculative economies, closer governance and monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to improve accountability. Facilitating B-T models and checking unregulated growth also remains necessary for relieving the pressures within urban villages. Within these villages, ventilation, privacy, fire safety, and the quality of the living environment need to be ensured through contextually relevant development control regulations and localized planned interventions to address community needs.

Vietnam's case points to an approach of tolerance and integration rather than erasure. Traditionally organized settlements around the alleyways of Hanoi and HCMC tend to be seen as increasingly "necessary connectors within larger road systems...[wherein...]...current evolution of each neighborhood depends greatly on its relationship with the emerging and renewed metropolitan centralities" (Gibert and Son 2016). As the epicenters of traditional settlements that have been engulfed in the wider city, urban villages continue to be vibrant public spaces, hubs of economic activity and cultural spaces in urban areas. According to Gibert and Son, the different morphological patterns of alleyways allow for the rural past of cities like Hanoi and HCMC to shadow its metropolitan future since their "spatial organization often reveals the ancient frame of rural paths, paddy fields or embankment systems, that structured the territory many decades ago. As a result, HCMC's urban structure is notably based on the juxtaposition of different composite urban fabrics" (Gibert and Son 2016). Keeping an approach of integration has allowed Vietnamese cities to build upon the grain of diversity and heterogeneity of urban form which has become their characteristic trademark.

## 4.2 NATIONAL CASE STUDY ON INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF URBANIZING VILLAGES

This section details out case examples undertaking an approach of integrated and community centric development in urban and rural villages in India. First, the case study from Naya Raipur brings to light how village sites were integrated and redeveloped in the process of creating a new capital city in Chhattisgarh. In the following section, efforts towards policy or planning reform to manage sustainable development of urbanizing villages across some other Indian cities have been summarized.

### Creating a greenfield capital city through rural redevelopment at Naya Raipur

With an urban population of 59.37 lakh, Chhattisgarh is the ninth lowest urbanized state in India. In the last decade however, it has grown at a faster pace than the national average, recording a 29.50% growth in its urban population, thereby indicating a dramatic rise in urbanization (Census 2011). After the formation of the new state Chhattisgarh in the year 2000, the state government decided to create a planned greenfield capital city for Chhattisgarh called Naya Raipur Atal Nagar<sup>5</sup> (henceforth Naya Raipur), notified under section 64 of *Nagar Tatha Gramnivesh Adhiniyam* 1973. The State of Chhattisgarh is currently in the process of developing Naya Raipur, as greenfield capital with a total area of 8000 ha. The city is being constructed in three phases, and is planned over 40 sectors, with a density of 250 person/hectare and anticipated average population of 16,000 per sector. Planned to be serviced through world class infrastructure for water supply, sewer network, grid-line road networks, telecom infrastructure, social and healthcare infrastructure and recreation spaces, Naya Raipur is imagined as an

<sup>5</sup> The capital city was renamed as Naya Raipur Atal Nagar to commemorate the death of late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, ex-PM of the country and a senior member of the then ruling party in the state of Chhattisgarh.

integrated smart city (NRANVP n.d.). The new capital will also include botanical gardens, a World bank funded Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), luxury hotels, convention centers and specialized industrial areas and townships.

Nava Raipur has been planned to cater to the infrastructural needs of industry and trade in the mineral-rich industrial region. Its planning area is spread across 237 sq. km. (with 40 settlements in 41 Villages) and its core planning area spans 80.13 sq. km., which had 13 erstwhile village settlements). These 13 urban villages form integral part of core city and 12 of these have been taken up for in-situ development of infrastructure in order to be able to be developed as part of the vision for the capital city. The vision plan of Naya Raipur Atal Nagar was to ensure equitable urban infrastructure for all; friendly, modern yet green city with emphasis on conservation of existing environment and landscape (NRDA n.d.). The Capital Area Development Authority (CADA) which was later renamed as Naya Raipur Atal Nagar Vikas Pradhikaran (NRANVP) is the nodal agency undertaking its development.

### **Innovative approaches for integrated development of rural pockets: Building Village Development Plans (VDPs)**

In order to develop Naya Raipur, 13 existing village settlements (with population ranges from 250 persons to 3587 persons) were to be subsumed under area designated for the central core of the upcoming greenfield capital. Keeping an open and flexible approach for developing the greenfield capital of Naya Raipur while following due procedure, NRDA has attempted to retain and incorporate existing village settlements while drawing up new plans. Despite being hailed as greenfield site for a new capital city, municipal authorities have recognized the significance of existing village settlements and their sense of belonging to their land.

The nodal development agency prioritized community engagement and stakeholder consultation to attempt an integrative approach in decision making for planning and implementation. NRDA attempted to incorporate best practices from documenting case studies, engage the community through focused group discussions and organize village design charrettes where community needs, and priorities could be discussed. Subsequently, local village development plans (henceforth VDP) were sought to be developed by Naya Raipur Development Authority in order to strategically plan how the villages can be integrated while retaining their local essence and history. The VDPs were to be developed keeping in mind existing demands for housing and services as well incoming population according to projected growth estimates of Naya Raipur.

Village development plans in rural contexts or ward plans/local development plans in urban villages allow for considering localized features and community needs including existing built up, location, socio-cultural composition, land use and livelihood patterns. Designed as a forward-thinking design blueprint, VDPs play a vital role in planning for immediate needs of the rural/urban village as well as strategize for its progressive evolution over a longer time period.

VDPs allow for the local context and fabric of the settlement to take precedence and plan with a community-based focus. Planning and implementation of village development plans in Naya Raipur underwent the following on-site processes: Consultation at regional and local level, Preliminary reconnaissance survey, Topographic survey, Ownership status survey, Base line Socio economic survey, Preparation of preliminary infrastructure development proposal, Panchayat consultation, Finalization



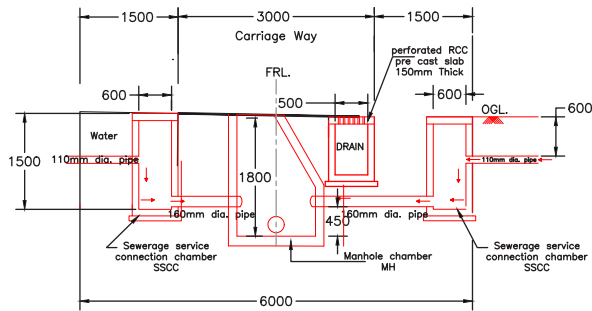
of Plan, Preparation of good for construction infrastructure design, Call for tender for infrastructure development, Execution of infrastructure and Revision of engineering design as per hurdles in implementation and finalization.

The VDP formalizes the boundary of the village area as a designated precinct within the new City. Provision of various amenities, street network and incremental housing must be designed respecting the *abadi* or settlement area and community needs. VDPs for each village in the Naya Raipur area were prepared after a structured process of community consultation and surveys that informed final planning provisions and layouts. The process of planning and implementing one such VDP is elaborated below through the example of Kayabandha village.

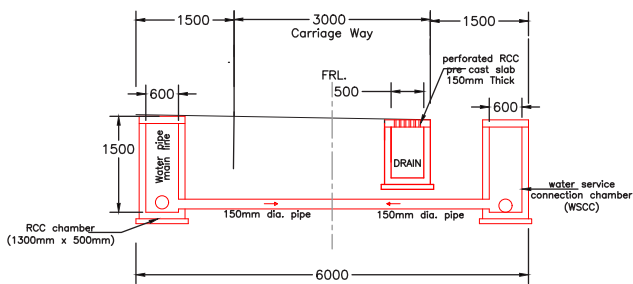
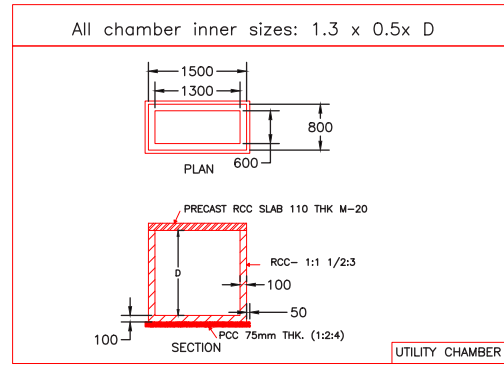
### **Building village development plans for community centric planning in Kayabandha Village**

Kayabandha village falls in what is planned as the central region of new capital city of Naya Raipur Atal Nagar. Spread over 48 Ha, the village only housed 129 families. Before the intervention, Kayabandha village lacked basic infrastructure and amenities including roads, drainage systems and household toilets, healthcare and access to public transport. VDP for the village was prepared after undertaking preliminary studies including physical surveys of the village and socio-economic surveys of the resident population. Preliminary situation analysis and demographic surveys were undertaken to gather contextual information by NRDA followed by a process of deep engagement with the community members. In order to assess the issues, needs and priorities of the needs, stakeholder consultations were designed through focused group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KII). During the preliminary interaction with the villagers and key informants from the village leaders, community members expressed a lack of proper basic amenities and communicated three primary requirements including- (a) access to potable water and transport facilities; (b) need for job opportunities; and (c) upgradation of community spaces like burial grounds and playground. Planning and development provisions were thus sought to be suitably modified by NRDA officials.

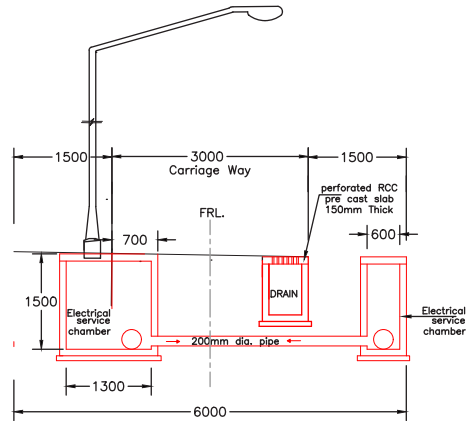
In Kayabandha, infrastructure design and detailing called for multiple iterations from drawing board to ground and back. Planning for VDP was undertaken with due consideration to existing fabric suggesting rehabilitation only when necessary. The challenge was not only to lay physical infrastructure in 3m roads but also to safeguard the mud houses built right on the edge of the road without setback, which would be impacted during excavation for trunk infrastructure connections. Given such challenges, NRDA opted for vertical stacking of infrastructure to lay out trunk infrastructure and made accommodations considering future demand based on allowed FAR.



TYPICAL SECTION OF SEWERAGE PIPE LINE AND CHAMBER DETAILS



TYPICAL SECTION OF WATER PIPE LINE AND CHAMBER DETAILS



TYPICAL SECTION OF ELECTRICAL PIPE CROSSING

are in Millimeters only unless otherwise specified.  
 Electrical Cable indicated in the above section is tentative only refer relevant Layout drawings for Execution.  
 Electrical Duct RCC details refer separate drawings.

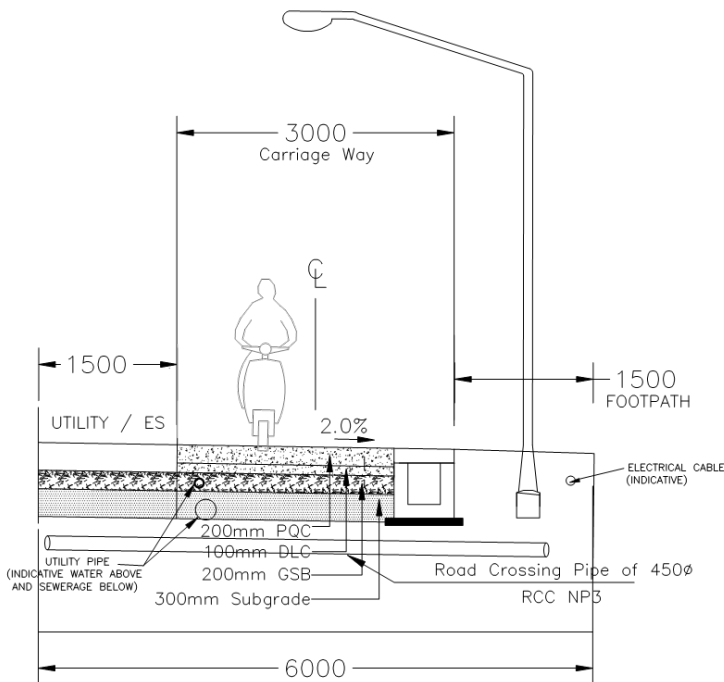
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0	22-01-13	ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION	WGX

AUTHORITY:   
 NAYA RAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
 Infront of Mahanadi Over of Mantralaya,  
 Bazar, Chhattisgarh

PROJECT: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FOR  
 VILLAGE KAYABANDHA - SECTOR 20  
 NAYA RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH  
 DRAWING TITLE: TYPICAL SECTION FOR SEWER, WATER & ELECTRICAL  
 LINE WITH CHAMBER DETAILS FOR 6M ROAD

Drawing No.:	NRDA-PSC-RD-FC:
Date:	22-01-2013
Designed:	Checked:
NAGA	A.K.SAMUD

PRODUCED BY AN AUTODESK STUDENT VERSION



6M ROW - RIGID PAVEMENT

Image. 9 (above) Sketch depicting plans for vertical stacking of trunk infrastructure; (below) plans for improving road widths in Kayabandha village (NRDA)

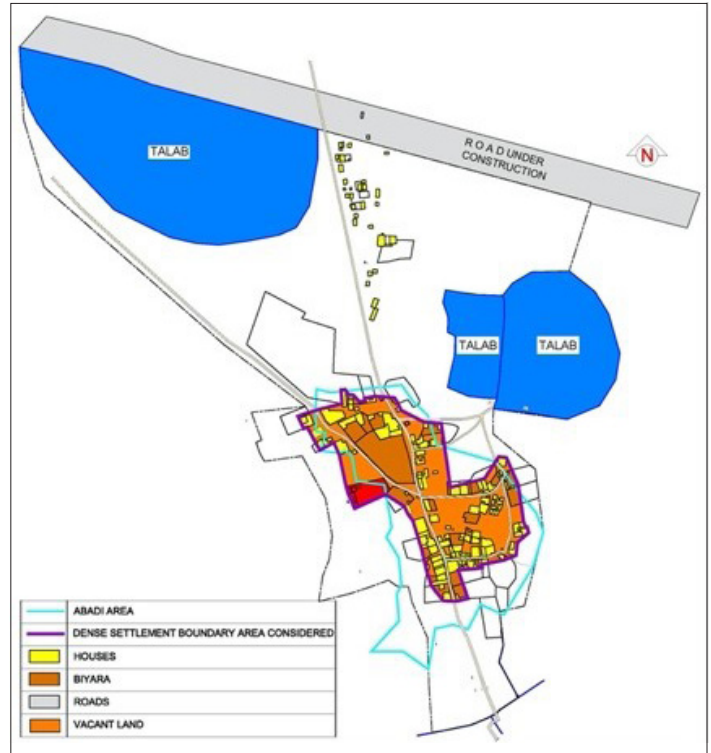
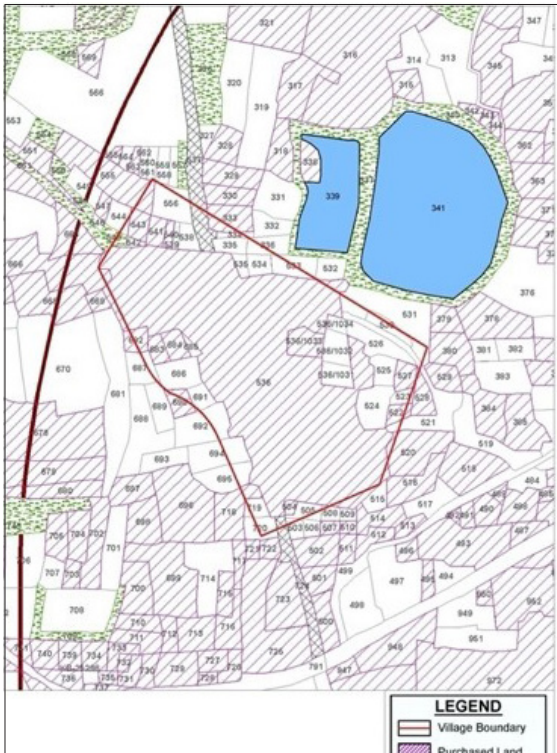


Image. 10 Multiple levels and scales need to be considered in order to draw up Village Development Plans. Involving site specific studies like topographic surveys and ownership maps help in situation analysis and eventually drawing up infrastructural design plans that are in tune with the context and ground realities. Ownership survey (left) and Topographic survey (right) were conducted in Kayabandha in order to design the preliminary infrastructural plan whose drafts were presented and discussed with community members (NRDA)



**Table 1: Changes due to VDP implementation at city, village and at household level. (VDP Documents, NRDA)**

S.no.	Aspect	Before	After	Impact
<b>A</b>	<b>Household Level</b>			
1	Treated Water / pipe network Connection	Households were Dependent on Handpump or borewells	Each household was connected to piped and treated water supply network.	Reduced labor and cost for getting potable water. Improved health due to safe and municipally treated drinking water.
2	Toilet access/ Sanitation provisioning	No Toilet or sewerage facility. Village members practicing open defecation	Toilets were provided in each household through convergence from other Gol Schemes. These toilets were connected to sector level Sewerage system.	Improved health and safety.
3	Electrification	Open overhead	Supply lines were located underground	Un-interrupted, and safe power supply
4	Land use and built up	Single story mud houses lining roads	Permission of more built-up space	Better utilization of land
<b>B</b>	<b>Village Level</b>			
5	Road/pathways	Patchy road network	Leveled and paved roads in the village	Motorable road without mud and potholes
6	Drainage	Patchy drainage network. Absent in most places.	Planned drainage network	No water logging and improved public health
7	Streetlights	Absent	Smart LED streetlight with network control	Improved security
<b>C</b>	<b>City Level</b>			
8	Trust building	Resistance from villagers for intervention inside village	People were satisfied with the level of transformation in quality of life.	Consensus building in other villages for implementation of VDP



*Image. 11 Before and After (Above and Below resp.) from the Kayabandha village post the VDP implementation (NRDA)*

### **Collaborating with communities for development of urbanizing villages in Naya Raipur: Opportunities and Challenges**

Building and implementing localized village development plans through a participatory process could facilitate integrated development where existing villages did not end up erased or becoming islands between developed sectors but incorporated into the larger plan for the greenfield capital. Through the process of community engagement, the physical and social infrastructure needs of the village communities could be recognized and addressed creating significant shifts in the quality of common resources and living environment the settlements.

Having an open and collaborative dialogue between planning experts, government officials and local villagers through the VDP implementation in Kayabandha village acted as a trust building and participatory planning exercise, which eased the way for holding community interactions and stakeholder meetings in the other villages falling under NDRA's jurisdiction towards VDP implementation in those sites. While the public participation was limited to the stages of consultation and need prioritization, this process can set a foundation for forging channels for active engagement across advanced planning stages for financial management and implementation which can provide the stakeholders a wider platform for influencing decision making and related outcomes.



*Image. 12 Nawagaon South Map was co-created with villager residents through collaborative planning mechanisms like design charrettes. Collaborative and community-led planning exercises between NRDA and village communities allowed the villagers to create opt for a locally relevant design plan. (NRDA)*

However participatory planning processes also face a multitude of challenges from lack of public acceptance, shallow levels of public involvement, trust deficits, caste politics, conflicting interest of various stakeholders. Cases of resistance from villagers was reported in a few sites such as Khapari which had earlier been selected for pilot implementation of village development plan instead of Kayabandha. Owing to hesitation expressed by the community, it was later dropped.

A similar situation of disagreement over village infrastructure arose in Tuta village wherein plans made by NRDA faced opposition from village residents. Land acquisition made the villagers who were traditionally land cultivators jobless, forcing them to take up building and construction work. This became a cause of breeding discontent against proposed VDP draft by the NRDA. Demolition or relocation of existing settlements also faced opposition from the residents. According to the community, grid network pattern suggested by the plan would increase travel time to the city and hence hamper connectivity. Additionally, dendritic street pattern of the villages which was in conjunction with the contours of the land was truncated in new road network suggested by the plan. It confined the village by encircling it, thereby acting as a barrier rather than better access. House clusters which were adjacent to the lakes were lacking service infrastructure. The new road network pattern would force realignment of the clusters in order to widen roads to provide service infrastructure to village residents and disconnect them from natural elements that support their life. These factors ultimately led to a breakdown of communication in the case of Tuta.



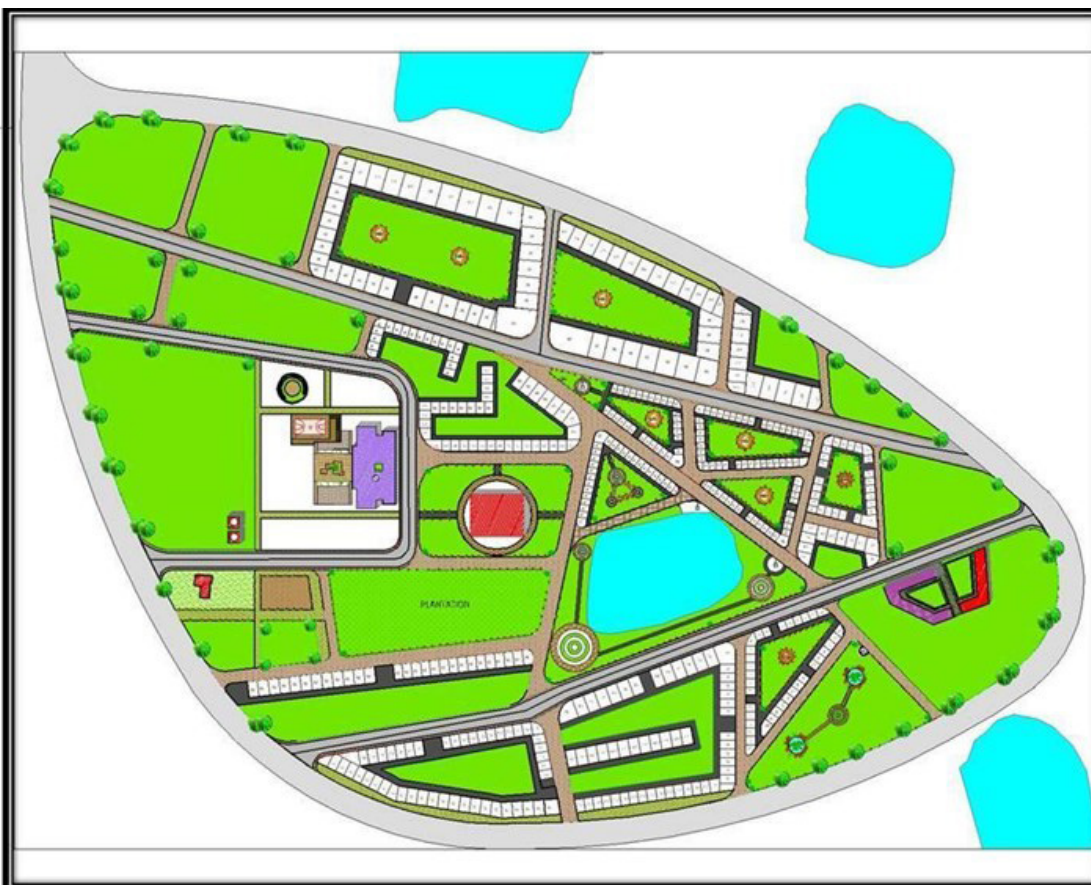


Image. 13 (Above) Survey map of Tuta Village; (below) Proposed Village Development Plan for Tuta Village

Despite its challenges, the process of incorporating existing village settlements into the emerging greenfield capital city of Naya Raipur through dedicated village development plans held potential of leading a decentralized planning approach to integrating villages within emerging urban areas. Not only did the village community benefit from receiving service infrastructure, but improved planning design aided in accommodating present and future needs. A consistent effort to establish and maintain an open channel of collaborative decision making between concerned authorities and village residents also showed improvement in chances of avoiding friction and negligence in plans for integrated development for areas undergoing significant socio-spatial transformation.

### **Efforts undertaken for planned development of urban villages across other Indian cities**

This section briefly notes efforts undertaken in the domains of planning or policy to address urbanizing rural pockets and urban villages in a few cities across India.

**Chandigarh:** Chandigarh Master Plan 2031 identifies 23 villages under the area of the Chandigarh Municipal authority categorized as sectoral and non-sectoral villages i.e. those falling within and outside the sector grids. For the villages falling within the sectoral grid, while their agricultural land was acquired, basic infrastructure and adequate social and physical infrastructure was sought to be provided in order for them to be integrated into the larger urban form (Government of Chandigarh 2013).

The Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh was brought into existence in 1994. Subsequently, nine villages namely, are Burail, Badheri, Attawa, Hallomajra, Palsora, Dadumajra, Maloya, Kajheri and Buterla were brought under the MCC and their maintenance and development controls were transferred to municipal authority, while the rest were still rural and governed by elected Gram Panchayats. With no pre-existing development control regulations and specific building bye laws for these villages, they had grown in a haphazard manner which were in contravention to guidelines and norms related to land use, building heights and circulation patterns detailed in Master Plans.

Given their unique built form and history, Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh laid down building byelaws for villages within the city limits of Chandigarh under “The Chandigarh Administration (erection and reerection of Buildings) Rules, 2006, for villages in the Municipal area of Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh” under Sub- Section 2 of Section 5 (2) read with Section-22 of the Capital of Punjab (Development & Regulation) Act, 1952 vide Notification No.26/6/39-UTFI(3)-2006/7869 dated 27.12.2006. The rules prescribed limits on the use of buildings, the height of the building, size of the habitable rooms, site coverage. The guidelines also provided incentives for giving up private lands for street widening within the *Abadi* areas, in addition to the procedure for building application. However, as there were no building byelaws till 2006, uncontrolled building activities had already taken place in these villages creating impediments in the enforcement of new building byelaws.

In view of this situation, Village development plans were prepared by the planning and building branch of Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh for few villages, namely Maloya, Kajheri, Dadumajra, Palsora and Hallomajra, that were later added to the municipal corporation of Chandigarh. Detailed village development plans for Manimajra village and Mayola village were approved by the Chandigarh administration. The village development plans capture the socio-economic profile, land use, livelihood patterns, growth trends; identifies issues (physical and social infrastructure-related, encroachment related, building regulation violations) and suggest recommendations and proposed land use plan. However, none of these village development plans were taken up for implementation (Government of Chandigarh 2013).

On the other hand, rural villages categorized as non-sectoral villages like Khuda Ali Sher, Khuda Jassu, Khuda Lahora, Sarangpur, Dhanas, Behlana, Raipur Khurd, Makhan Majra, Dariya, Mauli Jagran, Kishangarh, Kaimbwala and Raipur Kalan have seen varying extents of unauthorized construction within and beyond the extended *abadi* area. According to the Department of Rural Development and Panchayats, the area under unauthorized development beyond the *abadi* areas is nearly three times the *abadi* area in some of the villages, indicating that unauthorized construction beyond Lal Dora could be close to 254 acres (Government of Chandigarh 2013). The 2031 Master plan proposed building development Plans for each of these village based on detailed surveys of the village, considering their specific location, character, problems and pressures.

Suggestions for improving street widths or open spaces in the older areas in consultation with existing owners have also been made. Development planning through VDPs have been directed to retain the rural character and unique history of the *abadi*, ensure basic infrastructure, improve efficiency of the village and promote rural tourism (Government of Chandigarh 2013). However, these initiatives have been unable to move from the planning table to on-ground implementation.

**New Delhi:** The national capital was one of the first cities to include master plan directives to develop dedicated village development plans. The first master plan for the capital in 1961 envisaged comprehensive planning for rural and urban areas and proposed decongestion of city by shifting of non-conforming industries to selected rural areas. The term 'urban village' was used for the first time in Delhi's 1961 master plan to designate the clusters of villages chosen on the fringes of the capital to relocate small industries that had village-like characters such as pottery, handloom weaving etc. The proposal to shift industries to the selected villages did not yield the desired results, but to some extent helped the rural settlements to move into non-farming occupations. Over the next few decades, largescale acquisition and conversion of agricultural farmlands to serve the needs of the growing capital city accompanied by presence of municipal exemptions from seeking building sanctions in *abadi* areas led to emergence of urban villages as sites of rampant and often unregulated building construction. At the same time, these dense and underserviced pockets often became a crucial resource for those looking for low-cost or seasonal housing.

The Mini Master Plan for the Planned and Integrated Development of Rural areas of Delhi outlined in 1985 focused on identifying the 195 listed villages within National Capital Territory Of Delhi (henceforth NCT) (identified during Ninth Five Year Plan) as basic villages (147), growth points (33) or growth centers (15) depending upon the location, nature and potential of each village accordingly and propose construction of physical, social and ecological infrastructure to address their needs (DKVIB n.d.). Rural pockets were consequently planned to develop as special areas to ensure planned development with ecological balance. Delhi Rural Development Board was formed in 2004 under Department of Rural Development (later converted to Delhi Village Development Board in 2017) for securing planned growth of rural areas of Delhi and formulation of unified and coordinate area plans; prioritizing projects and schemes of the Rural Area Plan and its implementation. Two planned schemes were managed by Rural Development Unit of Development Department, namely (i) Integrated Development of Rural Villages and (ii) Mini Master Plan for Rural Villages for planned development of rural areas and social upliftment of rural masses. Tejendra Khanna Committee constituted in 2006 by the Ministry of Urban Development to look at unregulated construction in Delhi proposed drawing up Local Area Plans for village specific plans that are drawn up in consultation with the communities.



As per Census 2011, out of the total area of 1483 sq. kms., the rural area under the National Capital Territory of Delhi is 369.35 Sq. Km (24.91%) and total rural population of 4.19 lakhs (Census 2011). Annual outlay (2015-16) for the Rural Development Sector was Rs. 189 crores (Planning Department GNCTD n.d.). The Delhi Village Development Board (henceforth DVDB) succeeded the Delhi Rural Development Board in 2017 to ensure integrated development of both urban and rural villages in Delhi. Currently rural development projects approved by the DVDB are mandated to be carried out by the executive agencies such as Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Municipal Corporations and Delhi Jal Board. The annual budget for DVDB in 2017-18 was 600cr with an objective to facilitate development and ensure upkeep of infrastructural facilities depending on community needs. These needs have to be articulated through a system of village development and coordination committees that work in consultation with local elected representatives (MLAs) who propose projects for rural development and maintenance of facilities in their respective villages to the DVDB board who will sanction projects. However, DVDB projects have seen slow uptake the mandate of the institution remains limited to project based interventions for public spaces and resources.

Additionally, efforts to build village development plans have been proposed under Saansad Adharsh Gram Yojana by parliamentarians who adopted villages and local area plans published by organizations like Delhi Urban Arts Commission, yet no plan has been comprehensively implemented by DDA or DVDB. While implementation towards localized planning has been absent or sluggish at best, the national capital has slowly progressed towards building an organizational machinery to respond to the needs of rural and urban villages.

#### **4.3 LEARNINGS FROM CASE STUDIES FOR RESHAPING ONGOING RESEARCH STUDY**

Both international and national case studies presented here illustrate a diverse range of state responses to address developmental challenges for urban villages located on different positions within the urbanization trajectory.

As densification surges in and around metropolitan regions and SEZs in China, state approach towards urban villages has often looked at erasure through evictions and demolitions as the preferred means for effective land utilization. In such cases, redevelopment of cleared land has meant replacing village settlements with planned residential and commercial high rises. Thus, for many Chinese cities, instances of regeneration of existing urban villages have emerged through projects or municipal schemes in select sites rather building a norm of integrated development for existing settlements. These projects or targeted schemes have often created effective results for specific sites due to context-based interventions such as those implemented in Guangdong, Jiangsu or Nantou Old Town.

In Vietnam, the state has maintained a more tolerant approach towards urbanizing villages and self-built housing due to the crucial role they play as low-cost housing supply within cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City witnessing massive in-migration. Within cities, old alleyways neighborhoods continue to provide a rich historical legacy and built-up network upon whose blueprint urban centers thrive and expand. For villages on the city peripheries whose farmlands have been acquired and livelihoods shifted, erstwhile settlements have been threaded into new planned projects through integrated development and service upgradation as New Urban Areas (NUAs) emerge. Financial assistance through PPP and Build-Transfer mechanisms to engage private investment, securing self-built housing against eviction has enabled the state to include rather than erase urban villages while giving rise to heterogenous urban fabric in Vietnamese cities.

In the case of India cities, state response towards urban villages has often been fragmented and post-facto. The case study on Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh presents a scenario where village settlements faced the threat of assimilation in a new greenfield capital city. However, the use of Village Development Plans and civic engagement has offered ways to create more inclusive pathways for integrated development. VDPs when carried out through a deep engagement with the community and context provide an opportunity for understanding and incorporating community needs and accommodating for future growth as villages urbanize. While it requires a sustained and iterative planning process, VDPs can generate a conducive environment for integrating various scales and sectors of planning and simultaneously provide a platform for active dialogue. These can improve equitable transitions and better sustainability outcomes for community members and village settlements.

Notes on responses in Chandigarh and New Delhi briefly explain how urban villages have been addressed in planning and policy domains in different cities. Often provisions with policy and planning documents have been remained unactionable or not picked up for implementation. In National Capital Territory, touted to become the largest city by 2030 (UN 2018), urban villages continue to face densification and redevelopment pressures due to the rapid pace of urban transformation. In addition, existing rural villages have also faced dramatic change. In such a scenario inclusive and decentralized planning interventions could provide a unique opportunity for integrated development for village settlements located on different points on the spectrum of urban transition. Building models for community engagement and frameworks to develop Village Development Plans thus provide a way forward in provisioning for smoother and more sustainable transitions for urban village communities.

## **5. Research planning**

This section builds on the learnings gathered through existing situation analysis and issue identification for urban villages in NCT as well as case study documentation provided in earlier sections. Using these as a foundation, a broad research design framework was developed for this study. Following an iterative process, research tools and approaches were revised based on preliminary field visits and community meetings, as and where required. The next few sections detail out aspects of the research planning including the intent of the study, research focus and methodology as well as criteria for site selection. Following those are brief site profiles for the selected urban villages in NCT for carrying out the on-ground study.

### **5.1 RESEARCH INTENT**

Urban – rural interfaces are becoming increasingly common as cities urbanize and new peri-urban areas emerge. Village pockets located within inner cities which were once agricultural continue to densify, while rural areas on city peripheries are undergoing rapid demographic and spatial transitions. Despite these transitions, planning responses have been unable to keep pace with them.

Multiple challenges exist behind the conspicuous absence of urban villages from the planning table. A central reason for this stasis in urban planning is that the broad brush of macro level planning instruments and approaches remain disjunct from the needs and realities of urbanization on-ground and invariably ends up creating blindspots for planned development. Simultaneously, interest in acquiring

and developing available land parcels by regulating land use through city level and sectoral plans often ignores existing village settlements and their *abadis*. Absence of localized and contextually relevant interventions for integrating village communities and their settlements into the larger urban fabric leaves these densifying pockets underserved, thereby producing an unsustainable urban form. In addition, the complex nature of land ownership and transfer in urban villages creates further challenges for infra-structural provisioning and implementing development initiatives within urban village.

In the case of National Capital Territory of Delhi, budget allocation, planning and implementation of development schemes for urban villages have remained largely ad-hoc and inadequate. While no dedicated plans were specified in the current Master Plan (MPD 2021) for urban villages in NCTD, state allocated funds to the Delhi Village Development Board are also yet to materialize into any comprehensive interventions on ground. Given these gaps, this research study intends to undertake grounded research to capture aspects of urban transition in select urban villages in NCT and engage with diverse range of stakeholders to explore how participatory planning exercises could initiate a ground-up approach in assessing needs and designing planning interventions for urban villages in NCT Delhi.

## 5.2 RESEARCH FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

This research study focuses on understanding ongoing transformations as a result of urban-rural encounters and its consequences for urban villages in NCT. Given the limitations within macro level planning approaches to adequately address localized urban challenges and community aspirations, this study intends to explore the potential of collaborative approaches in identifying needs and design solutions to improve living environments in urban villages.

Through a deep dive across two selected sites within the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Rajokri (South West district) and Ghoga (North west district), a field-based study was undertaken including on-ground surveys and community engagement through consultations and workshops. Using secondary studies and field learnings, an Urban Village Development Plan Framework was developed as a guidance framework for localized development planning for urban villages within NCT.

Details of research methods used, related objectives and expected outcomes are outlined in the table below:

**Table 2: Research methods, objectives and expected outcomes**

Method	Objective	Expected Outcome
<b>Reconnaissance Surveys and field visits</b>	<p>Preliminary Reconnaissance Surveys were carried out independently by the research team for purpose of scoping. At a later stage, transect walks were conducted in the village with local officials /panchayat members and /or members of the village community to identify and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Nature of settlement- settlement built up, socio-economic composition, land and ownership patterns, common village resources and their use</li> <li>ii. Relief features and key landmarks in and around the site such as transport access nodes, markets, etc.</li> <li>iii. Key informants and community dynamics to ensure representative involvement of change agents and community members including marginalized groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gaining understanding of the span and nature of the settlements and its key physical and socio-economic features</li> <li>2. Identifying stakeholder connects and understanding of community dynamics</li> </ul>



Method	Objective	Expected Outcome
<b>Rapid Strategic Interviews and Focus Group Discussions</b>	<p>Strategic Interviews with key informants such as village panchayat members, <i>anganwadi</i> workers or <i>mohalla</i> clinic doctors followed a semi-structured and open format. Focus group discussions with stakeholder were structured via a broad survey questionnaire (Annexure 1). Together these were used to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note issues and potential focus domains identified and prioritized by community members including but not limited to elected councilor, village pradhan/panchayat leaders, community members, teachers/anganwadi or social workers.</li> <li>Discuss growth trends and challenges emerging over last decade; current service infrastructure level and major pressure points/ needs for the community.</li> <li>Refine methodology/ research tools being used for design charrette workshop.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking community needs assessment to understand issues-needs-concerns of the village community</li> <li>Gauging multiple perspectives or conflicting interests.</li> </ol>
<b>Community Workshops-Village Design Charrette</b>	<p>Collaborative planning workshop centered on Village design charrette were organized where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideas and issues discussed in the FGD as well as information collected during site visits were used to create urban design scenarios that could address commonly held issues and be implemented in the future.</li> <li>Consultations workshops were organized to discuss, modify and prioritize likely interventions ideas depending on community needs and preferences. Stakeholders were encouraged to offer their suggestions to improve these design interventions and identify opportunities for community participation within localized development in the future.</li> </ol>	<p>Prioritization of possible design and planning interventions that could be implemented in the future for an improved living environment within the village. Findings can be circulated amongst community and elected representative for further action.</p>

### 5.3 CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION THROUGH RECONNAISSANCE SURVEYS

Two sites were selected within the National Capital Territory of Delhi to situate the study and conduct primary fieldwork including site mapping, on-ground surveys for needs assessment and community workshops. The two sites- Rajokri (South West district) and Ghoga (North west district)- were selected based on the following:

- Representativeness:** The two sites selected for situating the research study represent two distinct stages on the spectrum of urban transition and hence provide a diversity in the profile of resident community, land use, nature of built up, livelihoods and community dynamics. Ghoga located in the north western periphery of NCT near the Delhi-Haryana border is largely agriculture-dependent and in early stages of being urbanized. In contrast, Rajokri has progressed into a dense, urban village with mixed land use and built up and a considerable influx of migrants from neighboring regions given its proximity to prime locations to international airport, arterial roads and residential neighborhoods in south western district of NCT. Out of the 135 urban villages in NCT listed by GNCTD,<sup>6</sup> both sites are representative samples from the two ends of the typology spectrum for urban villages (i.e. majority urban- in transition- majority rural).

<sup>6</sup> Complete list of total urbanized villages in NCT is available at <http://web.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/d03aed004a7f26dea618f-772d2eb9c1f/List+of+urbanised+villages.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&lmod=191127038> Accessed on 19th November 2020

- **Access to local representatives and village communities:** Points of entry and access to local communities remains a key obstacle in undertaking in-depth, site specific research that involves engagement with resident community and local stakeholders. Due to engagement with and support extended by the government of National Capital Territory of Delhi in undertaking this research, the villages of Rajokri and Ghoga were selected keeping in mind access to local representatives and key informants in the site which were crucial for undertaking community needs assessment and stakeholder workshops.
- **Scope of intervention for change:** Both the selected sites currently face challenges emerging from rapid urbanization and consequent needs. While Rajokri presents the case of a rapidly growing yet stratified village community which is inadequately serviced given the rate of change, Ghoga on the other end presents the need for basic infrastructure and integrated planning measures in order to for it to not be overlooked amidst upcoming industrial hubs and transport corridors in its neighborhoods. Hence, the selected sites present cases where community centric planning measures and contextually driven development plans could significantly improve living environments and quality of life for resident communities.

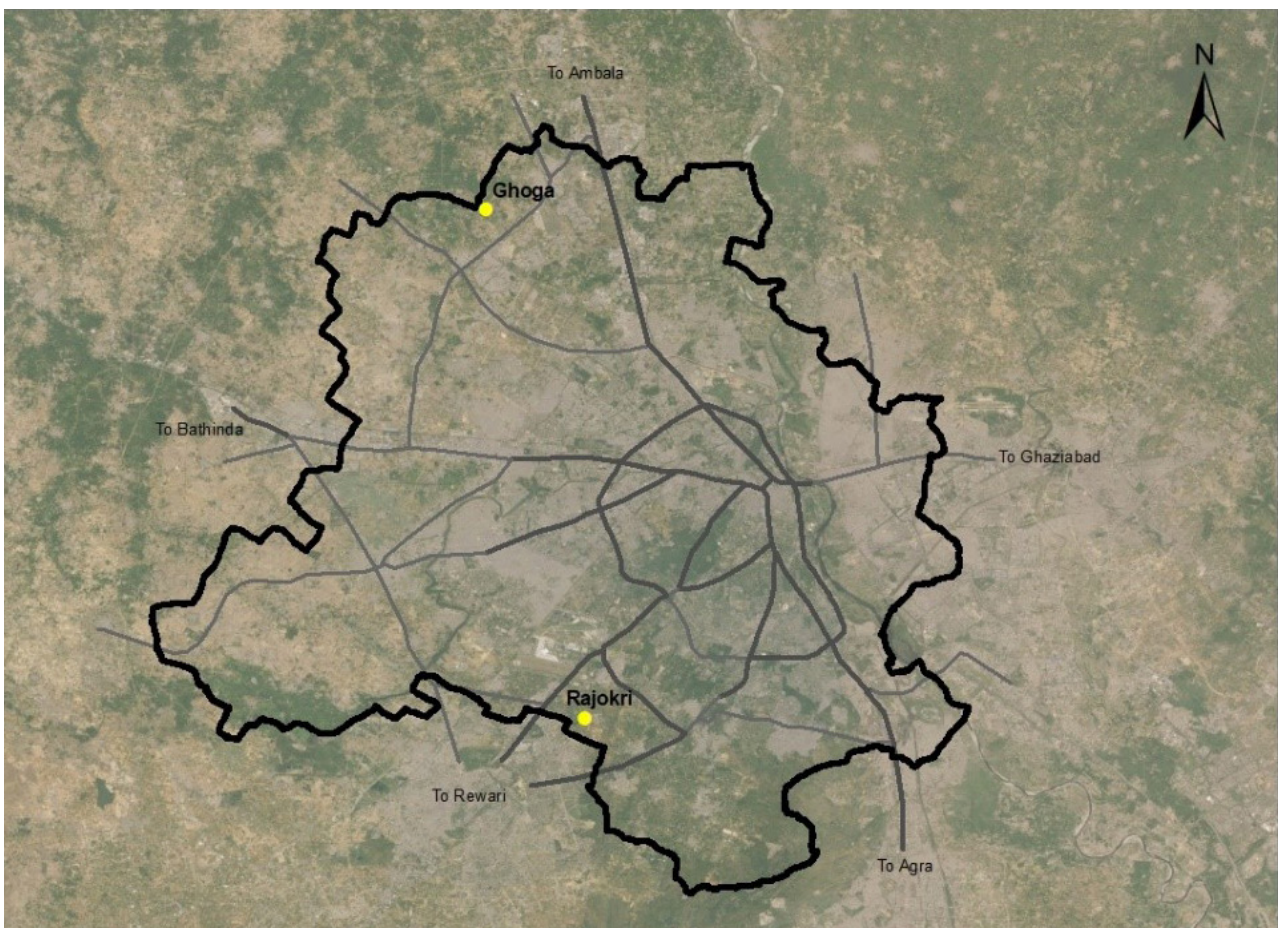


Image. 15 Location of selected urban villages within National Capital Territory (Google Maps)



## 5.4 SITE PROFILES

Preliminary site visits and reconnaissance surveys were undertaken to assess the sites and brief profiles<sup>7</sup> of both are provided in the following sections:

### Rajokri: Site Profile

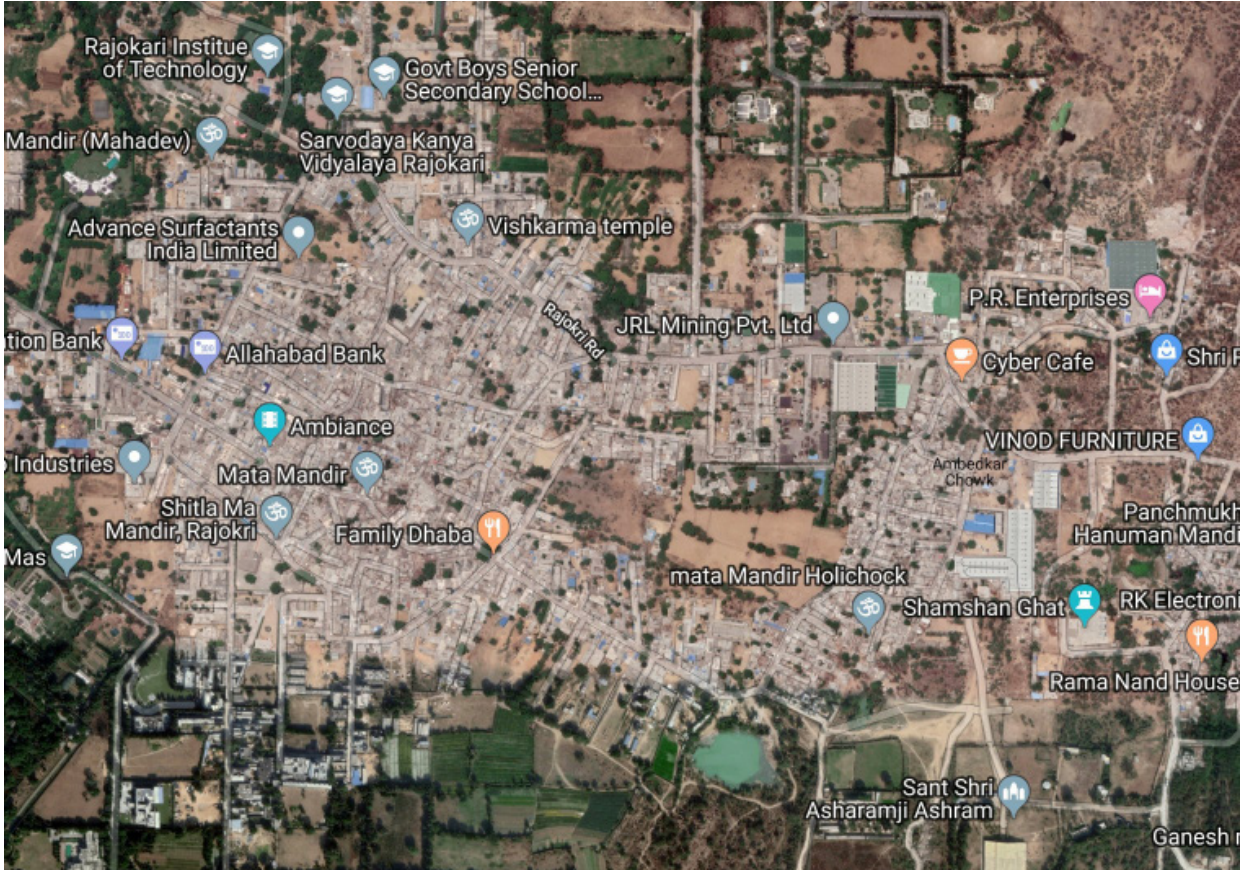


Image. 16 Settlement Density within Rajokri village (Google Maps)

Part of South west Delhi district, Rajokri village is in proximity to ecologically sensitive areas under Aravalli Biodiversity Park apart from being near Delhi's international Airport, DLF Cyber city and Delhi Metro route. With 4430 households and a population of 19148 people in 2011, Rajokri grew considerably in the last few decades. Rajokri is currently organised into three clusters- the main village which was once agricultural and has now urbanized, the self-built informal housing settlement called the BSS camp on Rajokri pahadi (indicating proximity to Aravallis) as well as the *Harijan Basti* (tr. Lower caste settlement indicating spatial segregation on caste lines). In 2011 Rajokri had a predominantly Hindu population (95.6%), of which 20.21% identified itself as Schedule Caste (SC). Both the nature of land use and settlement built up have transitioned significantly in Rajokri as a result of its location and proximity to major arterial roads and the airport. Agricultural land use has given way to mixed used and commercial enterprises. Warehouses, stone crushing industries, vocational centers and retail stores are spread out throughout the village settlement area. According to 2011 census, Rajokri had a Literacy Rate of 84.45% with a female sex Ratio of 800. Despite growth in neighbouring areas, transport and road access in Rajokri has remained inadequate. The *phirni* road (road circling the village), which

<sup>7</sup> Village profiles are based on data from Census 2011 and preliminary discussions with village communities during field visits and scoping. Details on history and growth of the village are largely based on accounts shared by community members and village panchayat members.



serves as the single access road to Rajokri, remains congested and severs the village from neighbouring areas due to absence of internal road networks, State sponsored health and educational facilities are concentrated in one section of the settlement dominated by higher castes and landed community members who self-identify as original inhabitants as opposed to migrants living in Pahadi area. Existing physical and social infrastructural facilities were concentrated (towards of the urban village) and were inadequate for servicing the current population of Rajokri which is clustered in multiple sites and is highly stratified.

### Ghoga: Site Profile

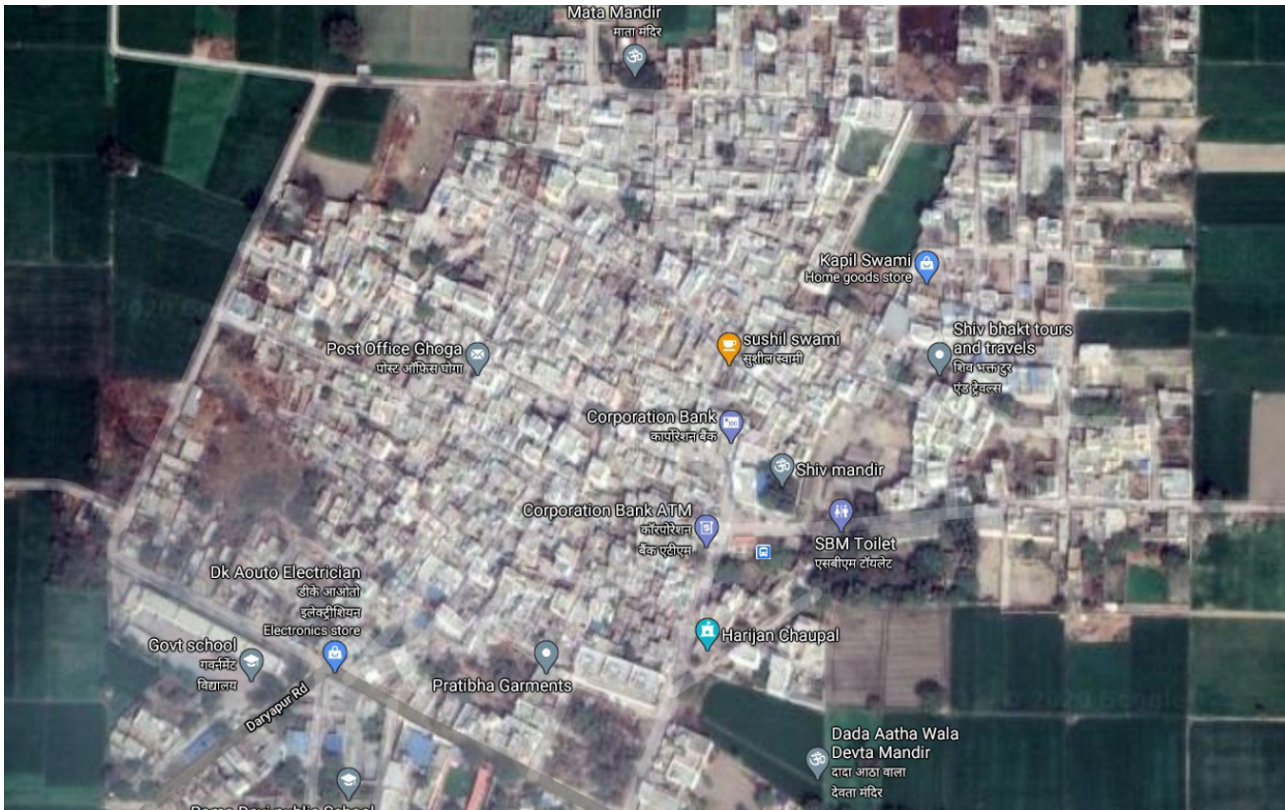


Image. 17 Settlement Density within Ghoga village (Google Maps)

Located in Narela Tehsil in North West Delhi, Ghoga village is spread over 2.59 sq.km with 677 Households and a total population of 3884 people. The foundation of the village was laid down by the two brothers hailing from Bawana around early 1800s. Largely dependent of farming, Ghoga was once an agricultural village with kutchha houses and non-metaled roads. Metal roads were laid in mid 1950s and Ghoga got electrified in 1960. Due to population growth and consequent changes, Ghoga Multipurpose Society was established by the residents for the maintenance of public utilities and community welfare. Ghoga has largely retained its rural character and dependence agricultural production, cattle rearing and dairy farming. 32% of its total population were engaged in either main or marginal work. In 2011, Ghoga had a literacy rate of 85% with a Female Sex Ratio of 857. The village is not spatially stratified but religious communities are clustered together in some parts of the village. Gender segregation is maintained in public spaces School with married women from families following purdah (veiling). The village has a senior secondary government school but lacks basic healthcare facilities and higher education institutes. The common village pond and Gram Panchayat land is largely encroached and has become a waste disposal site. Public spaces and social infrastructure for recreation and community gatherings are inadequate.

## 6. On-ground Study and Community Workshops in urban villages in NCT

The following sections document the primary research entailed in the study including the fieldwork and community workshops conducted at the selected urban villages in NCT.

### 6.1 STUDY OBJECTIVE: WHAT DID WE DO AND WHY?

In India, planning remains top down and bound in macro contexts, often overlooking community needs and concerns. Pockets of urbanized and rural villages and their settlement *abadis* remain under acknowledged in the process of planned development at city/regional level. While undergoing rapid change as a result of population growth and urban expansion, the built form, density and organic street network of urban village settlements can become a limiting factor for service provisioning. In a bid to encourage collaborative and community led planning initiatives, WRI India in partnership with the Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) organized community needs assessment and village design charrettes in two urban villages in NCT- Rajokri and Ghoga- to identify community needs and co-strategize locally relevant solutions for villages that would improve the quality of their living environment.

### 6.2 METHODOLOGY: HOW DID WE STRUCTURE OUR INTERVENTION?

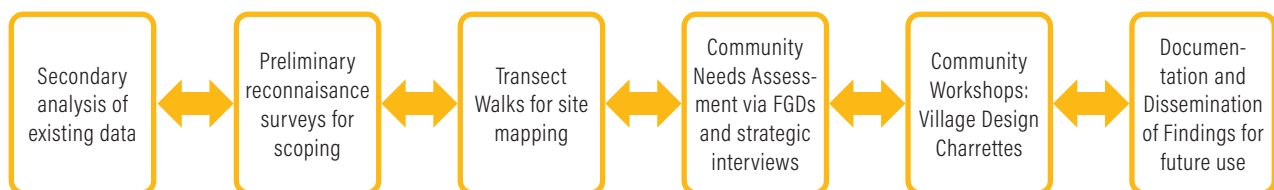


Figure 1 Research methods for on-ground study

While the primary fieldwork followed an iterative process, our on-ground study was structured through the following research methods:

- **Secondary Analysis:** Conducted to gather available literature on Rajokri and Ghoga across all available data sources within the public domain including Census survey, technical committees and parliamentary committee reports, dedicated area studies, visual documentation, planning documents such as Mini Master Plans, Development Area Plans or existing Local Area Plans.
- **Preliminary Reconnaissance Surveys:** Undertaken to initiate a socio-spatial review of the field site. This included assessing the basic nature of land use, built-up of the settlement and spatial organization of the village. The preliminary field visit allowed for scoping and gaining familiarity with the site, its key physical features and socio-economic context.
- **Field visits and transect walks:** Carried out with multiple stakeholders such as local officials and/or members of the village community to gain context and details about the nature and history of settlement (built up, socio-economic composition, livelihoods, land use and ownership patterns, common village resources and public spaces). It allowed the survey team to identify key informants and establish stakeholder connects to ensure representative involvement in subsequent community consultations like needs assessment and community workshop.
- **Rapid Strategic Interviews and Focus Group Discussion for Community Needs Assessment:** Strategic interviews were conducted on-site with various key informants such as local panchayat leaders, teachers or doctors in the local medical clinic during the initial visits. Following this, FGDs

were conducted to understand the Issues-Concerns-Needs of the community. This involved conducting detailed discussion with community members including elected representatives, panchayat member, community members, teachers/*anganwadi* or social workers. Through these consultations various issues like growth trends, changes emerging over the last few decades and aspirations for future were explored. These discussion threads were used to further refine the downstream exercises.

- **Community Workshops via Village Design Charrette Workshop:** Organized to facilitate a village design charrette in collaboration with community members. Community needs assessment, Focus Group Discussion and site observations were used to identify key challenges faced by the community and create urban design scenarios (that addressed commonly held issues) which could be implemented in the future. Illustrations, images and oral descriptions were used as tools to engage with communities. Through a hands-on exercise, members of the community prioritized likely interventions ideas depending on community needs and preferences in a voting process. They also expressed their demands and suggestions to improve these interventions and identify opportunities for community participation for future.
- **Documentation for future use:** Visual and textual documentation of the entire process and key findings were prepared. Post expert convenings and discussions to strategize way forward for better sustainable outcomes, study findings and Urban Village Development Framework will be shared with community members and offices of elected representatives. Insights from these could inform future interventions and development planning for urban villages.

### 6.3 ON-GROUND STUDY AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS IN RAJOKRI

WRI India organized community needs assessment and village design charrette workshop in Rajokri between 11th-13th December 2019. These on-ground engagements were organized to identify and prioritize community needs and co-create a strategy for localized planning solutions that could address challenges faced by urban village settlements and community.

#### Day 1: Field Survey and Community Needs Assessment

- Gauging on-ground situation & status of community facilities through transect walks on site
- Undertaking community needs assessment through Focus Group Discussions with multiple stakeholders

Day 1 commenced with a field survey of Rajokri village facilitated by officials of Delhi govt and community members who identified key relief features and landmarks of the village including community facilities such as the local health centre in Rajokri village, senior secondary schools, local lake revival STP project, community centre run by the state government, panchayat building and *baraat ghar* (community hall). This provided an understanding of the social and spatial organization of Rajokri which helped in setting the site in its locational context and an overview of the on-ground realities. A quick drive through assessment was made of areas surrounding the site to underline access and transport facilities. Key landmarks and features were mapped for reference.

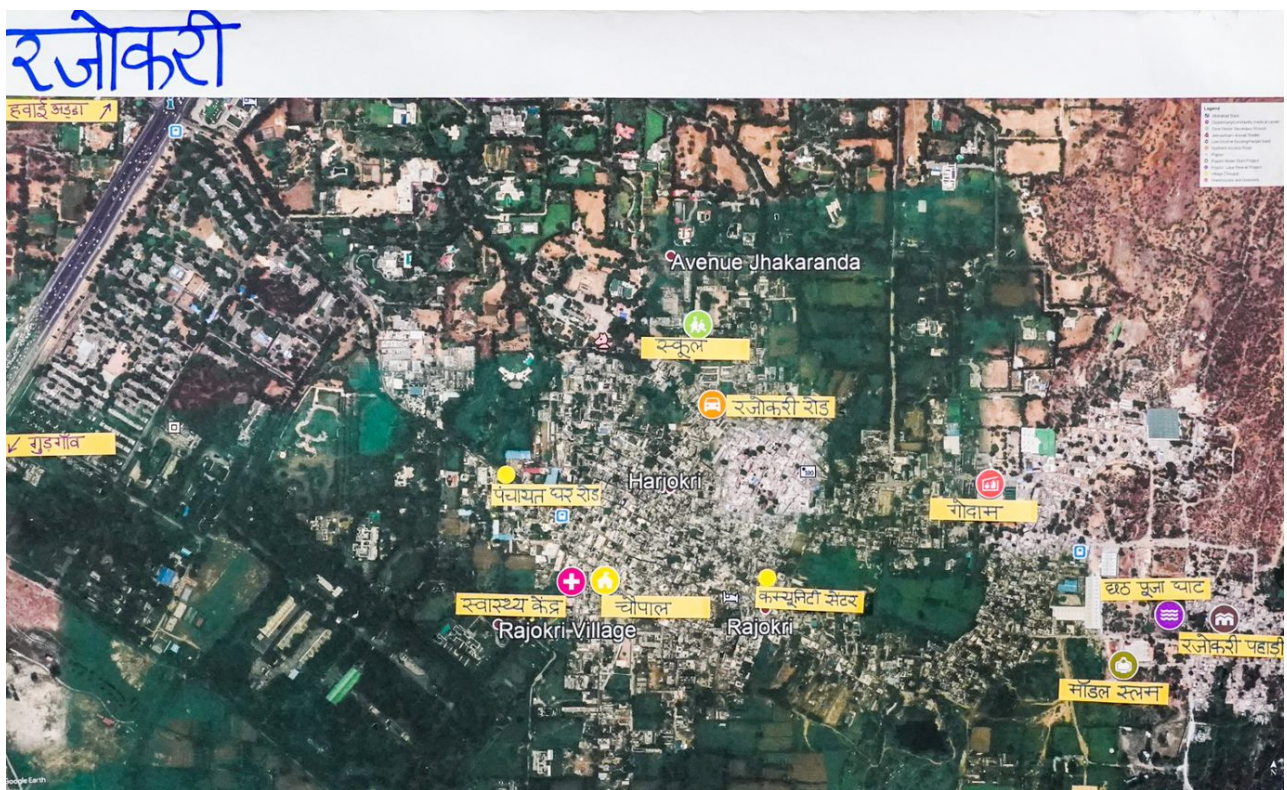
Focus group discussions were conducted with a cross section of stakeholders to ensure diversity of opinions. The FGDs included participation from elected representatives MLA Naresh Yadav, government officials, senior community members, village residents, *anganwadi* workers and local health offi-



cers. It was ensured that women, adolescent groups and younger members of the community were also represented. However, community members insisted on holding two separate FGDs for original village inhabitants and the residents of the informal settlement at separate venues since they identified as separate groups and had varied interests. Separate FGDs were accommodated to secure participation and opinions from all sub-groups. While two different FGDs were conducted, common themes were discussed within them. Some of these included:

- Settlement history, growth trends and urban transitions
- Socio economic and livelihood factors
- Current service infrastructure level in the village and status of community resources
- Key challenges and future aspirations
- Institutional accountability, channels of engagement with relevant officials and elected leaders

The primary objective for conducting the FGDs was identifying key issues or problems that the community faces with respect to their infrastructural facilities and resources. This helped in gauging which domains or issues required immediate action. Needs identified by both FGDs were collated and overlapping interests and needs were prioritized to aim for maximize impact. The community needs assessments aided in moving towards brainstorming on possible solutions and planning interventions for improvement in quality of community life and built environment of the settlement. Illustrations and design solutions were devised for the key challenges identified by the community which were presented during the Village Design Charrette workshop.



Map of Rajokri village with major landmarks and facilities in the village settlement marked during the field survey





Image. 18 (Top L to R) Studying plans of the of the local lake revival project and STP plant at Rajokri Pahadi with officers from Irrigation and Flood Control dept; community shelter in Rajokri ; (Middle L to R) Rapid strategic Interviews carried out with key informants like Headmistress, Government Senior Secondary School, Rajokri and Head officer at Mohalla Clinic, Rajokri; (Bottom) Focus Group Discussion conducted with multiple stakeholders including elected representative (Mehrauli Constituency MLA Naresh Yadav in the centre), Anganwadi members and village residents In Rajokri Pahadi area`



**Table 3: Key issues identified in the community needs assessment and possible design solutions devised for improving community facilities in Rajokri village, NCT**

Issues Identified	Proposed Design Solution
<b>Poor street design; lack of transport access and service infrastructure</b>	<p>a. Mixed street design for access roads and paved streets which harmonizes space for pedestrian movement and motorized transport; improve street signage.</p> <p>b. Vertical stacking of infrastructural services (sanitation, water and electricity supply lines to be stacked vertically with spillover buffers)</p> <p>c. Improving last mile connectivity via provision of feeder buses, e-ricks with bus stands through the main village and <i>pahadi</i> areas</p>
<b>Poor social infrastructure; lack of community facilities</b>	<p>Creating an amenities clusters which acts as a community hotspot. This entails creating multi-purpose facility which has a bus stand, Wi-Fi hotspot, CCTV and/or police chowki, bill payment/complaints box, medical dispensary outpost, <i>Anganwadi</i> centre/<i>baraat ghar</i>, public convenience facility. The facility can be solar powered and integrated it with existing infrastructure at locations such as:</p> <p>a. DUSIB Shelter in Rajokri <i>Pahadi</i> area/BSS Camp area</p> <p>b. Village <i>chaupal</i> or community centre in Rajokri main village</p>
<b>Common spaces for leisure/recreation</b>	<p>Redeveloping existing spaces/facilities into usable, accessible and multi-functional spaces for the community members to meet and play. For e.g. redeveloping the open playground next to DUSIB shelter through provisioning of shaded areas, furniture such as park benches and lights and dedicated play areas for children</p>
<b>Solid waste management</b>	<p>Encouraging onsite segregation and dedicated lots for local waste collection; tie up with local wetland for composting organic waste.</p>

## Day 2: Village Design Charrette in Rajokri

- Reiteration of key issues discussed during focus group discussions and open discussion on existing challenges for community in Rajokri
- Evaluation and prioritization of proposed design solutions addressing community needs voting
- Recap of learnings from the charrette workshop, available channels for collaboration and importance of creating village development plans for integrated development of urban villages

Taking inputs from the discussions with community members and focus areas identified by them, the team from WRI India facilitated a Design Charrette workshop where issues and blueprint for design solutions were presented before the village community in visually driven formats. The interactive session involved a detailed discussion amongst the participants who observed, deliberated upon and critically evaluated each design solution out of a total of four propositions (presented in a framework of the *samasya* i.e. issue/problem; *samadhan* i.e. solution; *sujhav* i.e. suggestion and *chunav* i.e. voting). Their suggestions and critique were incorporated under the suggestions section provided with each set of issues-solution to improve on the proposed design and add to its local relevance.

Consequently, community members evaluated and prioritized the most relevant design propositions according to their preference. The prioritization exercise carried out through an open voting exercise



provided community members a platform to deliberate on local issues and ideas for future interventions that address vital needs of the community. During the open floor discussions, women and children pressed upon the need for channels where their opinions and voices could be heard and incorporated within planning processes. Out of the four issues-solutions (detailed in Table 3), residents from Rajokri prioritized the following as their most crucial challenge and its likely solutions through an open voting system:

**Issue 1:** Poor street design; lack of service infrastructure and transport access

**Proposed Intervention:** Mixed street design, vertical stacking of service infrastructure, last mile connections through feeder buses and e-rickshaws for improved transport access

**Issue 2:** Poor social infrastructure and lack of community facilities

**Proposed Intervention:** Creating an amenities clusters which acts as a community hotspot

Further, a visioning wall (titled ‘*Humara Rajokri aisa ho*’) was used to engage the community members to discuss and/or visualize what the residents aspire for with respect to their village’s future and how these aspirations could be realized. It provided a platform to document community voices on needs for skilling centres and local employment, development of internal road network and minibuses for women’s safety and improving the ambit of *Anganwadi* resources that currently were limited to offering mid-day meals to toddlers. Issues of negotiating with the government officials on securing tenure for the residents of informal settlements of BSS camp on Rajokri Pahadi and improving water supply and solid waste collection in the area were also outlined. The workshop provided a forum to collectively assess key challenges and possible solutions for households and community at large. It also initiated questions on what community members can do to negotiate for their demands in the future and the need for making planning processes grounded and community centric.

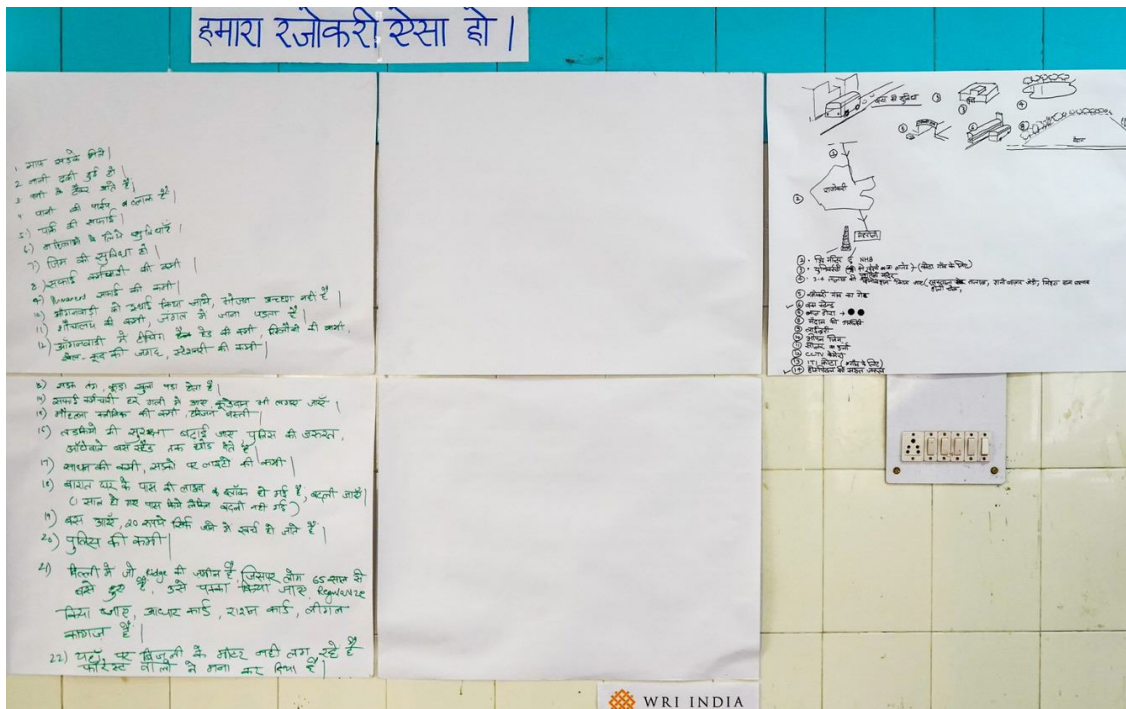


Image. 19 Visioning wall for community members to visualise and express their aspirations and demands for Rajokri’s future



Image. 20 Design charrette began with discussions with village communities about their village, current challenges and personal experiences which was followed by demonstrations of possible design solutions. Community members deliberated and evaluated these proposals and performed a voting-based prioritization. The workshop then progressed into having open floor sessions where future development needs and aspirations for Rajokri were discussed amongst community members. Female residents and residents from the basti lacking tenure security shared their own challenges and needs in smaller groups.





Image. 21 Design solutions suggesting mixed street design and improved connectivity (above) and Creating an amenities cluster (below) were voted as the most preferred solutions for improving community life in Rajokri. Upgrading common resources was considered by the community as most beneficial since it affected the entire community.



## 6.4 KEY LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS FOR RAJOKRI VILLAGE

The workshop provided a platform to introduce a collaborative, community centric and localized planning exercise which engaged the community as decision makers at formative stages rather than relegating them to end users within a planning intervention. The workshop brought together a diverse set of stakeholders from various groups such as elected representatives, government officials, community members on a common platform to dialogue and collaborate on identifying issues as and prioritizing possible solutions that are relevant for the improvement of community life in Rajokri. To the government officers present in the consultations organized by WRI India, it reasserted the co-benefits of localizing development planning. Focus group discussions and the Design Charrette in Rajokri not only identified common challenges but highlighted the presence of differentiated access to existing services between residents of Rajokri village, pahadi area or the BSS camp and the Harijan basti. Discussions at the workshop also revealed a high level of segregation that may exist within local areas and the need for planning solutions that can permeate stratified communities to improve on-ground conditions. The community workshops aided in improving community awareness and learnings from the consultations undertaken as part of the study may help in building towards creating urban village development plan frameworks in the future.

## 6.5 ON-GROUND STUDY AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS IN GHOGA

Under this research initiative, the second needs assessment and community workshop were organized in Ghoga between 14th-17th December 2019.

### Day 1: Field Survey and Community Needs Assessment

- Gauging on-ground situation & status of community facilities through transect walks on site
- Undertaking community needs assessment through Focus Group Discussions with multiple stakeholders

Day 1 commenced with a field survey of Ghoga village facilitated by members of the office of the local MLA, field workers of the Delhi govt. and village panchayat leaders who identified key landmarks of the village including senior secondary school, panchayat ghar (*chaupal*), local crematorium as well as the community centre, village lake (*johad*) and community toilet block which were in a dilapidated state. Transect walks through the village aided in assessing the social and spatial organization of Ghoga, locate village boundary and access roads (*phirni*) in order to understand Ghoga's spatial organization.

Following the field survey, focus group discussion was conducted with stakeholders from the community members. Strong prevalence of purdah system observed amongst the residents of Ghoga restricted the adequate representation of women amongst FGD participants. However, it was ensured that women, adolescent groups and younger members of the community were also consulted in separate sub-groups. Some of the themes discussed in the FGDs included:

- History of settlement, growth trends and urban transitions
- Socio economic and livelihood factors
- Current service infrastructure level in the village and status of community resources
- Key issues-needs- concerns of the community
- Key challenges and future aspirations
- Institutional accountability, channels of engagement with elected representatives



*Image. 23 (top left) Conducting transect walks to study the spatial organization and built up of the settlement in Ghoga village; (top right) Focus Group Discussions with male community members at Ghoga was organized at the village square to conduct Community Needs Assessment. Women were consulted in separate session due to prevailing gender segregation in the village; (Middle) Common spaces and social infrastructure in Ghoga was found to be in poor condition during the field survey. The village community hall planned as a multipurpose space is lying dysfunctional and crumbling down, posing a threat to residents and children who use the unkempt ground to play. Reported to have been inaugurated by PM Nehru in the mid- 1950s when he visited Ghoga with the President of Ghana, the structure and its precincts were strewn with debris, solid waste and cow dung when we visited. (Bottom) The village lake has dried up and now acts as a waste dump. It is bordered by informal settlements.*





Map of Ghoga village with major landmarks and facilities in the village settlement marked during the field survey

The primary objective for conducting the FGDs were identifying key issues or problems that the community faces with respect to commonly shared facilities and resources in the village. This helped in gauging which domains or issues required immediate action. The community needs assessment aided in moving towards brainstorming on possible solutions and planning interventions for improvement in quality of community life and built environment of the settlement. Design solutions for the key challenges identified by the community were illustrated and presented through the collaborative sessions planned under the Village Design Charrette workshop.



**Table 4: Key issues identified in the community needs assessment and possible design solutions devised for improving community facilities in Ghoga village, NCT**

Issues Identified	Design Solution
<b>Poor street design and road infrastructure, lack of connecting roads</b>	<p>a. Standardizing <i>Gali</i> design to improve road width and harmonize space by covering open drains, vertically stacking supply lines, standardizing seating space along household thresholds. Re-adjusting heights of street surfaces to avoid water inundation</p> <p>b. Improving connectivity with neighboring villages like Kadlupur as well as the state highway by building internal connecting roads to improve access</p>
<b>Poor social infrastructure; lack of community facilities like health-care center and/or dispensaries</b>	<p>Creating an amenities clusters which acts as a community hotspot. Creating multipurpose facility which addresses basic community needs like healthcare, recreation. It can incorporate a skill center for women, bus stand, Wi-Fi hotspot, CCTV and/or police chowki, bill payment/complaints box, medical dispensary outpost, reading room/library, <i>Anganwadi</i> center/<i>baraat ghar</i>, public convenience facility. The facility should be Renewable Energy based and can be designed by revitalizing existing infrastructure such as the dwindling community hall</p>
<b>Lack of common spaces for recreation, dilapidated village lakes</b>	<p>Revitalizing <i>johar</i> land (which once was the site of the local village pond) currently strewn with garbage into an accessible lake site for community use through lake revival creating new recreational parks. Integrating local lake with a playing field with open gym for the youth and adding park furniture such as gazebos or provide shaded seating areas, dedicated play areas for children</p>
<b>Solid waste management</b>	<p>Encouraging onsite segregation and dedicated lots for local waste collection, tie up with local wetland for composting organic waste</p>

## Day 2: Village Design Charrette in Ghoga

- Reiteration of key issues discussed during focus group discussions on existing challenges for community in Ghoga
- Evaluation and prioritization of proposed design solutions addressing community needs through an iterative participatory planning exercise
- Recap of learnings from the charrette workshop, available channels for collaboration and importance of creating village development plans for integrated development of urban villages

Taking inputs from the discussions with community members and focus areas identified by them, the team from WRI India facilitated a Design Charrette Workshop where possible design solutions for each issue were presented before the village community in visual formats. Local language was used for designing all workshop aids. The interactive session involved a detailed discussion amongst the participants who observed, deliberated upon and critically evaluated each design solution out of a total of four propositions (presented as the *samasya* i.e. issue/problem; *samadhan* i.e. solution; *sujhav* i.e. suggestion and *chunav* i.e. voting). Their suggestions and critique were incorporated under the suggestions section provided with each set to improve on the proposed design and add to its local relevance. Consequently, community members evaluated, ranked and prioritized the most relevant design propositions according to their preference. The prioritization exercise carried out through an open voting exercise provided community members a platform to deliberate on local issues and ideas for future interventions that address vital needs of the community. Out of the four issues-solutions (detailed in the table 4), residents from Ghoga prioritized the following as their most crucial needs that required immediate action:

**Issue 1:** Poor social infrastructure and lack of community facilities like healthcare facilities

**Proposed Intervention:** Creating an amenities clusters which acts as a community hotspot with focus on basic healthcare and medical facilities

**Issue 2:** Lack of common spaces for recreation; dilapidation of village lake

**Proposed Intervention:** Revitalizing *johad* land (village lake) currently strewn with garbage into an accessible lake site for community use through lake revival and creating new recreational parks. Integrating local lake with a playing field with open gym for the youth and adding park furniture such as gazebos or provide shaded seating areas, dedicated play areas for children.

### सुझाव

1. शाही का प्रोग्राम ले पाए
2. आज तक Dispensary नहीं बनी।
3. शोभा और एकरसिटी सेंटर
4. मिथवा के लिए कारखाना काम करने के लिए
5. C.G.M.S. ड डिस्पेंसरी मोहल्ला क्लिनिक
6. चंद्र नगर और फुटिंग
7. गाँव के लिए ट्यूबवेल कैम्पवात खुले
8. डे बिल्डिंग का करार।

### समस्या







**समाजिक सुविधाओं का अभाव, देखभाल में कमी।**

### चुनाव







### प्रस्ताव




**नया बहु-उद्देशीय सामुदायिक केंद्र।**

### समस्या

**सूखाव गाँव जोड़, खेलने एवं मिलने की जगह की कमी।**



### चुनाव



### सुझाव

- ① शाशासन घाट तालाब का काम अटार्स पर काम।
- ② खेलने बूझने का पार्क
- ③ शाही कच्ची-डू, 3 गलियों/गलियों-पक्की की जगह।
- ④ गलियों-3 निचो जैविका न सखाव, नया सिखार जगह।

### प्रस्ताव

**जोड़ों का नवीनीकरण, पार्क का निर्माण एवं खेलने के लिये मैदान।**

Image. 26 Design solutions suggesting amenities cluster and revitalization of common spaces through the lake revival and park were voted as the most preferred solutions for improving community life in Ghoga.

A visioning wall was used to initiate a community driven engagement on what the residents wish for with respect to Ghoga's future and how this could be realized (titled 'Humara Ghoga aisa ho'). It provided a platform to document community voices and needs. However due to low incidence of literacy and hesitation from members, the wall for future vision did not evoke response. Residents felt more comfortable in speaking in small breakout groups.

Women emphasized the need for channels where their opinions and voices could be heard and incorporated within local decision making and planning interventions. Due to the high incidence of gender-based discrimination and social practices like *purdah*, women's voices often remained marginalized even in panchayat decisions. They used the forum of the workshop to speak about the lack of employment opportunities, skill centers or home-based jobs in the area and requested for documenting their issues. Another key issue raised by the community at large and amplified by the women's group was of lack of healthcare facilities especially for the aged, pregnant women and young females.



Image. 27 Women were provided dedicated sessions within the community workshop to discuss their issues and experiences apart from being engaged in joint session to discuss community concerns during the Design Charrette

The workshop allowed for assessment of key challenges that Ghoga residents face and discuss solutions which could help them. It also initiated questions on what community members can do to negotiate for their demands in future and an urgent need for extending social infrastructure to urban villages in the capital's periphery.





Image. 28 The Village Design charrette was facilitated via structured discussions with village communities about challenges and personal experiences which was followed by demonstrations of possible design solutions. Community members deliberated and evaluated these through a voting-based needs prioritization. The workshop then progressed into having an open floor session where future development needs and aspirations for Ghoga village were discussed amongst the various groups. Women shared their own challenges and needs in dedicated dialogue groups.

## 6.6 KEY LEARNINGS AND NEXT STEPS FOR GHOGA VILLAGE

The workshop provided a platform for introducing decentralized and collaborative planning as a tool to achieve integrated development for urban villages like Ghoga that are still in the early stages of making a rural to urban transition and is dependent of farming incomes. The community workshop helped in raising awareness about the importance of planning through a community centric approach amongst residents of Ghoga who expressed feeling far removed and unheard by state and planning authorities.

The workshop brought together diverse groups together to engage with each other and collaborate on identifying and prioritizing issues and possible solutions that are relevant for the improvement of community life in Ghoga. Simultaneously, it revealed the high level of segregation that may exist within communities based on their ritual practices and customs. While the hall at the Hindu temple used for organizing community functions and festivals was made available by the community to organize the workshop due to the poor upkeep of the *panchayat* office, this location might have acted as hindrance for communities who do not enjoy easy access this space. Similarly, women might require specialized services like neo natal care, adolescent training and skilling for home-based jobs, which differ significantly from the needs for a government dispensary or recreational space expressed by senior male members of Ghoga who form an overwhelming majority in the village.

Documentation and dissemination of findings from the on-ground engagement to relevant authorities and amongst the community can inform discussions on ways to address current and future needs of the community in Ghoga for improving service provisioning and quality life. Community perspectives gathered from Ghoga also reasserted the need for a graded and contextually relevant approach.

Learnings from the secondary study, primary fieldwork and community consultations undertaken in Rajokri and Ghoga will be used to devise an Urban Village Development Plan Framework to provide a way forward for how urban village settlements could be better provisioned for.

## Annexures

### ANNEXURE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY TEMPLATE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

#### On Urban Transitions and Growth Trends:

- Could you elaborate on the history of your village settlement?
- Could you identify the key Landmarks and features in and around the settlement?
- Do you think your village has undergone change in the last few decades? If yes, what kind of changes have you noted?

#### On Socio economic and livelihood factors:

- Describe the nature of the settlement, primary means of livelihood, social and economic composition of the village.
- What changes have you observed on the land ownership and land use patterns. How have these changed over the years?

#### On Key issues, needs and concerns of the community:

- Could you detail out the current service infrastructure level in the village with respect to household Level services like piped water access, sanitation provision, electricity supply, roads and street lighting, solid waste management.
- Do you use public spaces in your village? How?
- What is the current status of commonly held village resources and spaces? Do you have community health centers, educational institutions, community toilets, common water sources, community centers? (Probe. children's play area, spaces for community festivals, village panchayat meetings)
- What are the key issues and challenges faced by the community?
- What are your immediate concerns and issues?
- What are your aspirations for the future of your village and community?

#### Institutional challenges:

- How is the maintenance of public facilities ensured?
- Do you know or meet your local government officers or relevant authorities?
- How is your relationship with elected representatives and local officials in your area? What channels of engagement do you use? (Probes- accessibility, frequency, accountability)
- Where do you go to make complaints or to seek grievance redressal?

#### Ideas for future intervention:

- Which areas or issues require immediate action?
- What does the community need for improvement in quality of community life and built environment of the settlement?
- What kind of involvement in planning does the community wish to maintain for future interventions?



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