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**Circulatory Lives in the
Mumbai-Konkan region**

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Contents

Chapter 1: Summary of the Study

In this study, we explore how individuals in families and communities express their dual belonging to 'a home' that can exist in different places. Such an expanded terrain of belonging is a reality for several people in the region under study – Mumbai city in western India and the coastal region of the Konkan. The sense of belonging is expressed concretely in acts of investment in the construction of homes and their internal and external aesthetic. It is also expressed in religious rituals and events, which are both enduring and evolving. Media, in particular social media, have now also been integrated into their lives.

The journey between places, and the virtual and real communication lines that people inhabit, forms a unified moment within their lives.

The various locations where people find themselves, form a unified field to produce "the context" in which people live. Through describing "micro" movements and relationships of a set of people, the study suggests larger patterns that bring together worlds usually conceived as being apart.

This study specifically looks at their dynamic lives in which the meaning of 'home' has a special resonance. It looks at institutions like the family as a mode of physical and social mobility and the act of construction of homes and sacred spaces as an elaboration of this mobility. Physical transport, communication channels and financial flows facilitate physical as well as social mobility.

The ethnography is centred around the lives of four families and a religious group. The main thematic of the documentation is the way they operate across two distant locations of homes (or sacred sites), one in Mumbai and the other in their village in the Konkan district of Ratnagiri, around 350 kilometers from the city.

It presents these experiences within a frame of narratives that the members articulate about the localities in which they live in and how they navigate the embedded duality of their homes – which signify a shared space but operate from two distinct places.

The study asserts the following:

1. The lives of many urban Indians remain connected to their points of ancestral origin, usually a village.

2. Family and community ties play an important role in keeping these connections alive, and in fact are the means through which these connections are maintained.

3. An annual calendar of meetings around festivals and family occasions, kept active over generations, is one very important mode through which families and communities do this.

4. Constructing homes in the village and the city, using joint resources, is a very important manifestation of these ties.

5. The railways (only 20 years old in this region) as well as smart phones have made these ties and connections easier to navigate, and have accelerated the pace of these movements. However we would like to emphasize that these technologies did not have a causal role in the story of mobility in this region. They have accelerated older modes of mobility that already existed.

6. Livelihood and education are important causes for moving from the village to the city.

7. Marriage ties, community solidarity, familial support, social security are causes for moves from the city to the village.

8. The reason for framing these movements in terms of circularity is rooted in a vast amount of studies done on circularity as a mode of mobility in India by historians and scholars of contemporary India, especially on migration and urbanization.

9. Circularity of movement is a way in which people cope with and shape the envi-

ronments they live in against several odds – for example, lack of resources in either of their two localities.

10. People and their movements, configured through familial and community contexts are also changing the nature of those contexts – which may be articulated as rural and urban, but are concretely expressed in more ambiguous or complex ways.

11. As urban practitioners, we consider it extremely important to acknowledge these complexities, and to question taken for granted notions of the urban and rural. We can see for example, how urban villages connected to fishing, forests and farming persist in some form or the other even within the fabric of the metropolis. At the same time we also understand the village to be part of seasonal labour supply networks that have created a dynamism and multi-sectorality in rural contexts for a long time.

12. Narratives that dominate urban studies today typically tend to visualize one way channels of movements between rural and urban contexts, concentrating only on the growth of megacities. In reality, urbanization unfolds in uneven, networked and dispersed modes.

13. This happens especially across vast terrains in India, where rural and urban connections remain lubricated by an accessible railway network, but existed prior to the railways as well.

14. All these factors suggest the need for more realistic rural-urban policies for India, and possibly other parts of the world. Such moves will facilitate better urban practices with far reaching impact on architecture, urban planning, livelihood options and resource use.

15. The study is based on a larger timeframe when mapping the movements of members. It pays attention to persistent, rhythmic movements over large tracts of time. The fact that people keep relations between the village and the city over generations is signifi-

cant. Within this framework we have recorded and analysed how individuals within families and communities move between homes, and for what reason, but the main axioms of the story are connected to established long term relations, movements between two homes, establishing a shared geographical imaginary across the village and the city, transformations of habitats and understanding what this circularity of people's lives means within the larger realm of urban experiences.

16. It was agreed upon between the Forum and Urbanology, that the main methodology of the study would be ethnographic portraits of individuals and families, which are enmeshed in community networks. This was understood to be important because a detailed and micro-level reading of specific case-studies would throw more light on these long-distance and long-lasting relationships between places that shape urban and rural lives in India. It was deemed more fruitful to look closely into the lives of some representative people, than measure movements of larger numbers of people without being able to examine their choices, reasons, thought processes and visions in a more intimate and detailed way.

Map of India
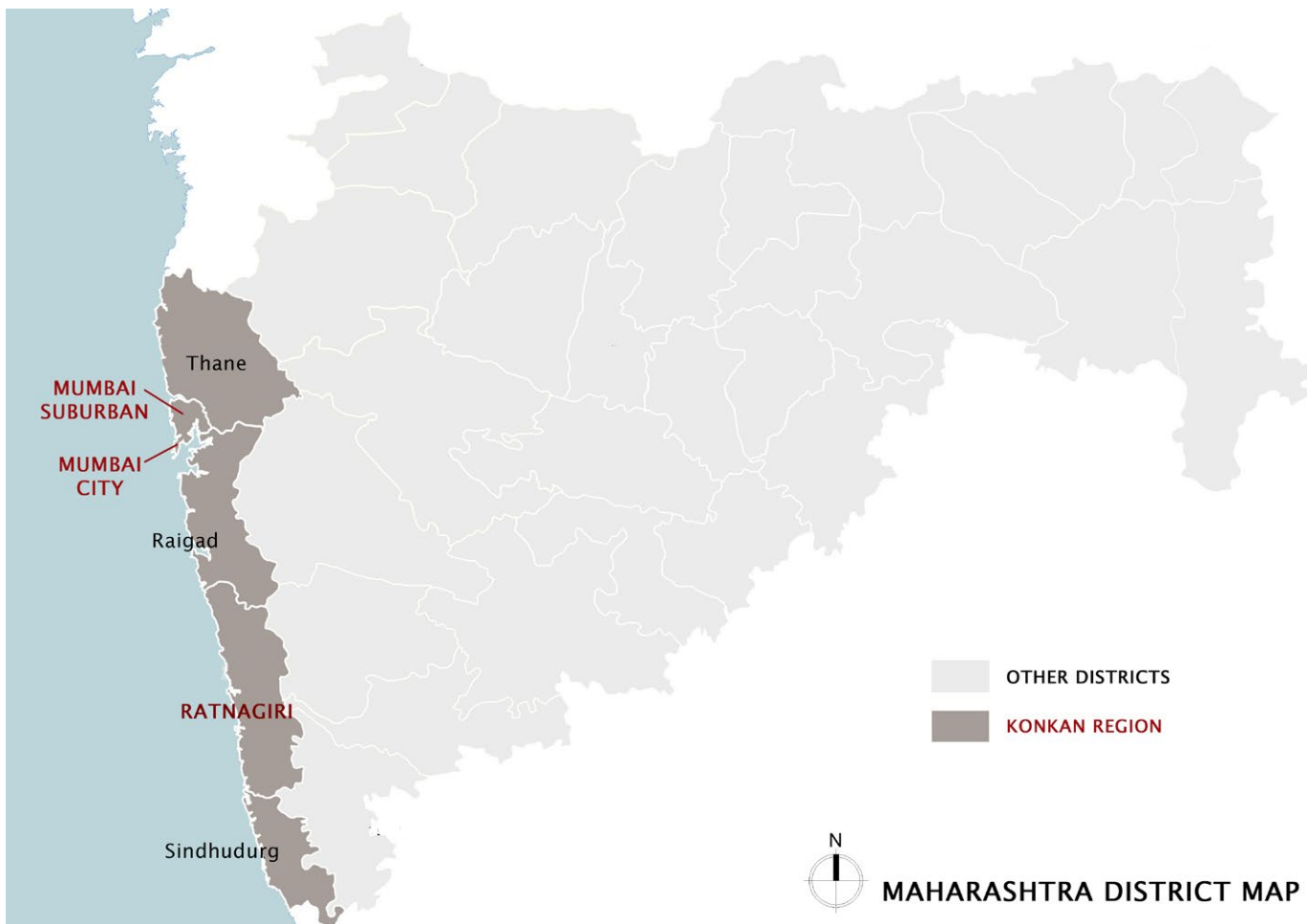
Top; Map of Maharashtra, *Bottom*; Map of Konkan region

Meet the protagonists:

The Kules (of Kondhe and Bhandup)

Top; Parshuram in the front, with his family at their house in, *from left*; Vasanti, Ramdas, Laxmi, Shreysh, Pratiksha, Deepak, Umesh, Dhruva and daughter Sara. *Bottom*; Ramdas, Laxmi, and their son Deepak, his wife Dhruva and grandaughter Sara in their family home in Bhandup, Mumbai.

Meet the protagonists:

The Takles (of Songiri and Bhandup)

Top; Shantaram and his wife Shevanti in the front, with their sons Keshav and Manohor, with his wife Sindhu and their son Akshay Takle. Their neighbour is also in the photo. Songiri. *Bottom from left*; Ankit, Yogita, Yeshwant and Akshay Takle outside their home in Bhandup, Mumbai.

Meet the protagonists:

The Jadhavs (of Ukshi and Naigaon)

Top; Ashok Kanha Jadhav and his whole family in front of their home in Ukshi. *Below*; Anjali (centre right) Ashok Jadhav with her sons Amit, Sunil, Ajay and their wives Krutika, Rasika, Pooja and grandaughter Spurha, Naigaon Dadar, Mumbai.

Meet the protagonists:

The Mohites (of Kotluk, Hedavi and Naigaon)

Top; From left Karuna, Bandhu, their daughter Bhumika outside their home in Kothluk. *Bottom from the left*; Sanjana, Sanjay holding his daughter Akshara, Sanjay's mother Asha, and their relatives from the village in the family home in Naigaon Dadar, Mumbai.

Meet the protagonists:

The religious group (of Kandoshi and Bhandup)

Top; Avadhoot Baba temple in Bhandup, Mumbai. *Bottom*; Avadhoot Baba temple in Kandoshi, Ratnagiri.

Chapter 2. Introduction

2.1 Assumptions of Study

In India, historical and ethnographic probes reveal that circulatory movements of migrant families and groups, connected to seasonal changes and availability of jobs, is a persistent phenomenon, (Deshingkar, 2010). They are found even in stable urban environments and in relatively good socio-economic conditions. For example, when people have a secure tenancy in the city or have moved up the mobility ladder, they still keep some connections with their ancestral places, usually a village. At most it involves several visits a year or an active part of the joint family keeping a working household back home and at the least, it could be in the form of maintaining some connections through land-ownership or via a joint-family member who has stayed behind.

Circulatory migration and the accompanying two-way rural urban movements, remain a significant statistical presence, spreading across large territories, thanks mainly to easy access to railway infrastructure, which is used extensively by the concerned population in India (Prasad, 2015).

The Indian railway has created channels of mobility that has made to and fro movements – over short term as well as long-term spans - an everyday reality for most migrant groups. These circulatory movements are structured by a dual sense of home and belonging where home exists in two places even as it represents one united or shared familial or community space.

The railway, created under colonial rule and massively expanded post independence, has, according to Ravi Ahuja (Ahuja, 2004) accelerated the historical propensity of India's labour force to be on the move. This has created expanses of movement, often in circulatory mode with a strong to and fro connect, that cover vast distances infusing dynamism in all the landscapes enclosed within the footprint of these movements – from the big metropolitan centers, to the smaller towns, right up to the door-steps of several villages that are part of the rural network that comprises India.

This study follows earlier investigations on the theme, "Circulatory Urbanism: The Konkan Railways and Mumbai's Urban System", submitted to the Forum for Mobile Lives in 2013. It takes these circulatory lives as its starting point. It goes into a detailed investigation of four families and one religious sect. They are all based in Mumbai with ancestral roots in the district of Ratnagiri on the Konkan coast, approximately 350 kilometers south of the city. Two families are part of stable urban contexts – even though they come from socio-economically marginal communities, called the Neo-Buddhist Dalits[1]. They live in the colonial mass-housing projects of the early 20th century, B.D.D (Bombay Development Directorate) chawls (workers barracks) of Naigaon, Dadar, Mumbai. The second wing of each of the two families is based at their respective ancestral village in the district of Ratnagiri.

The other two families are from communities said to be ritually higher than the Dalits, but are still marginal, according to official categorizations, that calls them the "Other backward Classes"[2]. They are based in Uttkarsh Nagar, an officially notified slums in Bhandup, Mumbai. This can be seen as a comparatively insecure habitat. These families also have active connections to their particular ancestral village in Ratnagiri district.

The fifth case, a religious sect, whose followers are from mixed-castes, emerged around the spiritual charisma of its founder who established it in the 1980s. The recently deceased guru belonged to a marginal caste – a family of carpenters. One temple of this sect is based in a settlement (also a notified slum, close to Uttkarsh Nagar) in Bhandup in Mumbai, and the other in a village in Ratnagiri.

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1   Neo-Buddhists - Dalits, refer to exuntouchables, a scheduled caste in India, who collectively converted to Buddhism under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of India's most luminous political visionaries, himself from the same community. This happened in the middle of the twentieth century.

2   Other Backward Class (OBC) – is an official term signifying castes that are socially and educationally disadvantaged.

To provide perspective to the context of the communities to which these families belong, it would be useful to note that the Dalits, Tribal communities and officially designated "Other Backward Castes" constitute more than half of the total population of the country. Furthermore, in a city like Mumbai, where more than half of the city's demographic lives in chawls or settlements classified as slums, a majority of the residents in them belong to either of these categories – i.e. Dalit, Tribal or Other Backward castes. (Sahoo, 2016).

While the study supplements its research findings evoking a large amount of secondary research, it does not make any causality-based analysis nor attempts to draw co-relational parallels with any of the variables being analyzed. India, the state of Maharashtra and the city of Mumbai are too large aggregates, to show trends based on a study through four families and a religious group.

At the same time it must be said that these detailed ethnographic investigations, seek to open up more effective explanations about urbanization in contexts like India (and possibly elsewhere), which do not reflect conventional demographic shifts, or neat enumerative profiles.

To elaborate, it is useful to ask, what does it actually mean to say that a certain number of people have become urbanized in a city such as Mumbai which is dominated by dwellings that share more in common with a village? Especially in terms of social and community bonds? Or for that matter how do you classify a family, which has affiliations to both a city and its traditional village, as either rural or urban? Especially when members in the family may live in both places at different points of their lives and in no particular order?

The study makes a case for factoring in movement and mobility of people to conjure a more realistic understanding of urbanization in such contexts. It seeks to point at the multi-directional pull that exists in India, given the deep connections that exist with its large and populous agrarian hinterland that also happens to be a significant source of its urban labour supply.

Eventually the study questions the presence of firewalled urban and rural policies and makes a case for an integrated approach that does not oppose one realm to the other. It looks at mobility and movement as more than simply infrastructure to connect places. Instead it considers it to be a facilitator of connecting people, through the channel of family and community ties in which double-rootedness and belonging to more than one place, is part of the country's "reality-vision" (Ferreira, 1976).

At the same time, this study does not seek to make a polarized argument. It does not invalidate the vast documentation of rooted urban lives and histories that scholars in Indian cities have generated over the last century. For most of the older, stabilized and rooted residents, especially the middle and upper middle-classes, the narrative of urbanization is a given, with the metropolis as a final destination. Their concern around perceived one-way migration of rural to urban areas, feeds the standard fears about the proliferation of shanties and "slums". This is not surprising as the global norm of urbanization as an index of development also applies to India, with the government getting ready for a "shift" in demographic growth and most policies geared towards making urban India prepared for a rural to urban "transition" (Costa, 1988, Breman, 2009). However, as mentioned earlier, this is simultaneously accompanied by weariness around and impatience with, a projected inertia on its vast agrarian population rooted in thousands of networked villages that still dominate the national scenario.

This study emerges from a place of urban practice and reflection that is ultimately concerned with policy. It ends its journey with a section on policy making that attempts to provide a more realistic and effective approach to urbanization based on the assumptions listed above.

2.2 Structure of the Report

The study introduces its assumptions, structure and evolution of its intellectual journey in Chapter 1. The evolution of the study is particularly important to note because it follows an earlier set of inquiries, which were previously made in collaboration with the Forum for Mobile Lives in 2013. Explanations and elaborations of the theoretical framework that influences our assumptions, interpretations and analysis of data are presented in Chapter 2. A de-

tailed reading of the secondary research on the Indian context shapes the interpretation of the ethnography and the ideas that direct our approach.

The study looks at the conceptual configurations of the village, the city and the industrial habitat. It factors in physical mobility as a crucial variable in the story of these habitats. This mobility is as much connected to physical infrastructure like the railways, as it is to institutions such as the family and community, which facilitate the process substantially. The idea of the home and the family (joint and nuclear), the dimension of space and the context of place act as a grid upon which the circulatory lives of the five case studies are placed.

This comprises Chapter 3 dedicated to a Review of Literature. This secondary research is largely focused on previous historical, ethnographic and statistical data and inquiries done in the South Asian context with some relevant digressions to other parts of the world. Chapter 4 explains the methodology that produced the ethnography, which is our primary data. The study lets the ethnographies of the four families and the sect speak for themselves (in Chapter 5) while making its interpretations of the ethnography separately in the analytical section (Chapter 6). The policy recommendations (Chapter 7) are based on both, the ethnography and the secondary research and Chapter 8 summarizes the findings of the entire study in the form of a conclusion.

2.3 Evolution of the Study

It was in Goa that we started our first inquiries into the Konkan through a short study on Goa as a network and urban system[3].This study helped us develop an understanding of the region as a network of interconnected systems, which had only recently been connected by the newly developed Konkan railway, around twenty years ago. We were influenced substantially by Anthony Leeds and his study on cities, classes, and urban systems (Leeds, 1994) in developing our vision.

The desire was to go deeper into understanding the region as it would yield insights about Mumbai as well – since the city was an important part of the

3   Workshop called Bio-topical Goa, with the Royal Institute of Fine Art, Stockholm, 2010

horizon of the residents of the Konkan.

Towards this end, we submitted a proposal to the Forum for Mobile Lives which culminated in a study "Circulatory Urbanism: The Konkan Railways and Mumbai's Urban System" (Echanove, 2013). In its report, we explored the various urban systems that constitute the Konkan region, which had recently been connected by the railways. The focus was on six urban nodes – Roha, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Thivim, Udupi and Mangalore, all of them significant train stations on this route. We followed the movements of 100 plus travellers starting from each of the nodes and tracked them to the places they would eventually go to, forming intricate networks along the trail of the urban systems that each node spawned.

One of the most striking aspects of our study was the gradual realization that the coast was not simply an interconnected network of urban systems which was serviced by the railways, (which had substituted older modes of travel such as the steamer boats and road which also operated here) – but that the movements in the system were part of circulatory rhythms that revolved around specific functions – religious, familial and economic which had structured movements of people even before the railways were launched.

At that stage we referred to the study as one of "Circulatory Urbanism" in which the Mumbai story had become more integral than we initially started out with. Mumbai was not just one urban system connected to several but was the most overwhelmingly powerful force-field in which the whole region was embedded. Of course, today, the Konkan has other emerging centres as well, especially Goa and Mangalore, but Mumbai continues to play a dominant role.

The city dominates the economy of the region, like it has for more than a hundred years, when it used sea-routes to forge bonds across its hilly terrain. Those bonds, were more than just about physical movement between localities. They were and continue to be shaped by relationships mediated by families and communities. In fact the family as a vehicle of mobility, through which individuals managed to traverse large distances by maintaining points of connection between both places, became an important variable in the study. The ability of an

Kule family waiting to board the train to Ukshi from Mumbai.

individual to use relationships and the related networks of familial connections and bonds emerged as important indicators that needed further elaboration and understanding.

Moreover, family connections were embedded in community networks. This was seen rather tangibly in the habitats where they lived in Mumbai. If people belonged to poor communities and families their habitats in Mumbai corresponded to a similar spatial configuration in the city. Thus neighbourhoods such as B.D.D Chawls where the lower-middle class Dalit community lived, corresponded to the Dalit enclaves in the villages from where the families had originally migrated. Slightly more upper caste groups (that is to say relatively upper to the Dalit but still officially designated as Other Backward Castes) lived in neighbourhoods such as Bhandup, where others of the same community affiliation also resided.

In Mumbai rich and poor neighbourhoods often overlap with ethnic histories. Such community based configurations are inevitably connected to migratory patterns reflecting continued affiliations to points of origin (Patel, 2005).

Their movements are all channelled by families - which are the main mechanism through which people anchor themselves in both places. Very rarely does this relationship between the two places express itself as an independent affiliation - as if it was about an individuated relationship to the place. It is almost always connected to family history - and this is in turn shaped by community affiliations. Just as individual family members use the family as a means to support themselves in their dual habitation, the family uses the community affiliations to do the same. Neighbours in the city are often from the same broad region where they collectively come from.

We also noted that while the train is an important mode of transport - it is part of a larger constellation of mobility channels including buses and roads. Our previous study showed that the existing train network was simply not sufficient to absorb the demand of people using its services, which is why people took recourse to the road.

In the present study, we paid greater attention to the accompanying increase of communication channels. We saw the importance of new technologies

such as mobile phones and web based systems such as Whatsapp and Facebook becoming part and parcel of the circulatory urban rhythms we were describing.

In the first study with the forum we provided a detailed profile of the circulatory urban system that shapes the Konkan region's connections with Mumbai, even as it pulsates with its specific movements around its own circularities. At the end of the study we felt the need for detailing these movements and rhythms, of understanding how exactly people live in such a circulatory world and of elaborating the concept of circulatory urbanism in a stronger way - which lead us to this study.

At the conclusion of this study we are more confident about describing circulatory movements in concrete terms and seeing how such movements are integral to many lives, rural and urban that make up the vast sub-continent.

We continue to acknowledge Leeds vision of urban systems as a framework to understand the diversity of habitats that make up contemporary spaces. This makes us still inclined to use the phrase "circulatory urbanism" as a valid description of what we are describing. At the same time we are also aware of the heaviness the term "urbanism" evokes. It is deeply entrenched in a set of observations and commentaries that bi-furcate it very deeply from the rural and beyond. Brenner says all that is outside the "urban" gets put in a conceptual "black box" (Brenner 2014) that remains undefined, but nevertheless lands up shaping the urban realm through those very omissions. However, unpacking the concept of urbanism through such a reading is beyond the scope of the study at this stage. All we hope to do for now, is cast a spot-light on the complex reality of what constitutes cities today in many parts of the world – where the realm of the urban emains connected to movements and flows of people that loop between much larger spaces and regions, often involving habitats such as villages and the rural dimension at large. We will pursue the unpacking of the concept of urbanism in the next stage of our inquiries.

For now, thanks mainly to the several discussions with the Forum, we limit ourobservations to simply show-casing the above discussions with the Forum, we limit our observations to simply show-casing the

above described realty-vision. So we have rechristened the study as "Circulatory Lives".

Our focus remains on the circulatory movements which are key to understanding the complexities of settlements and the process of urbanization. The more we explain how exactly Circulatory Lives unfold, the quicker we hope to convince our readers/audience into understanding the true realities of rural-urban dynamics which, we then hope, will make way for more realistic and effective policies.

For the moment therefore, the argument for circulatory urbanism can wait. We need to describe the circulatory movements first and then use these descriptions to illustrate what is happening on the ground. If this opens up a way of evolving more effective policies of governance, both rural and urban, then we would consider this study to have achieved a significant goal.

2.4 Collaboration between Urbanology and the Mobile Lives Forum

We see the study as a result of a long-term intellectual exchange between the Forum for Mobile Lives and Urbanology. Urbanology is a space for practice, research and policy formation that has been around for nearly a decade with its primary base in Mumbai, but with offices now in Goa and Geneva and affiliate centers in Sao Paulo and Bogota. Its focus has primarily been on understanding urban lives to enhance better engagement, ultimately to make for better policy and practice. Our focus on issues of user-generated form and design as strategies for critical and creative practice and reflection, ranges from engaging with objects inhouseholds, to interiors, architecture, activities inside homes and neighbourhoods, the settlement and the socio-economic and political horizon of cities at large.

Talking and working with inhabitants of neighbourhoods such as Dharavi and Shivaji Nagar in Mumbai, to hoods in Geneva and in Latin American cities gave us a good starting point to ground our observations for the different research stages we were involved with, with the Forum.

At the same time the range of intellectual voices that exist within the forum, the diverse projects that they curated and the dynamic environment that

Bus arrives at a busy stop in Mumbai.

they provided were critical inputs for the evolving study. It was their focus on mobility, transport and communication that lead us to open up our horizon of Mumbai city and see it as connected to the Konkan. The debates on circulatory movements and urban systems helped us sharpen our observations about migrations and the rural-urban context. The railways as a crucial factor of this thematic changed fundamental assumptions for the study and helped us make sharper observations about rural-urban migration and circulatory movements.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.0. Introduction

Our theoretical framework references commentaries on habitats, urban spaces, anthropology, geography and mobility studies. They help us connect the different variables that constitute our study. These include families and communities, habitats in traditional and contemporary contexts, migration and movement patterns of groups and individuals, conceptions of space, home and belonging and the significance of circulatory movements in people's lives.

3.1 Three Archetypical Habitats

Jean Gottmann (Gottmann, 1973) observed that places are conjoined with subjective elements. Habitats are infused with a social-psychological component thanks to the way in which kinship and community relations shape their use, their expression and arrangements. While we see how the spirit of kin and community ties infuse all places in our ethnographic chapter, we see through a theoretical perspective, how movement of people links and impacts habitats, together.

We describe three habitats that are archetypical in the sense that they have come to be associated with representations of the urban and the rural. The way these habitats have been conceptualised and addressed at the policy-level has evolved over time, but as archetypes they still very much frame the debate, and this is why we believe it is important to present them here as archetypes first, and then as complex, sometimes hybrid habitats that cannot be neatly put in one category or the other. It is through our observations of the way mobility connects habitats and shapes them over time, that we come to question the larger categories of the urban and rural to which they belong. The three habitats we refer to throughout this study are:

i) The tenement or chawl: Chawls are an emblematic worker's housing typology from Mumbai's industrial age. Two of the families we followed live in B.D.D. chawls, Naigaon near Dadar, which were built in the 1920s.

ii) The slum: Slums mix up elements of the village and of the city. They represent an unplanned and ambiguous city, which houses the majority of Mumbai's inhabitants, including two of the families and the religious sect we followed. .

ii) The village: Rooted away from the city in a rural district, villages are imagined as the antithesis of the city. In Gandhian political philosophy the village is considered to be the locus of Indian identity and spirituality. In present-day policy and business circles, it is imagined to be backward and static, even though historical and sociological studies have for long debunked that myth.

These habitats are immediately infused with a social-psychological component thanks to the way in which kinship and community relations shape their use, their expression and arrangements. Gottmann's observation of place as conjoined with these subjective elements needs to be constantly kept in mind throughout the reading.

The ethnography chapter makes it clear how the spirit of kin and community ties infuse all places. Moreover, it also shows how even the movements of the protagonists are made possible as much by familial relationships as by the concerned technologies facilitating the actual act of being transported.

3.1.1 *The Worker Tenement in the Industrial City*

In classical Marxist literature there is no urban without industry. The urban is the locus of the secondary and tertiary sectors, while the rural is the territory of the primary sector. The archetypical habitat of the working class is the "barrack" modelled after military architecture. The production of this form of housing responds to the logic of optimization, where the workers are given only the bear minimum to keep them active. The rationalization of the means of production accompanies the rationalization of space in which the mechanized work becomes a fundamental aspect of the city. In Mumbai, chawls embody the functionalist and hygienist approach to

urban planning that predominated in the nineteenth century. Chawls are modern structures, often built with concrete, bricks and steel, they can also be built in stone as in BDD Chawls. What characterizes is their rational and minimalist architecture. They are large-scale, master-planned, mono-functional and high-density accommodations, which were initially conceived for factory workers away from their families and villages.

However, dehumanizing the picture may feel, to a low caste rural peasant in the early twentieth century moving to the city to work in a factory for a fixed wage, urban life in a chawl may have been experienced as relative improvement from the serfdom, patronage and dependence he left behind in the village. In the city he can emancipate himself from his caste, as he becomes part of a class that can organize itself politically, and claim collective rights at the workspace. The convergence of class-consciousness and urban landscape within revolutionary rhetoric represents political evolution in this worldview. Mumbai chawls have been the historical sites of Dalit emancipation in the pre and post independence area. This is where the most important figures of the Dalit movement, such as Dr Ambedkar have risen to political prominence.

Industrializing England and Western British India in the 19th century – the time when Engels was writing his commentary on working class life in Manchester, Dublin and London - had a very short time lag during the historical unfolding of modern urban industrial life. Mumbai saw very similar working and living conditions as did those in British towns at around that time. Chawls were aimed at controlling the sprawl of the kind of slums that Engels describes. They were usually designed as rows of small rooms with a common corridor and bathroom, stacked on several floors. Some of them were so well built that they are still used today, often by the descendents of the initial tenants. BDD Chawls, for instance, where two of the families in this study live, are still very much in use. In spite of redevelopment plans, they are very much the same that they were in the 1920s, where they were built in the first place. Other chawls were redeveloped or gradually absorbed into the slums that kept growing around them. These scenarios continued to persist all through industrialization, post-industrialization into contemporary times.

What Engels describes in Britain then remains valid in certain contexts in Mumbai even today – although with one crucial difference. As Cambridge historian and chronicler of the colonial working class of 19th century Mumbai, Raj Chandvarkar points out, (2002) the industrial proletariat here, never fully gave up the pull of the village. So on one hand the industrial workers settlements –chawls– thrived and were densely used, by workers and their families. However, the crowding of rooms did not mean that the workers had given up the village for good. In fact it was not just families of workers who came to the city but entire villages sometimes. According to Chandavarkar, even as early as in the 19th century, workers recruited from Ratnagiri district, were not fleeing the village permanently.

They came to the city in larger numbers during low agrarian cycles when they always looked for alternative work. In the past, this ranged from joining armies, to trading in nearby towns to working on fields in other rural districts. The newly industrializing city was one more alternative on the horizon, which sent out recruiters for industrial labour in the same way as they had earlier done for armies and agrarian labour in other regions.

It is in this sense that chawls in Mumbai represented something more than the emergence of a modern urbanism and class-consciousness. It consolidated communities and village ties, and allowed rural families and communities to access the city, while keeping active ties in the village, which reveals a political trajectory that was distinct from Engels observations in Britain.

Chawls in Mumbai were initially constructed by British rulers in the early 20th century – no doubt influenced by similar efforts at providing decent living standards to workers back in England, but also as an urgent response to contagious diseases spreading in Mumbai (Iyer, 2014). Thousands died from the plague, and thousands more fled the city, at the turn of the nineteenth century. This was a clear threat to the city's economic productivity, which pushed the government and factory owners to provide accommodation for the labourers.

The Bombay Development Directorate (B.D.D.) Chawls were a network of tenements built all over

the city around the 1920s to house industrial and civic workers who were part of the government civic force – primarily in the Public Works Department or the PWD. At that time Mumbai was becoming a major industrial hub, producing mostly cotton for export, to Europe. Sir George Lloyd, who governed the Mumbai Presidency then saw their construction as a necessity since the city was undergoing serious unrest triggered by abysmal conditions in which the vast majority of Indian workers lived. Factories owners soon copied the model to produce mass housing for their workers.

The residents of BDD Chawls, are primarily from the Dalit community. These are the one-time untouchables of India's complex caste system who were and remain an important part of the country's work force. Even today, most of them work as municipal workers or service providers. The BDD Chawls of Mumbai were the political stronghold of the Dalit movement, which was lead by Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar in the 1930s until independence. Dr. Ambedkar believed that moving to the city was an important step towards liberation from class oppression, as it gave Dalits a chance to earn their own wages and send their children to school.

Chandavarkar (2009) and Gyan Prakash (2010) point out that the political ambiguity of the workers movement in pure class terms was a result of the caste factor. Within mills and factories, ex-untouchables and other lower castes never fully mixed and this divide was part of a grid that spread from the village to the workspaces in the city, especially the residential enclaves like the chawls and workers tenements. In theoretical terms, the tenements were not moments of transition from rural to urban, from peasant to industrial proletariat but an extension of social identities that kept a firm grip over lives connecting villages to cities.

Family, community and village networks continued to shape contours in the city. Caste based mobilization among the Dalits was ideologically motivated to fight against the caste system itself and its political resistance was aimed at fighting the continuation of caste in an urban context. Dalit poets such as Daya Pawar war have written powerful memoirs, which show the complex ways in which transitions were happening (Pinto, 2015).

In a poem titled "The City", Pawar wrote:

> *One day someone dug up a twentieth century city*
> *And ends on this observation.*
> *Here's an interesting inscription*
> *"This water tap is open to all castes and religions."*
> *What could it have meant?*
> *That this society was divided?*
> *That some were high while others were low?*
> *Well, all right, then this city deserves burying—*
> *Why did they call it the machine age?*
> *Seems like the Stone Age in the twentieth century.*
> (Daya Pawar in Amar Nath Prasad, M. B. Gaijan, 2007)

Even among the poorest and most marginal families, the village was not forgotten. The city equipped the critical Dalit to emerge stronger and helped reinstate their identity on newer terms back in the village as well. So when fellow villagers came to share tiny spaces in the chawl to sleep when looking for jobs, when the corridors were filled with community brothers – the idea was not to escape the oppression of the village alone – but to consolidate forces in the city and return to the village stronger.

Towards this end a majority of industrial workers in early 20th century Bombay were from Ratnagiri District (Chandavarkar 2009). All through their lives as factory workers, they kept going back – especially during monsoon season, to help in the labour intensive rice fields. They sometimes took leave for three to four months – but often their fellow family member or villager would take their place in the factory in a circulatory relay network of work. These temporary substitutes would also stay in the same room in the city in that very tenement chawl. So not only were these spaces not a marker of transition from rural to urban lives, but in fact were means to continue the active links between the two places.

The industrial tenement represented a certain phase in Mumbai's history, when its administration and its self-perception as a modern city were in tune with a global narrative of rural-urban transition. However, its actual use was far more rooted in local

Top; BBD Chawls in Naigon. This is one of 42 buildings. Each building has 80 rooms where families of 8 or more people live. Each room is 13.5 square metres. *Bottom*; A corridor at BDD Chawls. They are always full of people and activity.

realities. When the narrative changed and the administrative approach to workers lives and housing changed, this form gave way to something more ambiguous and difficult to perceive – the slum. Slums developed partly because the city's incapacity to control and plan its own growth, and existed before and during the industrial period. However, it is really in Mumbai's post-independence and post-industrial period that they explode and become the default habitat of the majority.

3.1.2 *The Slum*

If one looks at the concept of slums across the world one is struck by the relativity of the term. In one context it appears as impoverished living in the most basic sense – without water and toilets – while in another it could denote a poorly maintained middle class housing complex that is seen as a slum in relation to the richer neighbourhood that surrounds it. In 19th century England, the industrial barracks were called slums because of the density and poor infrastructure, while in colonial Bombay the workers barracks were not necessarily described as slums. In fact chawls (as they were locally called) were often distinguished from slums – which were seen to be extensions of older village habitats, becoming anachronistic in a growing industrial city.

It is therefore vital to theoretically interrogate the concept. The term seems intent on fixing its meaning permanently to its 19th century English roots. A meaning that was actually part of a creative process, in which fiction (East End novels) played a powerful role in shaping perceptions about working class lives (London, 1903). The Victorian slum in these narratives was as much a site of fascination and fear based on class prejudices or middle-class objections to 'immoral' activities, including prostitution and crime, as it was about a genuine concern around over-crowding, poverty and hygiene. The moral conflation of immorality, crime and poverty was crucial to that narrative which continues to shape the reading of the term "slum".

The dominant imagination of the slum in academic and journalistic literature, in movies and narratives such as those by Katherine Boo (Boo, 2012) and Suketu Mehta (Mehta, 2004), is a habitat of despair. It is a dead-end for poor migrants lured to the city. The slum is pure exploitation: where dominant classes exploit poor labour; males dominate females.

Yet, a closer understanding of the space – especially when seen through its ability to be connected to far away habitats and villages that continue to shape its residents lives shows a more nuanced picture that needs to be understood more sensitively. It has strong family and community relations and vibrant local economies that also characterise life in slums. In spite of the popular slum-dog narrative people working closely in slum spaces in many parts of the world have pushed for a shift in perspective. More accurate studies have shown how in many parts of the world – especially Africa and South Asia - working class families and community life, continued bonds with ancestral villages, vibrant local economies can all be part of urban slum life. These certainly don't belong to the legacy of the "immoral, criminalized" Victorian slum.

Unfortunately, one common mistake people continue to do is substitute the term slum with euphemisms. These include "informal settlements", "informal neighbourhoods", "informal city", or "urban informality" when it comes to identifying certain types of habitats. In reality, tagging specific geographical areas as "informal" blurs more than it reveals. It distracts researchers and practitioners from the task of identifying the diversity of forms and the multiplicity of processes actually at work in a city or an economy. Terminological fuzziness is often a sign of an inability to grasp the complexities of a post-Industrial city that still struggles with issues of housing – especially for a population that is not simply accumulating in the urban enclaves but remains mobile and maintains active connections to the places they come from.

Mike Davis (Davis, 2006), and other academics see slums as expressions of capitalist oppression, with insurrectional – if not revolutionary – potential. Some anthropologists present them as hyper-competitive deregulated markets where only the strongest survive. International organizations and ambitious urban designers count and map ever-increasing numbers of slum dwellers, carelessly grouping all kinds of habitats under a broad category.

The slums of Mumbai are actually a very diverse lot. Hyper-productive Dharavi in Sion is different from Konkan residents dominated Utkarsh Nagar in

Officially notified slum, Bhandup, Mumbai.

Bhandup, which is a far cry from Shivaji Nagar in Govandi, which is a resettlement colony that was always treated as a slum.

Dharavi historically attracted several artisanal groups such as potters and leather workers who belonged to marginal communities. Neighbourhoods in Bhandup grew mostly when the mills in central Bombay declined and new industries grew in the northern regions and unlike Dharavi which is a major productive centre for goods, in Bhandup there are more people working in nearby factories and regular jobs. Most local economic activities tend to be around trade and small businesses. Shivaji Nagar is a diverse mix and remains a receptacle for very poor migrants coming from the villages. It has several enclaves which are extremely underserviced with a class of workers way below the lower-middle class spectrum, but it also has very well-constructed structures and a prosperous local economy. In short – they are all very distinct neighbourhoods.

Two of the families in our study come from Bhandup. The neighbourhoods Utkarsh Nagar and Sai Baba Nagar, are officially categorized as a "slum".

The settlements in Bhandup emerged when the industrial mills of central Mumbai shut down and many workers came to work in new factories set up in North-east Mumbai, where Bhandup is located. This happened mostly in the 1970s and 80s by which time the state's interest and willingness to create workers housing had declined, along with the power and influence of trade unions.

Scholars of the city such as Sujata Patel and Jim Masselos (Patel, 2005) see a direct co-relation with the political decline of organized labour in the city and the rise of the slum as a dominant habitat. However, a closer reading of events shows a more complex and uneven reality. Most well-known contemporary slum settlements, including in Bhandup (historically controlled by the agricultural Agri community) and Dharavi, (historically dominated by the Koli fishing community) have a village like template. Settlements grew incrementally, eventually overtaking agrarian land for housing. They provided accommodation for industrial workers, artisans, small-time traders and service providers.

It was during the 1970s in Mumbai, when a so-

cialist welfare government launched a new spree of anti-poverty government schemes, that the formal notification of neighbourhoods into slums became widespread. To be notified as a slum meant that residents could make formal requests for improvement of their living conditions, (Bjorkman, 2015).

When old neighbourhoods such as Dharavi grew, the slum tag was important to get benefits from the welfare state. This meant that several other settlements (especially those that had more groups like Dalits and Other backward Castes) came into the officially designated slum narrative, which by now had begun to be integral to the administrative mechanisms of the city.

For economically marginal groups to stake a claim in the city, they had to make a special claim to be poor and urban in which being part of slum neighbourhoods was an important and official strategy.

It is important to note that the rural-urban one-way narrative of urbanization and urban growth, projected itself into India through the story of the slum. The slum was not merely a symbol of over-migration as is normally represented, with more migrants meaning more slums. In reality, the process of notifying neighbourhoods - where poor migrants accumulated - as slums, actually strengthened the idea of an excessive rural workforce moving into the city.

As Lisa Bjorkman argues, many neighbourhoods which did not begin as being notified as slums but were actually resettlement colonies to rehabilitate slum dwellers, eventually were treated as slums. This was mainly because new migrant groups into the city depended on local patronage by politicians to be able to get basic occupancy rights – whether they were short term or long term residents. For politicians it was important to keep the status of the whole settlement as unstable as possible so they could bank on the residents as voters. At the same time, since state elections and central government and municipal elections happen at different points of time, it was possible for residents in families to be able to vote at different places. In the same family, some residents were active voters in the village and some in the city. There are anecdotal and local references in urban India that refer to how easy it is to get voters cards if you live in an unstable settlement

though this cannot be empirically verified as double voting is actually illegal for one person. But the family can obviously use the vote of one member in each of the two places to bargain with political players in both places. Besides this, the actual settlement as a whole can become an "identified slum" as soon as 60-70 households live in a cluster, making it ideal for a politician to create a reliable "vote bank.

Thus in the absence of state-sponsored attempts at creating more stable working class tenements or any acknowledgement that migratory flows are two-way, the notification of the slum also became a way of fixing people's movements into the city. The slum narrative became a political tool for mobilization. Elected governments began to rely increasingly on competitive ways of mobilizing voters. When the loop in the circular migratory movement of the labour force entered the city, the government also sees it as an opportunity to mobilize the migrant groups as voters.

To avail of citizenship in the city is conflated with the right to vote in the city. It is only through the right to vote in the city that one can get a tiny toehold, or a shelter and at best a space to live and work. What this also meant for the individual, was a formal relinquishment of voting rights back in the village or town from where the worker may have come from. Occupancy rights in the city, thanks to slum notifications, became a bargaining tool and a means of attracting votes.

The government developed a dual and contrary commitment to maintain both, the regime of ownership (through protecting the right to property of the middle and upper classes) along with wanting to extract the loyalty of the migrant to the city as a voter. What emerged thus was a story of constant production of slums in the city. Instead of building more workers tenements, or increasing the volume of rental accommodation or simply acknowledging and organizing occupancy rights for the socio-economically marginal groups – the government politicized the question of housing.

Subsequently, most migrant groups had to electorally mobilize themselves for the smallest share of the city's accommodation space (to simply occupy space so they could live and work). Even so, they always fell short of being fully legitimate citizens as it

was impossible to grant them full legitimacy as that would affect the middle and upper – middle classes property market.

In spite of this political uncertainty –hundreds of thousands of workers managed to get short leases of security of tenure (especially if they were connected to powerful parties which won elections) and created a life for themselves. Conversely, their fortunes were intimately tied down to the fates of elections and the nature of party support. Dalits and poor Muslims were not as lucky as residents who ethnically belonged to politically stronger groups from Maharashtra – especially those from the Konkan.

What is rarely acknowledged or documented though is that all through this process – most migrant groups and communities maintained active links back with the village as well. Second and third-generation migrants from Dharavi continued to have one voting card in the family and one in the village (through another family member). Even though the dominant narrative of rural-urban migration firmly tied the individual migrant to the city, the family as a unit of operation allowed for continued dual affiliation.

The slum became a space for negotiation by presenting one face to policy makers in terms of the rural-urban migratory story and on the other side – through the family – managed to keep a toe-hold in the village. Which meant that the growth of slums in urban India could not simply be seen as a manifestation of rural-urban growth.

The large amount of academic research on seasonal and cyclical migration of labour, or continued rural-urban ties that were done in universities (as we show in the review of literature below) rarely made it into policy formulations connected to migration and urbanization. Even then, economic surveys rarely brought any focus on two-way movements between cities and villages. Mainly because the global narrative of urbanization was firmly entrenched in the idea of a demographic shift from the rural to the urban. It is much later – mostly in the 1990s, that we see references to circulation of labour and only in the most recent economic survey in India (2017) do we a factoring of the railways as a catalyst of a more complex mobility pattern that may have characterised labour movements in India.

In a useful stretching of the term "slum" in contemporary India, sociologist Jan Breman (Breman, 2006) points out, that "modern slums" are emerging in villages as well and are being referred to as such – making the process of urbanization in countries such as India more complicated. In fact, it is becoming particularly difficult to distinguish slums from villages in many parts of the peri-urban areas of the country, which completes a full arc when we see how many slums in mega-cities such as Mumbai share characteristics with urban villages.

3.1.3 *The Village and Countryside*

Scholar Ashish Nandy's essay '*The Ambiguous Journey to the City' (*2001*)* points out how the village has lived on as a cultural and psychological space at the heart of India's unique brand of urbanity. Nandy gives special attention to the role of the media in bringing alive a certain idea of the city in a sense that has deep roots in rural India. His study provides a detailed examination of language, words and concepts that people use – often shaped by the media and popular culture when making sense of their dynamic double edged mode of belonging. In the Indian context thus, the Village and the City become archetypes through which people think of their identities and locations. But these are not necessarily lived in the same way as they are imagined. While the archetypes dominate the imagination, the reality is full of slippages as villages and cities exchange their inhabitants, as cities find villages within them and vice versa and the movement between the city and village themselves become a basis for thinking about habitats afresh.

During the first half of the twentieth century, and a couple of decades beyond that, the Indian village had a special aura – thanks mostly to the Gandhian idealization that emerged more or less along with the contemporary Indian nation state. Gandhi was

a towering figure in the Indian national imagination and his own obsession with the Indian village was really a result of his distance from it. Having grown up in a port town in Gujarat and then having studied in Mumbai (then Bombay) and London in the UK, his biggest influence was the Russian writer Tolstoy whose imagination helped him create a commune like settlement during his years in South Africa. This is what subsequently became the basis

Ashok Kanha Jadhav on his property, Ukshi.

of his fantasy notion of an idealized self-sufficient village.

This fantasy came alive when he took his first journeys through the Indian sub-continent on the then recently constructed Indian railways which made him see the "real India" – one that lived in its villages. Gandhi created a template through which he saw colonial India being essentially managed by its urban centers and the real subjects of the colonial state, the victims of colonialism, were predominantly rural.

Historically, this was fairly accurate. The colonial presidencies of the British Empire were essentially the states of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, each of them named after the port - city they were ruled from. All political, educational and financial institutions were located there and much of rural India had been transformed into agrarian cash crop based enclaves that fed the colonial economy, through networks connecting them to the port cities and eventually the imperial center in London.

Purely from a political standpoint – by reaching out to the rural masses Gandhi was connecting to a larger political demographic – one that was also very radicalized compared to the urban resident whose lives were already enmeshed in colonial institutions. As a strategy Gandhi's appeal to the villagers of India, to be mobilized for political resistance worked very well. In terms of sheer numbers, the number of rural people involved in the anti-colonial struggle was exponentially greater. However, pure strategy was not without its pitfalls. In his sincere belief in Indian village life, Gandhi projected a lot of his own fantasies into rural India – and avoided dealing with several of its darker sides, primarily the stronghold of caste.

Which is what made his biggest critic and rival completely dismiss him. This was Bhim Rao Ambedkar, an LSE, London, and Columbia University educated -lawyer and draftsman of the Indian Constitution. He was also the most significant leader of ex-untouchable communities of India. Ambedkar was a public critic of Gandhi and mocked his love for rural India, which he saw as a snake pit of caste oppression. For him the mobility to the city was emancipatory and urban horizons were the only way to move away from caste oppression.

Ambedkar was influenced by the African American struggles in the US and saw the urban context there in a positive light. The rural plantation economies that were based in slave labour resonated a lot via caste in the Indian context. In his own historical and cultural interpretation of Indian history, he saw Buddhism as a positive force with a strong link to urban mercantilism and saw cities as part of that history.

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were projecting their own ideological concerns onto habitats and these did have a strong role to play in the way urban and rural realms were understood in the Indian context. However, given the fact that Gandhi's status was elevated after his assassination in 1948, and Ambedkar was caught in strong civil debates regarding caste oppression as he wrote the Indian constitution, for a long time the idea of India as essentially rural, dominated the public imagination.

In pure administrative, economic and demographic terms most Indians did live (and continue to do so) in villages and the economy was predominantly agrarian. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a socialist by inclination, had a strong historical imagination in which India was a unified whole – in which most of the poor lived in the villages. Even though he was the main motivator for the creation of Chandigarh – and instrumental in inviting Le Corbusier to create India's first modern planned city, he was enough of a socialist to pay attention to issues of land reforms as a precursor to reduce inequality. The experience of Soviet Russia and the agrarian revolutions in Russia and China were more important landmarks to him for reducing inequality, than developing a policy framework for an urban India beyond the creation of Chandigarh city.

For Nehru, modernization, industrialization and development were aggregate ambitions in which the aim was to reduce inequalities, which meant the reduction of poverty – most of which was in rural India. The fact was that the colonial economy inherited by independent India had impoverished its villages most and the entire administrative infrastructure was geared towards a change in that direction.

All through this period the village remained a powerful image and ideology. This image was reflected in popular culture – especially in cinema – where the dichotomy of the rural and the urban in terms of the good and the villainous, was ubiquitous. The Gandhian village, the product of a very urban imagination, dominated generations of activists and nation-builders who set up their own versions of communes all over the country. Ambedkar's critiques were mostly ignored, except in social science research and in the political struggles of the Dalit communities. Scholars such as M.N. Srinivas were already pointing out from the 1950s that rural India was not the Gandhian ideal but a more complex terrain where families and communities grew roots that sustained relationships even when families migrated to the city, (Rao, 1970).

The one foot in the village and one in the city imagery of Srinivas were echoed by several other scholars like Shah (Shah, 2010, 2014) and Kapadia (1958), many of whom also pointed out that the city too was not as much of a site of emancipation but did have tendencies to reproduce structures of caste in new geographies.

According to the Census of India – 2011[4] – The Rural is literally classified as "All others" in a classification of habitats, which only defines the urban. A village is simply a "unit of revenue", an approach that is linked to the history of colonial administration. During two centuries of British colonialism, villages, which were traditionally integrated into local political kingdoms, were reconfigured to be integrated into the centers of colonial administration, which were the three Presidency cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. These became the states of Bombay, Bengal and Madras and controlled villages through a system of districts. The district was administered either by Statutory Towns, (with a bureaucratic structure at the basis of its administration starting mainly a municipality) or Census Towns (with a minimum of 5000 people *or* a minimum of 75% of its male population engaged in non-agricultural activities *or* with a density of population of at least 400 per square km). The special category for villages on the peripheries of towns was recognized by the category "Outgrowth" which were also seen as urban. What is to be noted is that even with this minimalist definition of the "urban", In-

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4   http://censusindia.gov.in/

dia still remains predominantly rural as the same census points out, with only 31% of the population classified as urban as till 2011. This figure is hotly contested as commentators quote satellite imagery to prove that India is perhaps 63% urban, which would make it more urbanized than China![5]

This kind of need to classify the demographic of the country as a whole - either rural or urban - is perhaps connected to the definitional issues of the village and the city as official administrative categories. In contrast sociological studies[6] show that perceptions of space and belonging to the city, village are mediated by family and community narratives and are part of a dynamic framework in which relationship to land is the most important variable. Most villages are productive spaces through agriculture (and its subsidiary non agricultural activities) and these are tied to family and community ties. From within each familial vantage point, members can spread across territories for additional and complementary income and work shifting through different sectors. India's rural-urban matrix is an integrated one, energized by a mobile labour, which remains connected to family and community ties.

3.2 Beyond the Rural-Urban dichotomy

Henri Lefebvre opened up a way of seeing urban spaces in a manner that transcended a break down of habitats into villages, towns and cities. He put forward the idea that urbanization is a pre-condition to social formation and not an achievable goal. According to Lefebvre to speak of the urban meant going beyond the city and looking at the urban condition as it permeates into society as a whole. (Lefebvre, 2003)

According to Kofman and Lebas (1996) such a conception of space was rooted in an institutional debate in which, at the time Lefebvre was articulating his thoughts, rural sociology was very much the foundational intellectual tool to understand social space as a whole. This was primarily connected to

the institutional domination of the official Communist theoretical framework rooted in agrarian transformations that were then ongoing in the USSR and The Republic of China. A framework that was rooted in narratives of production – whether agrarian or industrial – in which the city by itself was seen as a marginal political space (ibid.)

Lefebvre's own conception of cities and the urban realm was a response to this formal and abstract goal of class equity that seemed to transcend actual sites on which capitalism played itself out. His understanding of the urban was an attempt to create a more critical framework that rescued emancipatory ideals from essentialist notions of rural and urban into a more concrete setting without losing sight of the emerging horizons that make up the modern condition – which for him was a totalized urban reality that included the rural under the influence of the urban.

In a somewhat analogous way, India's own conceptions of the nation, the city and village represented similar theoretical abstractions that Lefebvre was contending with. The ambiguous responses to urban and rural conditions, cross-wired as they were within an intellectual climate that was constantly looking at emancipatory ideals in a nationalist idiom, was pervasive across disciplines.

The industrial city as simultaneously a site of alienation as well as liberation (from feudalism) had been propounded in various sociological commentaries – from Georg Simmel (1903) to Max Weber (1921). Weber saw the city as primarily a market settlement in which economic transactions defined the basic characteristic of life. However, religious and cultural patterns and constraints, even within urban contexts, were intimately connected to economic choices.

Thus even in the European context, the distinctions between the rural and urban in qualitative or quantitative terms, did not mean a relinquishing of the power of cultural thought that remained influential in both realms. For Weber, who presented his thesis on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905), the cultural idiom was transcendental of geography.

Even Simmel, who saw how the individual was

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5   http://www.livemint.com/Politics/4UjtdRPRikhpo-8vAE0V4hK/How-much-of-Indiais-actually-urban.html How Much of India is Actually Urban? Ajai Sreevatsan, 2017, Newspaper Article.

6   The studies by Kapadia, A.M. Shah, Ghurye are all referenced in sections of this report.

torn between finding meaning in community equations and asserting his individualism within the urban context, did not provide for easy, simplistic equations and comparisons in which the city and the village became opposing archetypes. In the Indian context – the same moment when industrialized urbanization was taking root, primarily in old colonial cities, the city as a site of modernity was not always a taken for granted reality.

For example, while Ambedkar was unambiguous in his love of the modern city, he eventually was not so reliant on urbanization alone as a way ahead for caste emancipation. The year of his death saw him leave behind an emancipatory tool rooted in religious conversion to Buddhism as a trustworthier mode of dealing with caste. It was thus not enough just to move to the city. Even for Ambedkar, a deeper ideological shift was very much needed.

A city like Mumbai was full of contradictions while it urbanized itself accompanying colonial industrialization. The mass public housing projects, the industrial working class tenements (the chawls) were all positive moves towards making the metropolis more absorbent of working class groups. Their growth was accompanied by an expansion of educational opportunities as well as political activities such as trade unionism. But in all realms, caste rarely ceased to be a dominant force. It was active in schools and colleges, in unions and factories and certainly in the spatial configurations of habitats and settlements within cities.

Yet the city continued to be represented as a modern metropolis in cinema, in literature and political rhetoric. The reason for this could be – as Bruno Latour points out – that modernity itself was and remains an incomplete project. This allows for ambiguously modern cities to be mythicized as symbols of modernity – in spite of several incomplete projects of emancipation.

What could not be denied is that the city did indeed offer a lot of space for freedom and emancipation in *relative* terms – enough for it to keep attracting migrant groups from marginal histories from all over the country. At the same time, the ambiguity remained attached to the fact that almost all representatives of modern infrastructure never fully gave up their rural roots either. Industrial workers returned to

their villagers every year during agricultural season, political representatives kept strong connections with their constituencies in the villages and the mobility of nearly every one seemed to be connected to more networked affiliations irrespective of their urban or rural anchoring points.

Thus – industrial settlements in the early twentieth century in Mumbai– potentially imagined as sites of urban modernity, were in reality, places where workers with active roots to their villages lived, celebrated festivals and marriages and generally conceived of their urban lives as extensions of the life back in the village.

3.3 Planetary Urbanism

Neil Brenner and his Urban Theory Lab at Harvard have taken ahead Lefebvre's ideas of the urban in terms of their thesis on Planetary Urbanization, (Brenner, 2012). They present a set of arguments that question the notion of the urban condition as one emerging from a definite boundary of a city. Brenner specifically argues that the world is entering into an urban age or who consider urbanization as a demographic shift of people from a rural to an urban context.

> "*The urban can no longer be understood with reference to a particular "type" of settlement space, whether defined as a city, a city-region, a metropolis, a metropolitan region, a megalopolis, an edge city, or otherwise….. Today, the urban represents an increasingly worldwide condition in which political-economic relations are enmeshed*". (Brenner, 2017, p.188)

From here they go on to explain the necessity of developing a gaze on the planet that creates a holistic framework in which geography and terrain become the contexts in which capitalism is seen as unfolding, hungry for resources, disregarding national boundaries and political constructs of any kind. They conclude:

> "*…a new conceptual lexicon must be created for identifying the wide variety of urbanisation processes that are currently reshaping the urban world and, relatedly, for deciphering the new emergent landscapes of socio-spatial*

difference that have been crystallising in recent decades" (Brenner, 2012, p.13).

While we are highly sympathetic to Brenner's concerns (his formulations further our own arguments substantially), however we feel that his argument is constrains within the discipline of geography. The maps created by the Urban Theory Lab, the understanding of regions, the tracing of the flows of resources and energy all follow the eagle-eye gaze of the discipline and they do not take the argument beyond more mapping and charting of flows and movements. Superimposed on this is a familiar critique of neo-liberal economic practices and capitalism as processes that dictate the political and economic choices that are made by governments – local and national – who use habitats and national territory as ideological constructs to push forth their agendas.

There is little space for the kind of observations that we make in this study in which the level of agency shown by residents and users on the ground themselves is what drives the processes. These show a disregard to imposed categories of the rural and urban, of the village and the city and of territory itself. The idea of locality as something that is shaped by users and residents and is key to the way geographies are actually created – or new vocabularies generated - needs to be factored in by the kind of observations made by Brenner as a validation from the ground.

Such validation is important to also encourage an understanding of geography and space from the vantage point of the actor and not the satellite vision in which the obviousness of a planetary scale is taken as a starting point.

How do the specific movements of people as they forge pathways across territories shape larger political realities is important to acknowledge. When people refuse to relinquish their connections to the village even as they settle down in cities, the idea of the urban age gets subverted in a different way and needs to be clearly documented as a critique on its own terms.

Patterns of mobility have to be traced out carefully as people are not just mobile, they are mobile in specific ways. These are not always dictated to

by the choices of infrastructures but through other independent choices of their own. Choices that are shaped by cultural and social factors as well. In this study, while we definitely take Brenner (and Lefebvre) on board, the starting points for us remain the vantage point of the user, inhabitant, and the traveller and their familial and community relations they are embedded in.

3.4 Urban System

Another Lefebvre inspired voice is that of anthropologist Anthony Leeds. His understanding lends itself to a useful anthropology of habitats and helps us to strengthen some of the questions that the study asks.

Leeds defines as urban any part of the world whose economic, technological, and institutional power center is located in a city. From his perspective, farming is an urban activity, and the rural is a subset of the urban (Leeds, 1996).

In this light, while the economic and technological domination of cities on villages on the Konkan Coast is very clear, especially of a major city like Mumbai, the institutional linkages can go both ways. While formal village institutions such as schools, tax collection, or the legal system are clearly dominated by cities, that socially shape institutional linkages, these can be deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the village. Thanks mainly to religion and caste institutions in particular. These influence the city in many ways, including during elections and political mobilizations, since party lines often run along caste and ethnic affiliations. Community networks rooted in relationships and anchored in the village, are also important resources that are tapped into by small entrepreneurs, businessmen and artisans.

According to Leeds, we cannot view urban and rural spaces solely in terms of their geographical and occupational distinctions. He points out that all through human history even though most people have lived in rural habitats these habitats have been shaped and ruled directly or indirectly by the relatively smaller populated urban centres. Agricultural practices have often evolved to produce certain kinds of grains for taxation and farming systems have been linked – through feudal structures – to important urban centres. Thus, the world had been

urbanized for a very long time (even though most people did not physically live in cities) and the industrial revolution only marked a quantitative shift of populations into urban spaces – many structures continued from one realm into the other.

Leeds points out that urban power centers are an intrinsic part of the history of human settlements, and that distinctions of rural and urban are narrow categories defined more by their physical characteristics than anything else. Using these narrow definitions, many human societies get simplistically classified as 'rural,' or non- industrial, when, in reality, large agrarian regions may have historically been connected to urban industrial centers through revenue systems, military control, or political units like kingdoms. Indeed, binaries, which define urban systems by their industry and technology, and towns and villages by their functionality, obscure the integration that exists in the entire system. Transportation and communication infrastructure play an important role in maintaining these integrated systems.

3.5 Mobility and urbanness

Building on Leeds' urban system theory, we see human habitats, whether urban or rural as fundamentally networked and connected to each other through the flow of people, technology and ideas. In some cases, the links between places pre-existed infrastructure. In India in general and in the Konkan in particular we see patterns of movement that predate the railways. These older routes have been extended and improved by newer technologies –spanning larger and larger urban regimes.

According to scholars such as Vincent Kaufmann and Saskia Sassen the connection between places through people's movement and interactions is at the heart of what constitutes 'urbanness'. Kaufmann considers mobility as a condition of urbanness par excellence (Kaufmann, 2011). Sassen considers the coming together of local economic players and the formation of dense environments as an urban condition – which can happen anywhere – even among forested areas with traders coming forth and creating a market which can be dissolved the day after . In both cases the idea of the urban is intangible to some extent – even if it does draw on physical infrastructure at some level – either for transport or the existence of a framework for some exchange.

The movements that we describe in our ethnography are repeated over time, so much so that they impact habitats both ways – in the village and in the city. Michel de Certeau (1984) says that through repetition habits become habitats. People are not just inhabiting space, they are also shaping it through use. Moving from one place to the other, people shape a kind of space for themselves that extend far beyond on singular place. The movement back and forth affects places in many ways and blurs the notions of "point of departure" and "destination".

According to John Agnew – (2011) "place" is a unique terrestrial surface that cannot be replaced or exchanged by another. "Space" is more of a dimension in which matter is located – or perhaps a grid on which items are contained. To us, places are shaped by material and immaterial movements through space. Matter is never located in space as space itself is immaterial . However movement from one place to another creates an immaterial spatial field that connects them both – without necessarily making them more similar.

The discipline of geography has debated and discussed these concepts to a very nuanced level but for us these definitions are useful for a very specific purpose. Since we are dealing with identities that are both related to a place (ancestral home in the ancestral village) as well as space (in a more abstract sense involving caste and an urban location disconnected with ancestry) – we found these distinct concepts to be functional in a very direct way.

Very simply the idea of a home seemed to belong to a spatial dimension that was more abstract – but was expressed concretely in two places – the household in the city and the household in the village. The family was the uniting factor of the two units of operation but one that was easily divisible – with members living in different permutations and combinations across the two places.

In this way the home became a mobile spatial unit – accompanying the movements of the family members who moved from one place to the other. And since many members from the same village also travelled to the city – sometimes the village became mobile too and different members reassembled in meetings and festivals in the city.

The idea of the "city" was often about the workspace which contained a home which itself was part of another space of rootedness and ancestry. The worlds remained united and belonged to a shared mind space through interactions with family members, fellow community members and co-villagers.

This reality also made sense to us the more we engaged with contemporary writers on mobility – even though they were often speaking about a different context altogether.

As Mimi Sheller and John Urry point out (2006), places are part of complex networks through which people, travellers, goods, technology come together to express themselves in specific ways and in certain moments. They are always dynamic expressions of movement.

"In the new mobility paradigm places themselves are seen as travelling, slow or fast, greater or shorter distances, within networks of human and nonhuman agents." (ibid).

Their observation about places being about relationships echoes reflects Gottman. Places come alive through the consciousness of people and their acts and belief systems. They are dynamic and also encompass what people do with each other in close proximity. This proximity is what makes the relationship quotient more important than simple demographic and numerical density. For example, there can be many people occupying a place without being connected to each other. This produces a different dynamic and can express itself differently in a city in physical terms – with great numbers of people – and differently in a village – where smaller groups interact with each other and create a different dynamic. When the smaller groups move to the city – they bring in the dynamic with them.

Such a perspective can be applied to the historical context of movement of people, and the ability of families and communities to facilitate mobility. The caste-grid that allows families to slide over vast distances, transgressing urban rural territories, combined with the railway network in India which makes transport connections cheap suggests that habitats can also be components of mobility systems and not just anchors connected by channels of mobility.

Urry and Sheller's observation are applicable to India, which even if still relatively backward on the technological front, may be extremely mobile by using traditional social mechanisms –thus creating its own bandwidth of habitats and mobility systems.[7]

In another scholarly contribution that influenced us, Bruno Latour argues that social science has produced unsatisfactory accounts of society because it studies macro and micro dimensions of social life as if they were different worlds. He argues that the micro dimension of social life ("face to face interactions, local sites") cannot be comprehended apart from its macrodimension ("society, norms, values, culture, structure, social context"). Social processes, according to Latour are "circulating entities" playing out at different scales simultaneously (Latour, 2005: 16-17). Local actors are not evolving in a macro structure that is distinct from them. They are part of that structure. This is key to our understanding of the Konkan railways relationship to the region as well.

Vincent Kaufmann's concept of 'motility' also helps deepen a similar understanding of how people's capacity to be physically mobile, to have the freedom to make individual or collective choices of moving from one place to another, relates to urban formation. He defines motility as "the set of characteristics that enable people to move from one place to another," or in other words, "the physical means, the earnings, the aspiration to either a sedentary existence or to mobility" (Kaufmann, 2012).

Kaufmann applies that concept to the study of contemporary society, in which the increased choices available to those with access are multiplied almost exponentially by the development of transportation and communication technologies in the twenty-first century. This changes the way in which space and territoriality function and eventually challenges boundaries of urban spaces, city systems and habitats as a whole. In our previous report to the Fo-

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7   As we will explain in more detail in the next section, we do not believe that technological evolution is responsible for producing a new "paradigm" when it comes to people's mobility –at least in the regions we have studied. We have come across ple ty of evidence that in fact Konkan populations were mobile well before the advent of the train, the road and the steam ship.

rum, we explained how we find the concept of mobility relevant to the less technologically advanced Indian context as well. Our argument being that the capacity to be mobile is enhanced here through familial and community support structures and these have allowed for mobility even when infrastructures were even less developed.

While being aware of the powerful subjectivity in the works of Henri Lefebvre about urban spaces, and the methodological sophistication of Bruno Latour – in terms of developing multi locational conceptual frameworks – we continue to value Lefebvre and Latour and continue using their frameworks as lenses to look at our fields of inquiry.

What they help us do is frame the idea of space as a more abstracted concept in which the idea of a home can spread into two places. The circulation of people between these places, facilitated by familial and community networks produce a physical environment – a regime of urbanism that we see as arcing over the concepts of rural and the urban – which also means that mobility is crucial to understanding and administering policy in India.

3.6 Mobility in the Indian context

We do question however, Urry and Sheller's notion that there is a fundamental – paradigmatic – change in people's relationship to Mobility, at least in the Indian context. Back and forth movements between Konkan villages and places hundred of kilometres away is nothing new. Seasonal migration predates the existence of Mumbai in the Konkan. Movements of villagers responding to the need for work in the non-agricultural season have been recorded in the region since the 16th century.

Studies that we discuss in detail later indicate that even before modern modes of travel, male members of the families would go across the region, either to the medieval cities of Pune and Kolhapur for joining armies for a few months, or construction sites or to other villages where crops were grown in different cycles.

Villages are too often conceptualized as remote habitats cut from the regions around them, when they are in fact shaped by their relationship to other places – the forest, the city or other villages. Movement is as integral to village life as any social or physical structure, such as the clan, the field or the well.

It is equally true that the rhythm of seasonal migration and the village's relationship to the outside world has changed dramatically with the spread of modern transportation and communication systems (steam boat, road, train, smart phones) which has allowed people, goods, religious ideas, construction techniques, architectural styles, cultural references, money and so on to flow both ways at an unprecedented pace.

However, it is important to emphasize that even though modern technology has deeply affected the speed, frequency, quality and nature of movement and communication, it did not *cause* them. These patterns have always existed and it is impossible to conceive of village life and rurality without them. Older forms of mobility have always played an important role in the economic and cultural life of the village. Before the train people walked, used bullock carts or boats to move from here to there. In this regard, our analysis echoes' Tim Cresswell's sceptical response to the so-called 'new mobility paradigm' that supposedly brought the world into motion after long periods of agrarian and then industrial sedentarity. In his words:

> *"We cannot understand new mobilities… without understanding old mobilities. Thinking of mobilities in terms of constellations of movements, representations and practices helps us avoid historical amnesia when thinking about mobility… Elements of the past exist in the present, just as elements of the future surround us." (2010: 169)*

There is no denying that the modern era brought about new technologies of transportation and communication, which have had an impact on cities and villages. However, technologies of mobility like the train and mobile phones were not causal factors that precipitated movement but accelerating factors that facilitated dual belonging by increasing the speed and frequency with which people could move from here to there. We find no evidence supporting the notion that villages were static units until 'mobility' through technology 'arrived' in people's lives. Nor can we find any confirmation of the idea that traditional or technology-aided mobility put countrymen

Top; Late night commuters on the train. *Bottom*; Man waits for train.

on a one-way track towards the city. Such thinking is derived from essentialised notions of the village and the city as discrete entities that lived side by side but different time zones – one medieval and the other modern. Nonetheless, the myth of the backward, underdeveloped, and inert village versus the modern, dynamic city as an 'engine for growth' has shaped much of the development agenda in India since the 1990s at least.

The failure to recognize that the village and city were always enmeshed in complex ways through the movement of people, ideas and goods has also produced larger than life narratives of mass rural exodus depleting villages and bringing the city on the verge of implosion. This has translated into policies aiming at bringing together villages into clusters mimicking city forms and functions that would help containing the flow of migrants from the village to the city. A clearer understanding of the relationship between the city and the village, may help dissolving the belief that it is by transforming the statistical rural into the statistical urban that India will achieve growth, development and global relevance. It could also help formulating policies taking into account a different kind of urbanism, generated by mobile agents, which does not contradict ruralism and village life.

New mobilities play an important role in the spread of urban culture and way of life, but they do not necessarily imply the dissolution of the village as a form and as a social system. In fact, in some cases, they may even help villages staying alive and relevant by allowing more frequent returns and reinvestment. The reality is that rural and urban lives are simultaneous and complementary for many people. This relationship, and the fact that movement is going both ways, explains not only why the Indian village is undergoing a kind of urbanization that statistics can't quite capture, but also why it continues to play an important role in the life of a majority of urbanites in cities like Mumbai. The village is often part of one's identity and life-long journey – even for those who were born in the city. Strategic decisions made by ordinary people in the city affect village life on a daily basis. A natural event or a dispute in the village can dramatically affect family life in the city.

For millions of Indians the village and the city are not splintered spaces, but a continuum of relationships and choices. Two realities embedded in one another, providing access to complementary sets of opportunities and contexts. The movement from one to the other is not experienced as a constraint as much as a means to improve one's life. The movement from one to the other generates social and economic mobility.

The fundamental driving force of village-to-city and city-to-village movements is not technology but in the people's strategies of economic, social, political and even religious emancipation. Lifestyle improvements for many families rely on the maintenance of a relationship between the village and the city. This relationship takes the form of a loop linking two households belonging to a single family. Some family members live in the village, others in the city. Some are more or less mobile depending on where they are in life: Infants, students, salaried employees and elderly people are generally less mobile. Others can be very mobile, for instance housewives, fresh graduates, temporary workers, auto-entrepreneurs, windows or young retirees. But most of them will visit the city or the village (depending where they are based most of the time) at least once a year for community events such as weddings, religious ceremonies, medical needs, or following up on an investment or professional project.

Circulation of people and goods as being endemically part of the Indian sub-continental experience is something that needs to be understood carefully. These examples demonstrate how aspects of social organizations like the caste group or the family, the deep roots of village ancestry and the need to move to the city for complementary work without giving up connections with agricultural life, were and remain extremely entrenched systems.

Ravi Ahuja points out that :

"… railways and other forms of infrastructure…(are) materialisations of social relations in space. They should be seen simultaneously as results and preconditions of "circulation", i.e., of potentially cyclic spatial practices of social groups" (Ahuja 2009, p. 9).

He speaks about the movement of labour on India's east coast as circulating between agricultural

monsoon rhythms and whatever alternative works that used to be available in the region. At one time it was the textile industry that was part of the Mughal trading routes. Then with the import of British textiles the earlier rhythms changed and the same circulation happened between villages and centers in Rangoon and Calcutta and then Malaysia with the rubber plantations. This new channel of circulation was definitely possible thanks to fast steamer services that started to function there - but the basic structure of movement continued to be the same – agricultural activity to something else and back again. It is also true however, that due to changes in agrarian policies and land tenure systems, agricultural work itself began to decline. When that happened – more and more workers set out to work in Rangoon or Malaysia – but even then – they would always return during harvest season to cultivate their own land or as labour in the villages they belonged to. Village ties did not disappear.

Ahuja goes on to present the reality of circulation in the South Asian context as a short-hand for repetitive cultural and social practices that generated what was referred to by geographer David Sopher and Medievealist Burton Stein as "behaviour regions" or "circulatory regions"[8].

There are detailed references and descriptions to such movements and circulatory regions in David Ludden's essay *History outside Civilization and the Mobility of South Asia*"[9].

Ahuja quotes other works of a similar nature (page 71). For example, Haynes and Roy, (Haynes, 1999) Dirk Kolff (Kolff, 1990).

In another very important work – scholars Claude Markovitz, Jacques Pouchepadass and Sanjay Subramanyam[10], point out that circulation is not simple mobility. Circulation implies a dual move – a to and fro – which is repetitive and more importantly,

transformative. If there is a form to social change in the Indian context – it follows the principle of circulation bringing about a shift.

Caste has often been seen as a static category – but commentators have showed how the enumerative and census based systems emerged during colonial rule and were accompanied by forceful settling down of people and active modes of fixing them to places. This was not about nomadism versus sedentary – since even communities connected to land and ancestral villages were part of seasonal movement of labour – but a different kind of dynamism through people changed, modified and reinvented lives through each movement. This was more prevalent, before enumeration of communities fixed not only social identities but also these identities to specific places.

When historians in India talk of circulation as a mode of change – they are alluding to this very specific way in which caste managed to subvert its restrictive tendency and give an element of agency to people. It is this element that we will examine in greater detail in the analysis section as well – since the change we see in the lives of the families in our study – is reflected similarly.

It is not the move to the city, which liberates – but the act of moving itself. And this cannot be overlooked when understanding the template of urban and rural connectivity.

According to Subramanyam et al – (Markovitz, 2006), the totality of circulatory movements in a region or a social set up can be understood as a circulatory regime. Thus for example the Mumbai Konkan region can be understood as one circulatory regime. And Mumbai can have other connections with other regions – which indeed it has – like with Tamil Nadu or U.P.

These circulatory regimes shape the social and political structures in urban and rural contexts, they can intersect with each other in ways that produce friction or new modes of connectivity.

These regimes played a very active role in India until the eighteenth century – at which point the state began to restrict movements. This seems to be counter intuitive, since the railways were established

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8   Burton Stein, "Circulation and Historical Geography" and David Sopher "Geographic Patterning of Culture" – quoted in Ahuja 2009 (page 70).)

9   South Asia 17, no. 1, 1994.

10   Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia 1750-1950, Delhi Permanent Black, 2003 – pages 2-3)

a century later and this event, in colonial vocabulary is seen to be the first true instigator of large scale movement. However, railway scholar Mariam Aguiar points out (Aguiar, 2011) that this is a gross over simplification. According to her, Indian populations were already mobile and constantly circulating even before the establishment of the railways and the trains may actually have restricted the channels of mobility into specific linear points of connectivity, even though it enhanced the negotiation of distance.

Historical studies in India take great pains to explain how circulatory rhythms were part and parcel of economic (via trading) and cultural (via pilgrimages) dimensions of the South Asian region. These built geographical regimes of circulation as well as infrastructure.

According to Ahuja, conceiving of infrastructure as a foundation on which activities and movements take place does not do justice to the pathways of circulation that were generated *through use and movements*, which created their own value around exchange, symbolic transformations and both movement and rootedness.

Other historians such as Romila Thapar too have pointed out how the sub-continent was an interconnected geographical imaginary for a fairly long time – with people travelling and trading for religious and economic purposes down hundreds of years[11].

The sense of rootedness and slowness, of timelessness and rigidity that one popularly associates with the subcontinent, went hand in hand with feverish movement. Pilgrimages were undertaken by most adults, goods and commodities were perennially exchanged, and the overlapping goals of religious and economic travel produced a sense of geographical expansiveness that defied easy categorizations of identity and belonging. Habitats and dwellings around riverine systems like the Ganges or the Sutlej in the north, the Narmada in the west, the Brahmaputra in the east and the Kaveri in the south did not produce rooted agrarian systems as much as a highly mobile population of goods and services, which combined hybrid habitats and spatial functions for the people who lived in them. Even

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11   Thapar, Romila - Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History, Oxford University Press, OUP

remote tribal communities interacted with non-tribal communities in weekly markets on trade routes to exchange forest produce for salt, oil and other goods. (Ratnagar, 2004).

Historians such as Chris Bayly (Bayly, 1983) and more recently Tirthankar Roy, (Roy 2012) similarly, point out to constantly emergent networks on the sub-continent.

This happened with expanding and shrinking empires and local kingdoms, trade routes and shifting sites of commodity exchanges, religious movements, the institution of pilgrimages, modes of revenue collection from agricultural produce, as well as the desire of communities to move across vast territories to change their social status and reinvent identities. Nomadism was not linked to only simple social structures but was entrenched even in advanced Mughal polities whose massive road network schemes were created not only to connect places but to keep moving - following political, climatic and economic exigencies.

In the specific context of migration between Mumbai and Ratnagiri – Raj Chandavrkar's works loom largest. (Chandvarkar, (1994), (1998) and (Menon, 2004) implicitly show how caste, regional affiliation and kinship connected the districts of Ratnagiri and the industrial history of Mumbai. We say implicitly because the circularity of movement was not precisely referred to in his works but the consequence of that process is an intrinsic component of the descriptions he gives when he describes how castes and kinship relations played a huge role in the trade union movement and sustenance of the workers in the city.

Finally, a historical study by Gillian Mary Yamin, done for the University of Salford, 1991, (Yamin 1991) also speaks specifically of the Ratnagiri-Mumbai circulatory regime. She shows how various patterns of movement existed on the west coast for at least a couple of centuries of recorded history. These include regular rural-rural migration, rural to small town migration, soldiers and peasants interchanging roles at different points in the year, upper caste and lower caste migration following specialized demands for labour in kingdoms more than 300 kilometers away, even in an era where there was *no* mechanized transport of any kind. And all of this

was accompanied by a return to the ancestral village, at different points of time, much in the way we find in our contemporary study.

When Mumbai loomed on the horizon in the 19th century as an industrial hub, the villagers of Ratnagiri entered into its working cycle in much the same way as they had done before. However, many of her observations remain limited, moored as they are in the linear orientation that she maintains throughout her study – in terms of a one-way rural-urban migration. This over-rides her data that suggests all kinds of permutations and combinations with regards to migration patterns. This is typical of several migration studies that for a long time ignored the circulatory regimes that underlay patterns on the sub-continent and preferred instead to subscribe to the one-way rural-urban channel approach that had universalized itself. Typically, they ignored other studies that were done which complicated this linearity – which we present below.

3.7 Conclusion: Circulatory urbanism

The fundamental driving force of village-to-city and city-to-village movements is not technology but in the people's strategies of economic, social, political and even religious emancipation. Lifestyle improvements for many families rely on the maintenance of a relationship between the village and the city. This relationship takes the form of a loop linking two households belonging to a single family. Some family members live in the village, others in the city. Some are more or less mobile depending on where they are in life: Infants, students, salaried employees and elderly people are generally less mobile. Others can be very mobile, for instance housewives, fresh graduates, temporary workers, auto-entrepreneurs, windows or young retirees. But most of them will visit the city or the village (depending where they are based most of the time) at least once a year for community events such as weddings, religious ceremonies, medical needs, or following up on an investment or professional project.

Circulation across space and time, which connects the rural and urban realms in both directions over several lifespan (simultaneous and consecutive), is transformative in nature, as it directly impacts the social and physical environment in which the families live. In this study we focus on impacts

that can be tangibly observed and documented, such as the impact on the habitat of the families that we have followed for about three years. While we highlight the most obvious physical manifestations of these back and forth movements at the level of the home and neighbourhood, we also provide a thorough analysis of the families' internal relationships, their kinship relationship with fellow villagers and neighbours, their houses and habitat, their projects and aspirations. We document their social background and the cultural context within which they evolve, as well as economic rational driving their choices.

The patterns we document ethnographically at the level of a few families represent a phenomenon of vertiginous proportions at the macro scale. In demographic terms, the four families and one religious group we follow, represent several millions of people in Mumbai alone, tens of million in the Konkan and hundreds of million at the scale of India. We coined the term *circulatory urbanism* to convey the magnitude of phenomenon.

We use the word *urbanism* to express the aggregated spatial and societal impact of the continuous movement of people between village and city. We believe that the imprint that the village leaves on the city – and vice-versa – defines the nature of urban life in India. Our study reveals plenty of concrete evidences, notably in house and settlement typologies, but also livelihood strategies, lifestyles and in the cultural and religious realms.

We use the word *circulatory* to express the idea of circulating elements within an organism. We like evocation of the circulatory system, which transports of blood into the body. It is quite neutral too –a circulatory system can insufflate vital energy, or spread infectious bacteria. It depends of the nature of the *urbanism* it channels. What is certain is that understanding what circulates and how it circulates at a policy level could help shape the transformations at work in the country.

Because the phenomenon we describe is circular in nature, one could wonder why we have not rather used the term *circulatory ruralism*. After all, countless unplanned settlements in Mumbai and throughout India have been built by rural migrants bringing with them their know-how, social net-

works, their lifestyles and worldviews. Bhandup, in the North-East of Mumbai, where we have followed two families in their movement back and forth to their Konkan villages, is a good example of what could be called *circulatory ruralism*. Viewed from afar Bhandup is reminiscent of Brazilian favelas, except that the violence is contained by tight knit communities structures, with families who often have an history linking them back all the way to the villages they came from. With no help from the government they built community halls and temples. They organize festivals and ceremonies perpetuating ancestral rituals and traditions. Hens and chicks can be seen grazing along its narrow pedestrian pathways. Colourful small houses decorated with tropical plants are built around small piazzas with freshwater wells. It was developed incrementally and without any master plan by successive waves of settlers on a hillside that was reclaimed from the jungle in only a few decades. A few coconut trees rise above a sea of slopped roofs, many of which have Mangalore tiles that are typical of Konkan houses.

In many ways, Bhandup embodies the rural origins of its inhabitants. However, there is no denying that Bhandup, and other such 'homegrown' neighbourhoods in Mumbai are also intensely urban. Bhandup is in the heart of one of the largest metropolitan agglomeration in the world. It is densely built, on heavily disputed land, with bricks, concrete and steel. It is deeply involved in city and national politics. Its residents have a strong voice in municipal elections, as they often vote along communitarian lines. At the same time its demographics reflect the cosmopolitanism of Mumbai. Marathi is spoken in its streets with various regional accents. One can also get by with Hindi or English, and other regional languages. The kind of access that it provides to educational and professional opportunities is unmatchable in the village context. Many people work for the state or in the corporate sector, and most families belong to the middle-class. Electricity rarely goes off and most homes have access to running water.

It is true that the city of Mumbai itself challenges classic definitions of what is urban. Definitions such as the one proposed by Louis Wirth of the Chicago school[12] do not quite fit the bill since he defines urbanism as a kind of human settlement that has heterogeneous population, specialized functions, offers anonymity, and where people have impersonal and standard behaviours. While Mumbai is undoubtedly heterogeneous and has many specialized functions, large parts of the city would not match Wirth's definition with regard to anonymity and impersonal behaviour. Community and family structures still play an extremely important role in social and spatial organization in Bhandup and many other neighbourhoods. While attitudes are changing, especially among the new generation, most people still marry within their own caste, often with people from the same ancestral villages or regions. Other definitions of urbanism such as that of more traditional sociologists like Ram Ahuja[13], which stress individualism, and short and superficial relationships as fundamentally urban traits don't help much either. However, what we must retain from Wirth's definition is the notion that urbanism is a "way of life", meaning that instead of being defined in static spatial terms, it is defined by attitudes and choices.

It is perhaps in its attitude towards the village that Mumbaikars show their urbanity the most. They value the presence of nature and the atmosphere it provides (something that someone without exposure to the city may simply take for granted), and want to preserve it. At the same time, they want the comfort and amenities that urban life provides: brick houses with modern kitchens and "Western" style toilets. It is in the village that they can build the modern urban house that they cannot afford in the city.

Our ethnography documents such houses. Besides the house, circulatory urbanites, also collectively invest in infrastructure for the village, water system for instance, or community structures such as the temple or the school. We have seen detailed accounting of such investments, which included scholarship money for deserving children. Some families invest city money earned to purchase farming tools, a pickup vehicle, or open a shop in the village to help those of them that live in the village.

The villages we observed are integrated into larger urban systems. As mentioned above this is not new: villages have always been connected to broad-

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12   Louis Wirth, Urbanism As A Way of Life. in: American Journal of Sociology 44, p. 1-24

13   Ahuja Ram, Society in India: Concepts, Theories and Recent Trends Rawat, 1999

er trading, technological and institutional networks. Increased intensity in the flow of people, ideas, money and things between the village and the world outside doesn't imply its disappearance. We are not talking about villages being swallowed by the city. *Circulatory urbanism* is not what Patrick Geddes called *conurbation*[14], where villages are physically absorbed in an sprawling urban agglomeration. The kind of urbanism we are describing is not either what Steven Graham and Simon Marvin call *splintered urbanism*[15] or François Asher calls the *metapolis*[16]. These refers to fragmented and ghettoized experiences of the city, made more acute by new forms of mobility that intensely connect certain parts together while excluding what's along the way. Asher gives the example of a high-speed train bringing the departure and arrival points closer together but creating a heightened sense of distance for those who may be on the route but have no access to the infrastructure. As explained above, the movements we are observing in this study and their local impact are not technologically determined (though they are affected by technology is so far as it increases the intensity and frequency of the relationship).

It is important to emphasize that the kind of circulation we refer to is at least as much virtual as it is physical. One can live and work in the city for five or ten years, not physically returning to the village, without ever really being away from the village. A relative that brings news and rice from the village; the remittance he brings back with him; the discussions with co-workers from the same region; rituals performed here just how and when they are performed there; the search for a suitable groom for one's daughter who is back in the village; the savings of money earned in the city used for a well or a new house that will change everyone's life in the village.

Back and forth movements between Konkan villages and places hundred of kilometres away are not new. Seasonal migration predates the existence

of Mumbai in the Konkan. Movements of villagers responding to the need for work in the non-agricultural season have been recorded in the region since the 16th century (Yasmin, 1991). She points out that even before modern modes of travel, male members of the families would go across the region, either to the medieval cities of Pune and Kolhapur for joining armies for a few months, or construction sites or to other villages where crops were grown in different cycles.

Villages are too often conceptualized as remote habitats cut from the regions around them, when they are in fact shaped by their relationship to other places – the forest, the city or other villages. Movement is as integral to village life as any social or physical structure, such as the clan, the field or the well.

It is equally true that the rhythm of seasonal migration and the village's relationship to the outside world has changed dramatically with the spread of modern transportation and communication systems (steam boat, road, train, smart phones) which has allowed people, goods, religious ideas, construction techniques, architectural styles, cultural references, money and so on to flow both ways at an unprecedented pace.

However, it is important to emphasize that even though modern technology has deeply affected the speed, frequency, quality and nature of movement and communication, it did not *cause* them. These patterns have always existed and it is impossible to conceive of village life and rurality without them. Older forms of mobility have always played an important role in the economic and cultural life of the village. Before the train people walked, used bullock carts or boats to move from here to there.

There is no denying that the modern era brought about new technologies of transportation and communication, which have had an impact on cities and villages. However, technologies of mobility like the train and mobile phones were not causal factors that precipitated movement but accelerating factors that facilitated dual belonging by increasing the speed and frequency with which people could move from here to there

It is true that new mobilities play an important

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14   Geddes, Patrick, Cities in Evolution, Williams London 1915

15   Graham S. and Marvin S., Splintering Urbanism, Routledge, London, 2001

16   Ascher, François. Métapolis ou l'avenir des villes. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1995.

role in the spread of urban culture and way of life, but they do not necessarily imply the dissolution of the village as a form and as a social system. In fact, in some cases, they may even help villages stay alive and relevant by allowing more frequent returns and reinvestment. The reality is that rural and urban lives are simultaneous and complementary for many people. This relationship, and the fact that movement is going both ways, explains not only why the Indian village is undergoing a kind of urbanization that statistics can't quite capture, but also why it continues to play an important role in the life of a majority of urbanites in cities like Mumbai. The village is often part of one's identity and life-long journey – even for those who were born in the city. Strategic decisions made by ordinary people in the city affect village life on a daily basis. A natural event or a dispute in the village can dramatically affect family life in the city.

For millions of Indians the village and the city are not splintered spaces, but a continuum of relationships and choices. Two realities embedded in one another, providing access to complementary sets of opportunities and contexts. The movement from one to the other is not experienced as a constraint as much as a means to improve one's life. The movement from one to the other generates social and economic mobility.

Circulatory urbanism is also not about pendular movement from here to there. For one, it is not about an individual and personal experience. Families and communities, not individuals, carve circulatory urbanism. Families are here and there at once. This is why it can only be described as a loop and not as a bi-directional arrow. The loop describes a movement from here to there, but it also marks a singular and unitary space. It is the space of dual belonging that a family carves over generations. In this sense the reality we describe in this study is different from the one reflected in European studies on reversible mobility, which all focus on relationships that are primordially between individuals and technology.

The concept of *polytopic habitat* that emerged from the work of Mathis Stock[17]

resonates partially with our concept of *circular urbanism.* Building on Martin Heidegger's notion of inhabiting as a fundamental activity, constitutive of the human identity, Stock describes space as a resource and the realm of human activity. He also points out that:

> "*It is not enough…to have the economic and temporal control of travel; it is also necessary to be psychically able to cross the limits of everyday places…analysis of the social and the individual jurisdictions must come together to understand the dynamics of human mobility…(There are) New ways of inhabiting the geographical places of the Emerging World. Let us study them".*

He presents different examples – mostly derived from the European context – and sees space of action as essentially pluralistic and linked to the capacity of being mobile. In his story, the habitat that one produces is therefore polytopic. However, it does not exclude the possibilities of different combinations to become part of the analysis. In our case for example, it is "bitopic" since it formed by the movement between the city and the village in the context of India. We express duality and its resolution through the phrase *two places, one space*, which is central to our concept of *circulatory urbanism.*

And this is connected to a confluence of the varied factors that Stock alludes to – socio-economic, political and the "psychic" which we interpret as the cultural dimension that involves individual relations with family and community networks and is represented in dual notions of the "home". Notions that manifest as investing in homes and businesses, and lives in two places. It does not exclude the possibility of polytopic habitats but is articulated in this context as bitopic. It is this dualism that gives the arc of circularity a concreteness which we feel is best expressed as circulatory urbanism. It is after all a spatial dimension and gets expressed in both places – the village and the city. They both transform each other through the movements of individuals enmeshed in families and communities. This happens over time - years, decades and more. The frequency of movement is erratic, sometimes high sometimes

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17   Stock Mathis L'hypothèse de l'habiter poly-topique : pratiquer les lieux géographiques dans les sociétés à individus mobiles. (EspacesTemps.net https://www.espacestemps.net/

articles/hypothese-habiter-polytopique/

low – but it is always there, spread across movements of different family and community members along different moments of their lives. And as long as the economic and political lives of the individuals is tied down in some way to land, agricultural and related activities in the village and jobs and added income in the city this dualism will be an integral part of the story of mobility in India. And it will be expressed in the form of circulatory urbanism. In a country where rural life continues to be the prime source of occupation for a majority of residents, and urban centers continue to be the dominant space for economic power and dynamism, and as long as a very mobile labour force continues to be abundantly available, the nature of urbanism in India will be circulatory. It would be futile to label this as something "temporary" or a divergence from the global norm. As we see from different parts of the world including China and Europe – it could be its own very specific form of urbanism that, in an increasingly mobile world –as Stock suggests – needs to be studied on its own terms.

Chapter 4. Review of Literature

4.1. Rural Urban Linkages in India.

The observation that rural and urban realms are not discrete spaces, but deeply connected, is as old as systematic and scientific inquiries on the sub-continent.

In western India, the university of Bombay was set up in the middle of the 19th century and the first department of Sociology in the country was established in 1919 headed by well-known Scottish Urbanist and Botanist, Patrick Geddes. He is credited, among several other things, with coining the term "conurbation", which refers to a region that consists of a number of cities, large towns and other habitats, to form one contiguous area. (Geddes, 1915). He looked at geography, market networks and anthropology as connected realms making for a *"single chord of social life [of] all three combined"*[18].

Geddes sees this as a rather universal aspect of social life as he observes:

> *"The Greek city was at first merely the cultural centre of the rural life of the City State ; and the Roman 'Civitas', despite the excessive metropolitanism of Rome, was not just the municipal area but included the rural region together with the town, the 'Pagus* as well as the 'Municipium'.[19]*

Geddes saw the city as an integral component of the region it is embedded in, inter-linked by movements of labour and markets.

G.S. Ghurye, Patrick Geddes's successor in the same department, followed a similar approach as is evident in his writings on Cities and Caste (Ghurye, (1950), (1962). In both these works one sees a sensitivity to rural urban relations as being a continued and conjoined presence in urban contexts, reflected in family structure, caste and class configurations and the fluidity of urban boundaries.

Another classical Indian Sociologist Radhakamal Mukherjee (1889-1968) followed American Sociologist Robert Redfield in using the framework of a rural-urban continuum to understand Indian reality from the point of view of rapid change. According to him, such change was dissolving rural and urban characteristics and thus producing the continuum.

However, what ultimately dominated social science research in India is this regard, was Sheldon Pollock's more civilizational approach that rejected the idea of both, dichotomy as well as continuum – instead saying that all habitats in India, whether urban or rural, emerged from civilizational commonalities that were characterised by kinship and caste groupings.

This kind of framework represented by the coinage of the term 'rurban' has been widely used in the 20th century to understand specific kinds of blurred urban transformation.

The term "rurban", was first coined by C.J. Caplin in 1918 and used wholesomely by Sorokin in his work "Rural -Urban Sociology" in 1929. The "rurban" basically refers to a territory or landscape that possesses the economic and cultural characteristics of both urban and rural areas.[20]

Rural urban networks and the rurban complexity are well-documented in key urban studies textbooks – such as "*Urbanization and Urban systems in India*" (Ramachandran, 1992) and have shaped some research inquiries.

One of India's most renowned sociologists – Prof. A.M. Shah presented a paper "*Rural-Urban Network – Past and Present*" outlined his observa-

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18   (Geddes quoted in Munshi, Indra (2000): Patrick Geddes: Sociologist, Environmentalist and Town Planner in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 35, no. 6 (5-11 Feb. 2000) p. 485-491).

19   (Patrick Geddes in India: Jacqueline Tyrwhitt (ed.), Lund Humphries, London (1947). Full text available on - https://archive.org/stream/ParickGeddesIndia/Patrick%20 Geddes_djvu.txt)

20   (Ref: Parsons T.1954, Essays in Sociological Theory, The Free Press, London.)

tions based on decades of research[21].

In the paper he points out that the role of small towns in linking rural and urban society is something that needs to be understood systematically. These towns linked villages to urban centers and served as gateways to recruit labour for the industry. The systems of the joint family and the institution of caste facilitated this. He asserted that caste structures actually allowed groups in families and small village settlements to move over large regions since most castes from rural and urban areas are part of a common grid that connects them to each other by disregarding the exclusive boundaries of rural or urban territories.

This is what leads him to classify migratory patterns as being essentially shaped by changes in occupation and caste structures and influenced by marriage choices or employment. Very often these follow similar patterns in both rural and urban contexts convincing him that the village and the town cannot be seen as parallel or juxtaposed entities for this reason.

Another article by Dipankar Gupta (Gupta, 2015), similarly posits that many of India's villages would rarely qualify as rural if they were considered only on the basis of the dominant occupations of residents. Many residents of villages work as seasonal labourers in towns or cities, or in non-farm activities in the village. With the distinction between the farmer and the worker slowly fading, so too is the distinction between the urban and the rural. Gupta says that agriculturalists are slowly realising that their future economic security lies elsewhere, "perhaps in cities and towns, perhaps also in household and informal industries." (ibid.) At the same time, the need to shift to more "modern" economic practices was never accompanied by the need to go through the same shift in other lifestyle practices, largely because of the high level of rural-urban interactions.

On a distinct note Sociologist Dipankar Gupta

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21   This was in a workshop organized by the Institute of Rural Management, Anand and IRDC – TTI (International Development and Research Centre – Think Tank Initiative) on the topic: "Rural Urban Linkages" in 2012. In it he referred to an older study he did that has recently been reprinted - The Household and Family in India. (Shah 2014).

also shows how the nature of the rural is changing rapidly even when rurban characteristics have been absent. For example he indicates that household industrial units in villages and the growing dependence on non-agrarian incomes have gained in importance in the last couple of decades. In his words '*in economic terms at least, the village is not exactly textbook fashion rural any more*' (Gupta, 2012). In the same essay he points out that: the share of urban population in the million plus cities in 2001 stood at 68.7% but by 2011 this came down to 42.6% – a decline of roughly 26%. Whatever urban growth is taking place is not doing so in the big cities but in small towns all over the country. (ibid.).

These small towns are deeply integrated to their rural hinterlands with people commuting everyday up and down and across on transport systems that spread over entire districts.

According to Gupta,

> "*...The most recent figures show that 72.2% of the population continue to live in India's 641,000 villages. Male migration from village to village, both intrastate (41.6 %) and interstate (20.7 %) remains significant. ...nearly half the village economy is not agricultural any more with many more workshops and household industries in its fold. ...* (ibid.).

A paper by Sumana Chatterjee similarly re-examines the traditional understanding of urbanisation and the evolution of urban areas. The paper identifies "rurban" areas, or "census towns" that are urban forms of large villages, which embody new aspects of urbanism (Chatterjee, (2014).

Through case studies, the paper examines the impact that rurban societies have on urban societies when they exhibit economic change and socio-cultural change in different directions and according to different rates. It also highlights the need for and the challenges in including such typologies and societies (rurban) in our dominant understanding of urban centres.

4.2 Nuclear Families, Joint Families and Castes

According to Shah, (Shah, 2010), there are some

typical ways in which migration happens. Typically, the husband/father goes to the city with his wife and children staying back, being looked after by other members of the joint family. Even in the cases where the wife and children join him in the city, his property and assets remain in the hands of his joint family which he visits and revisits periodically. Also the move to the city is usually with the help of pre-existing groups – from his joint family or community who already have some base there. This consolidates his embeddness in the community and makes caste bonds stronger in urban contexts. In fact urban caste associations develop a new kind of leadership and extend their influence from the city back into the village. Sometimes they raise resources in cities which are then ploughed back into the village (Shash, (2010), p. 145).

Caste also operates in other ways. Sociologist Ian Breman (Breman, 1996) points out how local caste dynamics make employers favour groups from outside the city or town even as local workers with the same skills can be found on site. At the same time, local groups prefer working with employers from elsewhere and also migrate seasonally or cyclically for that very reason. The caste system as it were seems to always prefer workers from elsewhere so that local dynamics do not interfere with productivity.

Another sociologist specializing on Family in India, K.M. Kapadia (Kapadia, 1972), also asserts that families, who have gone for work to cities, continue to retain active connections with their joint family in the village or small town that they come from. Even after forming their own nuclear family, they do not function independently, and keep alive their bonds and kinship connections, mainly by hosting relatives or going back to the village in times of birth, marriage, death and illness.

The joint family ethic is also expressed in the continued fulfilment of role expectations in looking after all family members. For example, providing shelter, financial help to younger family members who have just come from the village or town for higher education or medical help. So even though co-habiting of various members of the joint family in the same house does not happen – (like it would in the village when economic dependence on agrarian activities and shared property facilitated it) the

joint family relations continue to be expressed extra-territorially through fulfilling other obligations and duties.

Kapadia also rejected the idea that the joint family had become dysfunctional thanks to industrialisation by pointing out to the successful industrial establishments in highly industrialized cities such as Mumbai. He showed how they are managed by individuals who strictly live by joint family roles and expectations. Rich business joint families live in the same building or complex, are connected to a common cemetery or cremation ground and share capital for business growth exclusively among themselves.

In a similar study by Milton Singer in the late 1960s, (Singer 1968), the scholar concludes that the joint family persists among industrial entrepreneurs, no matter how exposed they are to global culture and lifestyles, no matter how much they have travelled and been educated in modern institutions. Even though some changes have taken place, for example, some ritual observations may have been reduced – the structure of the joint family has not disintegrated into smaller nucleated units. A transformed joint family structure has been reinvented in an urban industrial setting by members of the ancestral home or village. The city according to Singer has simply transformed into a new medium for letting older relationships and networks continue to flourish.

Pauline Kolenda, another specialist on family in India, (Kolenda, 1987, p.4), asserts that industrialisation consolidates the joint family since it acts as a new economic base that also works on co-dependency between its many different members and provides capital to its members on an exclusive basis.

Similarly, in his essay, D. Parthasarathy (Parthasarthy, 2013), follows the conceptualization of Tacoli Bunnel who asserts that people described as being either rural or urban have deep connections across regions and it is mandatory to see how activities connect villages and cities through common practices.[22]

Parthasarthy takes this as a starting point of his analysis of politics in India and its cross connections

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22   (T. Bunnel et al. (ed.) Cleavage, Connection and Conflict in Rural and Urban Contemporary Asia (ARI Springer Asia Series 3.)

between rural and urban sectors with caste playing a key role. Low caste groups as well as upper caste groups looks towards the city as a means towards improving their existing position, consolidating existing hierarchies by taking their structures to the city when they migrate – and then returning to the village equipped with more authority or power. In some cases low caste groups return as stronger challenging upper caste village authority, and in some cases upper castes reinforce their traditional positions. In either case, the connections and networks become part of the loop of circulation that is integral to their lives, thanks to the prevalence of seasonal and circular migration.

This observation is whetted by several on-the-ground observations. For example this report in a national daily puts it very clearly. " How migration can almost level caste in rural Uttar Pradesh in 2017 election". The reporter Prashant Jha, points out that, "*Across India, migrants from Uttar Pradesh form a major share of the working force. Many of them come from rural UP, and when they return, they go back not only with more money in their pockets, but a different worldview, a view that affects how they vote*".[23]

For a more academic analysis of the phenomenon see David Picherit's *Migrant Labourers' Struggles Between Village and Urban Migration Sites: Labour Standards, Rural Development and Politics in South India.*[24]

4.3. Circular and Seasonal Migration

According to the entry on Circular Migration in Wikipedia[25], the term in the global context has been around from the 1960s and 70s. Frequent and detailed references to the term however, only seem to appear in the twenty-first century, when referring to movement of labour. The list of references that appear in the bibliography of the entry are mostly about international cross-national circulatory migra-

tory movements. These refer to the following criteria to qualify as circular: temporary, renewable, circulatory, legal, respectful of the migrants rights, managing to optimize labour markets for both, origin and destination countries.

The entry also points out that current migration policy rarely takes into account circular migration focussing instead on "permanent" or "temporary". These policies do not recognize how circular migration may actually allow the worker to be operational in both places - the home base and the host. This happens with frequent returns to the home and then long bouts back in the host place/city/nation. This dual connection helps the worker since he does not have to invest in longer-term infrastructure in his host country. It allows for what Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum call the maximization of capabilities (Sen, 1985). He thrives with the surplus generated by belonging to a low-income context and earning in a high-income context. This way the migrant worker can optimize his energy for his family in the best possible way. Circularity actually encourages people to maintain traditions and citizenship in a way that is meaningful to the workers.

Jorge Duany's work on Puerto Ricans (Duany, 2003) shows how circular migration between the island and the US mainland contributed hugely to cultural nationalism among the Puerto Ricans working better with its widespread geographic dispersion.

In many ways these global examples also parallel what happens within the Indian context.

Here, circular migration as a concept was first used by Dutch anthropologist Jan Breman in 1996 in his study of informal urban labour in the western Indian state of Gujarat. (Breman, 1996).

It is based on his observation that migrant workers to Gujarat, in both villages and cities, who came from other states, would return to their ancestral homes every year for long stretches of time, especially during the monsoons and did not necessarily set up permanent base near their work sites.

Jan Breman notes that labourers are treated as and remain "outsiders" of places where they work. Often, they are hired because of their transience, and their status as aliens, which give employers high bargaining power (Breman 2009). This is con-

23   http://www.hindustantimes.com/indianews/how-migration-almost-levels-castepolitics-in-rural-up/storyuKFk-T3KBPGkx8uWsDWBkuK.html

24   https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/globallabour/article/viewFile/1116/1172

25   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular_migration

trary to what many local policies assume, which is that influx of migrant labour is caused by shortage of local labour. The migrants' lack of recognition in their areas of work perhaps further contributes to the strength of the ties retained with their native villages, where stature and upward social mobility is easier. Brennan says, "*Migration has remained foot-loose, a phenomenon which has led to the continual circulation rather than the permanent outmigration of workers from the countryside.*" (Breman, 1996).

Another reason for the understated figures of mobile populations reported by statistics and census-level surveys, like those of the National Sample Survey, is that there is ambiguity in the definition of "migration". As Breman notes, in various parts of Asia, a large part of the population which leaves the village, engages in intra-rural migration, arriving in other villages or towns, and remaining only for the season. Migration is largely looked at as "arrival" into cities, and it also is operationalised in terms of distance demarcated by the boundaries of district or state. Departures are generally not accounted for.

Breman suggests that circular movements to and fro may be linked to poverty where continued dependence on land in the village and lack of access to good quality shelter in the city – makes people go to and fro between the country and the town. However, there are others like migration studies specialist Priya Deshingkar who question that narrative.

She does this in two of her papers (Deshingkar, (2003) and (2008) when she points out that migration as a whole, not just circular or seasonal migration in India has not been exclusively about the poor. And that middle-class migration, accompanied by absorption into the city has not shown a tendency to break away from the village in many cases either, which supports the older observations by sociologists listed above.

Deshingkar indicates that migration is not simply a function of necessity, but of choice too. And that people across class boundaries migrated and returned very frequently. In fact the word 'migration' in a definitive sense, seems an incomplete or unsatisfactory description of what appears in studies on the theme of movement of workers in India.

Scholars such as Srivastava, Ravi and S. K. Sasi-

kumar (Srivastava, 2003) also point out that all kinds of migration, rural-rural migration, migration within small regional footprints and rural-urban migration across varied distances tend to be 'circular'.

While Breman actually refers to the concept of circular migration, others point out to the lack of an appropriate conceptual apparatus to describe the circularity of movement, which has been variously classified as seasonal employment or cyclic migration.

In some studies we see clear indications that caste and community ties shape choices of movement in ways that have still not been adequately explained or understood outside of classical sociological studies as cited above. For example, trading communities with roots in a village in one part of the country, who set up shop in a city or another town in a completely different region of the country, follow the logic of caste based specialized occupations – which sociologist A.M. Shah refers to as a grid that transcends geography. More often than not, such a move is supported by the family and community networks which already have formed roots in the new host space.

Another specialist on urbanization in India, Darshini Mahadevia also confirms that migrant workers often come to the city on a temporary basis. A status that they can sometimes keep for years thanks to their capacity to move back and forth and retain strong ties with their places of origin. She also points out that most rural migrants go to other rural towns rather than big cities. "*Towns themselves are urbanizing very quickly, bringing in a way, the city to the village, so the village doesn't need to go to the city anymore*" (Mahadevia, 2001, pp 242-59).

More generally, scholars of migration point out that the realities of migrants and migrant labourers in India are largely overlooked in census data as well as policy formations because of institutional tendencies to view migration as permanent and residence as static. The National Commission for Rural Labour estimated 10 million seasonal or circular migrants in rural areas, including an estimated 4.5 million inter-state migrants.

A study by Ravi Srivastava and S. K. Sasikumar describes field studies during the 1990s over various parts of India. These attest to the large scale of

migration during harvest season. Despite of moving because of economic necessity, they also point out that a baseline of resources are needed for initiating migration. This adds a complexity to the nature and motives of the migrant. Srivastava and Sasikumar note that the option of migration is only available to those who possess appropriate skills and can raise sufficient finances required for migration (Srivastava et al, 2003).

Deshingkar and Start (2003) demonstrate in their paper how some groups of people succeed in entering what they call "accumulative migration pathways" - which helps people rise up the socio-economic ladder - and some do not. The factors that shape these include intra-household as well as wider social relations. These relationships are essential for examining the growth of migrants' standard of living, overall development, and general contribution to the development of their regions. They show cases that contradict popular knowledge, and reveal how people from poor areas can be on accumulative migration pathways and people from well endowed areas can be on coping migration pathways. Thus they show that migrant sugarcane cutters, earth-workers and agricultural labourers from remote and poor villages of AP and MP have improved their standard of living significantly and are investing their savings in agriculture and educating their children. On the other hand, some migrants from the prosperous canal-irrigated coastal areas migrate for coping purposes and are not doing so well.

Deshingkar and Start bring out other complexities in the success of migrants, in which caste looms large. Caste remains an important factor in determining who gets excluded from accumulative migration pathways. The importance of caste indicates that people migrate out of varying levels of comfort, discomfort, ambition, and desperation. These further highlight the need for academia and policy to pay greater attention to the social and cultural fabric and backgrounds of migrating communities, and to understand their motivations.

These complexities of the circular migrant are essential to developing and reframing the development models commonly used.

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan in their research on "Circular Migration and Rural Cosmopolitanism in India" (Gidwani, 2003) identify the circular migrant as someone who moves through geographical space, transmitting ideas, sensibilities, resources and techniques that contribute to the building of their dual homes and the transformation of social spaces in multiple worlds. Because of labour circulation, notions of identity according to single specific places become slowly irrelevant and labour markets become regionalised. They write on the need to view the circular migrant as someone who, by nature of his mobility, is a bearer of "cosmopolitanism". They do not see cosmopolitanism as a concept that is achieved at a certain fixed point in time and space, or is carried by the international or transnational subject. Instead, they press for the view that the nature of cosmopolitanism works at different scales, wherein the cosmopolitan can be any person who "disrupts conventional spatial divisions, and produces newly salient spaces of work, pleasure, habitation and politics" (ibid.).

With regard to circulatory patterns of labour migration specifically between Ratnagiri and Mumbai in the late 19th and early 20th century, Gillian Mary Yamin work is the most relevant.

She points out in her Ph.D. Thesis (Yamin , 1991) that records in factories, studies of shipping travel patterns and statistical analysis of labour needs in Ratnagiri (highest in the monsoons) and Mumbai (highest between October to April – post Monsoons) clearly shows that a large part of the workforce in Mumbai that came from Ratnagiri were part of seasonal rhythms travelling and living in both places for work and family connections.

She points out that even when roll-calls showed a worker working in a factory in the monsoons, often it was a substitute sent from the village in place of the registered worker in the factory. This was typically a family member or fellow villager. Also she aligns the movement between Mumbai and Ratnagiri that was mostly for work in industries, to older circulatory rhythms before that, connected to working in armies or old urban centres such as Pune or Kolhapur for work in the off agricultural season.

Since most farmers were free after the monsoons the quest for part time seasonal work was part of older movements that shifted its movements towards Mumbai in the 19th century.

4.4 Railways in India[26]

According to one the most well –known scholars of the railways in India, Ian J.Kerr, (Kerr 2001, there are several conceptual and methodological issues that need to be addressed when understanding the ways railways impact mobility in India.

While there have been many studies done on migration – there are few, which have paid attention to modes of, *how* people migrate – especially in the contemporary context.

It is only as recently as this year that the economic survey of India actually used railway data to understand migratory trends and found that it had been grossly underestimating the figures because of this oversight.[27]

The survey reports that India has a highly mobile labour force, which traverses great distances to work. And trains play a big role in facilitating the movement. There are in migration states and out migration states – that is to say people come as a labour force from specific regions and their destinations are also specific. However – till now the survey has not paid any attention to the backward loop that is an integral part of migratory movements in India according to migration studies experts.

Studies on urbanization simply refer to trains as a channel of one-way movement - referring exclusively to the millions that come to the big city from far away villages. The reality is that people come and go in both directions throughout the year as railway ticket sales testify.

It is the railway network that makes the migration of its workers integrate a regular circulatory movement between the city and the village, and helps keep alive connections on both ends no matter how far they are from each other.

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26   This section includes some references that are also detailed in the old report –We felt it was important to place older references here once more to remind the reader about the most relevant points relevant to observations in this too.

27   The Economic Survey of India 2017, http://bsmedia.businessstandard. com/_media/bs/data/generalfile-upload/2017-01/economic-survey-2016-17.pdf)

Everyday, trains in India carry 30 million passengers according to the Indian railway website. Trains connect the big cities and towns to most major towns and a large number of villages. A vast number of the urban workers and service providers return to the villages during holiday season and festivals, when the railways run special trains to manage the load of passengers travelling away from the big cities. They are not actually going to holiday destinations, but simply the villages and towns that they come from.

In 2015 and 2016, besides the regular train services, the railways introduced 30 summer specials to manage this rush. The starting and ending destination stations for each service is a good indication of different circulatory beats that we see in India. Not surprisingly the states like Orissa, Bengal, U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan - which are also considered to be sources of cheap labour are often where one end of the railway route exists, while the other is the relatively prosperous rural and industrial zones that include states of Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

The most recent socio-historical analysis of the railways in India is by Ritika Prasad (2015) who echo other scholars like Mariam Aguiar (2011), asserting again that the railways did not actually stimulate long distance travel in India but that networks of mobility and patterns of circulation were already around – not only "*before the railways but also well before any of the massive communication projects undertaken by the colonial state…*" (Prasad, 2015, 4).

She refers to scholar Ravi Ahuja who believed that the transport revolution of the railways and steamships engraved themselves on older regimes of movement – including land and water based systems of transport and did not supersede them altogether.

Most of her analysis is about colonial India but still resonates with the realities today especially when she says that "*…the presence of railways was both broad and deep enough to affect the entire colonized population…*" (Prasad, 2015,15).

She refers to the railways tickets in India even then being one of the cheapest in the world, if not the cheapest – and describes different ways in which

View from train, Mangalore to Goa.

the native population used it to enhance their older circulation for livelihood, education and religious pilgrimages.

In a similar vein Aguiar, (2011), exhaustively summarizes the common theories and ideas about the impact of the railways on life in India.

As the construction of a railway system was a colonial project, its political intentions are easy to frame. The railways are generally accused of being a tool of economic exploitation by facilitating easy export of raw materials, a mode of social control by imposing a time-table on an undisciplined native-population, and of causing environmental havoc by logging forests for timber and mining iron ore for steel.

However, Aguiar also shows that eventually, the railway was appropriated and taken over by the Indian imagination in a way that allowed many of those beliefs to be forgotten.

Aguiar's study is sensitive to the fact that Indian society was always quite mobile, and also indicates how religious, social and economic factors saw peo-

ple travel to and fro across vast distances even in a pre-modern context. Mariam Aguiar, asserts, trains merely reinforced and harnessed the *existing propensity* towards mobility that Indians always showed.

She points out that there were two (counter-intuitive) ways in which the colonial moment influenced change on the sub-continent: first, the imperial state actually *stabilized* a region where people *had high mobility*. The colonial state needed to organize people in terms of labour directed at specific revenue generating imperial projects. People were force- fully settled, their identities were fixed and their movements controlled.

Secondly, the imperial government introduced technologies like the railways with two intentions: consolidating colonial projects through organized cash crop production over large areas and at great distances from markets or ports, and extracting and transporting natural resources in and to remote areas for feeding a newly-emerging industrial economy and for developing new urban markets.

Due to these factors, the idea of the village and the city as fixed points of embarkation and arrival

became more rigid. They also generated linear narratives of rural-urban migration. Trains provided speedier movements from point to point, in fixed and controlled channels.

Aguiar argues that it would be accurate to say that the railways reinforced pre-existing high levels of mobility and movements on the sub-continent. But at the same time the railways transformed and controlled earlier patterns of movement according to narrower, imperial agendas linked primarily to revenue extraction through labour and land control.

At the same time, this technology, also allowed older forms of mobility to continue being expressed, albeit in newer ways, even outside the agenda of the colonial state.

People used the railways to travel to new destinations, to pilgrimage centres that were previously unreachable, and most importantly, to new towns during the off-agricultural season and then back home to their fields when work demanded, all with greater speed and efficiency.

Ian J. Kerr's *'Engines of Change,* (Kerr, 2007) is an important scholarly inquiry into the Indian Railways. It is a rich and detailed study on how the railways shaped modern India in terms of economic and social transformation while themselves being shaped by forces of nationalism and colonialism. He too is quick to point out that India – even in 1850 – was not *"and had never been a static and immobile place"* (Page 5) and goes on to describe road and water based transport systems that existed then in great detail. He refers to the nomadic Mughal rulers (who ruled large parts of the sub-continent before British rule) as living in enormous retinues that he describes as *"virtually small cities on the move – that included courtiers, soldiers, artisans, servants and hangers on.."* (ibid.), which became moving capital palaces administering cities as far from each other as Lahore, Delhi and Agra.

Kerr has written other books that are a resource for anyone interested in the historical growth of the Indian railways.

For example, his edited work, *'27 Down: New Departures in Indian Railway Studies'*, (2007) is a set of essays studying different aspects of the railways. These include an examination of local organization of porters of a Mumbai railway station, the representation of trains in popular culture and a lot of statistics about the growth of the railways in the twentieth century.

Then there is Laura Bear's *'Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy, and the Intimate Historical Self'.* (2007). It focuses on the Anglo-Indian community's crucial presence in the Indian Railways during the colonial era.

A book commissioned by the Railway Ministry itself is - *"Our Indian Railway: Themes in India's Railway History"*[28] is part of an enormous collection of books on the Indian railways that have been written as travelogues, economic commentaries talking of the impact of the railways on the national economy and other similar themes.

Studies such as '*Infrastructure Development and Its Environmental Impact: Study of Konkan Railway* (Ranade, 2009) provided some very useful data for us to start our own inquiries.

The focus of this book is on the impact of the railways on the physical environment of the Konkan, both during and after its construction. It is of the view that in terms of existing alternatives and other choices, the Konkan railway is one of the most environment friendly infrastructure projects that could have been undertaken. Obviously, this is actually a highly debated assertion. In fact when the Konkan railways was being constructed, environmental activists, primarily from Goa, fought several cases against the railway – primarily on environmental grounds[29]. The case filed by the Goa Foundation against the Konkan Railway Foundation was defeated by the Bombay High Court in 1992.

For our study, we find these specific environmental debates beyond our scope – and are suspicious of observations made by authors of any sponsored

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28   Edited by Roopa Srinivasan, Manish Tiwari, Sandeep Silas – Foundation Books Delhi - 2006, Ministry of Railways

29   https://www.ecolex.org/details/courtdecision/the-goa-foundation-and-anothervs-the-konkan-railway-corporation-andothers-a8ba46e8-1639-42b9-b876-687bdcb615e3/

book not just this one! However, some extracts are useful. The most relevant sections of the book are the ones that source commuter and travel data and there the consensus is clear: the Konkan railway is the most popular mode of transport of people and goods with huge numbers of people waitlisted with an aim of eventually targeting an annual traffic of 6 million people a year. The heaviest periods of travel are April-May, then November and December followed by September and October. The heaviest traffic is between Mumbai and Goa. The periods coincide with holiday seasons when people return home to their 'native' place (April-May) or for religious festivals (September-October for Ganpati, a very popular festival on the coast and November-December for Christmas). However, since Goa is a very popular tourist destination, a good amount of this traffic is of people going there via Bombay from all over the country. For the rest of the year, the traffic is mostly dominated by residents of the Konkan coast going up and down the route for business and familial matters.

The other major book on the topic is commissioned by the Konkan Railway's public relations projects (Shivdasani, 1998) which celebrates the completion of the 'missing link' – referring to the historical gap in connectivity between the major industrial ports of Mumbai and Mangalore and the heroic technical and other challenges faced by engineers in constructing the railway itself.

4.5. Relevant work from Africa and China

According to Christopher McDowell and Arjan de Haan[30] it is important to question the false assumption that sedentary patterns in society are or should be the starting point for social analysis.

It would be more useful to make migration as the rule, which should specifically be seen as a valid strategy open to households – often in combination with other strategies. According to them, a significant amount of migration in India is a two-way process and maintaining close links with home points is often the norm. They point out that there are complex institutional factors that are behind the causes and structures of migration. These get expressed in specific ways and should not be generalized as standard one-way migratory patterns.

Similarly, the concept of "double-rootedness" is an intrinsic part of the lives of Zimbabwe's urban migrants as described in the study by V.N. Muzvidziwa (Muzvidziwa, 2010). It connotes holding on to the concept of "home" while living in a foreign setting, an idea that is comparable to the setting up of dual households in India.

In the city that is part of the study, home for most interviewees was their ancestral village. For the women urban migrants in the study double rootedness was adopted as a survival strategy in the face of a declining and collapsing national economy. Urban-rural linkages were a significant survival strategy for the women in the research sample. The study asserts that what made woman able to achieve their goal of becoming urbanized was actually keeping one foot in the village, where their kin networks helped them increase their chances of surviving in town – especially through helping them battle local and national bureaucracies.

Examples from other parts of the world are listed by Elizabeth Mylott in her study on "Urban-Rural Connections" available as a free resource online[31]. According to Mylot – most people in developing countries use a variety of livelihood techniques in which migration is one such and they always are integrated into social and familial relationships. They move according to the seasons, sometimes working in rural areas and sometimes in urban areas – often keeping multiple households thanks to extended family networks – in both the village and the city. The income from each supports the entire family and these strategies are common everywhere in the world.

The reason why community identities remain strong is because they are used so much to maintain the cultural and economic challenges that people face.

She refers to studies which identify multi-spatial livelihoods in Nakuru town, Kenya. (Owuor, 2006), where many migrants combine rural-based and ur-

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30   IDS Working Paper 65 – referring to studies in Africa and South Asia. (Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods)

31   http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/10573/Urban-RuralConnectionsBibliography.pdf

ban-based work. That is why even in urban settlements, one third of the households own cattle and half have land in their village of origin. No matter how long they stay in the city, they do not weaken or lose these assets.

Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania show similar patterns in rural-urban contexts with co-dependency of rural and urban households and networks of exchange between urban and rural sectors. (Mahmoud, 2003)

The floating population in China – which refers to a demographic that varies from 150 to a 200 million – is a well documented fact. These are migrant workers bureaucratically yoked to their ancestral villages of origin but who travel to different cities and towns and even villages for work and return to their villages where some component of the family continues to live, at least once a year. Guy Taylor studied one such group in 2005[32].

According to Taylor floating migrants help domestic economies by acting as channels of remittance and knowledge transfer between villages and cities. Cheap labour from villages and towns continues to play a huge role in China's economic development. Some calculations estimate the floating population to be around 155 million while others give a larger number ([SEP]Kam 2008). This migrant population accounts for 70 – 80 % of the productive labour force in urban China.

Another study – (Changmin, 1997) points out that the present situation of the floating population adding value to the economy of the city by acting as cheap labour may soon transform into a situation of an urban crisis if issues of housing and absorption of the floating population is not addressed.

Her perspective is similar to that of commentators in India who view the slum population in cities like Mumbai as the outcome of the inability of the urban authorities to absorb the migrant population. The reason why the term floating population is used in China is to acknowledge the bureaucratic restriction on workers movements that officially does not recognize the legal status of the migrant worker in the city even while utilizing its services. The fact that the worker represents a connection between the ancestral habitat of origin and the city of work is not taken into consideration since circulatory or seasonal movements are not even considered as a framework.

This point is reinforced by the observations made in an essay (Liu, 2011) which cautions of major problems for a growing section of China's population which may not find its needs reflected in policies even as the choices the government makes for urban development may continue to show problems and biases of their own. This is something that resonates a lot with India as well.

As observations made by scholars such as Ravi Ahuja indicate, the circulation and movement of people leave behind, create or occupy physical spaces that service their specific needs. There is a regime that emerges around circulation and movement. Perhaps this is why a co-relation emerges between the floating population of China and habitats such as the urban villages that exist in China's biggest cities – including Shenzhen. These spaces become used by the transient populations and their growth – often seen as a problem by local authorities, just as slums are seen in cities like Mumbai – accompanies the growth of this same demographic.

The existence of urban villages in Chinese cities themselves are symbols of a rigid demarcation of rural and urban categorization – as many of them emerged when the government took over their agricultural land for urban development. However, due to additional expenses that the government would have to undergo in compensating the thousands of families in the village, (if they shifted) the authorities simply let the villages exist within the city without access to agricultural land.

The same system of restriction that does not allow villagers to leave their domicile of origin is another reasons why urban villages emerge in Chinese cities. As cities swallow villages, they cannot really digest them due to official restrictions on mobility for village residents. These urban villages then develop on their own terms and most grow vertically with residents letting and sub-letting apartments to the floating population that are inevitably needed for the city's labour supply. A sharp focus on this phe-

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32   Taylor Guy, LSE Migration Studies Unit, Working papers: No. 2011/07)– China's Floating Migrants: Updated from the 2005 1 % Population Sample Survey.

nomenon is provided by David Bandurski (Bandruski, 2015)

As China's challenges with urbanization continue – and the consequences of its accelerated rate of city forming become evident, the government has already began to formulate new policies that are now being reflected in studies and policy papers. The *National Plan of New Urbanization (2014-2020*) published by the State Council of China 2014[33] speaks about stressing the need to *break the urban –rural duality*, converting rural populations into urban residents, developing an integrated approach to agricultural modernization, industrialization, information and communication technologies and urbanization, besides looking more towards urban agglomerations that keep in mind ecological and environmental ideals.

In many ways these moves acknowledge the issues that we discuss in the Indian context as well and will look at them more carefully in other sections – especially the chapter on policy.

The above review of literature, from historical and contemporary Indian and global contexts, helped shape our study significantly. It gave us confidence to structure a methodology that would factor in many of the variables that previous studies already indicated, besides evolving some of our own to best bring out the special cases that we were dealing with.

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33   http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/BB910.
pdf

Chapter 5. Methodology

5.0

This study had two distinct stages of operations. Stage 1 involved an exploration of the Konkan region starting from Mumbai and going to Mangalore – following the trajectory of the Konkan railway that had started full operations only a couple of decades before the study was done. It mapped the movements of users of the railways along six nodes or major stations and towns.

Stage 2 of the study emerged from the conclusions and findings of Stage 1. The decision taken between the Forum for Mobile Lives and Urbanology was that the main method of enquiry at this stage would be Ethnography – a detailed biographical and historical profile of four families (plus one religious group that was subsequently added) that would be chosen as representative narratives of the lives of several others who live in this space. The Ethnography would involve interviews, observations and engaged discussions as well as mapping, illustrating and visual documentation of views and ideas.

One major clarification we make with regards to the methodology is that we were not aiming at recording *frequency* of travel and contact by individual family members *or* families and groups as a whole. Our study, the objectives of which we have clarified in previous sections, was based on creating profiles located on much larger time-lines, covering at least two or more generations of members and the presence of stable patterns of movement over much larger periods. What mattered was the kind of investments people were making in the villages and time they were spending in the city over a life-cycle. Individual variation in this regard was not an issue within the family as families as a whole were the units of understanding with a further awareness that their lives were tempered by community networks.

By an large this is an Ethnographic study, which provides detailed portraits of families who occupy two homes and a conjoined and shared sense of space between their village in the Konkan region and their home in the city.

5.1 Urbanology as a method of enquiry

Urbanology is a combination of the disciplines of urban planning and social anthropology shaped by an understanding of political economy. We work with teams of architects, engineers, researchers, planners and media practitioners and engage with local residents and inhabitants in different dimensions of urban life – from participatory planning workshops for streets and neighbourhoods to co-designing homes, workshops and tool-houses.

We see our research and practice as a conjoined activity inspired by Patrick Geddes. He was a Scottish urban planner and founder of the department of sociology and civics in the University of Mumbai in the early 20th century.

For Geddes, engagement with urban planning meant working with micro-level contexts, residents and given realities, which he felt, should be the starting points for analysis. Actively engaging with the context was a very important part of the methodology that he imparted.

Our research inquiries are spontaneously shaped by our practice. We are not fulltime researchers nor are we located in academic institutions. We operate from a neighbourhood called Dharavi, in Mumbai, following the logic of Geddes's approach that suggested setting up offices of practice in the locations one is engaged in. What emerges from the office are strategies of engagement on sites, designs that emerge through practice and collaborations with local actors and practitioners and research agendas that are relevant to on-the-ground policies based on practice and observations.

In the popular imagination and for most residents of Mumbai from elsewhere, the whole of Dharavi is a notified slum. For us, the term is a problematic one and objectively does not do justice to Dharavi's history – which boasts of schools started in the early 20th century and the evolution of several community institutions that helped its residents grow over years and decades.

It is a vibrant space, with a strong local econo-

my and has been the focus of several official urban re-development projects – most of them failures in the face of several locally driven approaches lead by residents that actually worked. We wanted to learn from all these experiences.

We see Dharavi as a neighbourhood that has been incrementally developing over generations, like several such "homegrown" neighbourhoods in other parts of the world including medieval cities and middle-class areas in modern cities such as Tokyo.

Our approach involves working closely with the actual processes of incremental development ongoing in Dharavi. This includes working with the local economy – for example construction related activities and related partnerships with contractors, residents, community leaders. Or artisanal and service economic activities that involves working with artisans, workers and artists.

Along with this we also do discursive work that has a creative component – like exhibiting the work of contractors and artisans in Dharavi at venues around the world, or producing research and writing essays, op-eds and engaging with policy-makers.

It was during our work in Dharavi that we first came across frequent references to travels to ancestral or native villages made by its residents. The sustained connections with their extended families, sometimes even articulated by second or third generation residents, went contrary to the standard expectations that most urban practitioners had, of rural urban movements being a one – way channel, mostly following distress issues back in the village. Our curiosity was already whetted by this topic – but we did not have the resources to do a study on what we (would today) call Dharavi's circulatory regimes. These included far away states such as Tamil Nadu and U.P., which were difficult for us to travel to without support.

Since we also had a base in Goa, the idea of exploring the Konkan region was more within our capacity. We had already done some work in Goa exploring the concept of the urban system, which had given us a thematic opening to start thinking through.

The first opportunity to work on the Mumbai-Konkan circulatory regime came to us through our work in the neighbourhoods of Uttkarsh and Sai nagar in Bhandup where we had worked closely with Amar Mirjankar, a contractor who built homes and community temples. It was our frustration of dealing with his frequent travels to Ratnagiri that marked these neighbourhoods as possible points of departure for our inquiries on this theme!

The first phase of our research on circulatory urbanism (submitted in 2014) did not deal directly with specific families and neighbourhoods in Mumbai. We were looking at urban nodes all along the Konkan coast, in which the district and town of Ratnagiri were one of six that we had surveyed.

The second phase of the research study, emerged through a series of dialogues with the Mobile Lives Forum, which encouraged us to provide more detailed ethnographies of the lives of families that were part of our survey in the first study.

Among all the six nodes we had focused on, Ratnagiri was clearly the most important one in relation to Mumbai for historical reasons. It was agreed that detailed and in-depth narratives on families with connections between Mumbai and Ratnagiri would help us provide more insights to the concept of circulatory urbanism which we had presented at the end of the previous study.

Going deeper in the lives of the residents, and making a careful choice of the families with whom we would be closely connected with were important parts of our methodology.

5.2. Need for an ethnographic approach

Before we moved to the next stage of our research we had to clarify to ourselves the main tool of inquiry we would use. This of course depended on the nature of our questions.

When the hundreds of interviewees that we had previously surveyed responded to our sets of questions about their frequency and motivation to travel (2014) – their answers often left us hungry for more information. But since we were surveying 100 travellers each on 6 stations and towns we did not have the capacity or time to go too deep.

It became increasingly clear to us that we needed to have much longer conversations with many of those who traversed the Mumbai-Konkan stretch in this circulatory pattern and these conversations would have to be held over a longer period of time.

It was a mutually agreed upon decision between us and the Forum to deepen the previous study through providing more details of a few families that would illustrate the thematic of circulatory urbanism more accurately, so that the full picture of the movements between the villages and the city could become vivid and clear. In the process, we decided to change the title of the study from circulatory urbanism to circulatory lives, because the terrain we were exploring was beyond the urban-rural divide. Nonetheless, conceptually, the notion of an "urbanism" remains valid according to us, since as we explain in the theoretical framework, the rural is but a subcategory of the urban in economic, institutional and technological terms.

The ethnographic approach was already an integral tool of our methodology. Our practice in Mumbai already involved the documentation of the people and projects we were engaged with. It was not just what actors such as local builders, community leaders and residents did that was important in our work – but also who they were and what were their lives as a whole, that also mattered.

Urbanology, as we mentioned above, is a confluence of anthropology – which primarily uses ethnography as its tool – along with urban practice, specifically planning, design and architecture.

Thus, when we showcase the work of local home-builders or artisans – their biographies and descriptions of their social contexts become integral to our approach. This information gives us a deeper insight into their motivations and backgrounds, their personal contexts and their embeddedness in familial and community configurations.

We start with ethnography at its traditional starting point – a systematic description and a detailed inquiry of a social group, from individuals and families to clans and larger networks, keeping true to spirit of their own narratives, vocabulary and interpretations. Ethnography is important to us as practitioners because we privilege the voices and practic-es of the people we inter-act with in our work. They are the best experts of their own lives. So it makes sense for us to always incorporate the methodology in our work. If we want to follow their lives and understand their patterns in a different aspect – not how they build, imagine, create and manage their habitats (which is our primary focus in our work), but how do they relate to other habitats in their lives and move between them (the focus of this study) - then ethnography continues to be an important part of our methodology.

Moreover, ethnography allows us to bring together biography, history and social structure – what C.Wright Mills has called the "Sociological Imagination" –into an analytical framework allowing for deeper insights (Mills, 1959, 2000)

In our case, the biographical template was specially important because the entire circulatory loop of migrant individuals, families and groups often played out the whole story of circulatory lives over a life-time or through the story of a generational shift.

Discussions with individuals, families and communities that would generate more details on this template were therefore important components of our methodology and these would have to be done across the two places that constituted the family's extra-territorial sense of home. They would also involve the journey itself and need to be conducted with people across age groups, gender and other configurations.

However, our ethnographic approach was not based on a traditional anthropological one, in which one unit – a home – a village or community – becomes the subject of the study where the anthropologist makes a collective portrait of the location (or community or culture) through the voices of the informants or subjects. Ethnography has evolved in various directions – from being photographic and purely representational in nature to developing critical forms that play with subjectivity and the voices of the subjects themselves.

Our approach was based on understanding the lives of the protagonists in our story through their own narrations and arranging these according to the logic that emerged from what they said.

We were not going to generalize based on these accounts – as the demographics and scales are too large and complicated to do that – but use them to illustrate the reality that we were suggesting existed. Through the illustration we wanted to reinforce the idea that this reality did indeed have that particular shape and pattern (circulatory) that we were describing.

We also made an effort to demonstrate that the four families that we had selected were in no way unique in their villages, when it came to their relationship to the city. This was done by mapping the family trees of all the other families of the clan they belonged to. In the process we asked the people we interviewed to tell us whether the family members were currently in the village, in Mumbai or somewhere else. This helped us confirm that the families we had selected fit a pattern.

The stories of the people involved had to be arranged around the most important variables – the family, the clan, the village or city and the community and within them a representation of different age groups and gendered voices.

The conversations, interviews and observations had to be made across these differences and also across the places – between the village and the city, including the journey whenever possible – to provide a detailed picture.

We were already equipped with the deep background knowledge we had about the history of circulatory movements in India and the world, (that we reviewed above), we had already documented a large and exhaustive survey of people who moved across the region on the Konkan railway in our previous study and now we had to provide depth and texture through the detailed descriptions of a set of selected protagonists.

Ethnography has both, a textual element (it is a product – an ethnography of a place or people) and a methodological one (it is a set of techniques). Thus ethnography can be a portrait, description and graphic (textual and visual) representation of a people or group. But it is also methodology, one that involves a combination of participant observation techniques, long conversations (that include structured and non-structured interviews and discussions) and en-

gaging with the people who are the subjects of the study (Marcus, 1999).

We used all these techniques to inquire and document the reality we were seeking to illustrate.

5.3. Selecting the families

Our previous study included a survey of about 600 passengers of the Konkan railways. It was not possible to make a choice of the four families for the case studies from that pool because those interviews were based on transitory interactions, done mostly on stations.

We decided to make neighbourhoods in Mumbai that had connections to Ratnagiri the starting point of the final choice of the families. Along with the homegrown settlements that we worked in – mainly Dharavi, Bhandup and Shivaji Nagar, we also connected to B.D.D. chawls for a more exhaustive caste based representation and to ensure Dalit families were included in the study.

B.D.D. chawls represented a formal and secure tenancy for the inhabitants, as opposed to other parts of the city such as Dharavi and Bhandup where people lack land title. This was an important consideration in our selection of B.D.D. chawls because otherwise our study could have been accused of focusing on people who have no choice but to circulate between the city and the village because of their unsecure tenure in Mumbai. Indeed, Jan Breman (Breman, 1996) and other commentators argue that circular migration may be influenced by security of tenure. The higher the security of tenure, the lower would be people's connections to the villages, was what was being proposed. Our choice of subjects therefore had to be based on this question of security of tenure as well.

The process of selecting the families was facilitated by a workshop we organized in September 2015 with a class of forty students from UMEA University in Sweden. The students were organized in small groups which each spent time with one of twenty families we selected. Each of these families had members living in both Mumbai and Ratnagiri District on the Konkan Coast. The students investigated the way in which these habitats were connected architecturally, but also socially and culturally.

The workshop was a way for us to 1) Engage with many families and select a few of them for our subsequent fieldwork; 2) to produce a certain amount of data that was relevant to our report; 3) to test our 'circulatory urbanism' concept with students who came without preconceived notion of what they were going to see.

We dedicate a few pages of this report to the workshop and its output and hope that it will provide a useful introduction to the more detailed ethnography of the four families plus one religious community that we have followed thereafter.

This workshop involved a larger survey of families from the neighbourhoods we worked in (Bhandup, B.D.D Chawls and Dharavi) – covering almost 60 families in all. This was a door-to-door survey in which we shared the goals of the research and invited families to participate. It was mandatory that the families and us connected – for this would be a long-term association between us who were the principal researchers, as well as our team in our office who would be assisting us.

56 of the 60 families we had surveyed had active connections to their villages (they would go there at least twice a year and considered it their home). From these we chose 20 families for more in-depth interaction, using the students who were participants in the workshop. This in-depth interaction involved the students interacting with the families in Mumbai as well as making a field visit to their villages.

The teams made field trips twice to each of the 20 families for the purpose of documenting and mapping out movements and life stories on the Ratnagiri side of the pendular connection. They made four trips on the Mumbai side. During the workshop the students and our team researched the socio-economic contexts of the individuals, families and communities to better set the template for the next stage of inquiry. A selection of the output of this workshop is presented in the appendix.

Our interactions with the families during the workshop became the basis for us to choose the final four families (plus the religious cult), which would become the focus of the study. Since all the families had more or less similar templates in terms of

their relationship to their village, we chose families that covered a variety of different types of impulses, keeping in mind, caste, class, age and gender representations and of course most importantly, the willingness they showed to participate in the study.

It was through this process, that two families from B.D.D. chawls and two from Bhandup became the final choice with people across generations and gender being represented. Two were Dalits and two were from Other Backward Castes, which was acceptable to us mainly because these groups dominate the fabric of the neighbourhoods that are a significant part of Mumbai *and* were connected to Ratnagiri.

We shared with the families the main focus of the study which were listed as follows:

1) Examining the institution of the **family – embedded in community configurations** as a mode of physical and social mobility between Ratnagiri and Mumbai.

2) Documenting and analysing the act of **construction and architecture** of homes and sacred spaces as an elaboration of such mobility in both homes.

3) Studying the **words, categories and concepts** people use to evoke a sense of home, many senses of homes and ways of belonging.

4) Mapping movement using technologies of **mobility and communication** employed by residents in facilitating the movements that characterized their lives.

5.4. Techniques

We interviewed family members in order to 1) document the objective story of their lives. This was supplemented by discussions with family members in different permutations and combinations – with groups from specific generations, gender based or couples. 2) We documented how they express their understanding of dual homes, in terms of village and city ties.

We spent long stretches of time with family members in their homes in the evenings in Mum-

bai or staying over night in the villages in Ratnagiri. Interviews were mostly done with one member at a time, but there were always moments of collective interactions and sometimes couples spoke together.

Besides formal interviews, we engaged in participant observation of the homes, (interior and exterior), villages or neighbourhood contexts, observing social relations between family and community members, the socio-economic context of the habitats. This was done mainly through taking part in family dinners, staying over in the homes, participating in festivals and other family events, walking around the habitats. Where the interviews and group discussions helped us understand how people express their ideas and notions, our observation helped us record details that were pertinent to our analysis and research. We used architectural drawing and photography as an integral part of our documentation process.

We conducted series group interviews with special focuses. These included intergeneration interviews with a grandparent, a parent and a child for each of the four families. Some of these interviews were also organized along gender lines, to insure that no specific kind of voice dominates. We also organized a group interview in the form of a workshop with the teenagers from each of the four families. At this occasion we asked them to present their life story, with a focus on their relationship with their Konkan villages, to each other. Members of our team also presented their journeys to encourage an informal and friendly atmosphere. This workshop was also filmed and recorded. Finally, we interviewed and filmed people both in their Mumbai and village contexts. All these interviews were filmed, transcribed and translated in English.

Besides interviews we participated in festivals, rituals and celebrations whenever the opportunity arose. We also took part in meetings in a local temple trust, village council and in public village group meetings in Mumbai that we discuss in the ethnography. Interviews were done mostly in Marathi and Hindi with the translators being from our team itself, and sometimes in English.

The distances between places is vast, the time we can spend with families at a time – especially in the village context – cannot be too long on each visit as it becomes a strain on the families. Whenever possible we spent the night in the families' village homes. There is hardly any possibility of staying at a hotel nearby and typically the villages are remote enough from the closest market as well.

So we compressed each visit with as much interaction as possible. The questions were focused on the home in the village and the city, or any other affiliation people may have. Distances travelled, communication frequency through mobile phones and other basic data was gathered through small surveys with each family. We also documented the favourite objects of each of the main family members in the villages.

The process included creating basic ethnographic profiles of each family and documenting biographical details of family members. Typically we would start with the head of the family – who would be the grandfather or grandmother and then gradually bring in all others.

Discussions about life in the village or the city were open-ended. In the city we spoke to the families usually in the evenings.

Whenever possible we joined the members who were travelling one-way or the other. Train journeys brought out a distinctive set of responses to our questions because of the memories it evoked, and gave us an opportunity to interact informally over a long stretch of time with family members.

Taking part in evening prayers and dinners in the village gave us a view of everyday life from within. We also spent time exploring the villages and their surroundings with some family members and also commuted with those who were traveling on work everyday to the closest town. We visited local primary schools, looked at the villages' infrastructure, temples and sacred spaces, observed its spatial-social organization, and talked to neighbours, small business owners, priests and elders. All through notes, photos and sketches were taken and processed into data after each visit either in the city or the village.

We met the temple group in times when there were no festivals or celebrations and also during ritually important times both in Mumbai and in Ratn-
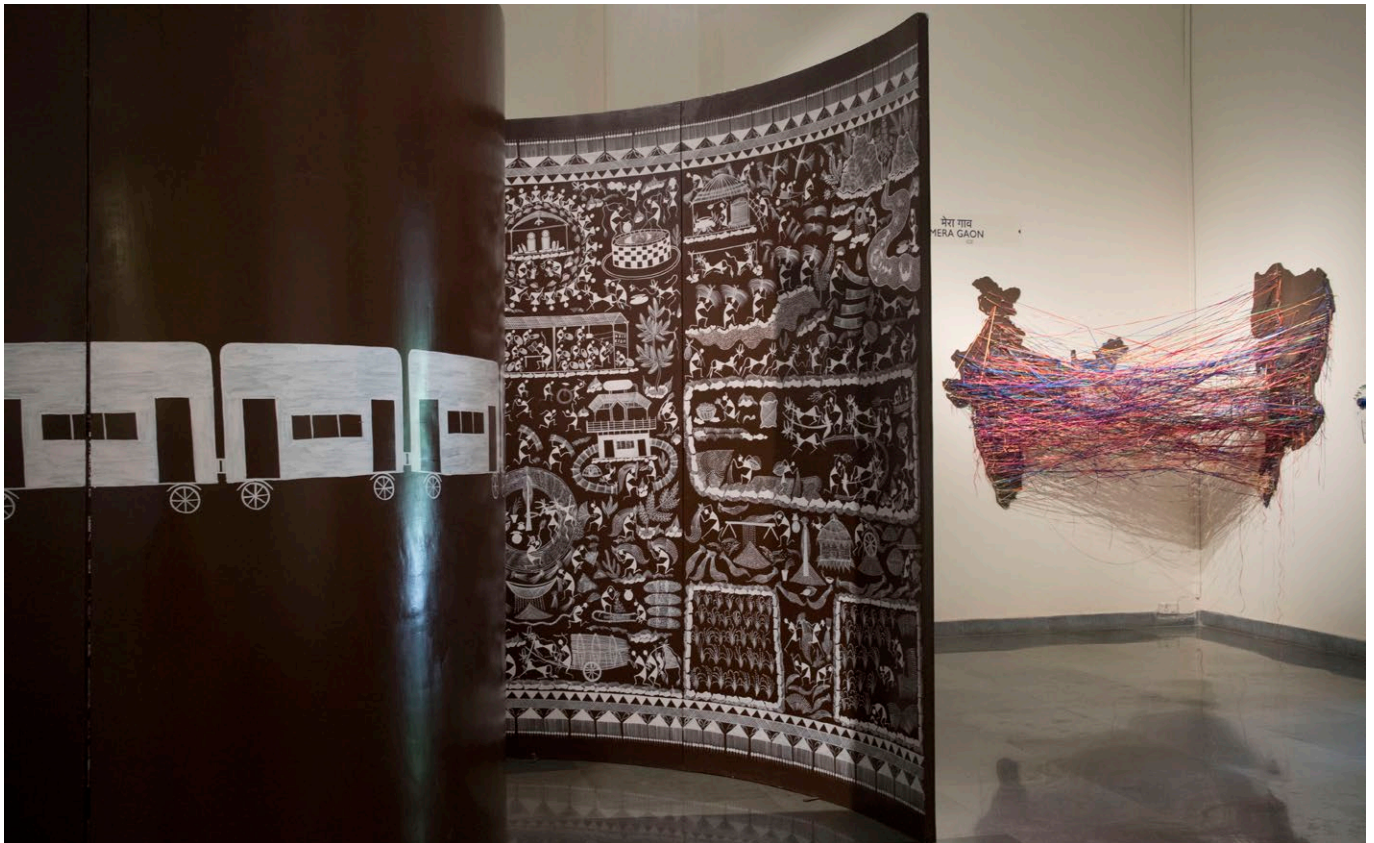
An installation at the Mumbai Return Exhibition - The Loop.

agiri. We spoke to various members of the religious community about their faith and journeys. Once, for instance, we were fortunate to have with us a driver from Bhandup who engaged in a fantastically rich discussion on the history of the area with Tai, who is the charismatic leader of this community. This exchange, which happened over bonfire in a pitch dark and cold night on the hill where the village temple is located, was unfortunately not recorded. It nonetheless increased our understanding of the context and stimulated our discussions.

5.5 Visual Documentation

Special visits were made to map out homes and habitats in detail on all sites involved in the study. An architect from our team was assigned to map out the details of the neighbourhood, homes and habitats in Mumbai as well as the villages. In the process, a collection of detailed drawings of homes and habitats in the villages and the city was produced and is included in the report. Maps and drawings help illustrate crucial aspects of the overlap between ethnic and geographical arrangements in the urban and rural contexts.

Besides the photos we took ourselves, Ishan Tankha a professional photographer was specially commissioned by the Forum and us for capturing the places and personalities. We have 200 high quality, high-resolution photos of the city and village contexts of the four families and the religious group.

In addition, we created private Facebook pages for each of the families, where they and us uploaded photos of the village, the city and the journey from one to the other. This allowed us to see the village through their lenses. A part of the exchange of images happened via Whatsapp, especially with the younger generation in Mumbai. Internet connectivity in the village was not always reliable, but teenagers on both sides use it a lot.

Video documentation in the form of interviews of the key family members whom we had shortlisted after initial conversations were also conducted on subsequent visits. These were an event unto themselves with the drama of setting up the equipment getting everyone excited. These sessions could go on for a long time as some respondents enjoyed the process. Many of the conversations, interviews and group discussions that comprise the ethnography are

recorded on video.

Since the places are dispersed, the families far away from each other, both in the city and the district, the visual documentation and mapping exercises were distinct exercises made during special visits as it was difficult to coordinate simultaneous visits with researchers, family members and the specialists in documentation at the same time.

5.6 Design and Art Explorations

We were invited to present our work on circulatory urbanism at the Constellation.s exhibition organized by Arc en Rêve at the *Contemporary Art* Museum (CAPC) in Bordeaux. We produced a giant mural on Circulatory lives, along with a 3 minutes video that represented the Mumbai-Ratnagiri story. Working on the mural and attempting at representing the concept of circulatory urbanism in graphical ways, helped us develop the concept further.

Along with the exhibition we also organized interactive sessions with visitors in Bordeaux who shared their own circulatory lives trajectories. Their stories were first sketched by members of our team, which included two architects and a landscape designer, and then processed into circulatory life maps. We mapped the trajectories of about a dozen visitors, staff and teams who were exposing their own work. We selected four of them that we included in a small video, which was then added to our display at Constellation.s.

Last November we were invited to show our work on Circulatory Lives in Geneva. This time we worked with Indian artisans and artists who connected to the central idea. They were from various parts of India: Mumbai, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, and Udaipur. We worked with Warli tribal artists who specialized in the form of Warli art, miniaturist painters, painters and artists from Dharavi – to produce art works.
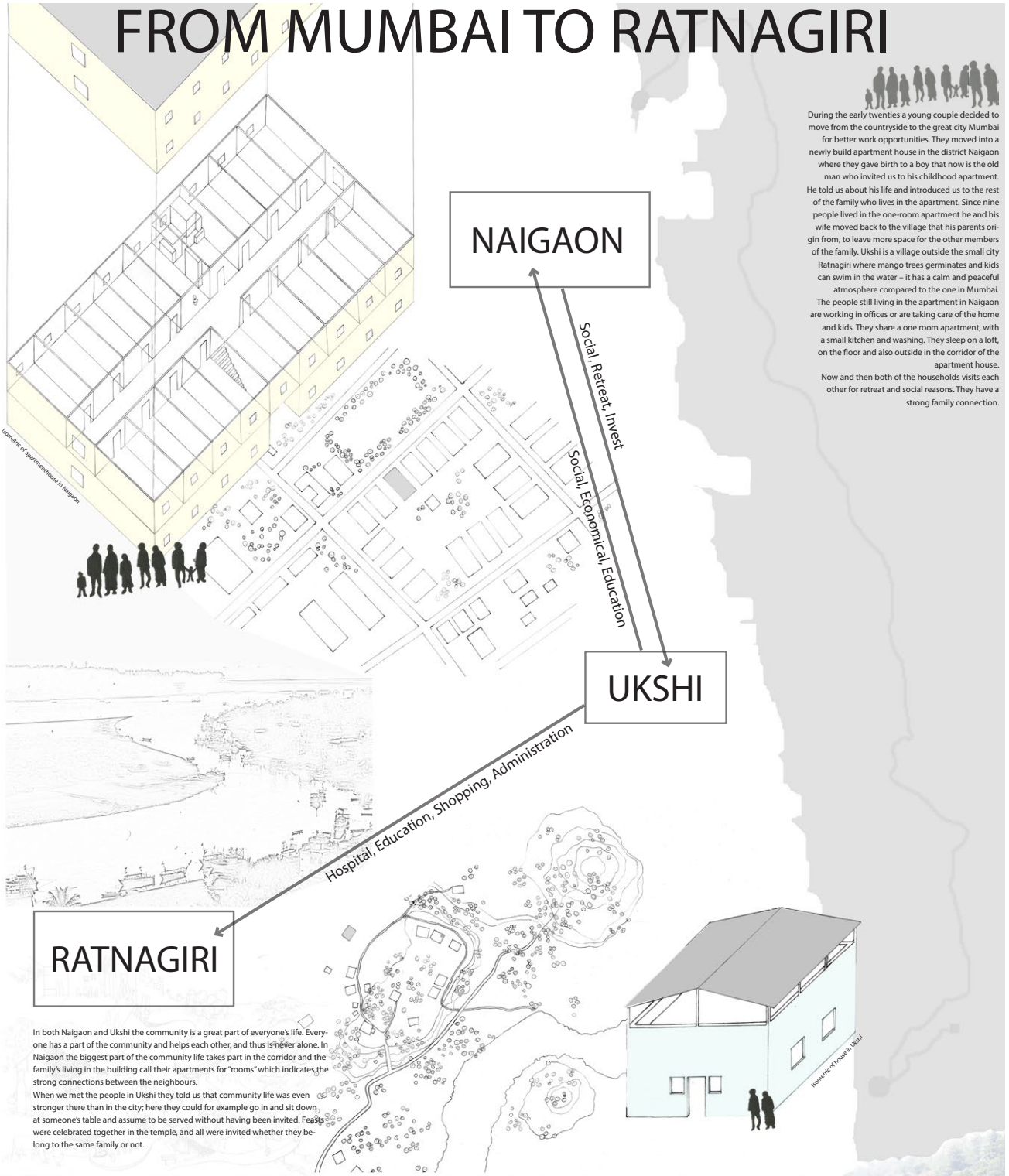
These emerged after a long discussion with each artist that organized their thoughts on the theme of circulatory lives. These were exhibited at the International School of Geneva and will be exhibited from April onwards at the *urbz* gallery in Mumbai. Photos and descriptions of the pieces exhibited are included in the appendix.

Finally, in July 2017 we were invited to show our work on circulatory lives and homegrown cities at the Bhau Daji Lad Museum, which is Mumbai's primary city museum. Details of the exhibition have been shared with the Forum.

FROM MUMBAI TO RATNAGIRI

NAIGAON

Social, Retreat, Invest

Social, Economical, Education

UKSHI

Hospital, Education, Shopping, Administration

RATNAGIRI

In both Naigaon and Ukshi the community is a great part of everyone's life. Everyone has a part of the community and helps each other, and thus is never alone. In Naigaon the biggest part of the community life takes part in the corridor and the family's living in the building call their apartments for "rooms" which indicates the strong connections between the neighbours.

When we met the people in Ukshi they told us that community life was even stronger there than in the city; here they could for example go in and sit down at someone's table and assume to be served without having been invited. Feasts were celebrated together in the temple, and all were invited whether they belong to the same family or not.

Circulatory Urbanism | URBZ
Robin Larsson & Moa Kengården

Urban Variance 2014-15

UMA | 3
Umeå School of Architecture | uma three

Collage produced by an UMEA (Sweden) student during a workshop on the relationship between Mumbai and Ratnagiri organised by urbz as part of the Circulatory Urbanism research project in September 2014.

Chapter 6. Ethnography

6.1. Sites in the study

6.1.1 *Mumbai*

Mumbai city is the starting point of our study. It is a megalopolis of an estimated 18.4 million people who live within its city limits. Its larger urban footprint includes a couple of million more. Mumbai is the capital city of the state of Maharashtra, with its 100 + million demographic, making it one of the most populated states of India. Mumbai is also In-

dia's financial capital, generating about 20% of the country's GDP. In the early 1990s, India moved away from the peculiar mix of Nehruvian industrial socialism and a Gandhian focus on rural development. Since the 1990s, India has deregulated its economy, invested in infrastructure and generated public-private redevelopment schemes. This has resulted in a construction boom and massive flow of speculative investments into the city and its periphery, which is showing no sign of weakening 25 years after it started.

One of the most striking characteristics of contemporary Mumbai is the extreme juxtaposition of wealth and poverty. According to government records and data, nearly half of Mumbai's population lives in settlements that are officially denominated as 'slum areas'. These are homegrown, incremen-
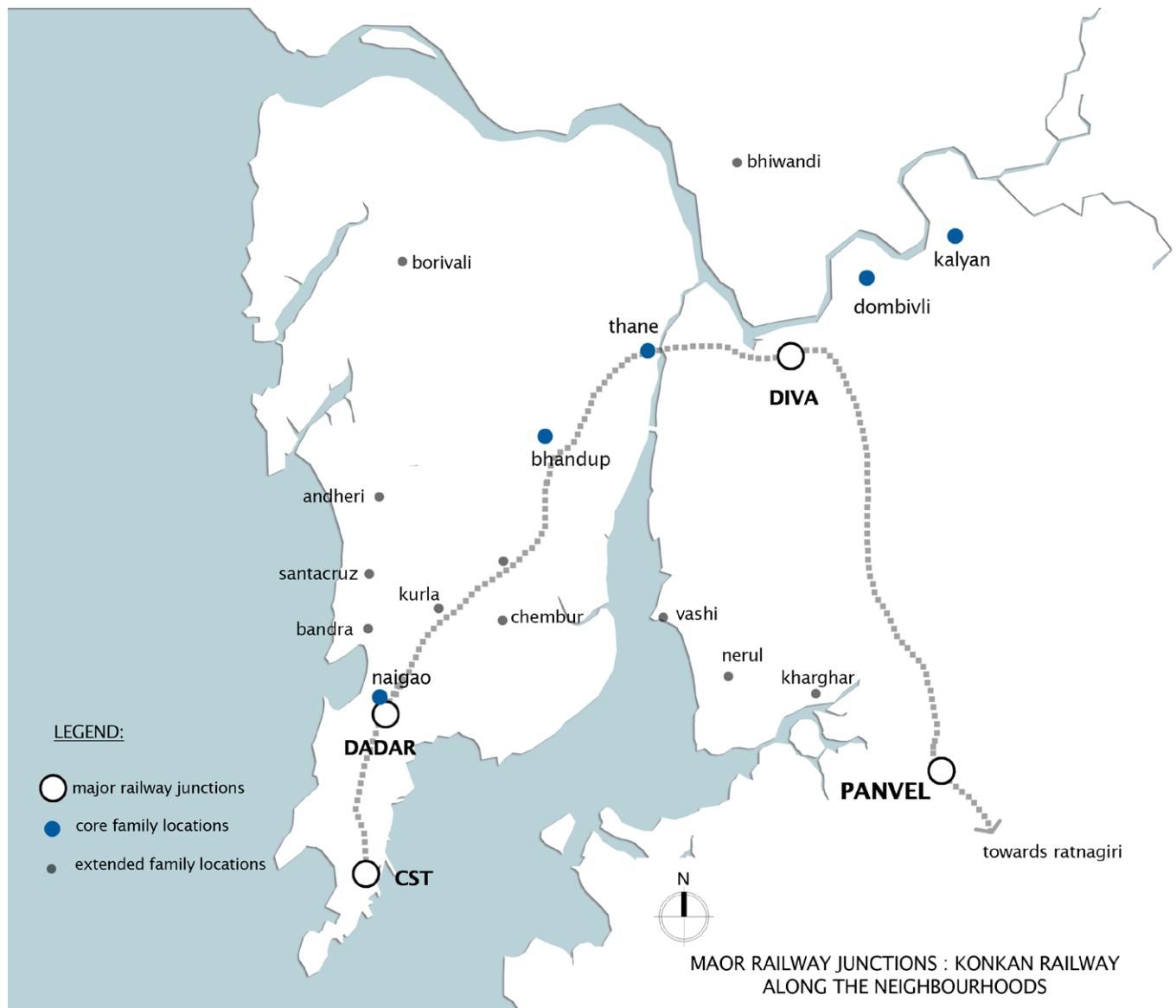
Map of Mumbai showing most important railway junctions.

tally developed neighbourhoods, which are usually struggling with poor infrastructure and inadequate services. The people living in such settlements are typically an assorted mix. They include service providers, workers in industries, small scale workshops or home-based manufacturing units, municipal workers, local entrepreneurs and traders, as well as middle-class residents who cannot afford a house from the city's exorbitant real estate market.

Mumbai was a major trading centre in the eighteenth century, when different actors such as the East India Company, the British colonial government and native entrepreneurs from the state of Gujarat developed it. Even at this time it attracted labour to work in the docks from the Bombay Presidency region, which stretched from Karachi in contemporary Pakistan to Goa in the south, and included the district of Ratnagiri. They built it as a port city trading in opium and cotton. In the nineteenth century it developed into a major industrial centre in Asia, known mainly for its textile mills. This is the period when a larger number of workers arrived here, primarily from the Konkan region of Ratnagiri to work in its mills, besides other parts of the country. The twentieth century saw a relative decline of these industries with the rise of the city as a major financial centre.

Today, as the city stepped into the twenty-first century, it has become a vast economic and financial hub in which large-scale and small-scale manufacture co-exist along with finance, trade, media, I.T and other activities, creating a discontinuous and layered urban template, with a diversity of built-forms, local institutions and global aspirations. Most of the city works and lives in contexts that are very humble by international standards, with very basic infrastructure. For instance, it is not at all unusual in Mumbai for a middle-class family of six people to live in a 25-m2 apartment.

Of the four families in our study, two live in a neighbourhood that is officially designated as a 'slum area', in the northern Mumbai suburb of Bhandup. The other two are from B.D.D Chawls in Naigaon in central Mumbai. As mentioned earlier, 'chawls' are mass housing schemes designed to house factory workers. It emerged in colonial India, and has remained an important housing typology in the city. Local residents often refer to 'Slums' as 'chawls'. This is partly because the typology of the

chawl, with its small rooms aligned along a corridor bracketed by common toilets at either end, has been often reproduced by builders in homegrown settlements. Besides, the demographic profile of chawl and slum dwellers overlaps, especially in terms of origins, caste and income.

6.1.2. *Naigaon Chawl*

The buildings of Naigaon Chawls are part of a network of such colonies referred to as the B.D.D chawls. These were created in the 1920s, by the Bombay Development Department during colonial rule. They represent a colonial vision of working class needs and were modeled on army barracks.

Typically each building has rooms next to each other in two facing rows. The central area becomes a passageway. These buildings housed several thousand workers employed by the textile mills or who worked in the municipal, or public works departments and earlier may have lived in private chawls or shanties.
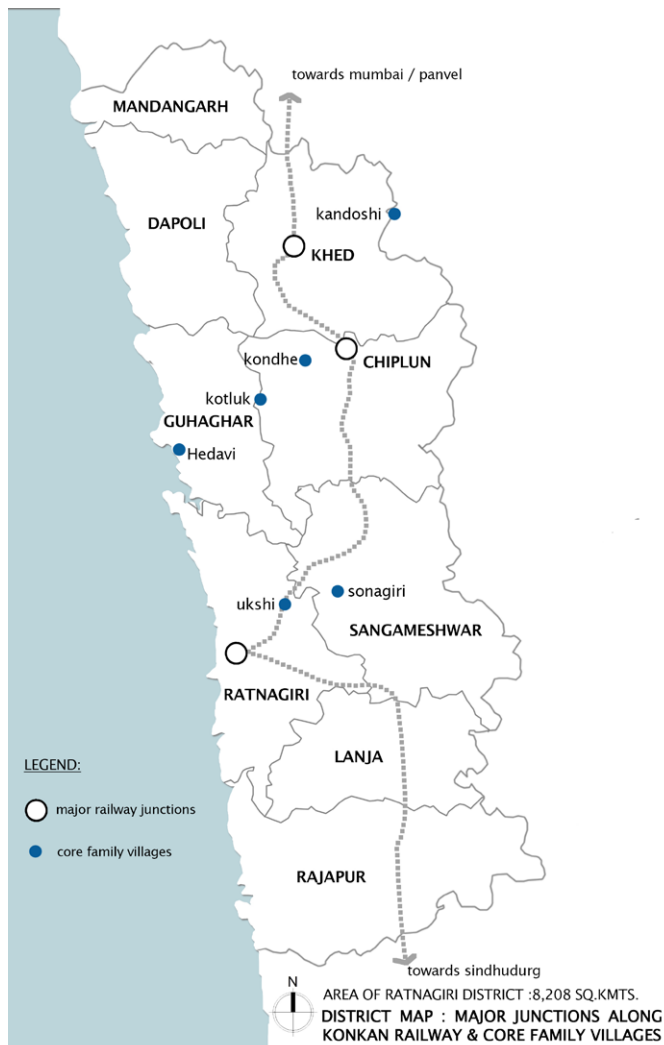
The Naigaon B.D.D. Chawl buildings cover an area of 5.39 hectares and have 42 buildings – each with 80 rooms – creating a set of 3,344 tenements. Out of these 3,246 are used for living by families employed by the police or workers in the municipal corporation of greater Mumbai, 25 are shops, 60 are used as school rooms and 13 as hospital rooms.

The closest railway station is Dadar, a major railway hub about 1.5 kilometers away. In terms of ownership, the chawls belong to the Public Works Department and the residents are tenants with secure occupancy rights that cannot be transferred or sold. Children of old textile mill workers or service providers to the municipality who are the prime occupants of the premises, are now integrated into the urban economy as part of the growing and upwardly aspiring middle class in the city. The central location of the chawls in Mumbai makes them a very desirable location in terms of daily commuting. At the same time, the pattern of living arrangements within the buildings reflects strong community shaped settings.

People from the same village or region can be found congregated on the same floor and an entire building can consist of people from one district

Top; Google earth image of B.D.D chawls Naigaon, Mumbai. Pins indicate buildings which families live. *Bottom*; Google earth view of the unplanned neighbourhoods of Bhandup showing family homes.

MANDANGARH

towards mumbai / panvel

DAPOLI

kandoshi

KHED

kondhe

CHIPLUN

kotluk

GUHAGHAR

Hedavi

sonagiri

ukshi

SANGAMESHWAR

RATNAGIRI

LEGEND:

◯ major railway junctions

● core family villages

LANJA

RAJAPUR

towards sindhudurg

N

AREA OF RATNAGIRI DISTRICT :8,208 SQ.KMTS.
DISTRICT MAP : MAJOR JUNCTIONS ALONG
KONKAN RAILWAY & CORE FAMILY VILLAGES

An installation at the Mumbai Return Exhibition - The Loop.

alone – like Ratnagiri or Raigarh, or Nasik. In the same vein, joint family networks spread through several rooms on a particular corridor and members from one clan may be found in close proximity to each other in the same building.

Internally, the families manage the cleanliness and general management of the floors but there is a formal society to look into the affairs of a cluster of buildings. This society also manages common open spaces between buildings. The chawls line a very large maidan (open ground), which is used by all residents for special religious, familial and cultural functions. An under-construction monorail system cuts through the neighbourhood and is set to connect the residents of Naigaon to central Mumbai and the eastern suburb of Chembur with a very modern transport technology.

The most recent update about the planned real-es-

tate development of the chawls is that they are slotted for a rehaul with the old buildings being transformed into apartment blocks to be constructed by a real-estate company under the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme. The tenants will become owners of apartments in a new typology with new neighbours who would pay massively for living in what is a prime neighbourhood.

6.1.3. *Bhandup*

Bhandup is one of the oldest suburbs of Mumbai and was once primarily forested and agricultural land owned primarily by the Agri community, (a farming caste). Some tracts were also owned by the Son Kolis, a traditional fishing community which worked in the mangrove creeks along the city's eastern coast.

When the first railway track passed between Mumbai and Thane cities in 1853, Bhandup got its own railway station. The area though remained peripheral in Mumbai's industrial landscape considered to be forested land. In the late nineteenth century, it became a major distillery centre for producing alcohol from coconuts and dates.

A real demographic leap occurred only in the middle of the twentieth century, when the population of the city grew and the large textile mills of central Mumbai began to decline. Workers from the city area moved up north, where new industries had sprouted. These included Crompton Greaves, a power company set up in 1937, followed by Asian paints, and Ceat Tyres, a car tyres manufacturer. Availability of water and relatively open land made it possible for newcomers to settle and build homes. The populations of Bhandup started picking in the 1980s and by the end of the 1990s the hills of Bhandup were almost entirely covered with small houses. In 2001 the population figure for Bhandup was 691, 227 and it is estimated by now to have touched a million mark. While Bhandup is a mixed neighbourhood in terms of class and ethnicity, it has a very large proportion of people (no reliable figures exist, just estimates) living in homegrown settlements.

Konkan Nagar, (named after the coastal region from where most residents come from,) Sai baba Nagar and Uttkarsh Nagar being the biggest ones.

As far as 'slums' go, Bhandup is relatively better off than other parts of the city, having been connected to municipal water and provided with decent infrastructure. This is largely due to the Maharashtra origin of its population, which is favoured by the Shiv Sena and other nationalist political parties that dominate the state bureaucracy. Still, stories of hardship and gang violence abound in Bhandup, which remains a somewhat volatile area, in spite of a general improvement in the last decade or so.

6.1.4. *Ratnagiri District*

Ratnagiri is one of 36 districts in the state of Maharashtra, a very large and populous state with 110 million inhabitants populating a span of 307,713 square kilometers. In comparison with other districts in the state, the population of Ratnagiri district is low – just 1.62 million people spread over a terrain of 8,208 square kilometers of forests, coastline and the Western Ghats – a hill range that runs north to south along the Konkan coast.

Ratnagiri district is part of a chain of four coastal districts of Maharashtra, that starts in the north immediately after the Mumbai metropolitan region, stepping down into Thane, Raigarh, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts – all of which are part of the Konkan region. The Konkan region itself goes further down south into the states of Goa and Karnataka.

Before 1981, what was referred to as Ratnagiri, comprised jointly of the two districts that today are counted as Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.

This region has been a source of labour for western Maharashtra for several centuries. Historically, farmers doubled up as professional soldiers and traders during the non-agricultural season and travelled all over western Maharashtra for work. Connectivity was very poor on land, but sea navigation had an old history with ports being fairly well developed along the coasts. The routes went all the way to bustling port-towns like Kalyan which today are seen as suburban extensions of Mumbai, but then were important trade centers in their own right.

The tendency of farmers looking for seasonal jobs for half a year segued well into the era of colonialism, with the development of the port of Bombay in the eighteenth century. During those years, the region saw shiploads of workers travelling up and down the coast for work. In that period, the return to the village, especially during festivals and the agricultural season was a well-documented fact. In the nineteenth century, the opening up of the textile mills in Mumbai saw a rush of people from here. They became part of the industrial work force in the city, even as they continued to maintain ties with the village. Roadways were rudimentary right up till the twentieth century with most people relying on steamer companies. In that same period, while the rest of the country had a rapidly developing train network, the Konkan remained untouched by this technology, mainly because of the difficult terrain. The hilly wet, monsoon afflicted region (for half the year almost) was treacherous to build railway tracks. In fact, the Konkan railways started to function only in the 1990s, finally providing a viable alternative to the bus-service, which was the only other mode of travel, since the shipping companies had shut down by the early 1980s.

6.1.5. *Songiri*

Songiri is a small village in Sangmeshwar Taluka (A taluka is an administrative sub-unit of a district) in Ratnagiri. It comes under the Kolambe Panchayat or Village council. It is located 40 km eastwards from the district head quarter town of Ratnagiri and is 253 km. away from Mumbai. To reach Songiri, the best route is to take the train from either Dadar or Thane stations and get off at Sangameshwar railway station – (on a slow train) or Ratnagiri Station on a fast train. The rest of the journey can be made by auto-rickshaw, bus or taxi. The village creeps up a hill off the highway.

Songiri consists of different enclaves, each conforming to a particular community. Thus there are distinct enclaves for the various clans, castes and communities that make up the village. Right on the top sections of the hilly terrain is Takle wadi, where the clan of the Takles live at the extreme upper end of the village. The Takles are Marathas, which is a title used to describe communities that were both agriculturists as well as professional soldiers enrolled in local armies. Neighbouring the Takle wadi is an enclave of a Dalit clan, after which is a settlement of the Konkani Muslims. Closer to the road reside the upper caste groups like the Brahmins. Agricultural
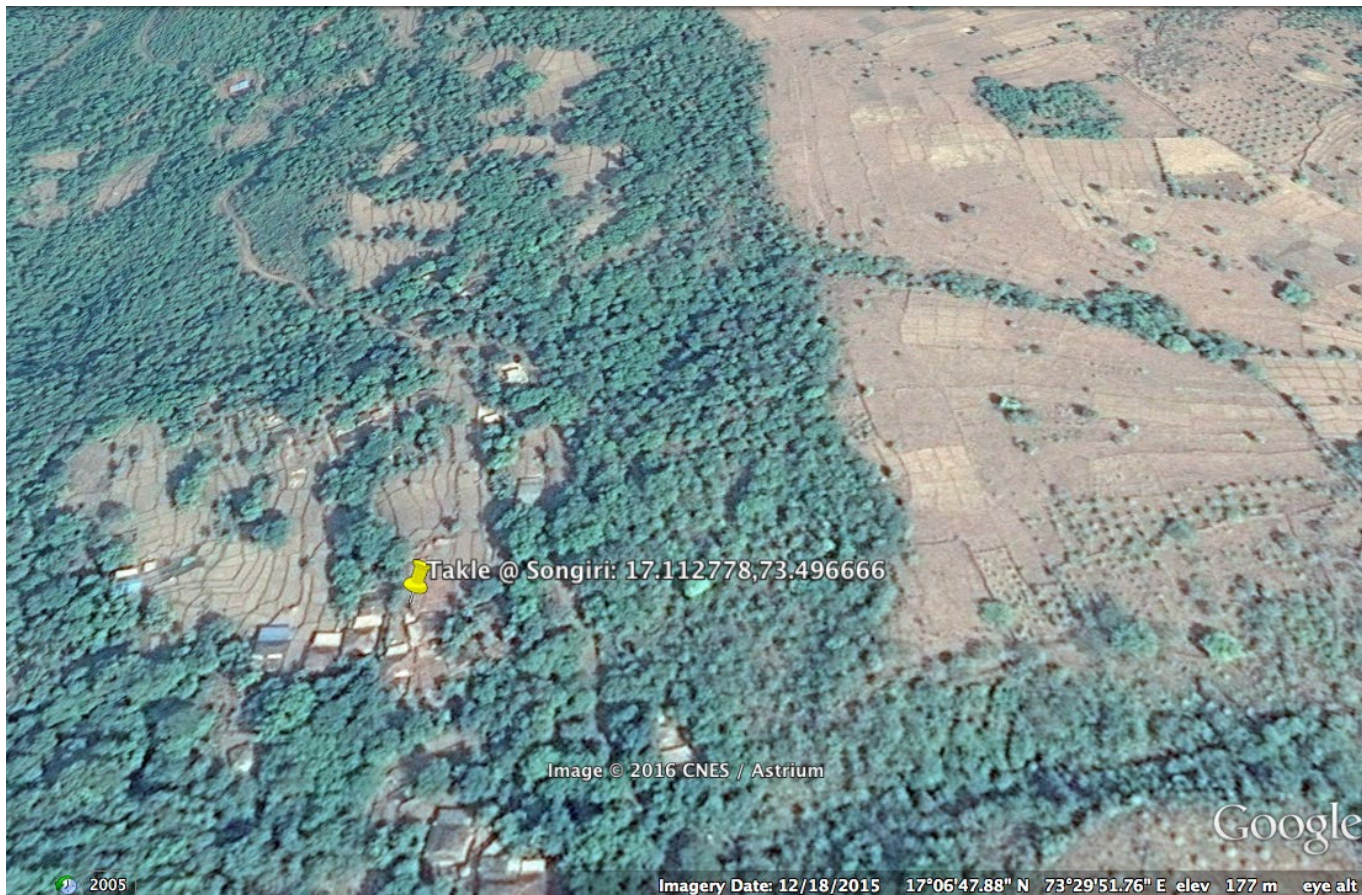
Top; Google earth view of Takale house in Songiri, Ratnagiri. *Bottom*; Google earth view of the Kule house in Kondhe village.

fields, tree plantations and forests that intersperse the whole village surround the hamlets. These are plotted and mapped with records kept in the village council office at a town called Kolambe, which also manages property disputes. There is a government school on top of the hill, which is used mostly by the residents of Songiri, but also sees enrolment from surrounding villages. The teacher commutes to the school everyday from the closest major town, Sangameshwar. The village is electrified and water is locally managed. Like in most traditional Indian villages, humans live with livestock like bulls, buffaloes and hens and cocks in close proximity. The forests that surround Songiri are full of monkeys that often raid the villages and have to be defended from becoming is a serious threat to agricultural practice.

6.1.6. *Kondhe*

Kondhe is a village in the Chiplun Taluka in Ratnagiri. It is located 99 km north off the district head quarter town of Ratnagiri and is around 169 km south from Mumbai. It has 410 families residing in it, making for a population 1794 of which 902 are males while 892 are females as per Population Census 2011. Its literacy level is 87.62 %.

Kondhe is very much on the main Mumbai Goa highway and its proximity to Chiplun town leaves a very clear mark on its character. It can be accessed with auto rickshaws (tuk-tuks – or expanded scooters) that regularly ply between Kondhe and Chiplun. The highway has become a hub where a two storied building with shops and many street-side food stalls already give it a town-like appearance. There are several homes, plantations and commercial establishments all along the highway.

The Kunbi community (also traditional agriculturists) dominates the village and there are several small settlements that have grown from specific Kunbi clans. Typically a clan grows around a clearing that has a temple, with homes being built in neat rows, one behind the other as the family expands. Land disputes and family conflict over property is common.

Typically, disputes are first heard by the village council and then handed over to the local magistrate in the district headquarters. The Kondhe Village council is also responsible for managing the new constructions coming up in the village along the highway. The residents of the village elect the council head.

Kondhe has relatively good electricity and water supply mainly due to its proximity to the industrial town of Chiplun. As often happens, growing towns tend to eventually pull in the surrounding villages into its administrative fold but it takes a long time for the village council to give up its hold on issues involving land and construction regulations.

In spite of high proximity of the village to the closest town, the landscape around Kondhe remains lush and forested, with the usual monkey problem being evoked by the residents. The agricultural fields yield rice and vegetables as well as have lucrative coconut, mango and betel nut plantations, which are major revenue earners. Besides the Kunbi community, other communities include Marathas, Brahmins and Baudha (Dalits)

6.1.7. *Ukshi*

Ukshi is a village in the Ratnagiri Taluka of Ratnagiri District (Ratnagiri is the common name for taluka, town and district in this case) and is located 25 km east from the district head quarters of Ratnagiri town. It is 257 km from Mumbai. There is a tiny railway station also called Ukshi where slow trains halt, but to reach it by road is a very long trek through hills and forests. Most residents coming from Mumbai, take a short cut through a tunnel and then walk on a dirt road to directly reach the Baudha enclave – the enclave of the Dalit community that happens to be on the outskirts of Ukshi village. Alternatively, travellers can get off at Ratnagiri station and take a bus to the stop on the highway from where it is but a short walk over a bridge over the Bowa River.

The first enclaves that appear on the road route are upper caste ones like the Brahmin wadi and the Desaiwadi, followed by the Konkani Muslims, then the Marathas, Agris and finally the Baudha enclave. The Baudha Dalit enclave is so named due to their conversion to Buddhism in 1956, which was a political movement launched by Baba Saheb Ambedkar, a legendary leader among the ex-untouchable Dalit community.

Forested hills and fields surround the enclave.

Top; Google earth view of Jandhav family home in Ukshi village. *Bottom*; Google earth image of Mohite house in Kotluk.

Most homes of the Baudha (Dalit community) are made with traditional material like mud, stonewall and tiled roofs, though a handful of families have transformed their homes into concrete and stone structures.

The Konkani Muslims in the village, who have a historical connection to places as distant as South Africa and the Gulf region have homes that reflect a much more lavish investment of material including glazed tiles for walls. Each enclave has a sacred structure dedicated to its own community so the village boasts of a fairly big sized mosque, a modern temple as well as a traditional one besides the Baudha Buddhist shrine.

There is a village council in Ukshi that manages local affairs and disputes. Different communities have historically controlled wells and while it is illegal to prohibit any community from using a village well, many members of the Baudha Dalit community have created their own pumped water system and dug a separate well a few years ago for servicing their own households. There are electricity connections in all homes though electric supply – like in most of rural India – is erratic with daily power cuts.

6.1.8. *Kotluk*

Kotluk is a village in the Guhagar Taluka of Ratnagiri District. It is located 53 km towards the north from the district head quarters of Ratnagiri town, 16 km from Guhagar town and about 217 km from Mumbai. Kotluk falls on the highway that connects it to major transport hubs headed towards Guhagar. In fact most long distance travellers do not access the village via trains as the closest railway station –Chiplun is 40 kms away. So people prefer taking the bus from Mumbai all the way directly to Kotluk.

Kotluk welcomes the visitor from the main highway with a long chawl – consisting of rooms and shops that mark it as an urbanizing zone on a busy transport route. This chawl is located next to the Baudha (Dalit community) enclave in the village. This enclave climbs uphill, house-by-house, family-by-family towards the summit, where the ancestral or oldest homes are located.

The other caste groups maintain their own enclaves, mostly lower down and closer to the high-

way. The total number of families in the village is 371 and the population is 1330 with males numbering 571. In Kotluk, the Baudha members are fairly dominant in the village and also take part actively in the village council (panchayat) elections. Young members run businesses and shops all along the highway and the intermixing between communities at the commercial level seems pretty high, which is not always the case with villages in the region.

Kotluk has a village school which is active, with a high degree of local enrolment. There is a small industrial estate that has emerged on the edge of the village. While agricultural fields and forests abound, with locals constantly sending warnings of wild animals attacking humans travelling at night, the roads are constantly abuzz with vehicular movement.

It is possible for a young person from the village to take a bus or hire a taxi and reach the closest town, which is around 6 or 7 kilometres away, where a cinema hall shows the latest Bollywood releases. Not many villages in the district – unless they are very close to a town – provide that facility and this is mainly because Kotluk's road connectivity is high with several new highway towns dotting the region.

In these new nodes, people from different parts of the state and even country have arrived and settled down for work. Guhagar town itself, which is the Taluka head quarters for the village is a local tourist hub and advertises New Year parties, pubs and restaurants, patronized by tourists and rich locals.

The inter-mixing of economic sectors, agricultural, industrial, services and transport related activities is reflected in the uneven landscape of the village, where a nomadic community making and selling brooms out of weed, rents rooms from a local entrepreneur and patronizes the local toddy (locally brewed alcohol from palms) to exchange notes with a migrant industrial worker from Bihar or a construction worker from Orissa – both of whom have come from more than a thousand miles away.

6.1.9. *Hedavi*

Hedavi is a village in the same Guhagar Taluka and Ratnagiri District, (as Kotluk) about 48 km north of the district head quarters of Ratnagiri to, 16 km from Guhagar and 220 km, from Mumbai.
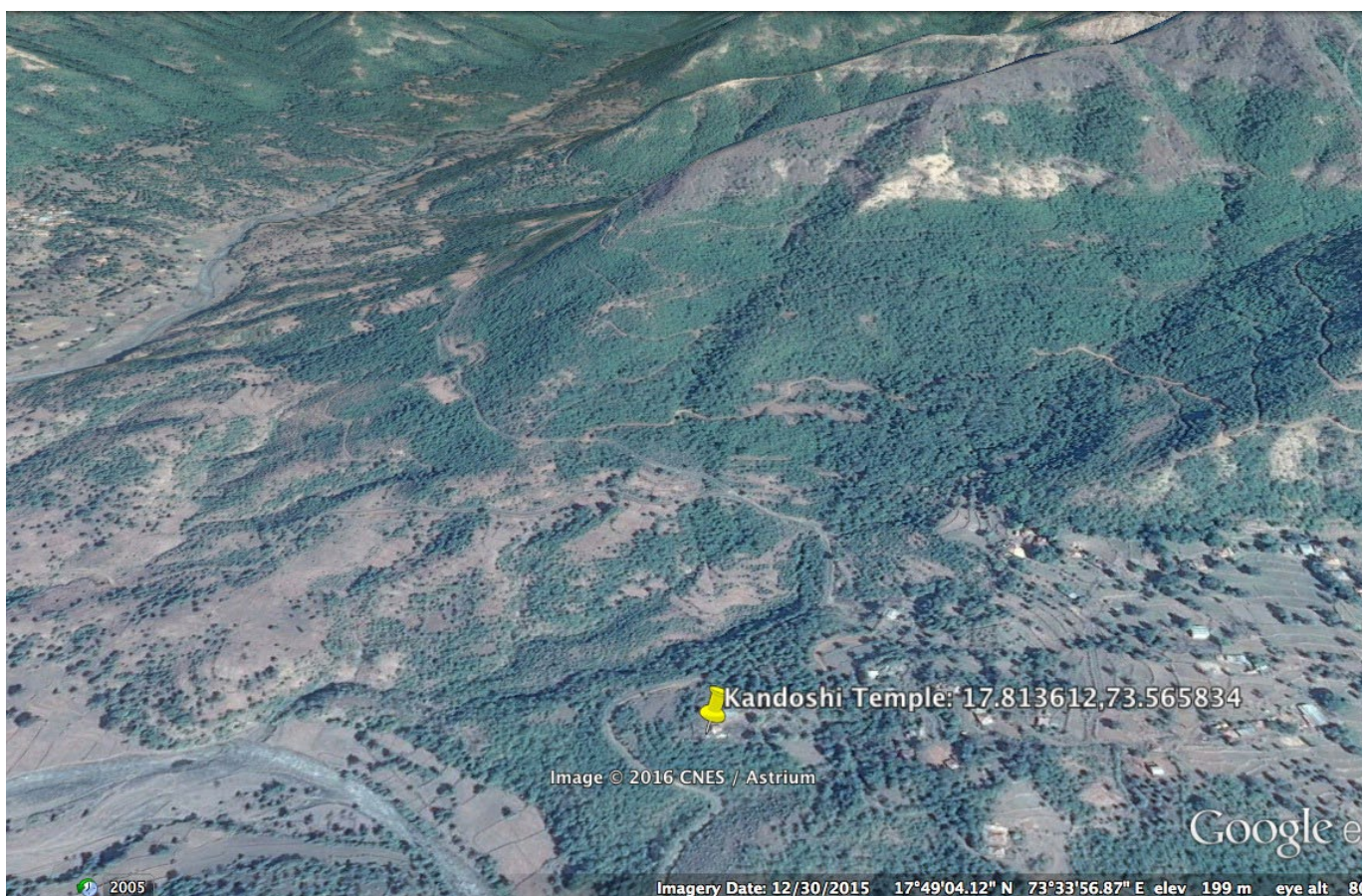
Top; Google earth view of Jandhav house, Hedavi. *Bottom*; Google earth view of Kandoshi temple.

Hedavi grew around a Ganesh temple that is well known in the region and attracts pilgrims from all over the Konkan and western Maharashtra.

Hedavi too is mostly accessed by families from Mumbai by a direct bus to avoid navigating the Chiplun railway station, 40 km away. Because the temple in Hedavi is patronised by upper caste groups, mainly Brahmins, it has a fairly well developed infrastructure involving hotels and restaurants around the temple area.

The Baudha Dalit enclave sits far away from this pilgrimage spot, atop a forested hillock. It can be accessed from the temple hub, through a few stone cutting workshops, small factories and sales outlets. There is a pathway along a riverside bank lined by thick vegetation and forests.

The Baudha enclave has a newly constructed chawl with shops. The house of a very rich Baudha member who has built a virtual mansion marks the entrance to the hamlet. The other Baudha homes creep up the hill and are of uneven quality, from simple to very humble mud and weed structures.

Raids by monkeys from surrounding forests is a serious issue in the village reaching the point where people prefer not doing agriculture due to the destruction and havoc caused by them. The total population of Hedavi is 2210 with 521 households and a male population of 1049. In the cases of both Kotluk and Hedavi there is a smaller proportion of men to women which demographers attribute to the fact that the males migrate to urban hubs but keep their wives in the village indicating an active bond with the homes there.

Hedavi has a different local economy from Kotluk as it is more cut off from major highway routes and transport hubs. At the same time the temple has stimulated a local tourist set up connected with other major temples, mostly along the seaside thus becoming part of an extended pilgrimage route.

The walk to the beach in Hedavi is less than 25 minutes from town, and there is a fairly big beach resort with a restaurant that attracts local pilgrims for a relaxed diversion. The upper caste groups, mainly Brahmins and trading communities such as the Desais have set up

small shops and factories in the beachside areas.

6.1.10 *Kandoshi*

Kandoshi is a forested village located in Khed Taluka of Ratnagiri district. The closest town is Khed. The village is made up of 4 wadis or hamlets – each overlapping with their ethnic group - Sutarwadi, (hamlet where carpenter families live, belonging to one clan) Dukkardhond (similar hamlet for a clan specialized in rearing pigs), Boudhwadi (those ex-untouchables or Dalits, now converted to Buddhism) and Raowadi (the dominant land-owning clan). The distance from Mumbai to Khed town is around 164 km. From Khed town to Kandoshi, the road journey is made through 20 km of forests. The forested region has a network of other villages like Kandoshi such as Kinjale, Kalmani, Birmani and Vadgaon. Kandoshi is the very last of those villages that touches the Sahyadhri hills on the border of the forest.

All the villages, including Kandoshi, depend mostly on agriculture and forest produce, though some family members may commute to Khed for jobs. Bus services start at 5:30 a.m. and provide a final service around 7:00 p.m. Besides, the villages have access to someone with a private car or taxi. In times of emergency there is always access to transport.

While the forested network of habitats does have a high school, access to medical facilities within the precinct is poor. Residents have to go to Khed town for medical care, which is a 45-minute drive away.

There is a temple built by the Bhandup-Kandoshi Temple trust (subject of this study) that sits a few meters away from the Kandoshi village, on private land. It has a gigantic stone lined well near the temple with steps going all the way down to its small pumping station. This well is the main source of water supply to the growing new temple complex but is extensively used by the villagers of Kandoshi as well.

The sacred geography of Kandoshi goes beyond the new temple and the old village. Through fairly thick jungles, across flowing streams, climbing up hills, stepping over steep rock formations one lands in a cave that is regularly patronised by the members

of the Bhandup-Kandoshi temple trust.

The village has a local administrative council, an erratic electricity supply and a localized well based water distribution system.

6.2 Family, Clan and Networks.

This study fundamentally covers the lives of 4 key families and a religious group. Each family is part of wider networks of relationships embedded in specific communities.

6.2.1. *The Takles (of Songiri and Bhandup)*

Our entry point into the story of the Takle family was the twin boys **Ankit** and **Akshay** Takle (19). They live in the settlement of Sai Vihar in Bhandup, and study in an undergraduate college in Mumbai city. They were part of our survey of the neighbourhood which is when they introduced us to their father Yeshwant Takle (48) and their grandfather Shantaram Takle (72).

Shantaram Takle is the oldest living member in the family. He spent most of his adult life in Mumbai city before retiring to the family village in Songiri. Our ethnography follows his life story and then reconnects to the stories of his grand children Ankit and Akshay while documenting other important characters who appear in the narrative, mainly his wife, Shevanti (60) his other sons, his brothers and their families.

The Takles moved to Bhandup in the 1970s and early 80s, from the chawls of central Mumbai where Shantaram had first come as a young kid from his village.

A significant number of their neighbours in Mumbai are from Ratnagiri district. In fact, as mentioned above, other settlements near Sai Nagar have names such as "Konkan Nagar" that reflect this affiliation more directly.

The Takle family lives in a cluster of small one and two room units. Typically, any

nucleated sub-section of the family (i.e. neighbours with the nucleated sub-section of the same family. This arrangement follows patterns from back

From left to right: Shantaram Takles, his wife Shevanti and their son Keshav.

in the village where they cluster in Taklewadi, (the hamlet of the Takles within Songiri village), where homes are densely arranged next to each other according to close kinship ties. Coincidentally, both, Songiri and Bhandup, share a similar hilly topography as well.

The distance between the homes in Songiri and Bhandup is approximately 320 kilometres, door to door.

The journey from Mumbai typically sees the Takles take a rickshaw or bus from their house to the Bhandup railway station, from where the suburban city commuting trains takes them either to Thane, Kurla, Dadar or CST stations. These are all railway hubs connecting local city trains to long-distance trains. From all of these stations there are trains going to Ratnagiri – either as a final destination or as part of longer journeys to Goa or Mangalore.

The Takles prefer the Konkan railway train from Dadar to the station of Sangameshwar, leaving early in the morning and arriving there by about lunchtime. The distance of 298 km is covered in about 6 hours.

Alternatively there are private or government run buses from Sion bus-station, Dadar bus-station or Thane, which would cover the distance in 7-8 hours. Before the train started functioning, the Takle family typically took a Thane-Ratnagiri bus to Sangameshwar, before switching to another bus for Songiri. This would take them about 12 hours in all.

Saurabh Vijay Takle, (17) who is a cousin of Ankit and Akshay (their fathers are brothers), lives in Songiri, and has this to say about the changing modes of travel over the last few years: " When I was a kid, if we had to go to Mumbai then the bus was our only option, though fares were very high. Now with the railway service it has become much became easier. The trains may be crowded, but they are faster and cheaper."

In cases of family emergencies, a private car could easily be hired at any given point, making people independent from public transport when the need arose.

Sangameshwar railway station, where slow trains

halt, is about 8 kilometres from Songiri village – which is about a half hour bus ride. From Songiri village to Taklewadi enclave is about 2-3 kilometres that can be walked in about 45 minutes or traversed by hiring a rickshaw, which would take about 15 minutes.

There is a larger constellation of localities that form the family geography of the Takles. This extended geography matches the expanded kin relations through marriage or because members have moved there for work.

The Takles like most families in this part of the country are patrilineal and patrilocal. Typically daughters move to the husbands place and have little everyday, physical connection to the father's home where they grew up except during festivals and celebrations.

The entire Takle kin-geography (including daughters) would encompass Kajarghati village in Ratnagiri district (where one of the daughters lives with her husband and family), Jogeshwari, a suburb of Mumbai (where another daughter lives with her family) and Nala Sopara, a suburb in northern Mumbai (where a granddaughter lives with her family).

Shantaram Takle, was born and brought up in his hamlet in Songiri village. When he was a young man, he left in search of job opportunities, going first to Delhi where he did a two-year stint working as a painter, while his wife and six children stayed on in the village.

In his absence, his wife, **Shevanthi**, now 60, took care of the house and the farms, which allowed him his license to leave. It was Shevanthi who designed their house in the village, even instructing the construction workers as they were building it, keeping in mind that it was to house all their three heirs.

After his Delhi stint, Shantaram shifted to Mumbai along with two of his sons, Manohar and Yeshwant. Shevanthi, along with their youngest son Keshav, and three daughters stayed on in the village managing their farms.

In Mumbai, Shantaram, Manohar and Yeshwant, started working at the Simplex textile mills as labourers. After initially living in a crowded chawl in

Sewri, a port area, Shantaram eventually moved to Bhandup, where his sons still live in the same house, which he had first built and occupied.

This is what Shantaram says while remembering Bhandup on his arrival, "There was no infrastructure then. We used to defecate in the open in the greens all around. Now there is no space even to spit… [over the past 20 years] we managed to get electricity, proper roads…till date, there is some or the other new addition to infrastructure every year."

As Shantaram says, Bhandup has indeed become much more populated since Shantaram moved there. The Takle house itself has expanded into three units, all next to each other. This is where two of his sons live with their children. The wife of the third son **Keshav** also stays here with their kids. She stays in Mumbai independently of Keshav, who continues to live in Songiri, where he works as a local contractor and daily wage labourer, with both his parents. Shantaram rarely travels to Mumbai now, though Shevanthi and Keshav go to visit Keshav's wife and children every month.

Shantaram's Songiri house is made of mud and was built with locally available material. The design is traditional with a big veranda at the entrance. The rooms are organised symmetrically around the *mazghar* (a sort of living room), which forms the core of the house. The *mazghar* is the space where guests are welcomed and where family meetings take place. While the city house in Bnhandup is made up of a couple of tiny rooms, the village home is spacious, with several rooms and large airy verandahs.

Shantaram's second son, Yeshwant, while living and working in Mumbai, is constructing his new village home back in Songiri. It was being built while we were doing fieldwork and is almost ready now. It is an urbanized house, designed almost like a two-bedroom flat with toilets inside. It stands right next to Shantaram's rustic village structure. Though he is a contractor himself, he has hired local help to build his new house because he wanted it to be done by someone who is familiar with the use of local stone, which he specifically wanted.

As far as everyday life in the village goes, inhabitants are still dependent on the forests around, main-ly for firewood, which is used for everyday cooking. A decade ago it was very difficult to find a doctor or get a patient treated in the remote village. Now, thanks to mobile phone connectivity, the villagers can immediately call in for an ambulance.

The government is planning to construct a road network through the village for better connectivity. But the villagers have a mixed response, fearing that if this happens, the village might lose its natural beauty and character. They do not want their home to become "too urbanised".

The family has other ways of accessing facilities, opportunities, and conveniences of urban life. For example, Shantaram's daughter **Sunita** and her husband **Santosh** (who live in the village of Kajarghati in Ratnagiri) have invested in a town-flat in Diva[34] (on the outskirts of Mumbai) so that in the future, when their children move to Mumbai for higher education or work (and it is taken for granted that they will) they have a home ready there as well.

Shantaram's deceased elder brother used to live in a house above (as on a higher level on the hill) his, in the village. Now his widow and the widowed wife of the second brother live there together with their children.

Among the children (Shantaram's nephews) **Ashok** teaches in a school in Ratnagiri Town, where he lives in a rented room, returning home on the weekends. The second nephew **Vijay** has passed away, while the third lives in the neighbourhood of Sewri back in Mumbai. The three nieces, all married, live in different villages in Ratnagiri. With regard to Shantaram's second set of nephews (via the second brother) only one has survived, Samir, who lives with his mother in the village, who we referred to earlier. His unmarried sister lives in Byculla (a neighbourhood in Mumbai) where she works as a housemaid and complements the family income in Songiri.

Yeshwant Takle, hopes to spend more time in his

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34   Diva is a town in north Mumbai, connected to the central line that has now become a favourite spot for purchasing apartments by residents of the Konkan. It is one of the major railway junctions on the Mumbai-Ratnagiri route. Even Yeshwant has invested in a flat near his sister's house in Diva.

Yeshwant Takle

Rutuja Jadhav

new city-style house in Songiri. For now though, his primary base continues to be Bhandup with his wife, older son **Yogesh** and the twins Akshay and Ankit.

Yeshwant recalls that when he first arrived in Bhandup, with his father, it was entirely undeveloped, and looked very much like a village. Even today, though there have been many changes over the years, the layout and structure of Bhandup is not very distinct from many village settlements.

For Yeshwant, as a child, Songiri meant summer holidays (April-May) and the Ganpati festival (September – October). The festival was more seriously patronized to commemorate Ganapati the elephant headed God of the Hindu pantheon. This huge festival involves buying the Ganesha idol, elaborately decorating the house, and hosting bhajans[35], pujas, and recreational activities like dances. The celebrations in the village last for around a week, going all through the nights.

Even today, Yeshwant, compulsorily takes leave during "festival season" to go to Songiri and is proud to have passed on his attachment to the village to his sons.

Akshay and Ankit both say they live in Mumbai because their college and work opportunities are here, but if they had the same opportunities in Songiri, they would move.

Yeshwant has clear plans of retiring in the village once he knows his children have settled down, and can take care of themselves. But he is only thinking of doing this once he no longer has to work regularly. He recognises that life has made him accustomed to Mumbai and its pace and he does tend to get restless after a few weeks in the village. Realistically speaking he envisages that his life will involve a to and fro movement between Songiri and Bhandup for as long as his health allows him to.

It is important to keep in mind that the lives of each nucleated unit is very much enmeshed in the lives of the joint family network. In the case of the

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35   Bhajans and Pujas are ritual singing and prayers

Takles these include their married daughters and their husbands and children, the brothers and sisters of Shantaram Takle and their spouses and children.

Our focus however, remains on that dimension of the family where there is shared space in terms of homes and immediate vicinity of the household – either in Mumbai or Ratnagiri. Thus Shantaram's brothers have homes right next to his in the village and there is some sharing of neighbourhood space in the city as well.

It is also to be remembered that the Takle joint-family is further enmeshed in the larger clan of the Takles. The clan consists of 7 additional households all around the homes of Shantaram Takle and his brothers. All of them share the same surname – which is of course what gives the name to the hamlet, Takle wadi, literally, hamlet of the Takles. The identity of the clan thus has a clear geographical expression in space.

The 'Takle' name is older than the oldest member's memory; According to Shantaram "My surname was carried on since my ancestors. I don't know [its] meaning."

He says that what most clan members believe is that there was a Brahmin priest who discovered the source of water on the spot where the hamlet now exists. The priest set up a temple and got his original ancestors, to start praying at the temple. That is how the early settlers grew roots and began to spread family trees and branches all around it.

Thus while different nucleated families within the Takle clan may have specific small temples in each house, corresponding to a particular nucleated unit from within each family, all of them are ultimately connected to the main temple dedicated to their clan goddess – *Bhairi Bhawani*. This temple, where the first Brahmin had settled down many generations ago, is the site where all major collective festivities happen, pertaining to any member of the Takle clan –mainly weddings and ceremonies connected to births and deaths.

Taklewadi is part of the village of Songiri. Songiri village consists of other ethnic groups including Muslims and other clans within castes such as Marathas

(to which the Takles belong) and neo-Buddhists[36].

The identity of community is important and is higher than that of a clan. The Takles count themselves as part of the Maratha community. By community we basically refer to caste – which is a complicated conceptual category in the social sciences but is a straightforward census identity that is officially recognised in India for affirmative action. Unlike family, clan and village, which are more or less connected to places and sites, caste is extra-territorial. Which means that people who don't know each other and may live in more dispersed locales can belong to the same caste.

As part of the Maratha community, the Takles can marry other Maratha people from other villages and districts. The Marathas are essentially part of the cosmology of warriors in the caste system. In this case, it could well be that the peasants from this region historically looked for jobs in the local armies of kings and chieftains in the non-agricultural season and that is how the ancestors of the Takles began to identify with the Maratha caste. It would be useful to remind ourselves that caste identities play a role in elections and this affects local village councils as well as state and national level assemblies and parliament. The Marathas are technically not a socio-economically marginal community, but they are highly stratified on class terms within. The Takles can be placed at the lower end of this spectrum.

The village of Songiri as a whole also acts as a small political unit since it has a local democratically elected council, which is connected to the larger administrative unit called a *taluka*. In this case Songiri Village is part of the Sangameshwar *taluka*, which is one of 9 *talukas* in the district of Ratnagiri. Ratnagiri has an administrative office through which it manages the *talukas*, each comprising village councils and their elected representatives. Elections are held at the village level every five years.

6.2.2. *The Jadhavs (of Ukshi and Naigaon)*

Our first conversation in the family was with young **Rutuja** Jadhav, (19) studying commerce in Mumbai and one of the youngest members of the

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36   Recent converts to Buddhism by the exuntouchable community now referred to as Dalits

Top; Ashok Gopal Kanha's household in Ukshi. He himself is not in the photo. *Below*; Ashok Kanha Jadhav in the field with one of his buffalo.

Jadhav family. She introduced us to her grandfather who had moved back to his village in Ukshi where he had a second wife for whom he had constructed a house in the late 1990s. Thus **Ashok** Jadhav (66) became the anchor of the story of this family, especially as he had a strong and active connect to both places. The Jadhav family is *Dalit[37]*.

The Dalit enclave of Ukshi has a dynamic relationship to Mumbai through an active community based organization that focuses on the development of the Buddhist temple in the village. This Dalit organization has its head quarters in Mumbai even though it is concerned primarily with the village. Following this lead took us to the *second* Jadhav family (from the same village, but no direct relation to Ashok Jadhav's family), that we also documented to provide a glimpse of life from the point of view of a family primarily based in the village but with an active role in the Mumbai-based organization, which in turn - in a classic circular loop - remains focused on the community and the ancestral village.

When the ancestors of contemporary residents of Mumbai and Ratnagiri first migrated to Mumbai for work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many of them were landless labourers working on the land that belonged to the Brahmin communities or other upper caste communities. When the season for agriculture was inactive, they would go traditionally to work in other places – either in armies or in cities.

For those who came to Mumbai, there was more exposure to political identity – the city was a marginally more liberal space than the village where they were subject to several caste based atrocities. After independence – but more specifically, with the call for conversion to neo-Buddhism – the community in Mumbai became more politicised and this included asserting their identity in the city – but also back in the village. In fact, to break caste-based notions in the village was important to most families.

During our interviews with family members, we were told that in the living memory of several elderly members wells in the village were exclusive and not accessible to those of the lower castes. This was something people felt compelled to fight against.

It was not enough to just get rid of caste identity by urbanising themselves and breaking away from the village history. It was equally important to go back and reclaim the village identity and break the rigidities there.

In the 1970s many Dalit families got access to agricultural land, thanks to land reform movements. Land, which their forefathers had tilled when it belonged to upper-castes, was now actually transferred into their names. Political movements in Mumbai asserting Dalit (lower-caste) rights were clearly tied to the fight for agricultural land in the village as well.

The sense of identity and belonging to the village for the Jadhavs needs us to take into account the complex forces involving caste and urban politics. For this reason, the ethnography in Ukshi focuses on two un-related families with the same surname (Jadhav). One of these two families is primarily based in B.D.D. Chawls Naigaon, and the other is primarily based in Ratnagiri itself.

Ashok Gopal Jadhav (**Ashok G**) has his main family (his first wife and his children) based in Mumbai where he worked all his adult life and Ashok Kanha Jadhav **(Ashok K)** is based in Ratnagiri with his brother's families and their children.

Ashok G is 66 years old and has two wives Anjali, (57) and Ashwini (54). His nucleated family, includes his first wife, Anjali, 3 sons and their wives and children who stay in B.D.D Chawls (Naigaon) and only visit Ukshi on holidays and during important religious festivals.

One of his two daughters lives with her husband in another urban enclave in Mumbai (Kasarwadi) but in the same neighbourhood of Dadar. The second daughter lives in a far away suburb on the outskirts of Mumbai (Virar).

Ashok Gs second wife Ashwini lives for most of the year in Ukshi village, where Ashok G also spends most of his time. Except during the four months in the monsoon when they escape to Mumbai.

Rutuja Jadhav, our main contact in the family, lives in Mumbai for most of the year, and identifies with the city as her home. At the same time she also

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37   Politicised name for neo-Buddhist converts from the ex-untouchable Mahar community.

expresses attachment to Ukshi (which is like a holiday home for her) through her parents and grandparents.

"We absorb the values our parents teach us," she says, "These feelings of being connected to the village are imparted to us by them."

Ashok G's house in Ukshi is an independent unit surrounded by small parcels of farmland.

Ashok G's brothers and their families complete his joint family. His younger brother mostly lives in Diva junction (the same one in North Mumbai which is a favourite for Konkan residents due to its connectivity to Ratnagiri by train) but also occupies the ancestral house in Ukshi village. This happens to be just behind Ashok G's newly constructed house.

In the case of Ukshi, we don't see a clear clan system operating as people did not reveal familial connections to each other's homes. There was a vague acknowledgement that all the Jadhavs must be related to each other but in distant memory.

At the same time, we did come across some other clan like structures when we mapped out the whole neighbourhood, where some families showed connections to each other. They formed small inter-linked units, but still referred to themselves only with their family names, and were not united as a clan like in the case of the Takles.

One reason for this differing approach could be due to the different caste histories of the Takles and the Jadhavs. The Takles are part of the dominant Maratha caste and traditionally higher that the neo-Buddhist (Dalit) Jadhavs – who in fact were historically denied even a formal recognition of caste – since they were the so-called untouchables – and outside the ritual caste system. This history may have contributed to the erasure of any links between social markers and physical, spatial markers that are so important to caste or clan based identities otherwise.

In the second Jadhav family that we documented in the same village, we asked Ashok Kanha for any possible clan – like relationship between his joint family and his neighbours but he denied any

knowledge. He did acknowledge that their common surnames must mean some original point of connect with a common ancestor but it was certainly not part of their living memory.

Ashok K's joint family lives in one large structure that was built over his father's old house and was designed like a Mumbai chawl – to absorb the density of the family. During festivals and other occasions, everyone from the large joint family network comes and finds enough space.

Ashok K did not get married and concentrated his energies on providing a good home for his brothers' families by investing all his energy and resource in constructing one common house for all members of his family. In his story thus, we only have a joint family operating from a common space with and no distinct nuclear families living in their own separate homes.

However, within his large house, there are designated rooms for the nucleated units and at the end of the house, there are two sets of bathrooms and two sets of kitchens which tallies with the two units of the distinct nuclear families. One is his own brother's wife and children and the other is his father's brother's son (i.e. his first cousin, a post man) and his wife and children.

There is a third cousin, also his father's brother's son, who lives in Mumbai in Sion, close to Dharavi with his family.

Ashok K's sisters and his father's sisters and their families live with their husbands and only visit Ukshi on special occasions.

Both the Ashok Jadhavs may not have an affiliation with their clans (unlike the Takles of Songiri) but all belong to the same caste/community - neo-Buddhist Dalits - living in the Dalit enclave of Ukshi village, which has its own elected village council.

Historically in the village, the Brahmins were the landlords while the others worked on tenanted land and paid taxes to the government via the landlord. The Muslim community, which predominantly comprised of traders (like the Desai community) travelled to other places including South Africa and the

Gulf and became part of a circulating Ukshi global diaspora.

Many Brahmin families moved to Mumbai and were part of a different circulating rhythm, while the Marathas and Kunbis were spread out between the two places – much like the other families described in the study.

The Jadhavs became politicised and converted en-masse to Buddhism. This happened in 1956, when the mass conversion call was given out by Dr. Ambedkar who was a leading figure in the struggle against caste inequality in India; he studied at the London School of Economics and Columbia University and went on to draft the constitution of India with a firm commitment to uplift the low castes and destroy the caste system. The adoption of Buddhism was to develop a narrative of rejecting Hinduism, while at the same time embracing an ideology that was born in India and thus was "native".

Mass conversion to Buddhism was done with a high level of local organization in which the Buddhist shrines played a very big role. The Buddhist shrine of the Ukshi village is the anchoring point between the to and fro movements of the community between Mumbai and Ratnagiri. It is the foundation of the Mumbai based association of Ukshi residents, who send money back for the upkeep of the structure and its associated programs. Celebrating Ambedkar's important dates as well as Buddhist festivals are equally divided between Mumbai and Ratnagiri in neighbourhoods in Mumbai as well as in Ukshi.

In Ukshi, this Buddhist community forms a Buddha Panchayat, which is a committee of Buddhist Dalits elected to look after the development of the village. The idea behind this committee is that Dalit Buddhists have an avenue to discuss social, economic and cultural issues that pertain to their interests as a community. In Ukshi, the Buddha Panchayat mediates and interacts with the Gram Panchayat, which is the local governing body of the village. It acts as a representative of the Buddhist community when discussing matters with higher-level forms of government. Within the community, it also authorises marriage and organises festivals and functions that the community celebrates – like Dr. Ambedkar's birth and death anniversaries, and Buddhism Conversion Day.

The Buddha Panchayat meetings are conducted in the respective villages, and their main office connects them, which is in Mumbai.

Lakshman Jadhav, who is 58 years old, lives in Panvel, in Mumbai, and his native village is in Ukshi. He is a member of a committee called the Ukshi Modi Utkarsh Mandal, which is based both in Mumbai and Ukshi. He said, "We work for the local elections, repairs and renovation of the Buddhist Vihara (Buddha temple), and other village related issues. All the decisions are based on consensus. Any major decision is taken in a meeting held once in a year by committee members of Mumbai as well as Ukshi. The agenda of this meeting is mostly about the development that has to be done in the village. The funds are generated mostly from the Mumbai committee so the villagers have lot of expectations from them. We are proud of the values, the culture and the place we live in. So we [Mumbai residents] visit this place very often. Our children also visit this place along with us. The cultural values have to be imbibed in them so we get them here. Every year in May there is "Buddha Pournima" which is celebrated all over. All the Committee people from Mumbai and Ukshi come together and celebrate this festival with joy."

Ashok G, known to Lakshman, lives in Mumbai in the B.D.D. Chawls, Building No. 7 of Naigaon. Most of the families in his building are Dalit and work as government employees doing menial (cleaners, sweepers etc.) work in Mumbai.

Ashok G's father came to Mumbai in the early 1940s and got access to a government job. He was allotted a room in the chawl and eventually passed on both, the job and the room to his eldest son. By law, a father could pass on the job to his son through a form of economic inheritance. As a result, at least one member from each house continued to remain connected to the government for employment allowing the family to keep occupancy rights of the room in the chawl.

Nuclear families in B.D.D. chawls tend to live in individual rooms, with their extended family living in neighbouring rooms, often in the same building. Thus some members of Ashok G's joint family also live on the same floor.

From B.D.D. Chawls in Naigaon, the most convenient way for the family to travel to Ukshi village is to take the train from Dadar station. A *passenger* train (which stops at all stations) sees the family alighting at Ukshi station. From there a short cut through a tunnel takes the traveller very close to the village (a 30 minute walk). The *express* trains, (stopping at selective stations), forces the family to alight at Sangameshwar, from where they take a bus or auto rickshaw to Ukshi, covering a distance of about 20 km.

According to Ashok, "The journey used to be very exhaustive and tiring as the buses tend to be crowded during peak season" However, he is quick to add, "Irrespective of all such discomforts, people were very attached to the village."

Ukshi village is bordered by the Bowda river. Silt deposition of the river had made it a hindrance to peoples' lifestyles and livelihoods, which made them rally together on a political project to build a bridge there - which was completed only a decade ago. This bridge accelerated the "development" of the village.

Ashok G's kinship geography include Kasarwadi, a neighbourhood in Dadar, Mumbai – not far from B.D.D. Chawls where his daughters stay – as well as Virar, a far off suburb of Mumbai in the north-western region where another daughter stays.

His closest neighbor is Ashok K, the second Ukshi family in our study, who is 54 years old. He lives in a house that belonged to his ancestors that he re-built to suit the needs of a modern joint family. The house very much looks like a Mumbai chawl – an idea that was inspired by his short seven-year stay in Mumbai during his youth. Of his house, he says, "My family, my dad, my cousins, faced a lot of hardships while making it. It was once constructed of hay and bamboo and lasted for nearly 60 years. Now, using the new technology and local materials I have re-constructed it to make it house all members who live in it together". Even though Ashok G and Ashok K are very close neighbours they are not related to each other through blood or marriage ties.

As mentioned earlier, the larger kinship geography of Ashok K includes: Sion, a north central suburb of Mumbai, (where his brother lives), Malad, a north western suburb of Mumbai where a nephew lives, the village of Devrukh in Ratnagiri itself where the daughter-in-laws of the family come from and Ratnagiri town where his nephew works and commutes to from the village.

More on Ashok G (Jadhav Family One)

Ashok G, age 66, was born in the year 1950 in Mumbai. He was brought up in the city, at Dadar Naigaon B.D.D Chawl, while his grandfather continued to live at their native place in Ratnagiri, whom he would visit as a child. He has nine uncles, most of whom worked in BEST (Bombay Electric Supply and Transport) either as fitters, turners or welders while others worked in BMC, (Bombay Municipal Corporation) except for the eldest uncle who stayed back in the village of Ukshi.

Ashok's father left the village and joined BEST, in 1940, 10 years before Ashok was born, as an operator of the Bombay tram on the routes of Trams Museum, Kings Circle and Lalbaug.

After Ashok's father expired, the property at their village was distributed among his brothers i.e. Ashok's uncles. Both of his uncles have their own separate homes in Ukshi, but because of Ashok's second wife, the village family does not keep active connections with Ashok and his immediate family members.

When his father used to work in Mumbai the family used to visit the village in Ratnagiri in the month of May. According to him, "The family usually travels together during 'seasons'. Summer is the season of fruits like mango, jackfruit, and cashew nuts and lasts from May to June end. These fruits are not available in Mumbai. And if available, they are very limited and they are four to five times costlier than the standard rates. Hence it is illogical and unaffordable to buy from here and eat. But it was available almost free in the village. In fact the old trees are still cherished by us for their sweet fruit.". The other season is the festive season – usually September/October for Ganesh – the family based celebration around the elephant headed God from the Hindu pantheon, as important to KOnkan families as Christmas in the western Christian world.

Ashok worked in the BEST for 35 years. He started work as a conductor and eventually got promoted to be an inspector, then special inspector and finally a ticket and cash supervisor. As per the government rules BEST does not pay any pension to the retired employees. In the year 1995 the workers of BEST petitioned and fought for the right to get pension. Their demand was finally accepted in 1997 and now he gets a monthly pension of Rs. 1559. (around 20 Euros).

As we know, Ashok got married twice. His first wife (Anjali, 57) stays in their house in Mumbai at Naigaon while he now stays with his second wife (Ashwini, 54) in Ukshi. According to him, she is going through some medical issues and he stays mainly to look after her, especially as being childless, there is no one else to look after her.

From the first wife, he has five children, three sons and two daughters. Eldest is is son Amit (41), the second is daughter Deepika (43), followed by Sunil (37, son), daughter Shruti (34) and the youngest son Ajay (32).

All of his children are married now and the tradition of grandchildren visiting their grandfather in the village still continues. Most of Ashok's cousins stay in different parts of Mumbai. If there is any serious family issue then all brothers gather back in the village and the problem is discussed in meetings of the committee formed by the fellow members of their caste. This caste council includes members of the same caste but not necessarily from the same family.

As the president of the Ukshi committee of his community, Ashok G is currently dealing with issues like construction of a Buddha temple, water-supply, roads and related issues. The committee meetings are organised twice a year and attended by Ashok (in Ukshi) and his family (in Mumbai).

Ashok is very passionate about a healthy life in the village, despite never having lived there until he retired. Through his role on the committee, he has been successful in getting water supply to his hamlet, Buddhawadi. For this he used his own well to pump water in an overhead tank and then supplied the water to all other houses. Since the neighbourhood generally faces water scarcity in the month of May, two pipelines have been laid, out of which one

is for Ashok's personal use while the other supplies water to 43 houses in the village. Ashok strongly believes in the good quality of life afforded by the village, and in maximising this good quality. According to him, he has made great investment in a future in the village, both for his own life and for that of his children and grandchildren.

Ashok built his house in Ukshi in the year 1997 while still working at the BEST. When the bungalow was constructed it was a first of its kind in the village and was built in Reinforced Cement and Concrete. The house was constructed during the rains and the site did not have good accessibility for trucks. Ashok recalls, "Because the road condition was very poor in the village, it was difficult to transport construction material. One had to cross the village river after getting down at the bus stop. Since there was no bridge at that time, we had to go by boat…and transporting the material was almost impossible. Hence most of the builders did not agree to take the initiative unless I arranged to bring the material myself. My eldest son was stuck for three days during the monsoon in a lorry. But in the end we managed!"

Ashok is fond of narrating the story of how the construction material was actually transported. Two big trees on either side of the river were strung by a cable rope. Stones required for construction were transported through a pulley system. The labourers used to work 12 hours a day from morning to evening. It took almost 6 months just to transport the material to the site.

Out of the 11 houses in the community this was the first house to be made in RCC (called pakka in Hindi and Marathi – which means cooked). When the construction was going on Ashok and his son used take leave from their work in Mumbai and would come down to keep a check on the process from time to time. In the periods of their absence, his cousin and wife used to supervise the work.

The house is very big and has three bedrooms built for each of his sons, for them to stay when they visit him. They have a huge terrace where they host parties and other family functions.

Ashok's family (ancestral) house still stands strong though it was constructed in mud. It sustains the monsoon very well but could do with a lot more

care, which is not always possible these days. The process used to construct traditional homes involved mixing of mud and stone aggregates with the right amount of water. The walls were plastered using cow dung and the villagers used to help each other re-plaster the house every year. But now there is no one to look after and due to lack of maintenance some parts of house have started to fall apart.

The new house has as much of a special place in their hearts as the old. Ashok has even preserved the rope that was used for transporting material across the river as a memento of the construction process.

Rutuja Jadhav, Ashok Gopal Jadhav's granddaughter, is a nineteen-year-old in her third (final) year of college in Mumbai, studying commerce. She has lived in B.D.D Chawls, in Naigaon, Mumbai, for her whole life, and as very small child has being travelling to Ukshi, regularly in the month of May to visit her grandfather. While her village on her father's side is Ukshi, the village on her mother's side is Hedavi. Both these villages were visited.

For the most part, her family in Mumbai treats travel to the village as a holiday opportunity. On her father's side, other than her grandparents, (i.e. Ashok and his second wife) almost everyone in the extended family lives in Mumbai for most of the year – except during the summer months, when travel back to the village is most popular. On her mother's side, the whole family lives in Mumbai and keeps their family home in Hedavi locked up for most of the year.

When asked about her family's connection to their village homes, she says, "It is ancestral property. We go to the village for a change; we are in Mumbai the whole year. So for the rest, we go there. And so it has to be maintained. After me, there are other kids [in the family]; they should also have this fun." But she says that she would never want to permanently live in the village. "Villages are not so developed…we don't get the same facilities as we get in Mumbai."

Rutuja goes to Ukshi by train, usually taking the Dadar-Ratnagiri Passenger Train, which halts at Ukshi. From the station, she and her family cross through the tunnel on the railway tracks on foot, then climb down a hill to reach their enclave in the village. This walk takes about 45 minutes.

Rutuja speaks of Ukshi as a holiday home. "We go only to relax," she says, "Not work." So they don't keep track of time the same way in Ukshi as they do in Mumbai. They wake, do chores, eat breakfast, sleep as much as they want, and roam around freely in the village. "We don't get to know how the time goes," she says.

At one time, they used to spend a lot of time collecting water. "We used to go fill water from the wells. Now the water connectivity is better, there is a motor connecting the village and the well so filling water is not a problem."

In Ukshi, Rutuja enjoys shopping at the Tuesday market that comes weekly to the village, usually buying fruit or dried fish, both of which are very popular there. Otherwise, to find a market on demand, one has to take an auto rickshaw or State Transport bus to a neighbouring village.

Also, because she associates trips to the village almost entirely with vacation, she has not been to Ukshi in two years – she has been busy with college and does not get "summer holidays" the way she used to.

Though she does not prioritise living full time in the village at this point in her life, because of her studies, she is open to the idea of living in the village later on in life, if she marries a boy who lives there. However she also says that she would relate better to a boy who has lived in Mumbai for at least some of his life, since she has been entirely raised in the city. And yet, due to community and family based choices in her life, she is open to all possibilities.

6.2.3 *The Kules (of Kondhe and Bhandup)*

As with the other families the introduction happened via a member from the youngest generation - **Deepak Kule**, (26) a student from Bhandup. He lead us to his dynamic grandfather **Parashuram Kule** (83) who had first built a house in the settlement in Mumbai – in fact he was one of the earliest to do so – and has now settled down in his ancestral village. Parshuram Kule's story includes legal disputes with his family and an independent set of choices that make him a distinctive voice in our ethnography. His daughter, **Vasanti** (53)**,** though mar-

ried, lives away from her husband and journeys between Mumbai and Ratnagiri between her father's two homes. We also do a special focus on her in this study.

The nucleated family of the Kule's, comprises of the patriarch Parshuram Kule, and his sons and daughters. In Mumbai, they live in Bhandup – not far from the house of the Takles (of Songiri) – and in more or less similar arrangements in terms of individual home units. Each home in Mumbai is roughly around 15 feet x 20 feet per unit, standing conjoined to each other. In the case of the Kules, his two sons live in two such conjoined units, in the sense that they share a wall. Outside the Kule house in Bhandup in MumbaI, is a small courtyard, a well, and a place to keep animals like chickens and ducks. Parshuram Kule recalls that when he first arrived in Mumbai, he rented a place in Bhoir Chawl in Bhandup, and that he liked it because it was very scarcely populated and was almost like a village. Initially the home Parshuram built on the hill slopes of Bhandup was made of mud and straw just like traditional villages in Ratnagiri.

From the main road to the Kule house in Bhandup is about a ten-minute walk up the hill on which the settlement of Bhandup is spread out. The Kule family owns a shop in the neighbourhood, where they run a business in spices. Often their travel to Kondhe village is linked to the requirements of this business.

Kondhe village is on the Mumbai-Goa highway in Chiplun Taluka. Chiplun Taluka is headquartered in Chiplun city, a municipal centre in Ratnagiri district, which is about 15-30 minutes drive from the village. It is a bustling old town that is now part of the

railway network, as well as being linked to a major national and state highway. It is part of a future port-coastal road network. These roads have improved the connectivity of Kondhe village to other towns in the area.

Bus services between Mumbai and Chiplun Depot are regular and fast; the Kule family recalls that at one time they would spend around 8 hours on the bus to traverse a distance of approximately 247 km.

Members of the Kule family reunite after a long journey from Mumbai to Kondhe.

These buses would be taken from Parel Bus Terminal, Mumbai Central or Thane, two major hubs connecting Mumbai city and surrounding regions.

Today, train services, always more popular and cheap, are frequent. The Konkan Railway now connects Dadar (in Mumbai) to Chiplun, in a 4-hour journey. The family finds this journey convenient because all trains – slow, passenger, express or fast – stop at Chiplun station. From there, a bus or auto rickshaw has to be taken to Kondhe village, about 8 km away. The drive takes 15-20 minutes. The village is right on the highway so drop-offs are very easy

Before either buses or trains existed, people travelling between Kondhe and Mumbai needed to take a passenger boat ferry, from a once-flourishing port called Dabhol on the Konkan coast.

The Kule's have a house that is newly built, in the style of a Mumbai chawl. The estate includes farms and also a dwelling where his daughter and her husband live with their children. From this estate to their ancestral house (they are estranged from their relatives due to a court case) is a distance of 1 km.

Umesh Kule (45), son of Parshuram, who lives with him in Kondhe village, also owns a shop and a road-side stall that is 200 m from their house, and a three minute walk away. Umesh lives in Kondhe because the development of Bhandup, in Mumbai, where his brother stays and where he once stayed transformed in front of his eyes from a quiet and forested area to a crowded and polluted one - an unpleasant experience for him. He much prefers the quieter life of Kondhe.

The other locations that involve the larger joint family of the Kules include: Chiplun city in Ratnagiri district itself, (where a daughter lives), Andheri, a suburb in north-western Mumbai, (where another daughter lives), and Virar a far off north-western suburb in Mumbai region where the second daughter lives.

Parshuram Kule, was born in Chiplun town, Ratnagiri District where he had also stayed as a child till he was 15 years old. In the 1970s, he travelled with some relatives to Mumbai, in search of better opportunities. He said, "There were no schools for further secondary schooling [in the village] earlier. So I finished my primary schooling till class four, and then went to Mumbai. My father's aunt came to the village to visit us. She took me along with her by boat. At first I worked in a hotel for a year or two and then switched to a printing press. I did not enjoy the work and then finally changed to mechanical engineering. I enjoyed that work." His last job was in the engineering department of Mahindra and Mahindra, a multinational automobile company. As a side activity, he also traded in spices and turned his small shop into a flourishing business with strong links to wholesalers.

Mahindra Tech was located in Bhandup, which at the time was a popular location for industry. As often happens, a settlement gradually got formed on the hill slopes of Bhandup as a result, where many other migrant workers settled. The hills were practical not only for their proximity to industry but also because of the high water table, which made potable water easily available. Many of the homes in Bhandup have their wells that still provide them water.

Parshuram remembered the rumour circulating that there was land available to construct a small hut in Bhandup, near a water source, surrounded by thick jungles, quite far from the neighbourhood he lived in. But it was his first opportunity to find and make his own space in Mumbai. He constructed a small hut made of mud and weed, literally overnight, in Bhoir Chawl, in Bhandup. He had gone with a troupe of his fellow villagers and members of his community who followed his lead. Proximity to the water reservoir and the trickle of water through the hill was an important reason for the choice of that space – as was the fact that the owner (who belonged to his community but was no relation) would not be able to evict them once they had constructed the house, due to tenancy protection laws.

Later, the owner gave them occupancy rights for a deposit and monthly rent, which became regularised a couple of decades later. The neighbourhood was very much like Kondhe village on the Konkan where he came from – thickly forested with the same flora and fauna.

The houses were arranged very much like the way they were in the village, with a small clearing for

Top; Members of the Kule family walkng through thick vegetation from the road to the family house. *Bottom*; Kule family making offerings at the temple in their home.

festivities. There was no electricity at first, but what Parshuram was more concerned with was whether the structures were monsoon-resistant. Since the land was hilly, both in his village as well as in Mumbai, he made sure that the foundations of the house, when it was being rebuilt in brick and cement in the late 80s, and then again a couple of decades later were strong.

Parshuram became quite well known in his area for making the most monsoon resistant and strong structures. When people did not heed his advice, they suffered and the house would get washed away. He remembers how a particular resident, who was not from the Konkan, refused to follow his step-layered style of construction and had to re-do his house twice.

For a long time the area was known to be a dangerous place. It was the site for the making of illegal toddy from palm trees – a very well known and traditional activity in the village – but strictly monitored by prohibition laws in Mumbai. Neighbourhoods like Bhandup and Dharavi in Mumbai were labeled as 'criminal areas' because they became involved in boot-legging – even though toddy-tapping was historically a legitimate traditional activity.

Parshuram Kule recalls that when he first moved to Bhandup, "It was scarcely populated will illegal activities around. There were liquor production units around. The place where we are reside was also once part of such unit. As there is a plenty of water available sourced from the lake above. This led to the growth of such illegal liquor production units. Since we were a group of ten people, no one dared to mess

Parshuram Kule on his property in Kondhe.

with us. We explained them very clearly that 'we are working people, so don't even dare to trouble. And if you still wish to than you better think of the consequences'."

The habitat changed and improved over the years. More people built homes using material they were familiar with. The areas inhabited by the Konkan residents in Bhandup have clean pathways using stone paving, wells are looked after and there is also a significant presence of trees and vegetation, all of which are packed in a very dense environment in terms of human population.

Over the years, electricity, and roads, sign boards including one referring to the neighbourhood as Konkan Nagar, (Konkan Town) started coming up. This was happening along with political parties emerging that began to patronise the settlers in contested spaces. Parshuram saw his own occupancy rights legitimatised in the 90s. Now his home in Bhandup is legally "his own" – though he technically cannot sell his rights to anyone else. But since his sons live there (and the adjacent home which they got some years ago too) the home is well used.

All through his life in Mumbai, Parshuram always visited the village during the festival of Ganpati and during the summer months. However the Kules avoided going to the village in Holi (a carnivalesque spring festival) which was the time, when other villagers would often return to their ancestral homes. We could not "because our work demanded that we stay in Mumbai and sort and grind the spices, and purchase chillies all during this season. That was how we ran the spice shop in Mumbai."

Parshuram's ancestral property, (which as we mentioned above is different from the home he built himself, in the same village), faced legal troubles while he was still working in Mumbai. His cousins had tried to take control over his property claiming that he did not need it, as he was earning well for himself in Mumbai.

But this excuse did not sit well with Parshuram, who fought around 12 cases in court for his land. "What would we have done if we had not won the cases? Would we have all of this?" he asked pointing to his new large farmhouse. His son added, "My

Vasanti Kule at her Khonde house feeding the family's hens - and one duck - who was born in the city, but decided to settle in the village.

father would have been left with nothing when he returned to the village".

He goes on to describe what happened. "Land was divided into two, the first half parcel of land belongs to my father's brother's family of four brothers and second half belongs to my father. Since my father was in Mumbai and they had land shortage, they took this advantage and illegally showed the entire land parcel in the name of that family. They disposed all the legal documents of land holdings by bribing the Talathi (Village Head). We did not even have the plot number because my father was in Mumbai. Finally we filed the case with the reference of a neighbour's plot number. And gradually we re-acquired our land holdings…thanks to a good advocate…During the proceedings, my father had to come every two months from Mumbai for the court hearings."

Parshuram finally returned in 1995. Besides his new house, he has helped his son buy a shop in a commercial complex close to his house and also provides space for his daughter to live in her own house along with her husband and child.

Parshuram's entire family consists of his two sons, **Ramdas** (55, whose primary base is Mumbai) and Umesh (45, whose primary base is Ratnagiri), and four daughters – Vasanti (53, who lives between Mumbai and Ratnagiri, away from her estranged husband), **Shilpa** (43,), **Sangeeta** (48, both of whom live with husbands) and **Asha** (50, who lives with her father in Kondhe, in a separate unit while her husband works in Mumbai).

For the most part, they grew up in Bhandup, where now only Ramdas lives with his family. He runs the shop that his father set up and trades in spices. The second shop that the family owns is given out on rent.

Unlike Umesh, Ramdas does not feel the same attachment to Kondhe as his father does. He says that this is because he left the village when he was very young and he no longer recognises anyone there, unless it is through his father. But he still travels at least once or twice a year. For him, too, it is important to travel to Kondhe during festival time, not only for cultural reasons but also for trade and business.

Umesh the younger of the two sons, was born in Mumbai and lived there during his childhood with his parents and siblings, but grew distasteful with the crowded, polluted nature of the city. He returned to Kondhe and now practices agriculture, looking after the family farms. He does this with the help of his wife, children and neighbours. He also owns a shop at a major junction of the village.

Umesh is financially supported by Ramdas from Mumbai; in turn, Umesh provides his "Mumbai family" – that is Ramdas's nucleated family – enough grains for a year. Umesh also managed the purchasing of the new plot and construction of their new family house in the village, which was largely funded by his brother Ramdas. The two work together to create a coordinated, functioning family across two places.

The situation is made even more intricate by Vasanti, Ramdas and Umesh's sister.

As a kid Vasanti happily remembers living in Bhandup and building their home in
Mumbai. After her marriage she came back to Ratnagiri to her husband's village a few kilometres away from Kondhe. Now she is separated from her husband and lives in her maiden home, managing the entire household in the village.

She also visits Mumbai very frequently to help with the family business. Since the new house in the village is a bit secluded from the neighbourhood cluster of homes, Vasanti finds it lonely to live in the house and loves to visit Mumbai whenever she gets a chance to stay there. Because of her frequent travel, which is linked to economic activity and not just vacation time, she is equally connected to both places.

In Mumbai, Vasanti lives with Ramdas and his family and helps them with the family business. Young Vasanti and her sisters were associated with the business for several years and their main job was to sort the spices and roast them before they were sold in the shop. After they got married they all moved to Ratnagiri and Ramdas's wife took charge of sorting the spices.

During our field visits, we managed to visit the Kule ancestral house as well. It has a temple where

family functions are regularly organized. This means some members of his family, especially the daughters, have to keep visiting the ancestral village temple for some function or the other. The ancestral house is smaller and humbler compared to Parshuram's new house even though the setting of the homes around a courtyard is very reminiscent of their settlement in Bhandup where the other side of the family lives.

Because we were associated with Parshuram, we did not get much access to the cousins and relatives which technically make up the joint family, but we did come across family members from the village back in Bhandup, in and around the same neighbourhood as Parshuram's sons. Relatives of Parshuram lived in and around the same area back in Mumbai. But just as there is not much interaction between them in the village, due to the court case, there is a similar lack of cordiality between family members in the city.

The Kules are essentially part of the Kunbi community. They are traditionally non-elite tillers (and peasants) found in many parts of western Maharashtra. In the Konkan, there is also a narrative that marks them out as the original inhabitants with aboriginal roots – though now they seem to have transformed into a caste identity and are a dominant community in the Konkan.

6.2.4. *The Mohites (of Kotluk, Hedavi and Naigaon)*

The Mohite family of B.D.D. chawls, Naigaon (in Mumbai) live in Chawl No. 7. And are connected to their ancestral village is Kotluk, in Guhagar Taluka of Ratnagiri district. The key individuals of the bi-locational family in this case study are **Bandhu Mohite,** who lives in Kotluk, and his niece **Siddhi,** who lives in Mumbai.

It was **Sanjay Mohite** (36), works in Afcon, an infrastructure company as an unskilled worker, a position he inherited from his father on his retirement, who led us to his village Kotluk, and introduced us to his cousin **Bandhu Mohite,** (34). Bandhu's choices of living and developing his life in his village became our primary entry point into the story of the family. While we documented the life of the Mohites, between Mumbai and Ratnagiri, we paid special attention to the individual narrative of Bandhu and his family.

While Bandhu, after his initial moving to and fro Mumbai, chose to settle down with his wife and daughter in Kotluk, his brother **Deepak M** (47), continued to live a middle-class Mumbai existence with an apartment in the far off Mumbai suburb Kalyan from where he commutes 48 kilometres one way by train everyday.

A side story on the village of Hedavi, also emerged thanks to their niece, Siddhi. Siddhi's mother, **Saili** (42) is Sanjay's sister and thus was a Mohite before marriage, when she married into a family from Hedavi. Siddhi grew up being as close to her mother's village as her father's – as all her neighbours and friends in Mumbai happened to be from the same places. Her friends include Rutuja Jadhav who has her ancestral connection to Ukshi from her father's side and to Hedavi from her mother's side. Though the two girls are not related by blood or affinity – even though there is an over lap of surnames. It so happened that Siddhi's mother fell in love with her Jadhav husband from Hedavi village who lived across her room in B.D.D. chawls.

The distance between Naigaon in Mumbai, and Kotluk in Ratnagiri is about 290 km. From Naigaon to Hedavi is about 295 km.

The distance is traversed mostly by bus – for the reason that the closest railway station (Chiplun) is about 40 km from either destination, which would involve another 1 hour of bus-travel anyway. The family finds it inconvenient to take the train because after alighting at 4 am at Chiplun they have to wait for the State Transport buses to take them to either Kotluk or Hedavi. Instead, the preferred mode of transport is a direct private bus, which does an overnight journey through the Ghats (a mountain range on the western coast), and in approximately the same time, reaches them straight to their village. It takes roughly 7 hours to reach Kotluk and an additional 45 minutes to reach Hedavi which is 25 kilometers away.

In Kotluk, Bandhu's new house is on the road itself and is well connected to transport hubs. Bandhu's ancestral house is a 5-minute walk slightly uphill, away from his cousin Sanjay's house in the

Bandhu Mohite in his family home in Naigaon Dadar, Mumbai.

same village.

According to the aunt Saili, Kotluk has "transformed…the village has developed like a city." It is true that Kotluk is full of economic activities – which is very different from before".

She elaborates: "At that time, there were no medical facilities in the village and during an emergency…we had to depend on ST (State transport bus) for commuting which had a very low frequency… and involved walking on mud-trails to eventually reach the main road. Now all of that has changed, and there are "too many" markets, with vendors coming from neighbouring villages to set up their practices in Kotluk".

When we explored the village we found that within a few kilometres of habitat, even today Kotluk residents have to negotiate forests before reaching the next active hub.

The other village, Hedavi too is surrounded by forests. Its economic activity is not strong as Kotluk, but it has changed considerably too.

Saili says, "The market is close by, the number of hospitals have increased, medical facilities are better. Also the fish vendors today actually climb all the way up the village and sell door to door. Earlier we had to go to the market or towards the seaside."

In Hedavi, a village built on a slope, Siddhi's paternal grandparents' home is approximately a kilometre and a half away from the bus-stop and the family has to navigate the last one hundred meters or so uphill by foot.

The kinship geography of the family involves, Parel – an old industrial hub of Mumbai, very close to Dadar, Kalyan, a far-off north eastern suburb of the Mumbai region (where a daughter of the Mohite's lives with her husband and family) and Palshet and Pede villages in Ratnagiri district where other daughters live.

Bandhu Mohite was born and brought up in Kotluk and the village is known as the birthplace of one of India's renowned freedom fighters, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, counted as one among the most important founding leaders of the Indian national movement against the British Empire.

Bandhu lives with his wife and daughter in his newly re-constructed family house, located along the road, which forms the main spine connecting the village to nearby towns. Before that he lived uphill from the road in his ancestral house.

It was Bandhu's father who had constructed the house in mud in 1980. His sons, Bandhu's brothers, modified and re-constructed it in local stone in 1992. Then they pooled in more money to add rooms to rent out for added income that would help in repaying the loan. The new structure has a ground and an upper floor, consisting of a total of 10 rooms (5 rooms on each floor). Bandhu occupies one of the rooms in the new house and the other 9 rental rooms adds to the family's economy and helps sustain them.

The sense of community in the village is strong, and the villagers hold *Bhauki* – (community – meets) between the neo-buddhist followers of the village. This meeting is scheduled every month during Pournima (Full moon day), when all members meet at the Buddha Vihar (i.e., village Buddha temple) to discuss the plans for community development.

Every individual provides funds for the community each month.

The village has only one high school, in the Marathi language medium. The children from the village have to depend on nearby small towns for higher secondary education. Bandhu's daughter studies in a private school situated in another town. She is a bright girl, but had to discontinue recently because of no direct bus service to the school. They plan to transfer her to another closer school, but Bandhu worries about the quality of education there.

Education and employment is very important to them. Even though the agricultural scenario has improved, Bandhu believes it would not sustain a family round the year. It is not practical to depend solely on agriculture for the extended family.

In most villages that we visited, almost everyone had at least one family member and a household in Mumbai, because someone in the past had gone and established himself or herself in Mumbai. This continues even now.

Siddhi Jandhav

Bandhu Mohite and his son.

Bandhu's connection to Mumbai has existed since he was a young child, mostly on family visits, which eventually led him to a job after school. He first lived and worked in the city for four years as a driver, renting out the Tata Sumo car that he owned. Eventually he sold it, as it was not profitable enough.

His brother Deepak Mohite had already been based in the city for many years, having gone there with his uncle post schooling. He started life in a locally renowned advertising agency and has remained associated with them till date. His teenage years were spent with Sanjay Mohite's family, in B.D.D. Chawls in Naigaon, which was his early refuge in the city.

Deepak recently bought a house in Kalyan and now commutes daily for work, but still retains a connection to B.D.D. chawls Naigaon and visits the village every 3 to 6 months (definitely in the month of May), making him a fairly frequent visitor.

Bandhu continues working as a contract-driver for various government officers, doctors etc., primarily from his village but also from the nearby towns. He basically facilitates regular commuters between Ratnagiri and Mumbai. Bandhu shares very close relations with these officials and according to him – is their favourite driver of choice.

His work thus gets him to Mumbai on an almost weekly basis. When in Mumbai, he lives at his uncle's house in B.D.D. Chawls at Naigaon in Dadar or gets accommodated in a lodge, if his client pays.

He takes around 7 hours to drive to Mumbai from Ratnagiri. He informed us that once he was offered a job as a driver for an officer, with a monthly remuneration of Rs. 15,000 (which is a generous salary). He turned it down as he prefers to live in the village.

When he first moved back to Kotluk, Bandhu farmed his fields to earn his living because farmland was already an asset that his family had in the form of ancestral land, mainly paddy fields, which were located in the backyard of his new house.

Even now, with his job as a driver, he continues to work on these farms, mainly cultivating rice. As this is monsoon dependent, he works in them for a certain amount of time in the year – usually around four months. He also owns 70 mango trees around the farm, the fruits of which are sold in the local market during the peak season.

There are many schemes introduced by the government in the village, which helps local farmers get farming equipment at subsidized rates. Bandhu has benefited from them but still feels there is a need for more modern machinery to be introduced for farming which will further benefit the region.

For him "development" means increasing the practice and efficiency of agriculture and says the government should give incentives to local farmers for cultivating vegetables and fruits and enhancing crop production with new techniques. As the land in the village is highly fertile, one should make good use of it. He does not see farming as anachronistic to his modern aspirations and believes that many young people like him are happy to integrate it into their lives in the villages along with doing other economic activities

Bandhu himself also works as a building contractor in the area, for the gram panchayat (local village council) and other construction. He also undertakes local public jobs like fixing light poles along the street. He is currently involved in building a crematorium in the village.

His devotion to good quality infrastructure in Kotluk is evident in his belief that construction work should be taken up carefully and loyally, without any intention of earning extra money by using low grade materials, as it ends up affecting the quality of construction and spoiling one's reputation. Such commitment is seen among many individuals who have lived and worked in Mumbai, and are now investing their effort, time and money into good quality lives for themselves and their families in the village.

Bandhu also owns a few shops in the village, which have been rented out as restaurants. He has recently fabricated a new portable shop. Besides this he believes that investing time in sports activities for young people in the village is time well spent, which has made him a part of many local cricket tournaments as an organizer. His passion for cricket is serious as he also serves as an umpire (on field judge and score-keeper) for district level cricket tournaments, for which he is paid Rs. 500 per day.

He takes an initiative during all the Gram Sabha meetings to pass any scheme to develop the village in terms of its infrastructural needs and has observed that villagers and the local government do seek to improve the quality of life within the village and reduce dependencey on the city.

Siddhi, whom we have introduced earlier, always includes trips to both villages whenever she visits the Konkan: Kotluk, her mother's native village and Hedavi, her fathers.

In Siddhi she stays with Asha Mohite, her maternal grandmother. When travelling to Hedavi, she stays with Ganpat Jadhav, her cousin's grandfather. Both her grandparents on her father's side live in Mumbai. When the whole family travels to Hedavi, for their annual trip, they stay with the extended family in the village.

The main mode of transport that Siddhi and her family take to go to their villages is a private bus. Taking the Konkan Railway to either Hedavi or Kotluk would require changing trains multiple times, and since she has a cousin who works as a private bus driver, the family finds it more convenient to hire or book his vehicle. They organise themselves in large numbers to spread the cost of renting such an expensive vehicle, but this is generally not difficult, because there are many people to contribute!

All of these people often travel to close by villages in Ratnagiri around the same time of the year. So she travels entirely with people she knows, even if they are related distantly. She enjoys the act of travelling to the village, boarding the bus late at night (around 11 pm) and arriving at 7 am. She recalls how people sing and play games with each other, bringing their own intsruments.

Siddhi, like Rutuja, associates her village with holiday and relaxation. She says, "When we go to the village we just roam here and there. Near [Hedavi] there are many spots, like the seashore just a couple of kilometres away. We walk there with cousins and have fun…sometimes we bring games like badminton or cricket." She also enjoys the rainy season in the village because the trees become lush with fruit.

Siddhi, like her cousins, believes that "The village is becoming like a city…though it should be like a village only." She believes that houses in the village should be made of mud, that activities in the village should not be polluting or loud, and that the village should not "develop" in such a way that it becomes crowded like the city. She enjoys the activities and pace of life associated with her village travels, because her travels are recreational.

One activity that she associates with family and the village is water collection. The river is 300 steps downhill from the village of Hedavi, where every day the family has to go and collect water in buckets. To save time and energy, they make it a group activity and arrange themselves in a line, passing the empty and filled buckets back and forth up and down the hill until they have enough full buckets at home. This has become a part of their routine and Siddhi finds the challenge fun.

Her family has recently constructed a new house. She says, "The house we constructed partly resembles any city house like Mumbai and partly like a typical one in the village, thus one room has a thatched sloping roof while the other is made of cement. There is a local mud stove for cooking and I love the food cooked on this stove!" But there are also some things that she acknowledges she is used to in terms of city conveniences, like having a television, electricity and mobile reception, which she misses sometimes when she is in her village. Recently though, she also acknowledges that phone connectivity has increased and even TV has become common in the village.

Her story shows that even though family lines are patrilineal there is a crisscrossing of journeys. The younger generation may claim mothers' and fathers' ancestral lineages and making trips towards both these lineages is quite common.

Hedavi, is a village on a hill, and is surrounded by thick forests with a Buddhist shrine. It also has an association in Mumbai and meets once a month creating programs for the village shrine, by raising resources.

Ganpat Ganu Jadhav, who is Siddhi Jadhav's grandfather's brother and who lives in Hedavi village, shares his experiences with the Buddha Pan-

chayat and its interaction with its Mumbai counterpart: "I was the president of this panchayat in the past, but since my talking skills are not good enough I resigned last year… Yes we do have a Committee in Mumbai. Some people live in Akola, others live in Nala Sopara. Not all are present on weekdays, so it was decided the meeting be held on the Second Sunday of each month. Here in Hedavi we have a meeting on every Poornima (full moon day)… Mumbaikars have a different meeting and here the meeting is different. The issues are informed to them by the president in a telephonic conversation or through a letter."

Thus the families are enmeshed in networks connected with the community history on a very dynamic foundation – based partly in Mumbai and partly in the villages in Ratnagiri. The economic and cultural co-dependency of the ties in the city and the village are most obvious in such structures and the use of them by the residents.

6.2.5 *Avadhoot Baba Trust (of Kandoshi and Bhandup)*

The temple of the recently deceased Avadhoot Baba, is hidden amidst a small grove of banana plantations in the dense settlement of Bhandup not far from where the Kules and Takles live. However none of the family members are devotees of the baba and were not even aware of the existence of the temple. We discovered it while exploring the neighbourhood and were introduced to its history and the life-story of Avadhoot baba through Tai, a lady in her sixties, who inherited his spiritual leadership. Tai's life is inextricably tied down to the life of her spiritual master and his connections with Kandoshi village, which is the site of his enlightenment as well as his mother's ancestral roots.

The temple first founded in Bhandup, has a near identical structure in Kandoshi village and its thousands of devotees attend rituals and festivals in both places. The story of this bi-located religious organization and its travelling devotees made a good case for our study.

The Bhandup temple was constructed in the 1980s as part of the vision of the founder. Though Avadhoot baba is no more, the religious association has hundreds of members, from all over the city and region (we were unable to get records for the exact figure from reliable documents).

The Bhandup temple has some chawl rooms around it where people related to the trust live. The family that owns the land on which the temple exists also lives in these rooms.

Avadhoot gained enlightenment in his mother's ancestral village of Kandoshi. It was in a small cave up in the thickly forested hills where he spent many years during his childhood. While he lived with his mother in his village, specifically in Sutarwadi, the enclave of carpenters in Kandoshi village, deep in the forests close to a town called Khed – the cave itself is approximately 4 kilometres away from the village. The cave is a natural formation with no construction happening at that spot as it is a protected forest.

It is only patronised during some special days and nights.

The twin temple of Bhandup, is being developed by the trust right next to the Kandoshi village. It is a sprawling complex that presently consists of a temple and a few rooms around it, very much like its Bhandup counterpart.

Thus the trust has three main sacred sites. The temple in Bhandup where the guru lived for most of his life and was the spot where he prayed and attracted his followers in and around Mumbai, the cave up in the hills where he gained enlightenment, and the new temple, close to his mother's village in Kandoshi, which he started constructing a few years before his death. During his lifetime he could only manage to construct a magnificent stone well next to the spot where he located the idol, as the epicentre of the new temple. However, he died before construction could start. Now his body is entombed on the same site and forms a chamber below the newly constructed temple.

To traverse the entire distance from Bhandup in Mumbai, to the other end of the temple's sacred geography, in Kandoshi (a distance of about 246 km in Ratnagiri) one has to take a bus straight to Khed town from Mumbai (either from Dadar, Sion or Thane stations). Then, one takes another bus or a private vehicle that goes through the forests to the

Top; Avadhoot Baba temple in Bhandup, Mumbai. *Bottom*; Tai, who looks after the temple.

temple located there. Alternately, a train from Dadar, Kurla or Thane, will take you to Khed station (which is a hub for all trains) and then another bus takes you to Khed town, to the entrance of the forests from where you either take a bus or private rickshaw into the forests.

Besides the similar architecture of the two temples, the natural landscape too has some common features. Of course, in Bhandup it has been obliterated by the dense habitation, but is still alive in the minds of the older devotees. They informed us that the city temple was once surrounded by the same kind of vegetation and landscape as one finds in Kandoshi today.

Devotees and members of the religious association perform some rituals in Bhandup and some in Kandoshi through the year and one can see the same people enacting similar rituals in both places.

The temple devotees and members of the trust come from places as disparate as Pune, Kolhapur, Sholapur, Nasik besides Mumbai and Ratnagiri.

There is another (fourth) sacred spot linked to the narrative but which is not part of the active life of the devotees of the trust. That is Ganeshpuri – where the Avadhoot baba's own spiritual guide, Swami Nityanand, had established his own centre. Ganeshpuri is approximately 80 km *north* of Mumbai.

It is an international centre as Nityanand is a globally well-known spiritual leader. It is also the place where the leader, Nityanand, lived and spent his life. For Avadhoot baba, following his guru's footsteps was spontaneous and much of his vision for his own spiritual architecture comes from Ganeshpuri.

The Kandoshi-Bhandup temples thus follow the biography of the founder of our case study – from Kandoshi to Bhandup and back, creating an expanded network of sacred spaces across the region for a large number of people.

The followers are typically lower-middle class and middle-class in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, and a mix of different castes and communities, approximating the social structure of the Konkan – dominated mostly by Agris and Marathas. Neo-Buddhist and Muslim members are non-exis-

tent.

Avadhoot Baba's biography is well – circulated amongst the members of the order. His pre-guru name was Shripad. He was born in the small town of Paithan in the state of Maharashtra. His father was an alcoholic and used to hit his mother every day after getting drunk. As a child, he was disturbed by this behaviour of his father. One night, when he was about five years old, Shripad's father beat his mother even though she was sick. That was when the lady finally decided she could not live with her husband and left the house with her two kids. Shripad's mother even though suffering from fever, decided to walk all the way to her native village in Kandoshi, Ratnagiri, more than 400 kilometres away.

As per the lore that surrounds Avadhoot Baba, she reached the banks of the river, which was flooded due to heavy rains. This made it very difficult for her to go across with two small kids. She asked Shripad to wait while she ferried his younger brother across. On returning, she found that the boy had disappeared. She panicked and was about to jump in the river thinking he had drowned when she heard Shripad calling her name. He was patiently waiting at a distance unafraid and calm. She managed to bring both of her sons to her family, in in Kandoshi. According to his devotees, this story from his childhood contributed to the Guru's sense of peace and fearlessness later on in life, when he became a charismatic leader.

When older, he moved to Mumbai to work with the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC), and settled on the hill slopes of Bhandup. He was always spiritual visiting many temples, both in the region and outside. He would frequently pray at a Shiva temple in Bhandup and became a disciple of Nityanand. He soon felt compelled to leave his job and came back to his village in Kandoshi.

There was a temple of Shiva in the Kandoshi village too, where Shripad became the local priest. One day he went into the jungle in search of a place to meditate. After about two hours of walking, crossing a mountain and a river, he found the cave. He meditated there for about twelve years. He returned to the village after his enlightenment and started preaching. He set up gatherings both in Kandoshi as well as in Bhandup, which he frequently visited. Through

his preaching he retained a connection between the city and the village. He also, in various instances, protected the residents of Bhandup from land developers, gangsters and politicians who regularly tried to evict its residents by using his spirituality and charisma to engage peacefully with the other party.

He valued local methods of construction and wanted to revamp the temple in the village by re-constructing it in the locally available black stone. He did manage to create a stone well in his lifetime, after which he dies in 2011 at the age of 70.

Tai, (60) who was adopted by him as a girl, lived in his village as well as in Bhandup, following him on his travels. Her name is Baby Ganjekar, and was born and brought up in the village of Khed, in Ratnagiri. She became Avadhoot's devotee and disciple, despite opposition from her family, who wanted her to get married and have a family. It is she who now she carries forward his knowledge and teachings. She took up the task of completing the temple that he wanted constructed. Since they did not access to enough funds to construct it in the local black stone, they had to build the temple in the conventional RCC technique. The construction is still in process of being completed and makes progress as and when the funds are gathered.

People from all over Maharashtra come to visit his Samadhi (tomb) in Kandoshi, to pay homage and offer prayers. The festival of *Datta Jayanti* is celebrated on a large scale at this temple and lots of devotees from all over Maharashtra gather here.

The following is a brief note about the community structure that shapes the logic of this story. Avadhoot Baba evidently worked as a labourer connected to the municipality of Mumbai. A story of him having a vision while laying boiling tar on the roads of Mumbai, near Bhandup, is what constitutes the genesis of the temple in the city. It also indicates that he came from a very poor family, most likely from a community that was indigenous or low-caste in origin.

His mother's village house is in a cluster of very simple structures, typical of forested communities on the Konkan, which often take on a different caste identity, with the lines between tribal clans and rural caste structures getting more blurred. This village too has different community based enclaves and his is Sutarwadi, which refers to the communities of carpenters.

While the spiritual guru, and his closest disciples are definitely from communities on the lower end of the caste spectrum, even though they do not slide into the so-called untouchable history, the trust, and its members is dominated by higher-caste communities, which is typical of religious formations. Eventually, in decisions about the temple, Tai's and the priest's views may not hold as much water as that of the trustees, who also control the treasury of the temple.

6.3 Patterns of Relationships and Space

The four core families in our study were mapped in terms of the physical proximity or distance of the individual members and the nature of their relationships to each other. This included closest proximity – which meant whether they stayed in the same house – followed by maximum physical distance in terms of living apart from each other. Since our families were located primarily between Mumbai and Ratnagiri – the maximum distance factored in was between these two places.

We wanted to know if those who are closely related to each other tend to share space in greater proximity, such as living in the same place (i.e. either in Ratnagiri or in Mumbai as one unit) or whether the family is indeed more flexible in that respect – allowing members to occupy space irrespective of relational proximity.

We also asked the families questions about the idea of home and where they felt their "home" is. Finally, we recorded stories about the making of homes and houses, about plans for the future.

6.3.1. *The Takles (of Songiri and Bhandup)*

We found that the grandfather, Shantaram, grandmother, Shevanti, and one of their son Keshav lived together in Ratnagiri under one roof. Keshav's wife, Kiran, and their two children live in Mumbai next to Shantaram's sons Yeshwant and Manohar's. In fact Keshav's wife's and her three children share a house with Manohar, his wife and their three children
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Shantaram Takle Family Tree
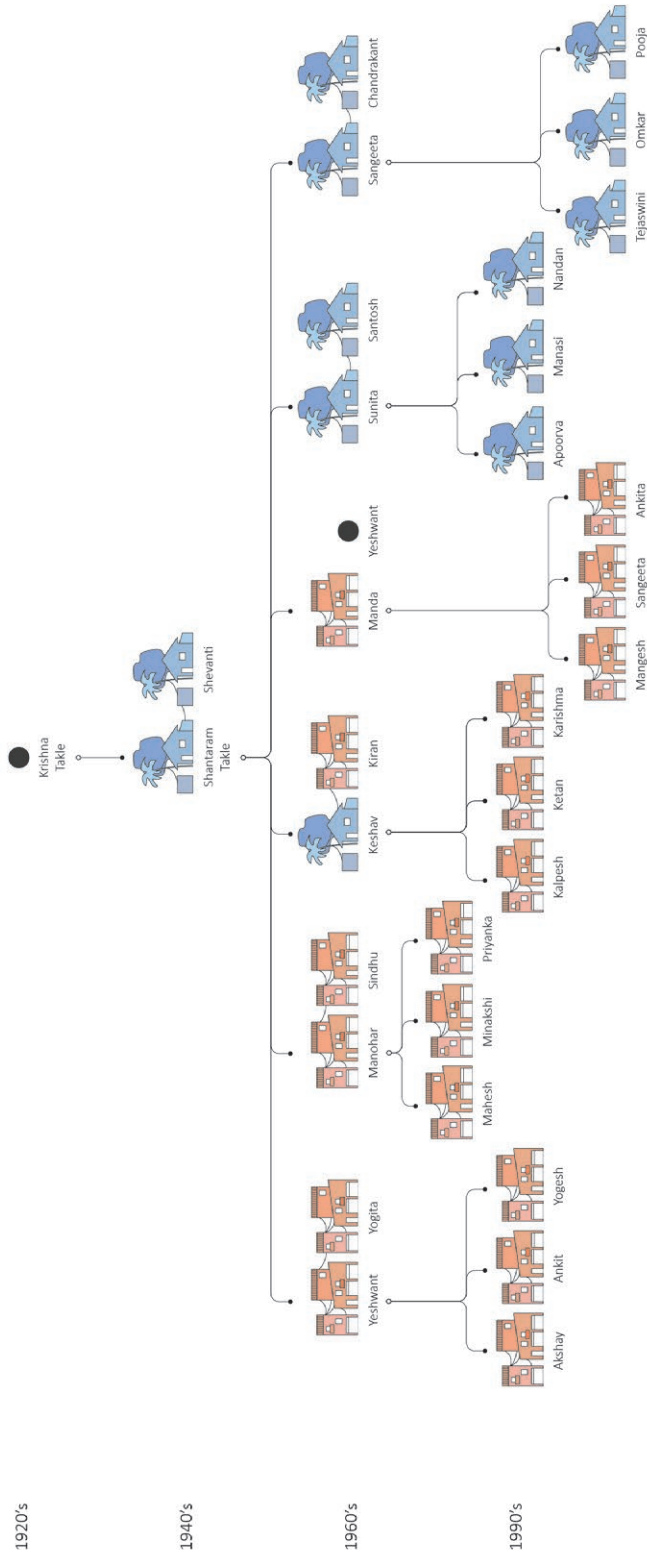
1920's

1940's

1960's

1990's

Households in the joint family that pre-dominantly live in Ratnagiri (blue village icon) or in Mumbai (red city icon).

Thus members of Keshav's nuclear family reside apart (with the father in Ratnagiri and the mother and children in Mumbai). But they are all living in close proximity - or even together - with close relatives. Kiran shares lives in the same house as her brother-in-law Manohar and his family. All cousins grow up together. Yeshwant's family lives in a new house while Keshav and Manohar's families live in the older house.

Thus across three generations, the family spreads out over the Mumbai-Ratnagiri terrain distributed in three houses. There is no necessary correlation between the closeness of family bonds and geographical proximity. Keshav lives in the village while his wife and three children live in the city. Close family members divide themselves and occupy homes on both sides and this applies to close-kin members as well.

To further investigate this, we checked out if the same principle of proximity and geographical distance goes beyond the immediate family.

We started with Ratnagiri inquiring about Shantaram Takle's neighbours to discover that they were his extended family with his three brothers occupying the two homes immediately above and below him (one being shared by two brothers). As we moved away from Shantaram's house, we discovered that houses furthest were where the people who were furthest in terms of kin relationships lived.

In Mumbai families shared a house or lived in adjacent houses. In the village family members stayed in the same hamlet and lived together as a clan cluster in the village and we did not come across any non-Takle in the Takle hamlet.

In Bhandup, there is a completely different story of density and space crunch but the same impulse struggles to express itself. Shantaram's immediate family and extended family live in close proximity to each other as much as possible. In fact it is because families share neighbourhood space that it is easier for a husband and wife to live separately – knowing that they are not living alone, but integrated into families.

In the rest of the vicinity (Bhandup), we found other families from Taklewadi also scattered around the neighbourhood. Even if they do not all live close to each other, they know where other members of the village live.

The neighbourhood of Bhandup has even left an imprint on the Taklewadi hamlet of Songiri village. There was a guru (another one, not Avadhoot baba) in Bhandup, with a spiritual following, which had become very popular there. On one of his visits to Songiri, he felt that a temple that belongs to the Bhandup trust must be built there.

Subsequently, the followers of the guru in Bhandup (who also belonged to Songiri village in Ratnagiri) built the temple. Now every year many of his followers with no connection to the village come down from Mumbai and celebrate some important festivals there.

Kin relations also affect spatial structures across Mumbai and Ratnagiri through projects such as constructing a home. So even if father and son or husband and wife live far from each other (one in Mumbai and the other in Ratnagiri) and do not spend much time together – the act of building a home back in the village can change the proximity equation.

Shevanti, Shantaram's wife, planned and oversaw the construction of their family house in Songiri, while he was living and working in Mumbai. She said, "I planned the house for three of my sons. We all three would live together, each one having a room." Her sons, indeed have a "designated" room in their house, which is for them and their nucleated families.

Yeshwant while still living in Mumbai has just constructed a new house in Songiri, envisioning it as a Mumbai style modern construction using reinforced concrete. The reason why he decided to construct his house there was because he had access to village land next to his parents home and is what he would have done anyway if he had stayed on in the village.

He says, "Tomorrow if we wish to go to the village, then we can settle there since we have a house. I can't stay with my father because it is a small place and we are three brothers and each of us have three children… but my father can stay anywhere. He can stay with us or he can stay in his house. It's not like

[we] keep our door shut..He can stay wherever he wants."

This idea of various members of the family sharing multiple homes shows itself in another member of the Takle clan, Atmaram Gopal Takle, who lives in Songiri but also spent a part of his life in Mumbai. He describes how he and his children travel: "My village house was built by our ancestors, 200 years ago. Farming was and is our primary occupation. There was no other option. We grew, and we ate. We raised our children on farming, educated them and now they are off to their destinations. We couldn't afford to give them higher education and sent them straight to Mumbai with our relatives, so that they could find some job and start earning. They were adults when they left and our daughter has taken a room in Mumbai, and we go and visit her at least once a month.

Once children reach a certain age, the nucleated family living in Ratnagiri knows that there is a "house" available to them in Mumbai, with their relatives, where their children can live. Because of the fluidity of belonging and access to multiple habitats based on sharing space thanks to family ties, they manage to travel to and fro quite regularly.

Most hamlets in the village are linked by lineage. They expand as children grow up and nucleate themselves with a new husband and wife starting their own home in the same hamlet. Of course – in this part of the region it happens with relatively little conflict because land is more easily accessible.

Where is home?

Most of the Takles we spoke to – Shantaram, his wife, his brothers, their wives, the sons in Mumbai and the grandsons there and in Songiri – initially gave us a flat answer: Home is the village. This does not contradict a sense of necessity to live in – or attachment to – Mumbai. For example, Atmaram Gopal Takle, who now lives in Songiri village, recalls his childhood move to the city: "When I was around 12 years old, my [uncle] took me to Mumbai to cook for them. My [uncle] worked in [Bombay] Municipality. I liked it there and I stayed there for around 15 years… my father use to earn alone. It was difficult to feed 12 people. So I went to Mumbai."

Yeshwant (Shantaram's son who lives in Mumbai) said, "If someone asks me where are you from? Then I say Ratnagiri, and if someone asks which village are you from in Ratnagiri? Then I say Songiri. If someone asks where do you stay? I say we stay in Bhandup."

Thus since they live in Mumbai, they identify with their larger district when speaking with people in the city. Within that context, their "native place" is Songiri. The response "Bhandup" becomes relevant when asked about their place of residence.

Place and identity converge in people's minds – especially in the case of the Takles, whose hamlet in the village is named after their clan name, which also gives them their surname.

Other than Shantaram's wife, everyone in his immediate nucleated family (wife and children) has spent time in both Ratnagiri and Mumbai. Shantaram, spent much of his adult life in Mumbai working, in all spending 15 years in Mumbai, and 2 in New Delhi.

His wife has never lived in Mumbai for prolonged periods even when her husband was primarily based in Mumbai. She was managing the estate in the village while her husband worked in Delhi and Mumbai. For both of them, home was clearly Songiri in Ratnagiri. Their three sons have lived in Mumbai for 25-35 years, and in Ratnagiri for 15-20 years (either in their youth or currently or both), while their three daughters have lived in Mumbai for 3-5 years, and in Ratnagiri for 22-37 years (either In their youth or currently or both).

They acknowledged that Mumbai has been important to them as a source of income and a way of stabilising the lives of their children, but that it did not come in the way of a sense of belonging they had to Ratnagiri.

For example, Saurabh Vijay Takle, a 17-year-old member of the Takle clan who lives in Songiri, has similar ideas as the generation before him: "My uncle stays in Mumbai. Even I wish to go to Mumbai for further education. After I finish my graduation in commerce, I want to work in Mumbai and earn some money… After I finish my education and some bit of service, I want to come back to my homeland and

settle down."

When we asked Shantaram to describe his early years in Mumbai and a quest for a home there – he pointed out that what he was looking for was accommodation –a place to stay rather than a home. He lived in relatives' homes in Sewri, which was a port area in central Mumbai, before moving to his house in Bhandup.

In response to our question whether he also considered Bhandup as home, Shantaram said it was in a sense, but since his wife lived mostly in the village and the anchoring point in his life was his family, he could not entirely invest the space in Bhandup with a sense of belonging that he did to his simple mud-house in Songiri.

Since his sons lived in Bhandup, we asked Manohar and Yeshwant the same question and their response was similar. They had both spent their childhood and teenage years in the village and moved to Mumbai for work. They had contributed a lot to the improvement of the structure they got from their father and made it a Mumbai modern house, no matter how small it was.

Yeshwant, while being very attached to the village, is also a Mumbai contractor and his ideas about construction come from the city. Of the construction sector in Songiri, he said, "Earlier, the market wasn't so great. There would be small temporary structures made using bamboo. But now it's built of masonry, like in the cities." Though both Yeshwant and Manohar have spent about 30 years in Mumbai and their children are very much Mumbai kids –their sense of belonging still comes from their village in Taklewadi, Songiri.

Yeshwant Takle said, "I had a plan, that the way I am in Mumbai, I would want a similar setup in my village. I had this plan from the beginning, that I can do something similar in my village like here in Mumbai. I am in Mumbai, but I should have everything back in my village too. I was thinking this from the beginning [since he moved to Mumbai]. My parents are in the village that is why I am doing it. My dad [lived] in Mumbai, I also lived in Mumbai, and I will live in my village too… And now I cannot do anything in Mumbai, I have everything; I have 5 rooms in Mumbai, of my own. Now I don't

have to do anything in Mumbai, whatever has to be done, is to be done in my village… I have earned a lot, I should do something for my village."

We posed a hypothetical question: would he have built his second home in another place, where land was cheaper, if he had a choice? He replied in the negative.

6.3.2 *The Jadhavs (of Ukshi and Naigaon)*

Like in Songiri, all members who belong to one community occupy a shared enclave in the village of Ukshi. Unlike Songiri, the hamlet is not occupied by one large family or clan, but several such families and clans, all of whom belong to the neo-buddhist Dalit community – once known as the untouchable caste and now a modern, politicised community.

Ashok 's children and grandchildren do not live in the village for long periods; they primarily reside in Mumbai, and travel to Ukshi village when they are on "holiday". However, the future is not fixed. As can be seen in Ashok's grand daughter, Rutuja's own complex responses. She defines herself as a Mumbai girl and speaks good English, but is also psychologically open to move to a village if her future husband happens to be from there.

Amit Jadhav, Rutuju's father and Ashok's son, married Krutika who grew up in the flat immediately facing his at BDD Chawl in Naigon, Mumbai. They have both grown up in Mumbai and lived in the city their entire lives. After marriage, Krutika moved to Amit's family flat (right opposite hers) keeping active ties with her family. The corridor space in between the two is an important point between the two families and other families living on the floor and in the building. Together they created what is called an extended family, sharing many things including space. The families enter each other's flat regularly throughout the day.

As Ashok Gopal Jadhav's family tree clearly shows, most of his family stays in Mumbai, and mostly in B.D.D. Chawls in Naigaon. Only he and his second wife treat the Ukshi village as a base. Yet Ashok does visit his first wife and family for a good three to four months every year during the monsoons, while his second wife comes for short durations during that period.

Ashok Jadhav Family Tree
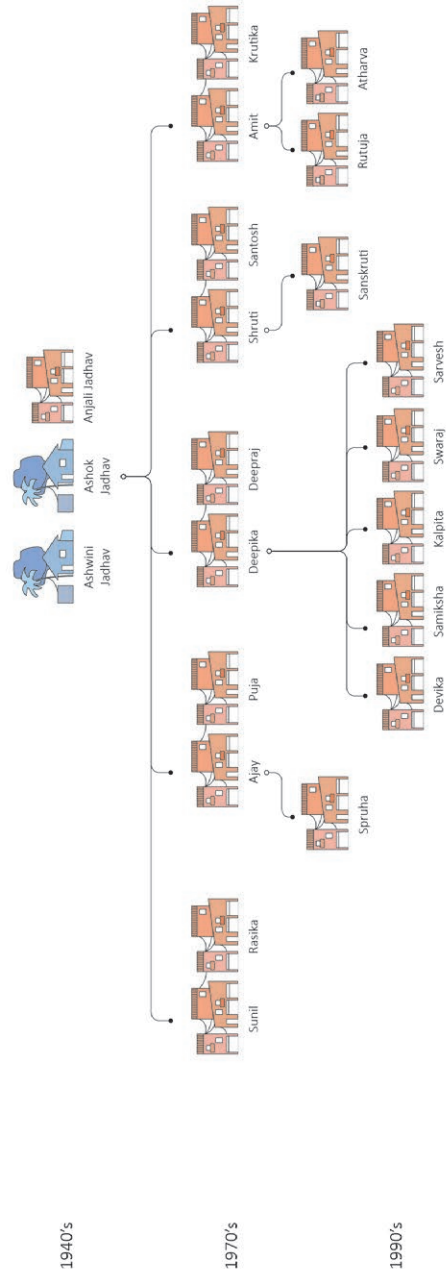
1940's

1970's

1990's

Households in the joint family that pre-dominantly live in Ratnagiri (blue village icon) or in Mumbai (red city icon).

His neighbor Ashok J has most of his family members living in the village of Ukshi, but also in other villages in the district and in Ratnagiri town. However, one set of his family, (his older brother and family) live in Mumbai (in Sion and Malad).

Ashok K built his house with the help of his brothers who live out of Ukshi. The house has private rooms for the other households who live in Mumbai when they come to Ratnagiri once or twice a year. Ashok K used traditional materials and construction techniques to build his house, but its architecture is a modern Mumbai one. It is organized as a chawl, which allows it to absorb the increased density with ease.

The women who reside in the house are the wives of Ashok's brothers. One of them has lived mostly in Mumbai before her marriage while the other has lived in a neighbouring village in Ratnagiri district itself. Yet both travel to their parental house with the same frequency – once or twice a year. The nature of the relationship, rather than the distance, determines the frequency. Ashok's two sisters and one brother also live in Ukshi, in Ratnagiri district.

Ukshi village has a strong community centre in the form of the Buddhist vihara, which is managed actively by members of the community in Ukshi as well as the city.

The patterns of relationships in terms of proximity, are shaped in Ukshi by familial and community contours. The spatial dimension of the village broadly conforms to community ties – where members of one community live in a cluster. Within this relationship, the families are more autonomous from each other – unlike Taklewadi in Songiri, which works as a tightly knit clan.

Even in Mumbai, families from Ukshi are scattered in different parts of the city – but are intimately connected to each other via the village association that meets once a month, and discusses and plans the programs of the Buddhist shrine – which acts as a connector between Ratnagiri and Mumbai.

Where is home?

Most of Ashok G's family members primarily live in Mumbai and only visit once or twice a year. They responded to this question in straightforward way. Home was in both places but most of them were quite happy being in Mumbai, especially the younger generation.

Yet, there were some complications. For young Rutuja, her village had become a real recreational space that she loved visiting every year and did not want it to change. She did not want it to become like Mumbai – then it would lose its charm, she said. Speaking of the present moment, she argued, "I can visit the village for some time but can't settle there... At present, I am excited to visit the village since I go only once a year. I would be no more curious and excited about the village [if I settled there]. I would then have the same feeling for the village like I have for Mumbai."

Her grandfather, Ashok G, agreed with her to an extent, in terms of the younger generation's feeling at home in the village. "No, she cannot settle in village because of the lifestyle she is used to in Mumbai. They cannot accept the lifestyle of village as they have been brought up here in Mumbai. But if she stays for a year, then she might get settled in the village and enjoy the life…there might be some limitation in resources because all the facilities are still not completely available in the village like Mumbai. But she would get used to it.".

At the same time Rutuja acknowledged that eventually she would adopt her husband's home, which would be her place of belonging. So even though she lived all her life in Mumbai, Mumbai too was temporary. She also said that she had no particular preference to the place of residence in relation to the person she marries. It would depend on the person. And he could be from a village in Ratnagiri or from Mumbai.

Because home is a node in a network of relationships, it is something more than a place, site or location. The overall answer that was yielded across generations with Ashok G's family was that home is both Mumbai and Ratnagiri.

For Ashok Gopal Jadhav himself, the act of constructing his new house in Ukshi, defined his relationship with the village. While he lived all his life in Mumbai, his retired life and his second wife took

him to Ukshi where he literally constructed a new innings for himself – mainly because land was there and he belonged to the place through ancestry. It became his home again.

The act of constructing a house is repeated in many life-stories. Ashok Gopal Jadhav narrated the story with pride. New houses in the village are seen as achievements, assets, and marks of social status.

He said that after he built the first concrete house in the village, other families were influenced and decided to redo their houses also. "People began to feel that they too must improve or reconstruct their houses. And then many houses around began to undergo modifications," When asked why people do not put their investment in a business instead of a house, we got the response that most people have finished their working lives and would rather invest in creating an asset than continue working. People prefer to live a retired life in relative comfort.

His house is a symbol to him and his family of this comfortable life of retirement in the village, a life that comes with peace and security. "If one wishes to spend the rest of his life [after retirement] happily, it is important to settle in the village," he says, "There is no pollution; the air quality is pure, the water is pure, and the future is pure and bright."

Unlike Ashok G's family, Ashok K's is primarily based in the village. For this family, the sense of belonging, the definition of home, and the narratives around the sense of home were not difficult to pinpoint: they centred around their village. We asked the individual brothers who also lived there: If they had a choice, would they have made a home elsewhere, away from the family, at a place of their own choice?

The answer in all cases was no. There were no members of the extended family that we could trace who had branched out elsewhere and built homes that were largely detached from the primary family home and ancestry. Even the women who had married "into" the family, that is, married men in this family and made this village their home – responded that their husband's and husband's brother's home was their home. Though they returned to their maiden home once or twice a year (one is from another village in Ratnagiri district and the other grew up in Mumbai).

Most wives anchor their own sense of belonging to the husband's location. **Vaishali Satish Jadhav**, who grew up in Mumbai and married a member of the Jadhav family in Ukshi, said, "After the wedding I came to Ukshi. My husband works as a postman here. We live together therefore I live happily. My in-laws have treated us so well, they don't give us a chance of missing [my family in Mumbai]. Even when I go to my mother's place I miss my family here."

The design of the house of Ashok K' starts with him meeting an architect who encouraged him to use local stone and keep the stonewalls exposed. Ashok adopted both these features, as opposed to going the way of the others in the village, who had used bricks and reinforced concrete. As a result the house looks almost trendy and very contemporary in a design conscious way – though it is a very simple piece of construction. It is surrounded by trees, plants and plots of land where Ashok and his family shower all their love and care. As part of the beings that occupy the house, besides the humans, one can count a pair of young sheep, fowl and at some distance two bulls who are the tools of trade for Ashok – as they till the land.

The internal architecture of the house takes into consideration the diverse constitution of the family. Ashok K wanted to imbibe his whole joint family into the structure, while at the same time allowing for space and expression within it. He said, "My old house was a very small one. But we live in a joint family. We wanted a house to accommodate the entire family…we are seven brothers and we wanted to stay under one roof, even though we had different kitchens. I thought of a plan that consisted of separate kitchens. But no one should ever get to know that we are separate. I shared this thought with my brothers. I told them they should come here in respect of my father's name. We are bringing his idea into reality. I planned the house for my brothers' kids. I planned the house in such a way that there is one gathering space (living room) and everyone can disperse to their rooms from there – 1RK (1 room and kitchen) each. Any guest should sit in the common place and should be welcomed by all. He should be satisfied with the service…"

With regard to the material used, "I used Chira stone. We required around 27 loads of it…and 125 bag cement. The carpentry work for such a house would be too much. So I used iron to get better finishing. As a result everything has come out to be one. It will be one as our thoughts are one, we are united, and there are no different thoughts. I will pass on the culture and traditions taught by my mother, father, cousins, grandmother, to my brothers."

This "united" structure is deeply definitive of the sense of home. Regardless of his single status, Ashok enjoys being the "Dadaji" (grand patriarch) of the village; he thrives on the community-oriented nature of the village and engaging everyone around him in a family-like setup.

He said, "Whenever we [residents of the village] meet, say at 7.00 in the evening we talk for around 30-45 minutes. We share our thoughts." When asked about any memorable moments he remembers from his life in the village he says, "A memorable moment is living peacefully with others. There is no special moment as such." For Ashok the physical proximity of "living together" entails an emotional intimacy that extends to his larger family, neighbours, and residents of the village.

6.3.3 *The Kules (of Kondhe and Bhandup)*

This dual household traverses Mumbai and Ratnagiri in a very regular way and complements each other economically as well as through kinship responsibilities.

Asha Vilas Bhuwad, Parshuram's second daughter, also lives in Kondhe while her husband lives and works in Mumbai. "Few years ago we [my husband and I] took a flat on rent in Jogeshwari [in Mumbai], and we used to stay together. We were in Jogeshwari for 10 years. Later father gave us land to build our own house, so we built a house there. Every evening my husband calls me up. He asks about our well being; about me and my sons."

The fact that Parshuram lives separately from his older kinship structure, literally a few meters away from his village, marks a distance from his traditional identification with his village – even in terms of obligations. He has been in conflict for years over property titles with his relatives from the village.

For him and Vasanti, his first daughter, the visits to Mumbai are imbued with more affection as they both have memories and close relatives there.

The frequency of their visits and duration of stay differs from (and is more balanced than) those of Ashok G's children or grandchildren for example. Vasanti travels frequently between Mumbai and Ratnagiri – because she travels for economic reasons, helping with the family businesses in both Mumbai and in the village, and not just for holiday.

However they kept reminding us that Kondhe is more home now, even though the house in Kondhe owes everything to Parshuram's and his children's lives in Mumbai – in financial as well as architectural terms.

The same proportions of scale can be seen here as in Mumbai – except that in Kondhe the generous space allows for a greater multiplication of units to create a bigger structure. Yet – the house has small rooms that are distinct – almost like the chawls of Mumbai once again. Parshuram himself goes up one floor and sleeps in his own room, as most people do in Mumbai.

The stamp of Mumbai is also seen in the way the family has bought small pieces of property near the highway to run businesses. Parshuram's son Umesh, runs a small eatery from one such place and the entire buzz of the road anticipating more impact from Mumbai.
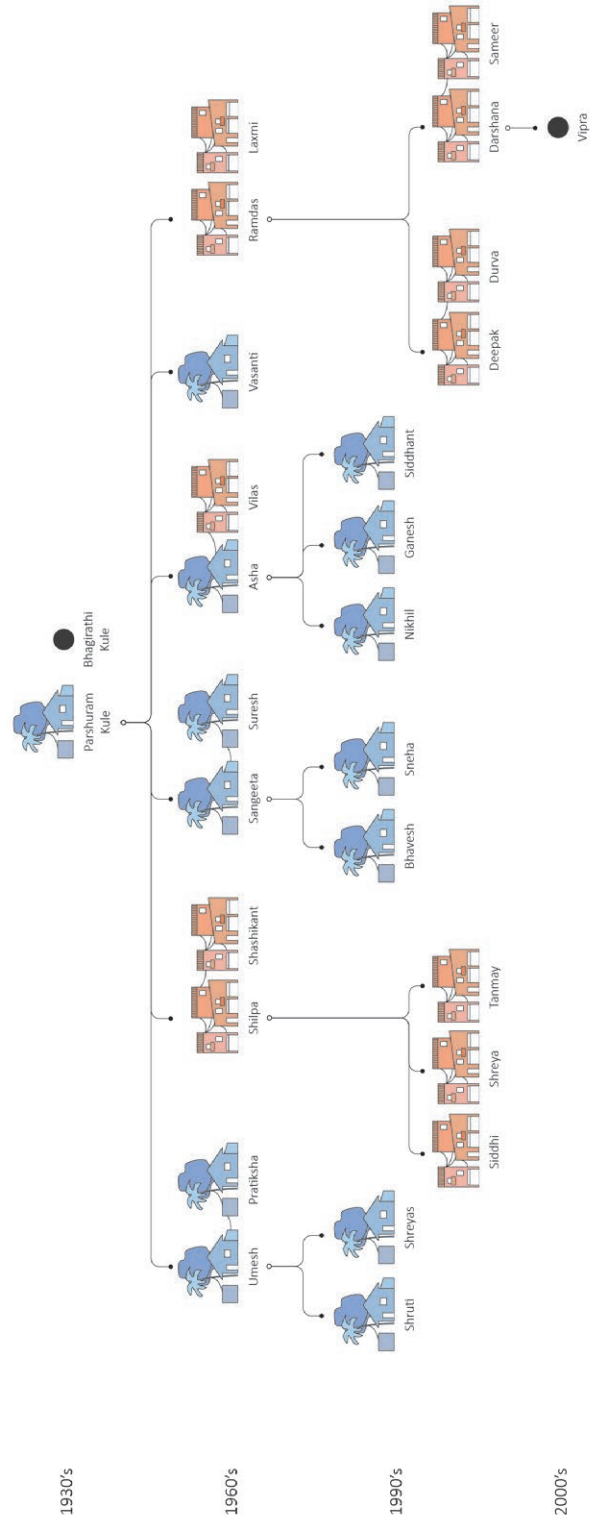
The proximity of kinship and the physical sharing of space is almost equally proportioned between Ratnagiri and Mumbai with one brother and his family living in each of the two places and the sisters and father traversing both places with equal frequency and duration.

Where is home?

As Parshuram Kule informed us, living in Mumbai had always been about finding shelter and providing accommodation for himself as well as his family.

In Kondhe, Parshuram purchased a plot of land a few hundred meters away from his ancestral home

Deepak Kule Family Tree

1930's

1960's

1990's

2000's

Parshuram Kule

Bhagirathi Kule

Ramdas

Laxmi

Vasanti

Vilas

Asha

Suresh

Sangeeta

Shashikant

Shilpa

Pratiksha

Umesh

Deepak

Durva

Darshana

Sameer

Vipra

Siddhant

Ganesh

Nikhil

Sneha

Bhavesh

Tanmay

Shreya

Siddhi

Shreyas

Shruti

Households in the joint family that pre-dominantly live in Ratnagiri (blue village icon) or in Mumbai (red city icon).

and temple, in the same village precinct. Of his old house, he said, "We had built that house [my childhood home]. It had only one room. We couldn't manage in there. It was a multipurpose room. In Mumbai its possible to stay in a small space but here it's difficult to manage. So I shifted here and built a new house… This house is 20 feet wide and 35 feet long. Whereas Bhandup's House is 12 feet wide and 20 feet long. Bhandup's home is almost half of this house."

Though he says that the need for his nucleated family's own space contributed to his decision to move out of his ancestral home, the main reason he has moved is to avoid the tension of having to deal with estranged relatives, with whom he had engaged in numerous court battles.

The new plot of land includes a large plantation of fruit and a big structure with a large room and kitchen on the ground floor and a row of bedrooms and a corridor on the top floor. It is, like Ashok K's house, very much like a Mumbai chawl, and its proportions are a multiplication of the spatial logic of one small unit of their settlement in Bhandup. It looks like an overgrown Mumbai unit.

There is on Parshuram's property, another small structure used as a traditional kitchen and a small modern bungalow – with a living room, a bedroom and two kitchens (one traditional and one modern) with attached bathrooms that his daughter Asha owns with her husband and children.

Asha said, of building her nucleated family's house on her father's land: "*Gharkul* was a scheme implemented by Panchayat [the local governing body]. It was an initiative for people below the poverty line. The scheme says government will pay half the amount for construction of house. So we spend some money of our own and we got a grant from the government. This is how we built the house. But land was given to us by our father." About the structure of her house, Asha said, "The plinth is constructed of stone. The *chulah* (traditional wooden stove) is outside to boil water for bath and for cooking at large scale. Wood is used to burn the *chulah*. The smoke coming out of the Chulah blackens the ceiling. So it is outside. The kitchen inside is used for everyday cooking." Her sister Vasanti Kule adds, "The stone structure (*Kasu*) is 100 years old. Our ancestors built

it. The metal sheets used for roofing is still as it is."

Unlike a typical patriarchal set-up the Kules include the daughters into the property sharing as well as business and this is reflected in the living spaces in the village. Vasanti helps in the family spice business that is run from Bhandup.

In response to our question about belonging, Parshuram answered that his sense of belonging was in Kondhe. He said, "With no work, [I prefer to live] here in Songiri. Mumbai is only for work, not to enjoy living. If there is no job in Mumbai, one will definitely come to the village."

His son and grandson acknowledge that they are much more removed from Kondhe than Parshuram – Ramdas Kule, Parshuram's second son, says, "Since my upbringing is in Mumbai, I was not attached to the village… Also people [in Kondhe] recognise me only through my father but I hardly know anyone here. But we visit every year in Ganpati since my father has shifted to village after his retirement."

His sisters feel slightly differently. Vasanti Kule, who helps with the family business and lives part of the year in the city, remains attached to her childhood, which in a sense took place in two places, and to her idea of rootedness. She said, "We have a sense of belonging to the village. We were 6 of us, so our parents didn't have high aspirations. They treated us like farmers' kids that belong to this [village]. Our father was in service [an employee in the city] but still we were raised as farmers' children." Even Ramdas Kule also said that Mumbai is a place to work, and not "home".

They acknowledged that without Mumbai, they would not be able to do what they did in the village – build their own house from the capital they collected in Mumbai. For young Deepak, Mumbai is his future and he looks at it as a place where he will earn a living and get a job – but then he will still go back to his village every year, take part in the festivities and contribute to the house and farm in the village as well. He feels that when he retires, he will have his village house again which he will make even more comfortable and a better place. Also since Mumbai is not very far from the village – just 350 kilometres or so – he also believes that the village may become part of the urban fabric of Mumbai one day, espe-

cially with enhanced train and bus services.

6.3.4 *The Mohites (of Kotluk , Hedavi and Naigaon)*

We followed one strand of the Mohite family that is based in BDD Chawls, Naigon in Mumbai, to Kotluk, a village which sees a very dynamic growth and where Bandhu (Siddhi's uncle) has set up a business and constructed a new set of Mumbai-style tenements that sits next to the traditional village where the rest of his family and clan have homes – some occupied and some vacant (with family members in Mumbai).

The second strand from B.D.D chawls took us to Hedavi, where Siddhi and her family travels frequently to and have invested in homes – though this village does not have many youngsters.

We see in both Kotluk and Hedavi, a clustering of family members related to each other living close to each other in physical terms as well.

While the traditional village of Kotluk has old style homes, with many vacant structures and elderly residents (who had returned from Mumbai post retirement), Bandhu Mohite's new chawl is full of new tenants and sits on a main road buzzing with economic activities.

The Mohites in B.D.D. Chawls Naigaon live close to each other in a way that mirrors their spatial arrangements in Ratnagiri. Sometimes different nuclear family units live opposite each other on the same floor.

In Hedavi the Mohites had invested a lot in modernising their traditional homes and one of them was again a virtual reproduction of a Mumbai-style chawl.

Ganpat Ganu Jadhav, who is Siddhi Jadhav's grandfather's brother, described the exchanges and interactions that were taking place between his village Hedavi, where he lives, and Mumbai, from his own childhood days: "My father used to live here in Hedavi but our cousin Vitthal Sonu Jadhav lived in Mumbai. He was responsible for all the financial give and take for the family. He regularly used to send us money, clothing and food…My elder brother was in BEST [Mumbai's bus service]. My parents were old. So he decided that I should stay here and take care of them while he would go to Mumbai. Since my parents were old there should be someone to take care of them…[our family in Mumbai] got everything for us. Especially on their visits. Right from cooking oil , to pulses to grains and everything, enough stuff for 6 months. When everything was about to finish we would inform them. And they would get it for us. Many of the times they would get fish for us too."

Family members from Mumbai who were now retired lived here and were frequently visited by the others from the city.

But members from the Mumbai family had not invested in any economic activity in Hedavi, as much as supporting their family in Hedavi with economic activity financed by Mumbai.

Once again we noted a high degree of co-relation between kinship proximity and physical proximity as in staying close to each other but also grafting the same equation across Ratnagiri and Mumbai.

Physical distance did not come in the way of relationships and their obligations and compulsions and the family and community left as much an imprint on the way people occupied spaces in both places as much as the historical experiences of staying in the city and village also shaped their lives – as we saw in the physical reproduction of the chawl as a typology of built-form in many instances.

As an aside we noted that other members from the same community (neo-Buddhist, Dalit) but not from the same family had invested in businesses even in Hedavi. One such family lived close by and had diversified in setting up a shop, a travel agency and other businesses managed by the son (of the same age as Bandhu Mohite). The father who provided capital had worked all his life in Mumbai, had returned to Ratnagiri to help his youngest son set up a business. Two of his other sons continue to live and work in Mumbai.

Where is home?

For Bandhu Mohite the idea of home centers around Kotluk. Besides the house he lives in, which

Sanjay and Bandhu Mohite (Clan) Family Tree
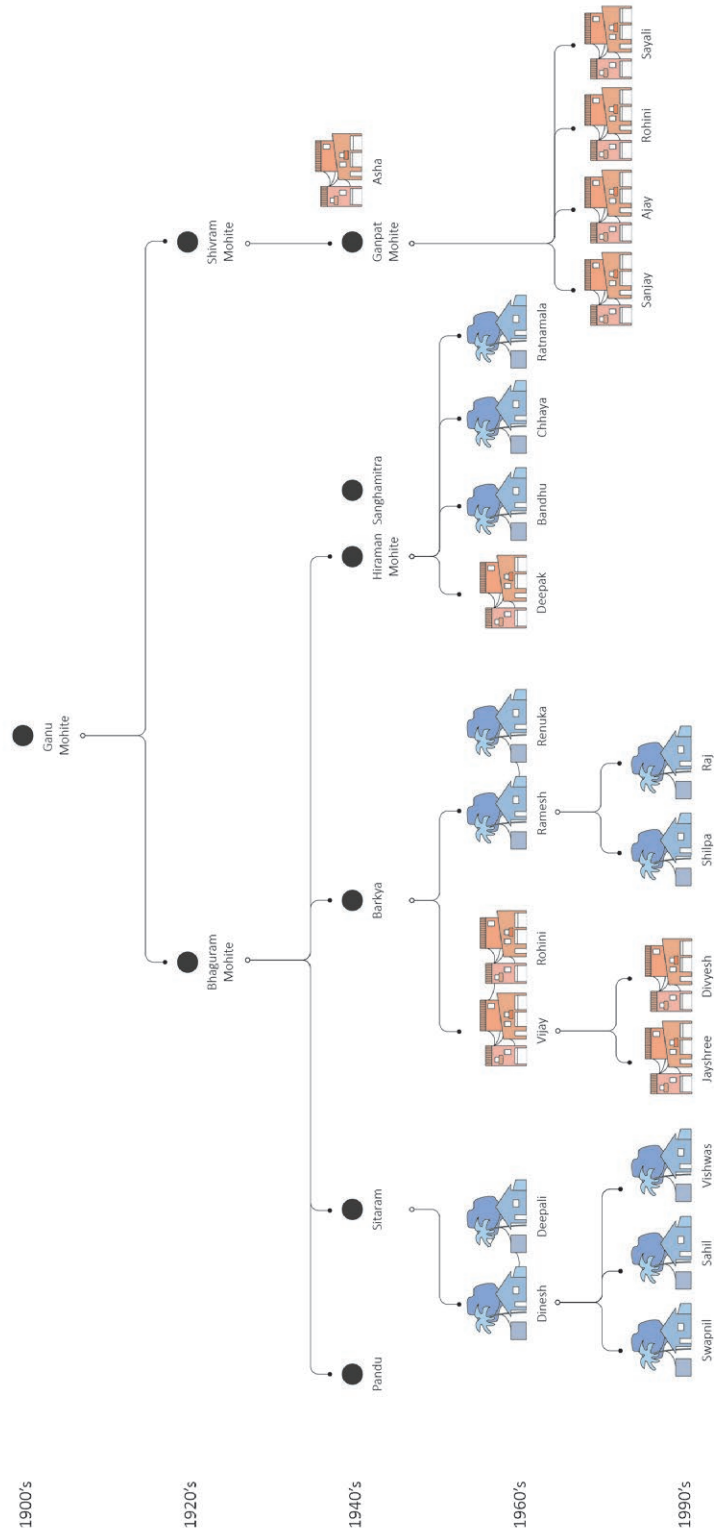
Households in the joint family that pre-dominantly live in Ratnagiri (blue village icon) or in Mumbai (red city icon).

is the chawl he constructed with his father and brother– the notion of home is linked to his ancestral house on the hillock. This is shared with his father's brother's family and is used as an annual meeting space for religious activities and for marriage functions. Bandhu is wholly engaged with and invested in Kotluk's local economic and political activities, and participates in local governance efforts to develop the village.

During the 1980s, under various government schemes each ancestral household in Kotluk was equipped with a system of gobar (bio) gas plant, which helped the villagers to supplant the tedious traditional methods of firewood cooking with cheap bio-gas and convenient gas stoves. Today, under the Rajiv Aavas Yojana many houses have been rebuilt with better infrastructure. The housing typology of the changing village seems to be organised in a way that follows the typography of the city.

This gradual transformation of the landscape is something that many family members commented on. It is happening all over the region, from Kotluk to Hedavi, from Songiri to Ukshi.

Ganpat Ganu Jadhav, (Siddhi Jadhav's grandfather and Bandhu Mohite's brother-in-law's uncle), describes his house in Hedavi village and the changes in its context in the following way: "A big hotel came up 4 years ago. The doctor of the village also improved the hospital that existed there with better infrastructure. The number of vehicles, like cars and bikes has also increased. Since everyone is earning well, the old housing typology with Mangalore (earthen) roof tiles will go away. Everyone will want a RCC house for themselves. Even us. We used to have an old house. It had a Mangalore tile roof and 12 doors. Everybody started building his or her own individual houses in the wadi. So I requested Upendra [Siddhi's father] that even we should build our own house. That is how we built this house. It is made of cement and concrete. We wanted a new home, that's why we took the decision to build in RCC. It is more durable than the earlier one. It has a mezzanine floor where around 50 people can sleep at a time… We told our requirements to the contractor and he designed it accordingly. Our own specific requirements included 4 rooms, 1 living room, kitchen and outdoor space to be used as kitchen."

Like Bandhu Mohite, Sanjay Mohite also feels a sense of belonging that is firmly committed to his village. There is a strong overlap between identification with the village, its history and with the community. According to some elders we met in the Mumbai meeting of the Kotluk Baudha Community group in Mumbai, (the village committee that meets in Mumbai), the community has such a strong sense of politicised identification with the Dalit experience. For them access to land formal titles to agricultural land were given as late as the 1970s. So it is impossible for even young family members to give up affiliation to the village. It is akin to giving up a huge resource.

Bandhu Mohite's cousin (and Siddhi Jadhav's mother), Saili Jadhav, says that she likes having a balance of belonging to Mumbai as well as her village and that both are her homes, but that they would not want to live in Mumbai once their children started taking care of themselves.

She says, "My husband has built a house in our [her husband's] village, [Hedavi] it's our property. My husband wishes to settle in the village after retirement. We did plant lots of mango trees in our plot in the village…my husband's mind is frequently diverted to the village and he has all the plans fixed, that he will enjoy with the retirement money to its fullest. He will drink, eat and sleep. His thinking is, 'I spent my entire life here and I am retired now and I want all the comforts and luxuries. Hence I need to go village.' He [Saili's husband] says that he will do something for the village."

In our interviews we met young people who had grown up in Mumbai but had moved to the village after marriage – identifying the home as a space defined by relationships not nature of habitat.

Baliram Jadhav, a retired member of the family who lives in Hedavi village, follows this pattern also, planning his career and his family in support of it – he said, "I was 13 years old when I went to Mumbai. Since then I was working in Mumbai. I got married... I had to bear the responsibility of my family. In 1966 I got an opportunity to work with Nocil - a chemical company. The duration of my service was around 35 to 36 years. I retired in 2000. Even during my service [period of employment] I paid full attention to my family in Hedavi. I had four sons. I had

a responsibility of my mother and father, also my cousins. Every two to three months I used to come here to Hedavi and slowly started developing the property here. After my retirement in 2000, I settled down in Hedavi. I developed my orchards, I bought some farmlands, built a house. Now I spend my life happily here in the village. We both are settled here. We have done our best to educate our kids. We have developed the property here so that our children do not feel helpless anytime. I have been always there for my sisters, and the responsibility to maintain the relations as I did belongs to my children and I am sure they will do it. That is the only expectation we have from our children."

Siddhi recalls, "Earlier it used to be a joint-family structure in villages; there used to be four or five families in a village house. Now the new houses are upgraded…and planned like city homes…but [still] within a village context… but they are upgraded from the earlier traditional and vernacular style of construction.

Many families now no longer live in the same house, but have constructed houses for their nuclear families adjacent to their ancestral or other family homes, keeping in mind the "modern" up-gradations they prefer for their conveniences, based on their exposure to Mumbai construction.

6.3.5 *The Avadhoot Baba Temple (of Kandoshi and Bhandup)*

Here we see how religious impulses as a social force acts as a moment of transition for families and communities. A transition into a more abstract sense of belonging where members from different communities and castes and families come together and negotiate the idea of the journey between places: in this case between Bhandup in Mumbai and Kandoshi in Ratnagiri. The temple in both cases is rooted in their own neighbourhoods and a significant portion of devotees is from in and around the neighbourhood.

At the same time, due to the charismatic nature of such organisations, the ability to attract members from elsewhere is high, and eventually at all the rallies and festivals – equally divided between Ratnagiri and Mumbai – we see a mix of people from both those neighbourhoods, city, district as well as from

places further away.

The trustees of the temple do not live in the neighbourhoods but are intimately involved in major decisions. The priests and the elderly woman Tai, who is the main inheritor of the charisma of Avadhoot baba, live in the temples in both places, but they may not have as much power and authority in the larger functioning of the temple and the trusts.

What we noted though was how the temple's architecture and location in both places had many similarities. The presence of chawl like rooms around the temple in Mumbai was sought to be reproduced around the temple in Ratnagiri as well, in what was presently forested terrain.

The temple in Bhandup is also part of a residential story. Just next to the temple in Bhandup, lives the landlord (who owns the trust land on which the temple is built) with his property and tenants. This structure, a small trail of houses, is a part of the temple complex. The landlord also has a house in Pune. Since he too is a devotee of the guru Avadhoot Baba, and now of Tai, who has inherited his legacy, he does not treat the temple and its residents as typical tenants.

Within the temple complex, Tai lives by herself in a tiny room with a kitchen and a toilet in one corner. The priest and his family live in a similar place in another corner. Plants and trees and a small compound with a banana orchard surround the temple itself.

Back in Kandoshi, in the forest – the maternal house of the guru is part of the sacred geography of the place and has a temple within it. That is the spot from where religious festivities begin. This is part of a small hamlet of others in the same clan as the guru's mother, who came from a community of carpenters. A couple of 100 meters away, is the new temple complex next to the well built by the baba. The temple is a bigger version of the one in Bhandup and has a small room a few meters away that has a toilet and kitchen. The trust wants to upgrade that and make a bigger dormitory where women and children pilgrims and devotees can stay.

The sense of belonging for Tai, the priests, the trustees and the devotees is a diffused one. Just as

for the baba, home was many places and that the cycle of ritual and festivities involved an expansion into both the city and the village – the spiritual legacy itself covers the entire expanse as well. When we asked, to which place does the temple and Baba's spiritual legacy actually belong? the question was met by incomprehension. Avadhoot baba moved from village to city, finding his guru in the city, meditated near the village, and set up a temple in the city and then built a new one in the village. These cannot be fragmented into any discrete unit of representation.

6.4 Journeys

The journey to the village is a very important part of the identity and life of the Ratnagiri – Mumbai resident. All our responses were met by enthusiastic descriptions. Older residents described the different forms of journeys the families used to make in the past and compared it to the relative ease that the train has brought to their lives today. The younger ones spoke about the mango season (summer time – from April to early June) and the religious festivities when the whole family gets together. And then there were the regular journeys made by those who travelled more frequently. We mapped out the frequency and reason of travel between the two places of different residents and read the data per family as well as individually.

6.4.1 *The Takles of (Songiri and Bhandup)*

When we spoke to Shantaram's son Yeshwant Takle why he feels compelled to go back to the village periodically – he said to get over the stress of living in the big city.

But once he is in the village, within a month, he also wants to get back to the city and to his work. He says, "I can [work] but I do not like the way I am here in Mumbai…in Mumbai, people are always occupied." He loves the environment in the village as it is peaceful and calm and he does not fall ill there – but laments the fact that there is not much work there. Still, he remains in touch with the village because he relies on it as a more stable home, which is less demanding: "I did not think that once settled in Mumbai, I will forget or neglect my village. The priority was always village first, Mumbai next. Regardless of me settling in Mumbai, village is my 'main'

identity. For example, if I am rendered jobless here, back in my village I can still drink and eat something. Yes, farming is a possibility. Even if one did not work here [in the village], had no job here, you'd still manage and survive somehow. But it's not the case [in Mumbai], here one can only survive if he/she has money…[in the village] we have our own farmlands, can handle on our own…one would not need as much money [as in Mumbai]."

Yeshwant Takle's relationship with Mumbai and Songiri has been in balance since he was very young, and he is used to balancing his lives in the two places and "keeping in touch" – not just with the place but with the familial relationships he had in them – for almost his whole life. Though he grew up in Songiri, and did not completely move to Mumbai until he had finished school, he made yearly trips to the city while he was still in school, during his summer holidays, to visit his father who was working there: "I used to go to Sewri (in Mumbai) when I was small. Dad used to stay there in a rented flat and I used to stay there maybe once a year, during vacations when I was in the 10th standard. Also during the Diwali vacations of 7th, 8th standards and so on. We all used to stay for a month, during the month of May, and then head back to the village…kind of the other way round. Here in Mumbai, we go to our village when we have vacations. Similarly, we used to come to Mumbai when we had vacations in our village."

He sometimes did very basic work with his father in the city while visiting. When he grew up a bit more in his early teens, his father, Shantaram would take him to do serious work on construction sites in Mumbai, since the family needed income. His journeys between Mumbai and Ratnagiri have reversed over time: At first it was annual visits to Mumbai on vacations while he studied in the village, followed by a time when he worked in Mumbai during his annual vacations, then when he settled down in Mumbai the flow went the other way during the vacations and festive seasons but not as frequently as he wanted, to a period where he returns more frequently also because he is building his house. And in the future, he sees a time when he will be living mostly in his village and returning to Mumbai once in a while to meet his sons and their families.

His son, Akshay, Shantaram's grandson, said he

Different stages of a typical Mumbai-Ratnagiri journey, from Thane to Sangameshwar station, followed by final autorickshaw ride home.

loves going back to the village as frequently as possible, though at present his education – he is studying information technology in college – constrains his travel. For him, if an opening emerges for a job in or around the village, he would like to live there. He says, "There are limited places to visit in Mumbai…there are buildings all around…but you can explore so much around the village…there is so much to observe and experience in nature. You feel better." Akshay's twin brother Ankit also says that if he had a good job in the village he would like to live there.

Yeshwant and his sons spoke about how tiring the journey used to be in the past by bus – taking 12 hours to reach home. The state run buses or private services (which were more expensive) started from Thane station, which is two stops away on the local commuting train from their closest station, Bhandup, and went all the way to Sangameshwar town, from where they would take another bus towards their village. Now by train the journey is shorter – taking only 6 hours to travel to Ratnagiri (express trains) and then take a bus from there home for another hour. He expressed the convenience of the Konkan railway, narrating, "People prefer to travel by train because of affordability, comfort and frequency – but if we go by bus, it is expensive, uncomfortable and exhausting. Train is spacious, goes punctually, one can get up and roam around. Bus keeps on bumping up and down because of the road which leads to nausea and vomiting problems to many people."

For Akshay's father – each journey over the years has also been an exercise in observing changes happening all the time in the village. He says that the village is not static, and in small ways changes have been occurring over the years – like different ways in which people build houses, the increased use of mobile phones, and the presence of television. Also markets seemed to have grown around his village. For example, in Sangameshwar (the closest market town to the village of Songiri), the markets used to be very basic – but now they have developed into bigger places for transactions. The only difference between Mumbai and Sangameshwar is the fact that there are malls in Mumbai.

Yeshwant had spent the first 15-17 years in his village, where his mother looked after his eight siblings and him, while his father worked in the mills in Mumbai. At that time Yeshwant used to participate in farming. This memory is part of what makes him attracted to going back to the village. He worked at the mills for 13 years. During this period, he would visit the village once a year. that was the only time in the whole year that he used to be able to visit his village – during Ganpati, which is a huge festival that happens around September or October.

This is also the main time that he sees his mother, Shevanti, who does not visit Mumbai often at all. She told us "When we bought a small room, I went to see it... Otherwise no [I don't travel to Mumbai]. After wedding of my sons, they went to Mumbai. I can't leave my house here [in the village]."

Now since Yeshwant has more time, and his house is being constructed in the village, he goes to Songirii frequently – whenever he can. The train has made it easier as well. He can also go for the next most important festival, which is Holi. This happens in the early summer (March or April). His sons enjoy that festival too and in their descriptions we see the same celebrations that their forefathers did. Akshay describes in detail the kind of rituals and dancing that goes on during those times.

In terms of frequency of travel of different family members between Ratnagiri to Mumbai, we mapped Shantaram, the eldest patriarch now settled in Ratnagiri, who travels just once a year to Mumbai, while his wife, Shevanti, travels the most frequently, 12 times a year – averaging once a month. The average amount of visits in either direction – Mumbai to Ratnagiri or Ratnagiri to Mumbai was twice a year for each family member.

6.4.2 *The Jadhavs (of Ukshi and Naigaon)*

According to Ashok Gopal Jadhav, almost every house in Ukshi, has a familial connection to Mumbai, and almost all villager dwellers are familiar with travels to the metropolis, whether they visit frequently or spend several months a year there. This is a common cycle across families and generations.

Ashok says, "Our travel pattern changed once the railways were introduced. People of Konkan have never dreamt of in their life about railways serviced in this region; as it has to cross so many mountains and rivers. We were scared travelling by ST(State

Top; Ajay Jadhav, son of Ashok Gopal Jadhav travelling from Mumbai to Ukshi by train with friends for a holiday. *Bottom*; The shortcut from the station to the village is through a narrow train tunnel. Photos taken by Ajay Jadhav.

Transport Bus) earlier because of such dangerous landscapes…the mountain passes and are prone to major accidents. But irrespective of all such difficulties, any person belonging to Konkan staying in Mumbai will visit his village at any cost during respective festivals and seasons. As we have a unique affection and attachment with the village." Though Ashok did not grow up in the village, he has been visiting it every year since he was a small child.

Now, with the Konkan railway, it is much easier to travel. The Ukshi railway station is just 15 minutes walking distance from the village. However, Ukshi is not on the "express train" line, and the frequency of trains is less at Ukshi station as it is not profitable for the government. It is only the passenger trains of Dadar-Ratnagiri and Diva-Ratnagiri that take a halt at Ukshi. There was a proposal by the government to construct a better station closer to the village, which would make it convenient for everybody. But for this, people were asked to give away pieces of their agricultural lands. The villagers opposed that proposal and the new station was never constructed. Whenever Ashok comes back from Mumbai he gets down at Sangmeshwar station, on fast train, stays there overnight and then reaches Ukshi in the next morning.

Despite these inconveniences, Ashok says that the train has benefitted them a lot, because the journey is more comfortable and faster. He compares it to when he was a child, and he took the ferry from the Bombay port to the port of Jaygarh, in Ratnagiri district. Then we would alight at Jaygarh and walk till village. It used to take 2 hours to walk.

When the State Transport service came into effect later, a bus stop was introduced in Ukshi village, giving people like Ashok and his family the chance to take the bus directly from Bombay Central station to Ukshi. This bus would leave at 6.30 AM and travel through the Ghats for around 11 hours, before reaching the village. Ashok says, "Though the journeys were dangerous, we still had an urge, curiosity and happiness to visit the village. Similarly the kids eagerly await for their examinations to get over ask their parents about the visit to their village."

According to Ashok, families plan ahead eagerly and try to book tickets two to three months in advance. Otherwise, the general compartment on the train gets extremely crowded, in both directions, filled with people making regular yearly or bi-yearly trips. He said, "Even if the train journey is long and tiring, if we book tickets at least two three months in advance…and claim for reservation…then at least 95% [of the journey] is comfortable…the rest 5% is by ST (State Transport Bus). While travelling by ST, we can't move once the bus stops at its respective bus station. In train, we can move from one compartment to another as it is all connected through and through. There is a provision of toilets. The train is full of hawkers and vendors selling eateries. Hence the journey is very comfortable." Rutuja, his granddaughter, added, "I remember one journey by train with my uncle and sister which was very comfortable with seat available. These people had reached already and cleaned the house. Yes, sometimes passengers are often helpful and kind. They offer a small place to sit." Though the practice of travelling is far older than the railways, the introduction of the railways has contributed to normalising this practice. It is a complete normalcy for the younger generation also. Rutuja Jadhav, Ashok's granddaughter, has a different relationship with Ukshi than Ashok, because he lives there, but she is equally attached to it, and looks forward to her trips there with equal eagerness, despite the inconveniences of travel even after the Konkan Railways began.

For Rutuja, the journey back to the village is very much a holiday and a change of scene. This also means that she travels less and less as she gets less holiday from her college work. But even if she has not actually done so in the last few years, Rutuja speaks as though the journey is as familiar to her as it always has been, since she was a child – travel is a part of her life; she says that she needs Ukshi for a change from Mumbai; this is partly why she keeps in touch with the village. Ashok Gopal Jadhav says that it is an inherited attachment; simply by being around their parents and grandparents, children learn the meaning and value of retaining links with Ukshi, without having to be told or explained it. Ashok Gopal Jadhav. He says, "Any person belonging to Konkan even if permanently settled in Mumbai, will at a minimum visit his village three times a year… Even the school going children eagerly wait in the month of March and April for the annual examination to get over with and rush to their respective villages...What your parents teach you, you'll capture the same values." The family usually travels

together during holiday 'seasons' during May and June. The other two important seasons are the Ganpati Festival (September – October) and the Holi festival in March.

But because the Jadhavs are neo-Buddhists, they have translated the same festival periods into a new ritual calendar that goes with their adoptive religion. Ambedkar Jayanti in the month of April, Buddha Jayanti and Vijaya Dashami during October and the day when the community converted from Hinduism to Buddhism in the form of Diksha as a ritual around that time as well. So in sum total the number of visits to the village remains more or less the same – thrice, according to Ashok's son – whether as Hindus or Buddhists. The other reason people travel to the village from Mumbai is when there is a wedding in the family – which mostly coincided with existing holiday seasons or festivities.

The family is very familiar with the railway time-table – knowing exactly which trains stop at which stations and the possibilities of alighting at Chiplun (by major express trains), Ukshi (only two passenger trains) or Sangameshwar – (a handful of express trains). The trains have already become naturalised and generate their own stories about the kind of food available and the behaviour of co-passengers.

Even though the main family we interviewed spoke about the train as the ideal mode of transport, nearly all other family members (from the joint family) listed the state run bus-service as the main mode of travel.

One major difference between the journeys made in the past and those made now was discussed in terms of provisions people had to carry to the village. In the past – nothing much was available in the village – so people carried as much of tea, sugar, rice and other essential food or other items. Nowadays everyone travels light as local village shops stock almost everything. Ashok said, when asked what people carried to the village from Mumbai when visiting: "No, not from here. Why should we carry so much of heavy luggage with us? We get everything in the village." It is when people are returning to Mumbai that their luggage becomes heavy, with the mangoes and dried fish from Ratnagiri, which are staple goods.

Ashok Gopal Jadhav prefers his life of retirement in the village to a life in Mumbai throughout the year, but his urban roots are reflected in his inability to deal with the slush and mud of the village during the monsoons. So at the end of every summer – just before the rains he returns to Mumbai and stays there for a good three months. Other than his children and grandchildren who come to visit him yearly, the monsoon season is a source of his connection to Mumbai also. He says, "But my (second) wife is completely against coming here. She wants to stay in village. Of course – those who are farming cannot leave the village in the monsoons but that does not apply to me as I am retired and do not farm."

The Mumbai side of the family visit during the month of May and during festivals and in spite of these short visits still refer to their village as 'home'. Rutuja says, "If you ask our Sweety she is always so excited to go to the village. She is only two years old." Ashok Gopal Jadhav says, "These feelings [of going back 'home' to the village] are automatically generated in [the younger generation]."

In a survey we did with all the family members of the Jadhav family – in Mumbai and Ratnagiri (mostly based in Mumbai) – out of a total of 21 members across generations – two members said they travel to the village 5 times a year, three of them said 2 times a year, one said 3 times a year, and the remaining travel once a year.

This discrepancy between the data, and the statements made by Sunil, Ashok's son, who had said that people travel at least 3 times a year, was explained by another family member: the actual travel depends on leave given by employer. The three times are an ideal and not everyone can go all three times a year. At the same time the people who do go only once a year average out a stay of 3 months per trip – April, May and June.

The second Ashok Jadhav Family – Ashok Kanha Jadhav – was primarily based in Ratnagiri except for the sisters and daughters who were distributed between Mumbai and Ratnagiri. Thus from 46 members 26 were in Ratnagiri and 20 were in Mumbai.

While Ashok Kanha Jadhav and some of his family members did speak about journeys they had made to Mumbai as young men – most stayed there

for between 5 and 7 years and had eventually given up the city for the life in the village.

The average number of trips made to Mumbai by the Ratnagiri residents was once a year – mostly to meet family members. The Mumbai family members made on average 2 trips a year to Ratnagiri. From the 46 members around 22 take the train and the rest use the state bus – except for one member who traverses the distance on his motorcycle

6.4.3 *The Kules (of Kondhe and Bhandup)*

Parshuram Kule, his sons, Ramdas and Umesh, and Ramdas's son Deepak, each have their distinct arc of travel stories between Mumbai and Ratnagiri. Parshuram's daughter, Vasanti, now separated from her husband, has another unique travel story; while the wives of both his sons Ramdas and Umesh follow their own trajectory.

Parshuram travelled to Mumbai for the first time with his aunt by boat when he was 10 years old. His aunt, his father's sister, was married and lived in Mumbai. His father was a farmer in the village. Parshuram started working when a very young boy. But then there were breaks and he returned to the village for a short period to complete some more studies – even though he would work during his vacations in the city. He eventually settled down in Mumbai into a job.

Parshuram's eldest son, Ramdas, was born in Kondhe village where his mother was then based, and later he and his mother joined Parshuram in the city; Parshuram by then had set up a house in Bhandup. The rest of the family was born in Mumbai. Over the course of Parshuram's career, while he was working and then managing the family business, trips to Kondhe village were frequent, averaging out to twice or thrice a year. The early years involved taking the ferry from Mumbai to Dabhol, the port closest to Chiplun town, where Kondhe village was located. Then came the ST buses – which were long, weary and uncomfortable – and finally the train.

Parshuram's grandson, Deepak, sees this as a natural progression and an eventual merging of his village with the city. He says, "After a few years, once the highway starts, [the travel time between Kondhe and Mumbai] will be reduced to two and a half hours. This will be the next 'change' we will encounter. Maybe helicopter also. Metro, fast bullet train are all part of development…bullet train is already introduced in Gujarat and Mumbai. In future, if there is a demand then it may start from here as well. Highway project is under construction and partially complete…I am waiting for the same and also very curious to experience it." His fantasies envision the distance between the village and the city entirely collapsing and the journey becoming a commute.

Parshuram used to visit the village at least twice a year when he was based in Mumbai – now he lives in the village and goes to the city when court cases demand his presence, which ends up being around 8-9 times a year. His son Ramdas visits Kondhe 3-4 times a year for festivals, but predicts his trips will be more frequent upon retirement; and his brother Umesh visits Mumbai 2-3 times a year, either for festivals or important work.

Parshuram's daughter Vasanti was a perfect go-between in the family across the two homes for many years. Her journeys are frequent between Kondhe and Bhandup, averaging about 6 times a year – they are shaped by a history of changing involvement with the two sites, over her lifetime. She spent time in Mumbai as a young girl and has happy memories of her time here; after getting separated from her husband, she frequents Mumbai more to help with the business and because she enjoys the company she feels in Mumbai.

Parshuram's other daughters and daughters-in-law also all travel at least once a year to their "dual households" – two daughters visit Mumbai from Kondhe while the other daughter visits Chiplun from Mumbai. The distance between Kondhe and Mumbai is not too much and the village falls on the highway; and it is not too far away from the station.

From the 27 family members, most of them travel once a year, or up to 3-4 times a year. One of Parshuram's son-in-laws, who lives in Mumbai and whose wife (Parshuram's daughter) stays in Kondhe, travels to Kondhe from Mumbai about 15 times a year. Other than this, only Parshuram travels fairly frequently, up to 9 trips per year. Also, other than Parshuram, who travels for court cases, and Vasanti and Umesh, who often travel for work mixed with recreation – most people in the family travel for reli-

gious ceremonies, festivals and holidays.

6.4.4 *The Mohites (of Kotluk, Hedavi and Naigaon)*

Bandhu Mohite's connection to Mumbai has existed since he was a young child, with vacation trips being made to meet his cousins, including Sanjay Mohite, at least once a year. After his school he went to Mumbai to look for a job. By then, his brother, Deepak Mohite had already been based in the city for many years, having gone there with his uncle after he failed his 10th grade examination. Deepak also visits the village every 3 to 6 months and without fail during the month of May.

May is also the most popular time for the family members in Naigaon, Mumbai, to travel to Kotluk to visit their family. The extended research that we did showed that around one fifth of the families with dual households primarily went to their villages to visit families.

There are two options for travellers between Kotluk and Mumbai, the train and the bus. The train is a very unpopular option, though it technically is an option – because taking the train will require switching trains twice and waiting at odd hours for a State Transport bus for the last stretch of the journey. Taking a passenger train (one which halts at every station) will be around a 10-12 hour journey. One tickets costs Rs. 300-400. The nearest train station to Kotluk is Chiplun.

This is why all 31 family members responded that their primary mode of transport is either private bus or State Transport bus, directly between Mumbai and Kotluk. Alternately, passengers from Kotluk can travel to Sawarda, the nearest bus station to Kotluk, and travel to Mumbai from there. The private buses are more expensive than the train, at around Rs. 600.

With regard to travel to and from either place, at least three family members travelled more than 5 times a year, six members travelled 2 times a year and the remaining travelled once a year. The reasons for travel, as in most cases with the other respondents, have largely to do with religious festivities, holidays in summer and generally to meet the family and be in touch with the village.

In Hedavi, which is the second village we followed through in this case study using Siddhi Jadhav as the anchor – from the 21 members in the family that were surveyed – 19 are actually based in Mumbai with only the oldest couple, Ganpat and Jaishree, both in their 60s based in Hedavi Village. Siddhi's journeys to Hedavi are marked by large groups of people who belong to her extended family and all live in Mumbai (most of them in B.D.D chawls, Naigaon, the same place where she lives) and are all going to Hedavi, because only her cousin's grandparents stay there all year round.

Therefore, the traffic from Mumbai to Hedavi on annual journeys remains high – with one member travelling 6 times a year, five members travelling 3 times a year, four members travelling 2 times a year and the remaining doing an annual trip. The elderly couple based in Hedavi also travel to Mumbai twice or thrice a year and list medical reasons as their prime cause for travel. The others travelling to Hedavi from Mumbai list their main reasons for travel as being religious, familial, and recreational in nature. Siddhi has described the journey of travelling to the village (by private bus) as an extension of the holiday in the village, because together members of the same large extended family all travel in the same vehicle, bringing games and singing songs and playing instruments through the night.

6.4.5 *The Temple Journeys (of Kandoshi and Bhandup)*

Here the journeys made by the temple residents, the priest, his family and Tai are like most other Mumbai based Ratnagiri residents. They go during festival times and when important rituals have to be done to match the sacred calendar. The journeys average out to almost 6 to 8 times a year. For the devotees, the two main rituals are in April and in December – one commemorating the Lord Shiva and the other Lord Dattatreya. These are the two most important rituals to travel for. The April meeting is held in Bhandup and the December meeting happens in Kandoshi.

While Tai and the priest travel by train and bus (from Thane station in Mumbai to Khed station in Ratnagiri by train, and the remaining distance by bus), the devotees from elsewhere come by organ-

ising collective pilgrimage buses from different cities. However, these buses function primarily around Mumbai, Pune and Kandoshi.

Religious songs are part of the travel journeys for everyone and there is a lot of fasting done on special days that is followed by collective simple feasts at the end of the rituals.

6.5 Keeping in Touch

In this section we summarise our findings on mobile phone and internet usage and how it shapes the relationship between the two places in the family's lives.

6.5.1 *The Takles (of Songiri and Bhandup)*

All members in the family in Mumbai use mobile phones, though only half of them use Internet on their phones. The average number of phone calls made to Mumbai from Ratnagiri or from Ratnagiri to Mumbai was once a day, while other phone calls were for local purposes wither within Mumbai or within Ratnagiri.

On the Songiri side, the most active user was 17-year-old Saurabh Takle, who uses the phone for recreation or keeping in touch, both with members of the village and relatives in Mumbai. "I use What's App on my mobile phone. We have a group of friends in the village. We have a special group for the family. My uncles [in Mumbai] are also added in the group…I ask about their well being basically…Our friends and siblings in Mumbai told us about What's app, and to use What's app we needed a smart phone. We didn't even knew what a smart phone was. We used to use a PCO (public phone booth) for calling. Now we are familiar with What's app. There is no network for any company cards in our village. So we use what's app. We update our friends about any incident that happens in the village. We friends in village have what's app groups…

I also have college groups like, 'Dilwale', 'Z group' and 'Star'. We often talk about college works. If anyone is absent then we share notes on whats app. New photographs and messages we get from Mumbai." Whats App is clearly an app that has had a significant impact on the lifestyles of the youth in the village, with respect to both their lives in the village and their communication with Mumbai. "After we got an idea of whats app , we all purchased a Smart phone," Saurabh said. "I don't call much. I mostly chat on Whats App…I chat with [my uncle] whenever he is online…I talk to my sister [on the phone]."

For the most part, the older generation in the village has phones only for the purpose of receiving calls; many of them do not know how to make outgoing calls, and they talk to their children in Mumbai when their children call them. Shevanti Takle, Yeshwant's mother, said, of her phone, "It has helped me. I can dial a number. I can receive one…I can attend and disconnect a call that's it… I may get a call or not in a day. After two three days I call up and remind them… they just call up to ask about our well-being. Nothing else."

She is not as regular in making outgoing calls; she says, "I will not spend my money. They should do it," but also that, "I call my daughters my grandsons…if they are ill."

She uses the phone more than her husband Shantaram Takle, who said, "I talk [to my children] when they call, may be once a week or once in a fortnight. My wife talks a lot to them, many a times."

Atmaram Gopal Takle Shantaram's cousin, also spoke of similar experiences keeping in touch with his children in Mumbai:

"We don't call them. They only call us… Our relatives have one phone. Our children call us on that. They call in the afternoon. They ask about our well-being. They ask if we want to come to Mumbai. Should We come to pick you? But our property is here. Why leave our own place and go? We have mango trees here. Who will look after them after we are gone? People will take the fruit."

6.5.2 *The Jadhavs (of Ukshi and Naigaon)*

In Ashok Gopal Jadhav's house, in Mumbai, out of the 21 respondents, 17 had access to mobile phones and the others did not (from those who did not have them, 3 were children). From the 17 mobile users 9 had access to the Internet on their phones. Mobile phones were used mostly to make local phone calls in Mumbai – but they all said they spoke to someone

Electrical pole in Songiri. Few of the villagers have landline phones. Most of them use mobile phones. Songiri only receives reception from one phone company.

Saurabh Takale keeps in touch with his family and friends with his iphone. He prefers phone calls, sms and Whatsapp over facebook.

in the village at least once or twice a week.

Ajinkya Vasant Jadhav, who is Ashok Kanha Jadhav's nephew and lives in Mumbai, said, "[I use] a smart phone. I do use whats app. All [my whats app contacts] are from Mumbai. [I call up Ratnagiri town from the village] at least once or twice a day."

The Internet on the phone was almost exclusively used to watching movies rather than surfing the net.

Only Ashok Gopal Jadhav lives with his second wife in Ukshi and uses the phone to be in touch with his first wife every day. The couple stay in the village for eight months a year and phone usage is maximum when they are there. In Mumbai they are already close to the family members and usage declines.

Ashok's wife in Ukshi uses the phone mostly to keep in touch with her husband if he leaves the house for any work (which is rare) and to keep in touch with her family.

Ashok Kanha Jadhav (family no. 2) has most members living in Ratnagiri itself. He said that he only uses his mobile phone for work, if he has to call his brothers in Mumbai – and he does not call more than once or twice a week. He also does not use his mobile phone for leisure, as he prefers to talk to the people around him in the village, as opposed to people in Mumbai: "I talk frequently to my village mates. I talk about their health, or about farming. Politics is not my favourite topic."

Out of the 46 members in this family, (Ashok Kanha Jadhav's family), 6 did not have mobile phones and from the 40 who did, 12 had access to Internet on their phones. All of them listed movies and news as the main use of the Internet on their mobiles.

They mostly used the mobile phones to keep in touch with relatives travelling for work through Ratnagiri district or on the trips people made to Mumbai. The average usage of phones was twice or thrice a day among all of them.

6.5.3 *The Kules (of Kondhe and Bhandup)*

Of the 27 members, in Kondhe, only 8 do not have mobile phones (and all of these are children) and 5 out of the remaining who have phones also use the Internet on the phone, mostly for entertainment. Usage of phones between Kondhe and Bhandup is pretty high with 1-2 calls being made every day while most of the other usage is local – in both places.

Asha Vilas Bhuwad, Parshuram Kule's daughter, has had a mobile for the past two years. Her husband works in Mumbai while she lives in Kondhe village. She said, "Every evening my Husband calls me up. He asks about our well being; about me and my sons."

Out of the entire Kule family network we surveyed in Mumbai, only five don't have mobile phones, and 17 members actually do have an Internet connection on their phones. They watch Marathi and Hindi news and entertainment programmes primarily.

Phone usage locally is very high – almost 6-7 calls every day and between Mumbai and Ratnagiri it averages to between 2 and 5 calls a week.

6.5.4 *The Mohites (of Kotluk, Hedavi and Naigaon)*

In terms of mobile use, out of the 21 family members, in Naigaon, all 17 adults have access to mobile phones, out of which nine have mobile phones with Internet. The average calls within Mumbai are almost 5-6 a day while between Mumbai and Kotluk is around once or twice a week.

Ganpat Ganu Jadhav, of Hedavi village, described the use of the mobile phone both for work and for family. He said, "Mumbaikars have a different [committee] meeting and here the meeting is different. The president in a telephonic conversation or through a letter informs the issues to them… I have 1 mobile [phone]. I use it for telephonic conversations. You can say, I get two calls per week. I call up [Mumbai]. I call Upendra, Nitin, Saili, and Neha… I call if any urgent information has to be passed. Otherwise I don't call."

As with the Takle family, it is usually the younger generations calling the older family members, and not the other way around. Siddhi said that the use

of phones helped her and her parents keep in touch with her grandparents a lot, because before mobile phones they had to rely on postal service. She says, "Now daddy has given his old cell phone to grandpa and they don't know much about the phone. So daddy has instructed them that whenever the phone rings, he needs to press the green button, come in the [cell signal] range and speak to us. He is following it well and updates us about his health and if needs money." Sometimes, though, one of her grandparents will mix up the ends of the mobile phone, and accidentally hold it to their face upside down when answering their call.

6.5.5 *The Avadhoot Baba Trust*

Tai, the Priest and the Trustees all use mobile phones out of which the priest and two trustees have internet as well. The phone is primarily used to keep in touch between the two temples during festivals and for preparing for festivities. Coordinating travel plans is crucially dependent on the phone as sleeping arrangements and food preparations have to be done before either party arrives to that place.

6.6 Sacred Connections

All the villages in our study are, like most Indian villages, composed of a fabric of diverse ethnicities. The communities that live inside them occupy spaces that are more or less marked by these distinct groups. When the communities migrate, they tend to occupy their new spaces – whether they are urban or rural – in a manner that spells a continuity from their older arrangements. Of course, it is not possible in the city – especially in such a big metropolis as Mumbai – to completely enclose groups around as clear-cut markers such as in the villages, but, as our ethnography shows, the tendency is very much in that direction. Even in the geometrical, functional architecture of the B.D.D chawls, neighbours, floors and buildings tend to coagulate with social groups that share their geographic or ethnic roots.

The binding factor of community is often ritual, festivities and cultural events that encourage people to come together.

In the villages, the families describe the celebration of rituals and festivities as very enthusiastic moments, as it is an opportunity to showcase differ-

Advhoot Baba

ences vis-à-vis the other groups. Interestingly, this enthusiasm does not seem to fade even when groups migrate to the city.

Festivals that mark the most important moments in the Hindu or Muslim calendar are as much an event in Mumbai as they are in the villages. All Hindu castes, whether they are dominant, upper caste ones like the Brahmins or trader-communities, or lower in status but demographically dominant like the Agris, Marathas and Kunbis, celebrate the two

Tai inside temple in Bhandup.

most important festivals on the Konkan coast. These are Ganpati, the worship of the elephant headed God, which usually happens in the months of September or October (following the Hindu Lunar shifting calendar) and Shigmo or Holi festival, that usually happens in March or early April, which marks the change of season from winter to Spring.

While the other festivals in the Hindu calendar are celebrated with as much gusto, those do not demand a trip back to the village, while Ganpati and Holi almost always do.

Ramdas Kule, of Kondhe village, and Parshuram Kule's son, said, "[We travel] during Ganpati, Diwali, Holi festivals. These are our two important festivals: Ganpati & Holi, and we always visit the village during these festivals."

Between the two, Ganpati is very significant for bringing the family together – and usually all members congregate at the ancestral home, make and keep a clay idol of Ganpati for one and a half, five or seven days at home and then, in a small procession in which the family carries the idol take it and immerse it in a water body.

Yeshwant Takle, who always tries to take leave at least once a year from his work in order to go to Songiri for Ganpati, recalls how much he enjoys celebrating: "First and foremost we would buy the Ganesh idol, and then look after decorations throughout the night. And once the decorations are done, we'll keep the idol at its place. Pooja followed. It amounted to 8 fun-filled days in the village, as we also had entertainment like bhajans, dances, phugdi by the ladies and more programmes. And it would last till 4-5am/pm… Yes, very busy for 10 days, with no time to spare for other things."

Holi or Shigmo as it is known on the Konkan coast tends to be a village affair in which the whole village participates and celebrates the festival of colour, which also involves a carnivaliesque procession in the village. Yeshwant Takle adds, of this secondary festival, "…if we got leave only then we'd go for Holi… Yes, Holi was celebrated in a big way. It used to be of 8 days, with palanquin processions in every home and we would eat and spend time together. It was fun."

All families that we spoke to referred to the

Top; From the Takles photo album showing young men from Mumbai in a river in a village near Songiri. They are about to immerse the Ganpati idol. The festival marks the return of Mumbai based Ratnagiri residents. *Bottom*; Baudha Shrine of the Ukshi village, Dalit-Baudha enclave.

importance of both these festivals – especially the Maratha family of the Takles from Songiri and the Kunbi family of the Kules from Kondhe – both residents of Bhandup. "When I go back to my village," Yeshwant Takle said, "It reminds me of things I used to do and I still do those. Be it dancing or anything else. I used to dance then, and I still dance. Its called chakdi dance, which is dancing as per the beats… It's a dance that has people spinning around… The drummers would be in the centre with people spinning around them. I do that even now. Everyone used to like it… That's why if I go now, I don't just look around. I can still do what I used to do back then."

In Mumbai, the Ganpati festival was politicised in the late 19th century by a freedom fighter from the Konkan, (from Ratnagiri town in fact), Lokmanya Tilak, who made it a street festival involving entire neighbourhoods, as a form of political protest. Till date, in Mumbai the Ganpati Mandals are huge neighbourhood platforms for local political forces to come together. It is celebrated by all Maharashtrian Hindus with much organisational fervour. However, those from the Konkan coast who live in the city, always mark the calendar and try to make a trip to the village if they can help it.

Thus in all four villages of ours, when the member say they go back once a year, and cite festival or ceremony as the reason for travel, it is usually for the Ganpati festival. If they say twice a year, it is most likely also the Holi/Shigmo festival.

Ashok Gopal Jadhav, of Ukshi, belonging as he does to a neo-Buddhist community, also associates his family's travel (and his own, from his childhood) from Mumbai to Ukshi with their community's celebrations. He said, "People going to this region of Konkan belonging to diverse religion/sects/community celebrate diverse festivals. Hindus celebrate festivals like Dushhera, Diwali, Holi, Ganpati, in their respective seasons. Festivals celebrated by our community are Ambedkar Jayanti in the month of April, Buddha Jayanti and Vijaya Dashami during Dushhera (October-November), the day when we converted from Hinduism to Buddhism in the form of Diksha as a ritual. This day is very important to us and we celebrate on a large scale. Hence we visit [our village] at least three times in a year from

A meeting of Buddhists in Five Gardens, Wadala, Mumbai where residents of Ukshi and Kotluk among many other Konkan villages where village matters are discussed.
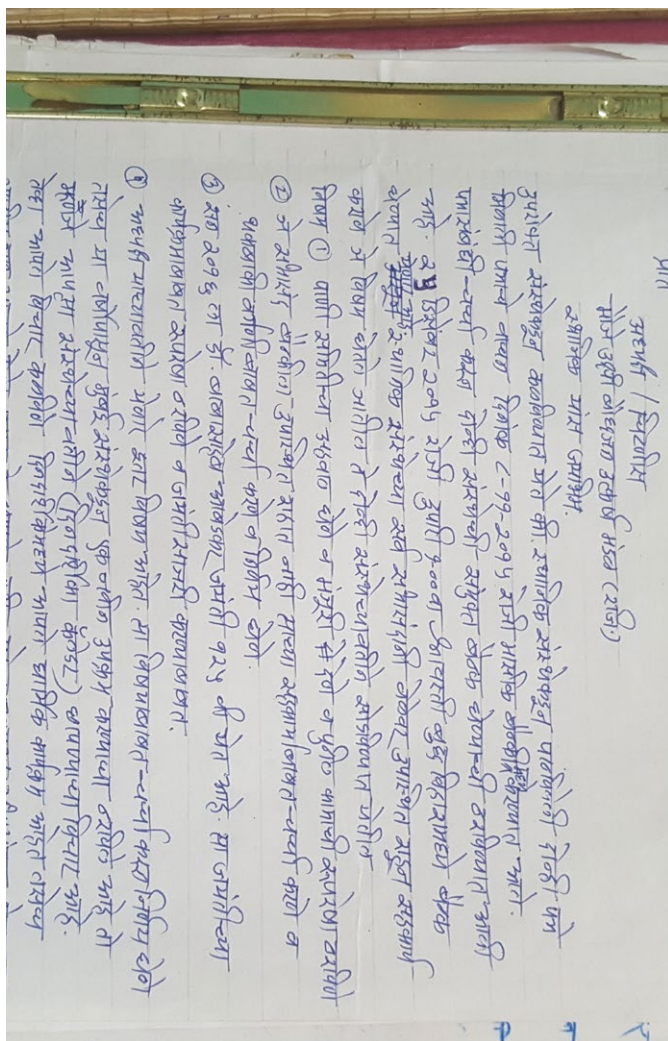
A letter of the Mauje Ukshi Baudhjan Utkarsh Mandal Mumbai - the Ukshi Residents Welfare Trust Mumbai. This reveals that the trust is registered and active in both places. Discussions of infrastructure and events in Mumbai and Ukshi.

Mumbai."

The other reason for going back, which has become institutionalised but is not religious in nature is the summer holidays that usually fall in May. This hottest of Indian months was holiday time for the convenience and ease of colonial masters during the British period and happily coincided on the Konkan with the mango and jackfruit season. Many of our families mention the mango season as an important moment on their calendars and usually for families with children who go to school, this moment is the time when they go back to their villages.

All through Mumbai's industrial history, there are complaints of employers that workers leave in the summer holidays and do not return at the stipulated end of the holiday, which usually coincides with the start of the monsoon. The fact is that for many decades, when agricultural work was as important to the families – even if they worked in industries and factories in the city (and in many cases remains so even today) the monsoons is the time when labour is needed the most in the fields. Workers extending their holiday to the early weeks of the monsoons were and remain a common feature in the urban service sector. The absenteeism from work during this period is a sign that the workers are part of dual household families and that the farm back in the village needs more helping hands.)

Rather than signify a religious moment alone, in terms of spiritual quests or rituals, these clearly mark the value of family and the community/ village in the life of the individuals. The rituals involved simply cannot be done alone – without the active presence the family and community at large. For those employed in mills and factories, getting leave for the festivals was never easy. In the narratives in our study we came across people wanting leave but getting frequently rejected so only some family members could go while others had to postpone their trip to the next year.

Yeshwant Takle recalls, "We didn't get any holidays. We were not granted leave because workforce was scarce, so we had to be on the job…but we would apply for a casual leave of ten days and for ten days we would be in the village."

At the same time, it is interesting to note some level of "rootedness" in Mumbai also, when he says, "Attachment [to the village] was there, but limited to once a year, during [Ganpati]." Yeshwant's connection with his village has largely been influenced by the flexibility and constraints that Mumbai life has offered him.

We asked them what exactly those moments meant, when they were also getting absorbed by the city and its fast pace and rhythm – why did the festivals mean anything at all? The answers were mostly related to the attachment they felt to the village. It was a genuine break for them from the monotony and challenges of urban life. Both our families – from Songiri and Kondhe who live in Bhandup come from poor, working class families and live in homegrown settlements, otherwise broadly referred to as slums. The lives of Shantaram and Parshuram, whether working in mills or in their own shop,

meant struggling for basic necessities for much of their lives. The moments of returning to the village during festivities was also a break – a genuine holiday. As Ashok Gopal Jadhav of Ukshi related, this season is also about other kinds of family celebrations where the social and the religious constantly overlap because in a sense, both are equally sacred.

He said, "All the families in Mumbai will attend the weddings in this season. People used to walk irrespective of the distance be it two, three or four miles and participate in all the wedding rituals with enthusiasm. Irrespective of all the hardships of walking on such roads for long distances on harsh sunny day, it was unique experience and fun. Weddings, be it of relatives, cousins, kids were the only opportunity/reasons/excuses to visit new villages."

Though recreation was often associated with an escape from the economic struggle that came with city life, it is also true that a quick survey of families we encountered on the trains going from Mumbai to Ratnagiri – from a diverse set of backgrounds – middle class and upper castes included, revealed that these moments were not class specific. The return home every year – the sense of belonging to both places was itself a ritual and cut across class boundaries. The sense of repetitive acts, returning home year after year – was a ritual in itself, and like many rituals, helped shape people's experiences and sense of belonging to a place that was home, and not fully so.

The family members informed us that for those who had grown in the village, the religious festivities and the return home was a way of reconnecting with past memories of the village. For those born in the city, the trips were a way of forming those memories. It was these trips – that were made even before the railways and the road services – using ferries and boats and prior to that, by foot – that helped keep the connections alive.

In this sense the most sacred space, the call to return, was ultimately about the connect with ancestry. And the ancestry was rooted in the land and homes. In Takle wadi, Songiri, the local village temple, the small shrines made for ancestors at the boundaries of homes, were all the architecture of ancestry that marked the sense of the sacred. Atmaram Gopal Takle, who lives in Songiri, describes these shrines:

"[Our kul daivat – family deity – is] Bhairi Bhavani. Its always in our small pooja room in our home."

Of the community temple in the village, he narrates, "Our house was far away down there. Here there were 4 brothers. Of which 3 brothers had built new houses and this one is ours. This was the start of the settlement. Little further down near the Orchard there are 5 to 6 houses. The Landmark there is the Ganpati temple. You might have seen on your way. Deep inside the village there are 2 more houses. It is said that , in those days, there was a Brahmin. In search of water he came near the existing Gosavi temple and asked for water. He erected a stone there supported by a Dhond. So he got water for which he asked. The water served the nearby paddy fields. So one day someone dreamt of him, and they built his temple. Every Monday we worship him in the temple."

Even ancestral homes and property informed this sense of the sacred, and Yeshwant Takle's attachment to his father's home in Songiri village, while at the same time being conscious of his Mumbai background, especially since he is a contractor and deals with structures, exemplifies this: "[My father] returned to his village, built a house; I'm exactly doing the same thing. What my father did, is what I will be doing. But we'll modify some bit, and make it like Mumbai style!"

In Kondhe village the line of ancestry was broken due to litigation – but even though land was in dispute, Parshuram Kule and family would still go to the ancestral home and participate in festivities regardless. The fact that he chose to buy land and build a new home, close to his ancestral land is a testimony to this.

With regard to the B.D.D. Chawls, Naigaon and the families there from Ukshi, Hedavi and Kotluk, the story is complicated via caste. These families are all Dalit families, who have come from the same ethnic fabric of Hinduism in terms of history – but were radicalised in the mid 1950s because they were designated as 'untouchable'. For them, the historical access to land and status in the village was extremely tenuous. The move to the city was a reality of life from the late 19th century – way before their radicalisation in the 1950s – when they rejected Hinduism and adopted a new Buddhist religious identi-

ty – for which they are called neo-Buddhists. They had to reconstruct many aspects of their lives and cultural identity. Temples had to be reconstructed as Buddhist shrines. Old icons and idols had to be replaced by new ones. Old religious festivals were to be substituted by new ones on the same calendar.

With such a strong sense of re-generation, the city of Mumbai became part of the story of the Dalit communities from the Konkan in a special way. The city was a site of modern identity and greater opportunities. But – as our family members from Ukshi reminded us – the renewed identity of the community had already seen what the city had realistically given.

Most families who were Dalit, including those living in B.D.D. chawls, way before their conversion, had a good experience of what living in Mumbai meant for them. How the city still managed to do both, create new opportunities but also reproduced old prejudices. There were many narratives among the Dalit Mumbai experiences that spoke about the double-edged way in which Mumbai provided space for emancipation from caste – but also did not fully do so.

Whether it was this factor, or the continued hold that the village had for the residents from the Konkan, the fact is that the village remained a part of their lives. And the religious calendar, the Buddhist shrines, the celebration of the birth and death of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (the London School of Economics and Columbia University educated lawyer, architect of the Indian constitution), as well as the day he marked as the mass conversion into neo-Buddhism – continue to be celebrated with as much enthusiasm and gusto by the Dalit community in Mumbai and the Konkan as Holi and Ganpati.

And one clear marker of this as a feature that cuts across the Mumbai-Ratnagiri arc of belonging is the village associations connected to the Dalit communities that were created and nurtured in the city of Mumbai and continue to do so.

If the city is inextricably part of any community's life – and if the village is actually an equally important part of the same community's life, it is more so for the Dalit community and needs to be understood with some sensitivity. Because the Dalits had little

reason to be attached to the village if their history of marginalisation was taken into account. And as their leader Ambedkar was clear in his assertion that all traditional identities had to be rejected for a real transformation in the lives of the Dalits, there was little reason keep connections. And yet the pull of ancestry was strong enough. Even before the land reforms – that we referred to earlier – were implemented in this region – sometime in the 1970s – villages continued to be visited by Mumbai based Dalits every year – much in the way their fore-fathers had done.

When the land reforms were implemented – farming on their own land was something many families seriously took on – whether they were working in the city of not. And many village associations that sprung up in the city – in which members of a village got together, collected funds and invested them back into the upkeep of the Buddhist shrine, for organising of festivals and even for projects that involve water pipeline laying, construction of new wells etc. These Mumbai based village associations were deep networks that covered the expanse of Mumbai and Ratnagiri and became very important in the lives of the residents in both places.

In the words of Lakshman Janu Jadhav of Ukshi Village, "We work for the local elections, repairs and renovation of the Buddhist Vihara, and other village related issues. We arrange for a meeting at Wadala (a neighbourhood in central Mumbai) in the every first or third week of a month. In Ukshi we started constructing a Buddha Vihara in 2007 and it was completed in 2009. The construction cost was around 15 lakhs. The contribution for this Vihara came from the social workers and some more money was raised from charity. All the decisions are based on the unity of the village members. Any major decision is taken in a meeting held once in a year by committee members of Mumbai as well as those in Ukshi. The agenda of this meeting is all about the development that has to be done in the village. The funds are generated mostly from he Mumbai committee so the villagers have lot of expectations from them."

Lakshman also said, "All the committee members have a sense of belonging towards the village. They feel the development of the village is our responsibility. Therefore this Committee deals with

the repairs and progress of the village. We are proud of the values, the culture and the place we live in. So we visit this place very often. Our children also visit this place along with us. All the children follow us and they too feel that they should offer their prayers in the Buddhist Vihara every morning and evening and even meditate at times. The cultural values have to be imbibed in them so we get them here. Every year in May there is "Buddha Pournima" which is celebrated all over the country. All the Committee people from Mumbai and Ukshi come together and celebrate this festival with joy. In Mumbai the vacations are generally in May so people from Mumbai spend their vacations in Ukshi."

In our conversations with the various village committees from the Konkan among the Dalit communities – at Five Gardens in Wadala – Central Mumbai – we came across the same narrative repeatedly. A firm commitment to improve the life in the village, collect revenues from Mumbai based villagers – they were all meeting in village based groups – and planning of events and celebrations for Buddha jayanti (commemorating Buddha), Ambedkar Jayanti, (in the name of Ambedkar) and other important events.

The calendar was evenly divided between having celebrations in Mumbai – in B.D.D chawls as well as back in the villages of Kotluk, Hedavi and Ukshi.

Taking part in the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations at B.D.D. chawls in Mumbai was an event worth narrating. There were installations that showcased miniature models of Columbia University and the whole life of Ambedkar accompanied by thunderous, modern contemporary music and dance Bollywood style. B.D.D. chawls have also become the site for a kind of local hip-hop style urban musical tradition – all of this expands back into the village as well, with youngsters also looking towards the life there as having significance to their story.

We saw this in with Ajinkya Jadhav, Ashok Kanha Jadhav's 25 year old nephew who lives in Mumbai. He has grown up in the city but is equally attached to Ukshi; he says, "[When I go to Mumbai] I miss the peace and nature of the village…if I get a job here [in Ukshi] I can stay here in the calm and peaceful environment."

Along with the families connecting to ancestral anchoring points in their lives, located in the village, cutting across caste backgrounds, the Kandoshi-Bhandup Temple story in our study brought in a different set of principles. While the story of Avadhoot baba is explicitly religious – with strong roots in India's heterodox religious traditions – it is also about spatial control and the making and re-making of space and geography – in a manner where the ancestry is not kinship or biological.

In Avadhoot baba's story, his meeting with Nityanand Maharaj is significant. Guru Nityanand passed on a strong and independent spiritual tradition rooted in the philosophy of Advaita – or non-dualism – which historically was attributed to Adi Shankaracharya – a philosopher saint supposed to have been responsible for defeating Buddhist monks and scholars in debate in the 7th century AD. Such spiritual traditions are often not connected to large centralised religious orders but revolve around the charisma of realised souls who then encourage a multiplication of such centres in a decentralised way. They keep a kind of anarchic base to certain practices and in theory are open to all castes and creed. The idea was to respond to the challenges of Buddhism and its anti-caste impulse – without giving up the ideals of Hinduism. Thus Hindu gods such as Shiva – the ascetic-householder - could become part of these traditions, as Shiva is more heterodox within the Hindu pantheon.

You see all of this reflected in Avadhoot baba's story. His humble background as a worker in the Mumbai civic administration as a road-tar layer, his desire to attain spiritual enlightenment, his success at this in a cave back in his mother's village in the Kandoshi forest, his return to the city and setting up a temple in Bhandup – fighting land sharks and dangerous local mafiose – then starting a spiritual centre in his village and handing over his spiritual legacy to a young poor orphan girl whom he had adopted and who now was integral to the sacredness of the temple. We spoke to Anant Gaikar, a teacher who used to live in Mumbai (his mother is from Bhandup), who is now living in Angaon, a village in near Ganeshpuri. He said, of how Baba came to Mumbai and established the temple: "Beyond the mountain is Satara District. Baba's native [village] is a place called Paithan, in Satara District…And the place where the temple is situated is his maiden native [mother's

native village]…He spent his childhood here. He was an exceptional devotee. He went to places like Triambakeshwar, Nashik, etc. in search of god. We have his biography written in a book. That book is in Bhandup. The name of the book is "Maharashtrache Santa". While he was roaming around in search of god he realised he needs a guru to reach the almighty. So he set out in search of a guru. Meanwhile, the construction of Tansa dam was going on and some of its work was done in Bhiwandi. That's how he reached Bhiwandi. During that time Swami Nityananda had his existence in Ganeshpuri. So baba's search for a guru led him to Swami Nityananda…Baba was from here, and while moving on he reached Mumbai."

What revolves around this narrative and the temples in the two places sites - are devotees and followers from all walks of life, people from different locations who are now part of the calendar of the temples activities – equally divided between Mumbai and Ratnagiri. Rituals have to be done in both places. If one festival is celebrated in Kandoshi attracting hundreds of followers, the same is to be done in Bhandup for another festival. In a group discussion that we had with some of the devotees, one of the participants explained, "There are two organisations. The organisation in Bhandup has been registered and the one in Ratnagiri is not. But the events are held in both organisations… Both the organisations are a part of one trust. The Bhandup one is the main organisation and this organisation is a part of the main organisation… The funds come from donations mainly from Mumbai. The villagers too contribute to some extent." Another participant said, "The main branch is in Bhandup. So they held main programs there [in Bhandup]. But Datta Jayanti and Baba's Punyatithi are celebrated here at a large scale. So people from Mumbai do come here to celebrate these two festivals."

Making pilgrimages is part of religious life in the region and a lot of it is towards making acquaintance with new places, and even controlling new plots of land. Many of the devotees we spoke to discussed the act of travelling to attend functions or events that spread the baba's message. Anant Gaikar said, "Baba went to Mahabaleshwar, Satara, Phaltan, Pune, Ahmednagar, Thane and Mumbai for his Yog Sadhana. And all the people who got acquainted to him and his teachings come here to promote

the events and even participate in some." Describing these events, he said, "Here we hold religious and spiritual programs. In spirituality attaining self-actualisation is difficult. It can be done only if you have a guide and that guide should himself have attained self-actualisation. This guide was our Baba…We organise various events to bring spiritual awareness amongst people…The fact is that the society has split itself into various castes and creeds. The intention is to bring them all together with the help of spiritual awareness… One person with others can develop a society. So it is the need of the era to be one and a part of whole to develop the society."

The Bhandup temple was built on land that has a history of dispute. Though there is a landlord, who is also a trustee, the history of conflict reveals that it was contested. The setting up of a shrine is a way in which communities also assert right over space. In Mumbai, homegrown settlements use shrines as a way of creating a sense of organised control, as a shrine officially needs a trust – which is a legal body. It is this trust that organises the events and programs among the community, which the devotees described. Once a shrine is built it is difficult to demolish it and under its patronage families start to live, with some modicum of security. Many devotees describe coming to and going from the temple land in Mumbai, or having some association with it. Pandurang Gaikar, an ex-headmaster living in Ratnagiri, says, "Around 25 to 30 people have come [to Ratnagiri] from Bhandup. We organise a bus for this event. We all live here for 7 days. When Baba was here this place was so crowded. Now the number of people has reduced…some of them have grown old, some might be busy. The younger crowd is not much." Suvarna Sunil Panchal, a devotee living in Ratnagiri, recalls, of the building of the temple, "This math (special shrine for a particular lineage) was built in 2011 after Baba took a samadhi. There was no water source nearby the old math. So baba had thought of an alternative land where a new math could be built. So baba decided to dig a well. We started digging the well in 2001 and finished the construction of the temple by 2003.The cost of construction for that well was about 7.5 to 8 lakhs. The cost was borne by the committee members. Besides them, whoever baba asked would readily come ahead and help him… Baba was uneducated, but he had engineering skills which is quite evident from the construction of the well. He himself supervised

the construction of the well."

Both the Bhandup temple and the Kandoshi temple have elements of such land -takeover. The trust in the Kandoshi forest may not have a legal right to build a structure – but the charisma of a guru and the sanctity of religion may override this. The devotees we met spoke of their Baba with reverence. Anant Gaikar said, "My Baba reached Bhandup which was a small village then. It was a coincidence that he took a room on rent next to my mother's room in Bhandup. This is how my parents and grandparents got acquainted with Baba…He had a kind of magnetic personality which attracted positivity and so the nearby people around him. My parents became his disciples… before my birth…I became acquainted with Baba 12 years ago…I completed my [higher secondary schooling] in science so I didn't believe in spirituality and karmas…And I used to live in Baba's math in Bhandup. While living there I got some unique experiences. Then I got attracted towards Baba's teachings. I was so attracted that I couldn't separate myself from him and his teachings. This happened in 2003. I used to believe in practical living, so I didn't believe in karmas and all. Baba taught me the Yogshastra practically and that's why, I got attracted to him. I am close to him and his teachings and I will remain close in future too."

Others, including those living in Ratnagiri, claim similar reverence for Avadhoot Baba. Sandeep Gaikar, a driver by profession living in a village called Titwade in Ratnagiri, said, "I have settled down in my village and I come here to attend programs. I attend each and every program in Bhandup. Baba has given a right direction to our life. Our devotion towards Baba is more than the almighty himself. I leave all my jobs behind and come and attend the programs." Janardhan Ramachandra Akarde, who is from a village called Pandavshet in Ratnagiri, and works at Citrus Checking Pvt. Ltd. In Wadala, in Mumbai, said, "We attend every function here [in the village]. We are devoted to Guru. Baba was from this village, so we have been attracted towards him since childhood… We have seen him very closely. We are born and brought up here [in the village]. We have never seen a guru whose Bhakti knew no bounds. He has faced a lot of hardships… We didn't have chappals to wear, but we had faith in Baba. We followed what he said. Baba taught us to do some new and good things… My father use to drink a lot.

After he met guru he stopped drinking. We have taken an oath and we all have put on Tulsi Mala, so we don't eat fish and meat. We don't drink either. We use to eat non-veg before, but now we don't. It's like we eat something that is already dead, so in our body it further decomposes. So we don't feel like eating." Pandurang Gaikar claimed, "Baba was uneducated but the knowledge about spirituality and salvation was a Gods gift. His talk was mesmerizing and we often forgot hunger and thirst while he was talking."

The more devotees the temple attracts the more secure it is of becoming firmly entrenched in the neighbourhood.

The starting points for taking roots of course have some element of ancestral connection in Kandoshi as well – as Avadhoot Baba's mother's family belongs to the village close by. However in the case of the Bhandup temple – it is like Mumbai – a moment of opportunity that provides refuge to some people as well as concretises a religious tradition.

6.7 The Good Life

The idea of "the good life" as it emerges in the conversations, frequently evoked the idea of comfort and stability. Many people from Ratnagiri talked of the village as an embodiment of "the good life" because it is a place of retirement, a place "with which to have a long-term relationship"; which would wait for them to return. Mumbai embodies change for so many people, and perhaps this in a sense, is what makes the stability of one's life in the village so sacred.

At the same time, we observed that medical facilities, access to hospitals and schooling were things, which were still not as easily accessible in the villages. When brought to the discussion, the common response was, the city provides medical facilities for sure, but for many urban residents, the affordable facilities is not of a very high quality even in Mumbai Similarly, affordable government schools in Mumbai were not very different from accessible schools in nearby towns in Ratnagiri.

Though between medical facilities and schooling, there were more respondents who valued schooling in Mumbai at a higher level than medical facilities. If anything at all, it was education in Mumbai that

was more of a factor that attracted young people, though there were as many responses that were contrary!

In this light, there were frequent assertions that things are improving and changing in the villages now. There is a slow improvement in the social infrastructure in rural areas in medical and educational terms.

Young men in Ukshi village informed us that they did not go to Mumbai any more in search of jobs, as Ratnagiri town itself had started providing opportunities. Besides, other hubs such as Goa were close enough for daily or weekly commutes. At least two men in their early twenties, from Ukshi village, commuted by motorcycle every day to Ratnagiri town for work. One was an educationist who had set up a private school near the city to which he travelled daily and the other worked in a garage.

While the respondents based in Ratnagiri were speaking more about the changing scenario in the Ratnagiri landscape, the Mumbai residents tended to speak about their ancestral villages more in terms of emotional attachment and family values.

Yeshwant Takle of Mumbai and Songiri village, had this to say, ""The address here [in Mumbai] can change but it can't be changed in the village. I can sell this property here but I can't sell the property in the village. Did you understand? If I go to my village and wish to sell the property, then I can't sell. You can sell any property here in Mumbai, whether bungalow or an apartment. This is the difference. We can also sell a building structure…in the village…but you cannot sell the land. It is not possible in village to sell the property on basis of transfer system like we have in Mumbai. For example, you can think of shifting any place here in city, but you cannot change your place in the village, which is the place of your identity, your origin, etc. Like people do not shift from one village to another. Hence it is referred as 'Mool Gaon', Mool means our roots, our origin, identity, ethnicity, native." This idea rings true with Parshuram Kule's assertion that when he came to Mumbai all he was looking for was a place of residence. Places of residence can change; they are simply an economic and logistical process.

One cannot "lose" one's village the way one may have to move out of a house – it is not purely a physical relationship but also largely a social one. These two are inextricably linked, as Anil Jadhav, of Ukshi village, says about the connection between his place of residence and the relationships in one's life: "My father spent his whole life in Mumbai. He could never enjoy his married life. He never spent quality time with his life. He used to visit his family once or twice a year. He could never…spend time with his children. But one desires a good and healthy family life. I realised that the moment we are distant the communication gap between us brothers increases. We can't talk in detail on phone. This may lead to stress in one life. Say for e.g. A husband is in a city far away from his native. He is not in a position to communicate freely with his wife or family in the native. It may lead to depression. And I am strictly against it… Lots of people have money, AC's, nice cushions but they don't get a sound sleep. But I get it here. That's why I came here…

What we call happiness is here. The environment of the village is healthy. The moment you step in this village you feel energetic. This environment acts as a tonic of energy, and the levels of energy never come down. The feel of the earth, the smell of earth is not quite obvious to all, but it plays an important rule in molding this environment." This is also consistent with the finding that one very popular reason for families to visit Ratnagiri was to see members of their extended family there, a practice that is not separate from celebrating festivals. Even Saurabh Vikay Takle, who lives in Songiri village and is only 17, and who wishes to move to Mumbai at some point, already realises the significance of social relations in this pattern. He says, "I like to live here. Our own people live here; it is so good to interact. Whereas in Mumbai most of them are strangers and there is no one to talk to. "

Asha Bhuwad, Parshuram Kule's daughter who lives in Kondhe village with her children while her husband lives in Mumbai, said, "[I prefer] The village life. Here we are at peace. The quality of environment is good. In Mumbai, life is fast forward. No one has time . They are always in a rush. Busy all the time. Here we can do things peacefully at our own will and in a timely manner."

Ashok Gopal Jadhav, who spent his entire childhood and working years in the city, also firmly be-

lieves that if nothing else, the village is certainly a place to be once there is no more work to be done. He says, "Ideally, people should settle in village after retirement as Mumbai is full of crowd and pollution, one wishes to stay away from this chaos and leave peacefully. One wishes to spend the rest of his life happily then it is important to settle in the village. This place is so crowded. I am just not able to bear the chaos in the evening. In village, one eats of his own [accord], drinks of his own and rests peacefully. I feel better in the village… Nature, peace and stress free life. There is no stress in village unless there is an emergency call from Mumbai. Live a peaceful life in village, eat drink and enjoy at the fullest."

This resonates with Atmaram Gopal Takle, from Songiri village, who said, "For us [home is] here in the village. We like to breathe free air. Roam around wherever we want. We feel suffocated in Mumbai," and with Ashok Kanha Jadhav of Ukshi village, who said, "Since this environment is suitable for me, I feel fresh here. I have adapted myself to this environment. I feel restless everywhere else."

It is also interesting to note that this is exactly what Saili Jadhav, who is Bandhu Mohite's cousin, related to us about her husband, who is of a different generation than Ashok Gopal Jadhav, Ashok Kanha Jadhav, and Atmaram Gopal Takle; Saili's husband is excited to finish building his house in Hedavi and retire there to enjoy himself. Parshuram Kule also agreed, and said that "With no work, [I prefer to live] here in Songiri. Mumbai is only for work, not to enjoy living."

Of course, this is a slightly extreme view and certainly not shared across the respondents of the two younger generations. The "good life" to many people expands across geography, particularly for those who recognise that they enjoy the opportunities that the city has to offer, whether it is economic or recreational.

Yeshwant Takle says, in a more even way, "I love the village. The environment is very peaceful and clean. Hence people don't fall ill because of such environment. Hence I love the village the most, but I also like Mumbai…There is a continuous work flow in Mumbai but not in village. Hence we are in Mumbai for livelihood…If we feel stressed in Mumbai, then we leave for our village for a month…you are stressed about your livelihood in Mumbai…We feel relaxed and are free from all tensions…I can stay in the village at the most for a month. One is refreshed in the village within a month but not more than a month. There is no opportunity in the village."

In a sense he has imbibed the stress of work in the city into his lifestyle; and associates the village entirely with relaxation. This is slightly different from the way Parshuram Kule is invested in his village, Kondhe: "here is a local Agricultural officer who stays here and he tells me about it. If there are any seminars or workshops about new farming techniques, he takes me along with him." Many residents of the villages in Ratnagiri village are thus invested in the economy of their village and in agriculture; they described working in the fields as a part of their daily life, and Bandhu Mohite of Kotluk has expressed a passionate interest in developing agricultural innovations in the village.

The younger generation also has a more fun-centred way of looking at the village. They admit that they like to spend their holidays there, roam around, and escape from city life temporarily. Akshay Takle of Songiri village who lives in Mumbai said, "We feel free in the village unlike in Mumbai where we see the same old chawls once we step out of the house. There are limited and same places to visit in Mumbai but you can explore so much around the village in nature. There are buildings all around in Mumbai, but there is so much more to observe and experience in nature in the village. You feel better."

With this lifestyle comes a protectiveness of the the village environment, as a getaway from Mumbai. "A village should be like a village," Siddhi says, when talking about development, "[Houses] in the villages should be made of mud… many of our villages have historic places which we appreciate. If we are not careful, they will be destroyed no? But the worst is when the village starts to slowly turn into a city. It is happening but it is kind of sad, that it is so…".

If we compared the statements of the younger residents (late teens to mid-twenties), there were discrepancies between the Mumbai settled youngsters and the Ratnagiri based youngsters. Within them, girls and boys had different views as well. The two girls definitely had an emotional attach-

ment to the village, but also defined themselves as urban girls who were a bit of a misfit in the village – now that they were exposed to life in the city. Yet, the good life for even them was about the peace and quiet in the village, paradoxically tinged with anxieties about boredom, if they stayed too long. The boys from Mumbai in our families in that age group seemed to be enthusiastic about the village more unconditionality and - like their parents - valued its clean air, the peaceful nature of village life vis-à-vis- the noisy fast pace of their Mumbai life. If they had jobs and a good college in the village, they all agreed they would move back to the village.

This response converged with the choices that the younger residents based in Ratnagiri articulated. Among the three boys - one from Ukshi, one from Songiri and one from Hedavi – they all said that the landscape was fast changing here and they saw economic opportunities expanding in Ratnagiri. In contrast, Mumbai was crowded, dense and dirty. Their forefathers had had no choice but to go there, since there was not much to do here in those days. This is not the case today.

Also, if Chiplun, Ratnagiri or Goa gave them a choice of work, and they had to move away from their villages, to the urbanized areas, it was still preferable to them as they had the option of returning home on weekends. This definitely seemed to be a very desirable option among others we spoke to as well, in evening gatherings in Ukshi village during our field trips.

In this regard, Bandhu from Kotluk was a living embodiment of the changing landscape in his village, and someone who saw many opportunities, exactly in the way other youngsters articulated to us as their ideal.

There was a constant flow of discussions on the good life that spilled over and became a spontaneous comparison between Mumbai and Ratnagiri even though it was not attached to our questions. Our aim was to ask them their ideal notion of a good life, irrespective of a place. But the responses were nearly always tied down to the particularities of their own contexts – and became an inevitable ground for comparison.
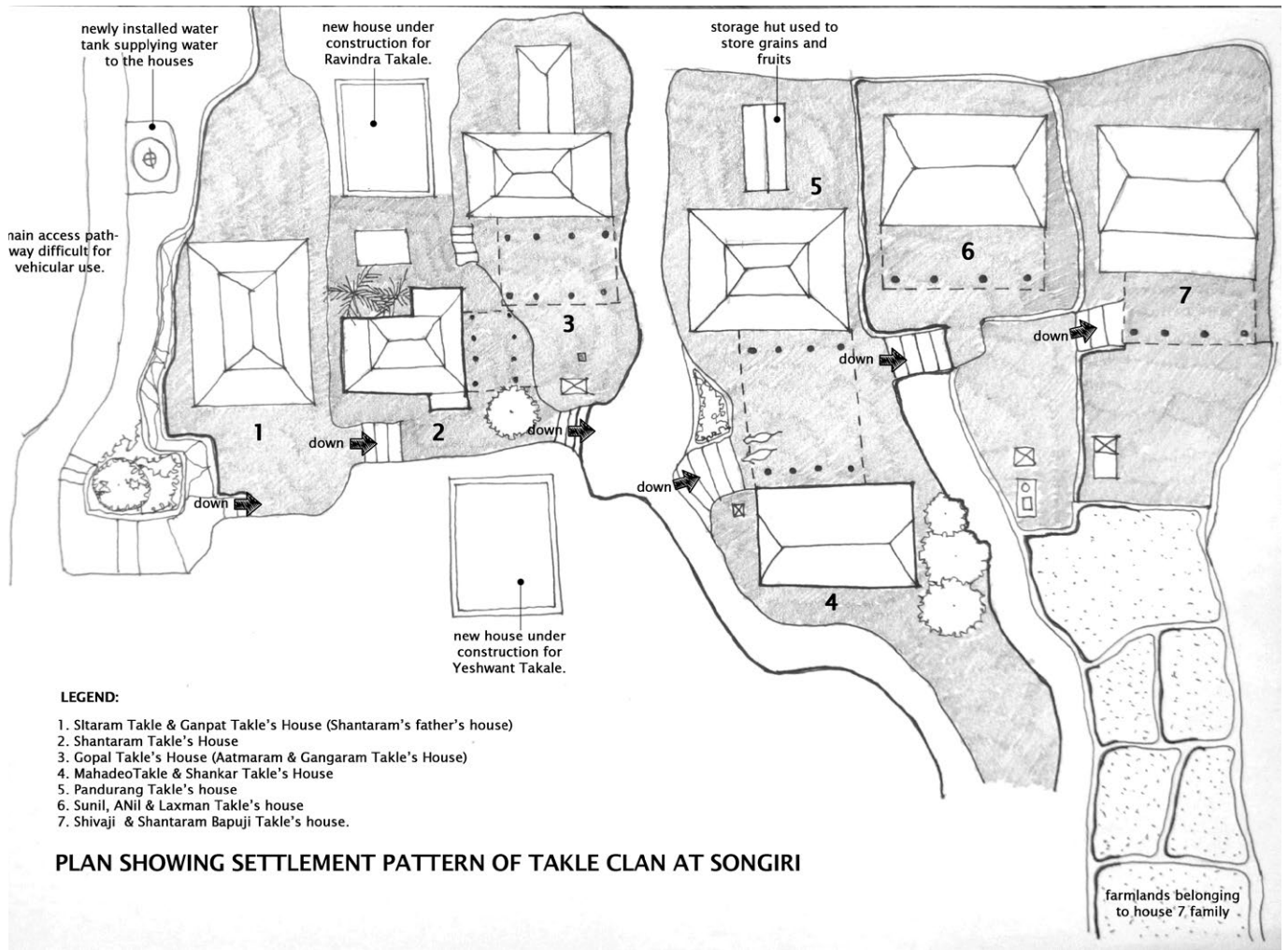
What seemed to emerge was the idea that the good life was a clean environment, good air, access to decent schooling, access to social and familial bonds, the security of a village and access to livelihoods. In this scheme of things access to livelihood was a powerful variable that tilted the balance in a skewed way, making everything else redundant. Thus the move to a place of crowds and density was justified due to the quest for a job. Which paradoxically meant that the changing landscape in Ratnagiri was now complicating the move to Mumbai, and becoming an additional choice in their lifestyle. Especially since Mumbai did not offer much else besides a job. All other elements of the good life, we were told repeatedly, was already here in Ratnagiri.

Deeper queries to ascertain if Mumbai offered more freedom in terms of gender and community control over their lives, and whether this was an element to factor in when speaking about the 'good life' - was met with guarded responses. The fact was that community control over their lives, whether in the city or the village, were already pretty strong in any case. Living in the city did not in any way mean a dissociation from the village to start with. Especially since they lived with families and community networks in both places.

Conversely, when speaking to the Ratnagiri based youngsters, we found that living in the village was not about being located in the village as permanent fixtures, but moving and travelling all the time, between different locations – in which the quest for a livelihood – for work - became a constant factor. But it did this without cancelling out a continued dependence on the farm and on the few economic sources in the village connected to the farm – like fruit orchards, poultry etc. Families and communities continued to share economic resources, farming was done collectively, and during agricultural season, everyone pitched in. People just took leave from work in their jobs wherever it was and added to the village labour force.
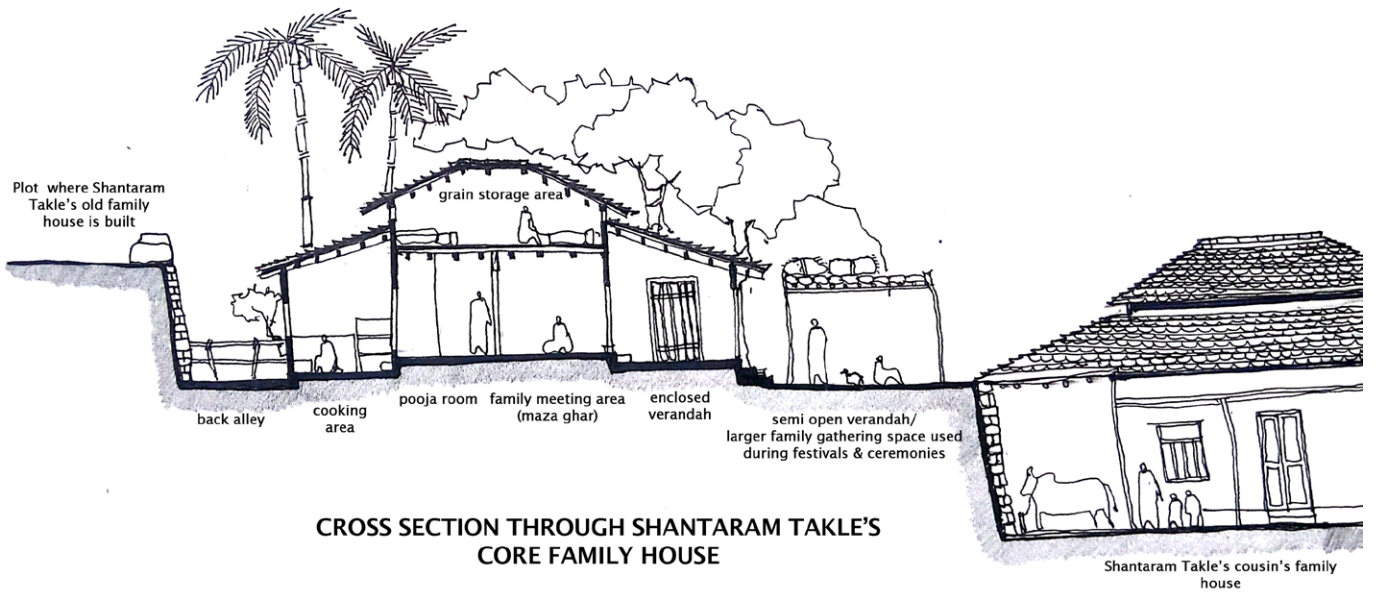
Within such arrangements, the idea of the good life as individualized ambition had a limited use in our research. Though it did prove to be a rich source of reflection about the value of emotional connections to the village and the ideal of the village as a place that provided for a quality of life not so easy to get in the city, no matter what other opportunities the city provides.
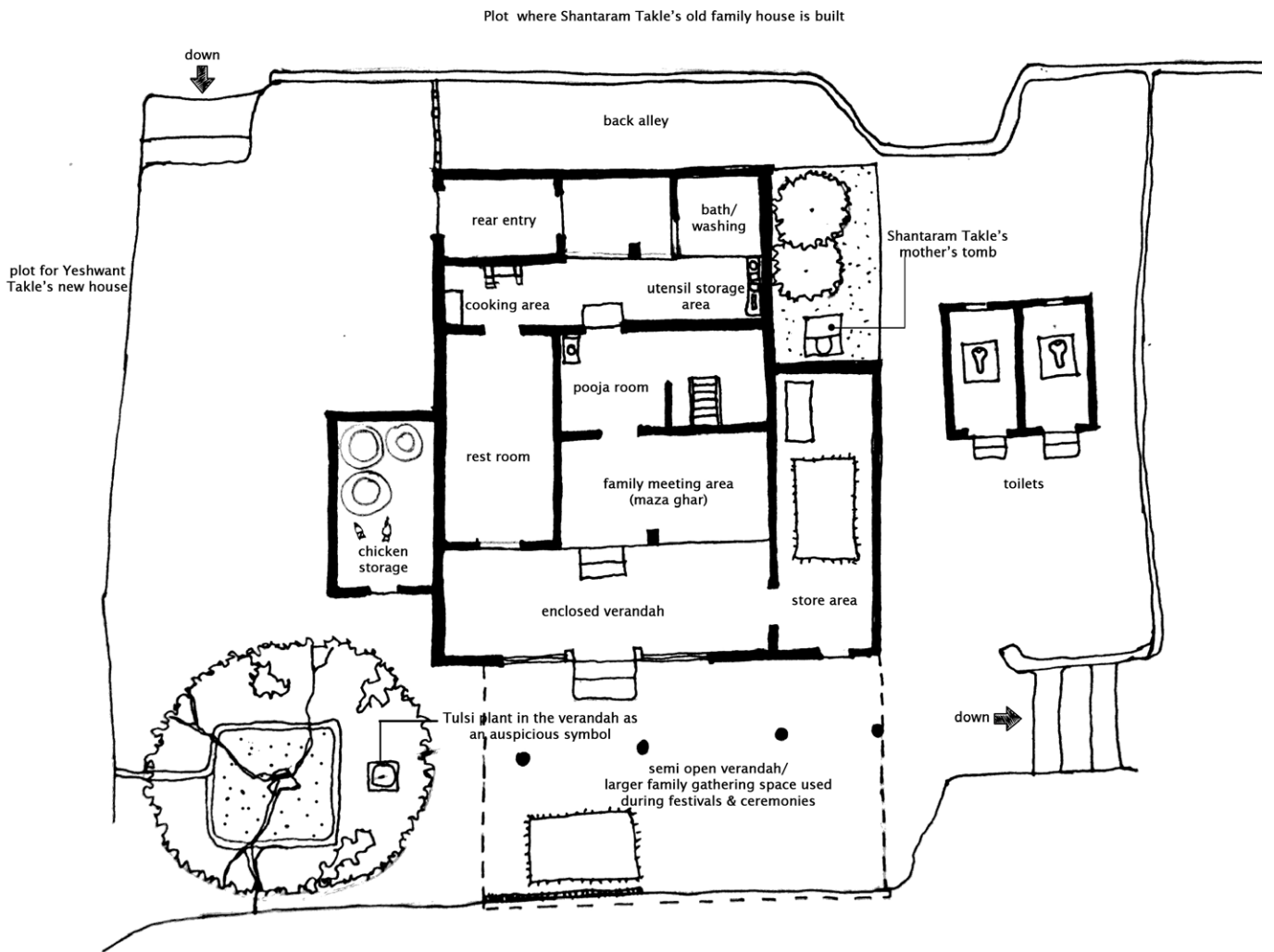
Top; Akshay Takle in front of basil plant used for prayer inside a Tulsi Vrindavana. The plant is cultivated for religious and medicinal purposes, and for its essential oil. It has many health benefits as well. *Bottom*; Shantaram's wife Shevanti standing in front of their house, the roof is made from clay tiles, Taklewadi.

Plot where Shantaram Takle's old family house is built

grain storage area

back alley

cooking area

pooja room

family meeting area (maza ghar)

enclosed verandah

semi open verandah/ larger family gathering space used during festivals & ceremonies

CROSS SECTION THROUGH SHANTARAM TAKLE'S CORE FAMILY HOUSE

Shantaram Takle's cousin's family house

Plot where Shantaram Takle's old family house is built

down

back alley

rear entry

bath/ washing

Shantaram Takle's mother's tomb

plot for Yeshwant Takle's new house

cooking area

utensil storage area

pooja room

rest room

family meeting area (maza ghar)

toilets

chicken storage

enclosed verandah

store area

down

Tulsi plant in the verandah as an auspicious symbol

semi open verandah/ larger family gathering space used during festivals & ceremonies

SHANTARAM TAKLE'S CORE FAMILY HOUSE

Top; Sketch showing cross section of Shantaram's house. *Bottom*; Floor plan sketch of Shantaram's cousin's house.

Top; Akshay Takale at the site of Yeswant Takle's new home. *Bottom*; Shantaram facing his house, with his cousin's house behind him.
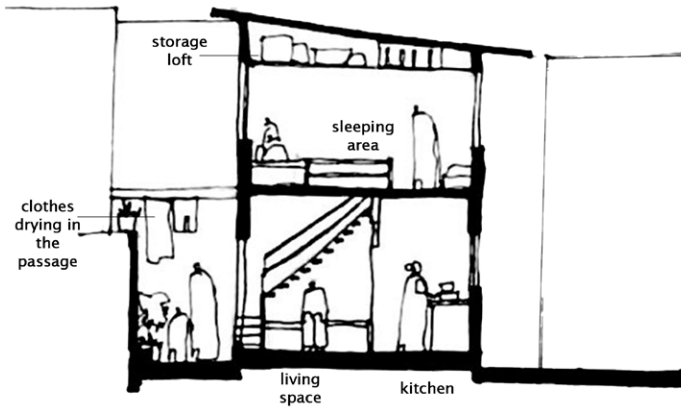
Top; The narrow street on which Yeshwant, Manohar and Keshvar's houses stand, Bhandup.*Bottom*; A woman walking to the temple. The same rituals are performed in Bhandup and Songiri.
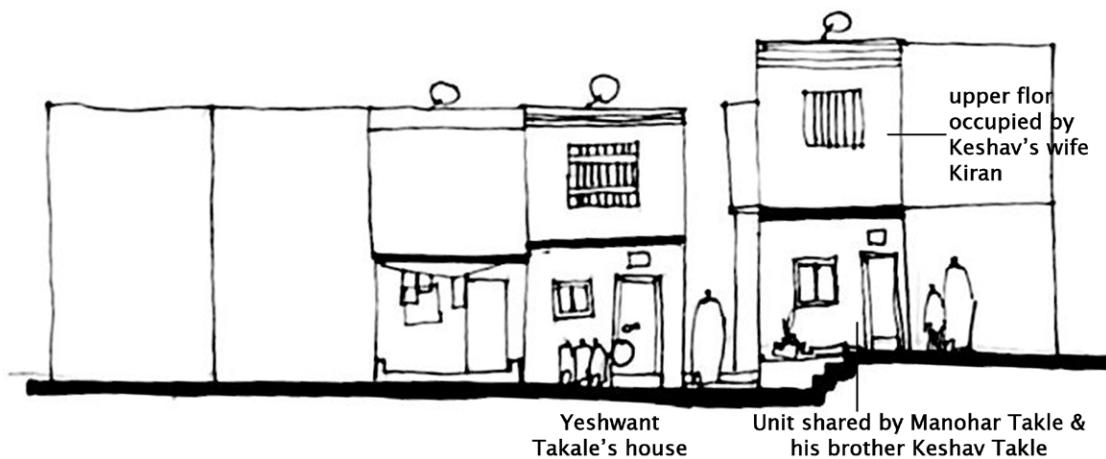
A street leading to Yeshwant's house with a construction site. A common sight in Bhandup.
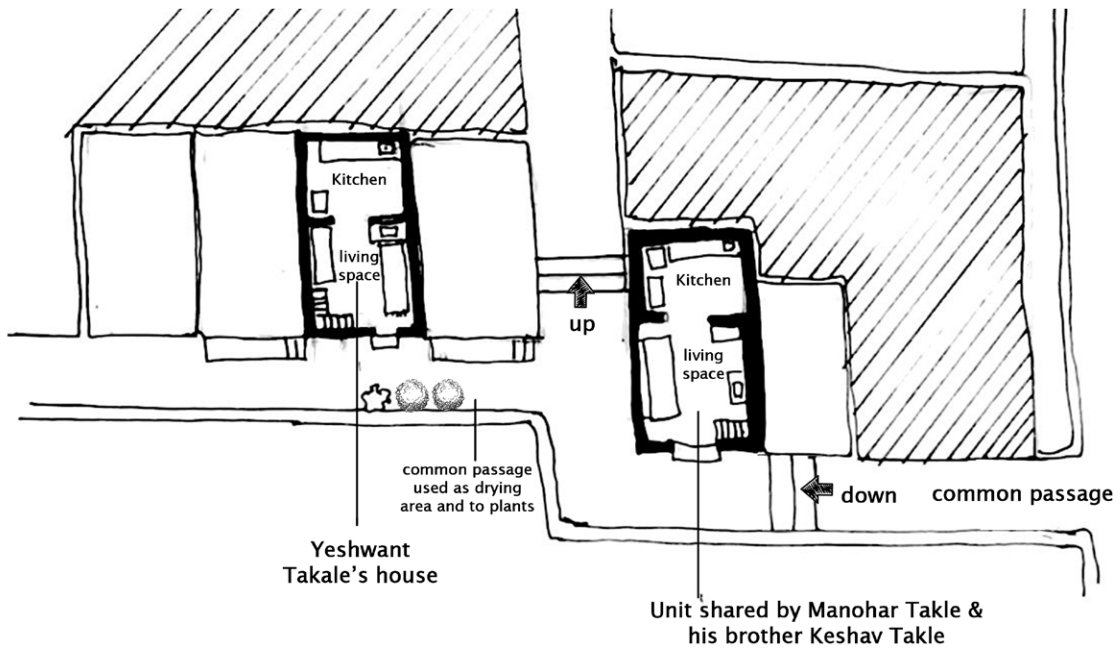
PLAN OF THE SETTLEMENT IN BHANDUP SHOWING YESHWANT TAKALE'S AND HIS UNCLE KESHAV TAKALE'S HOUSE

CROSS SECTION TROUGH YESHWANT TAKALE'S HOUSE IN BHANDUP

ELEVATION OF YESHWANT'S AND KESHAV'S HOUSES IN BHANDUP

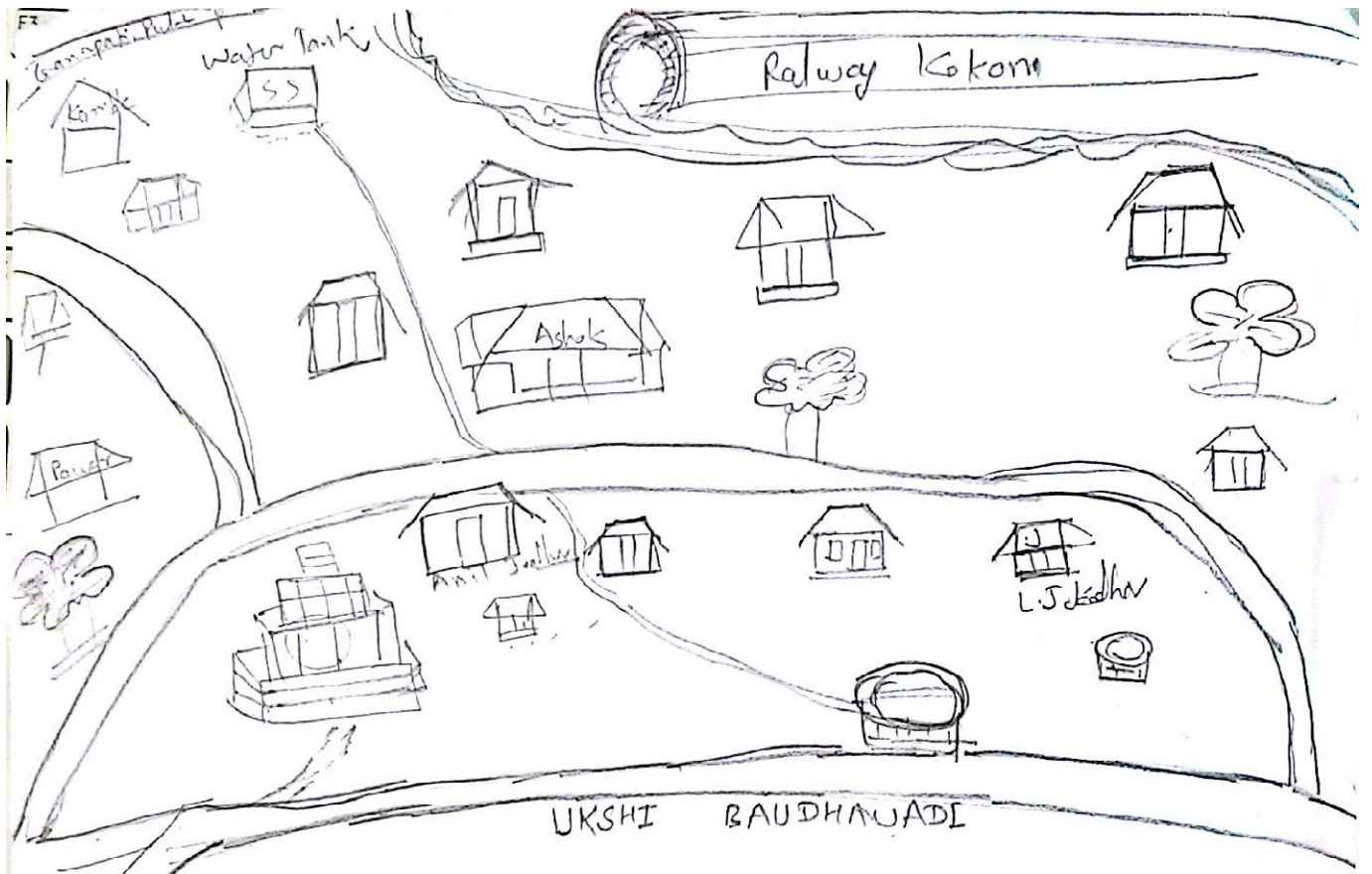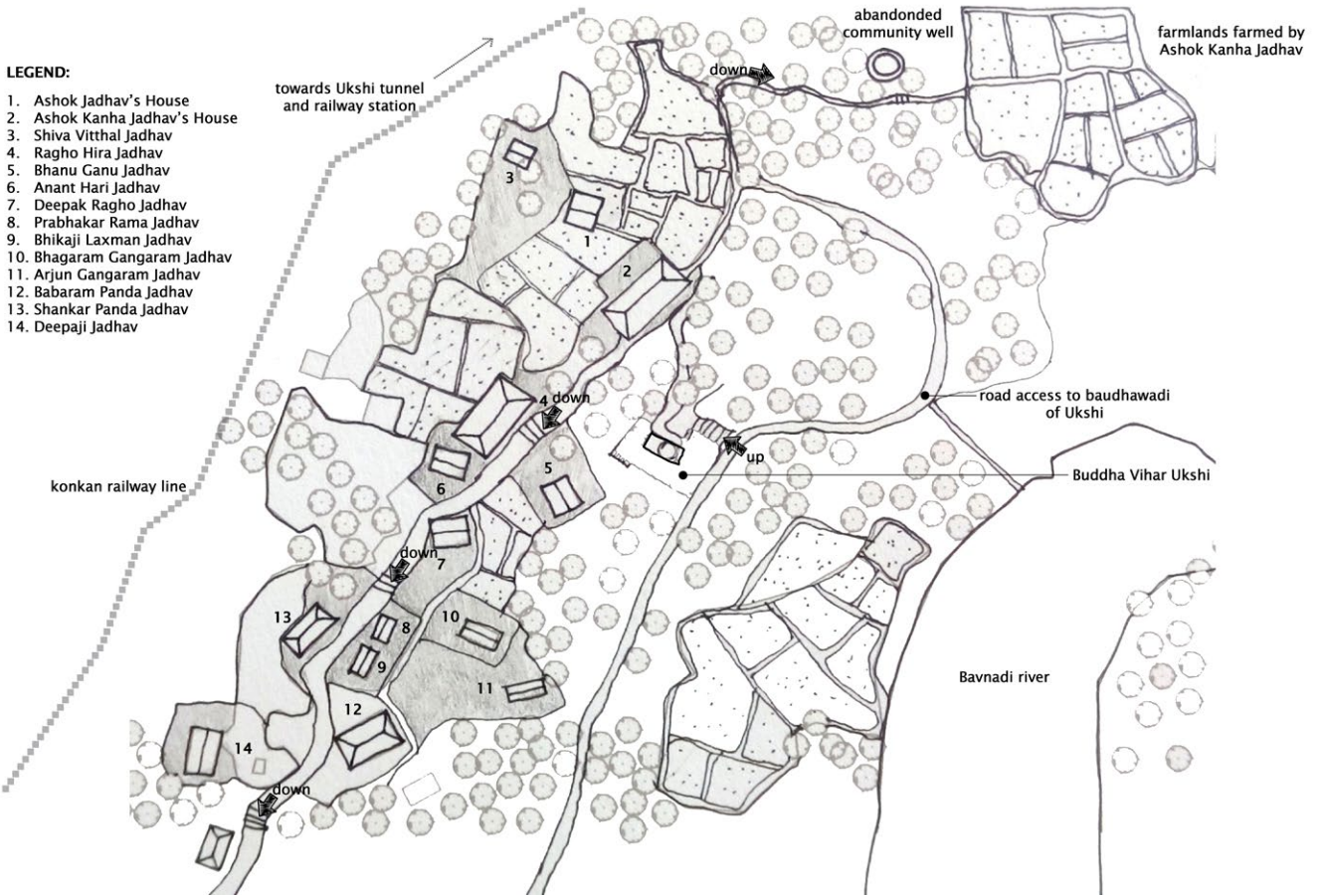*Plans, sections and elevations of the Takle houses in Bhandup.*

Top; Traditional house in front of a 'modern' house in the background, Ukshi. *Bottom*; Traditional houses in the field, Ukshi.

Top; Busy area outside of Ukshi train station. *Bottom*; Ukshi train station.

PLAN SHOWING SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF JADHAV FAMILY AT UKSHI

LEGEND:

1. Ashok Jadhav's House
2. Ashok Kanha Jadhav's House
3. Shiva Vitthal Jadhav
4. Ragho Hira Jadhav
5. Bhanu Ganu Jadhav
6. Anant Hari Jadhav
7. Deepak Ragho Jadhav
8. Prabhakar Rama Jadhav
9. Bhikaji Laxman Jadhav
10. Bhagaram Gangaram Jadhav
11. Arjun Gangaram Jadhav
12. Babaram Panda Jadhav
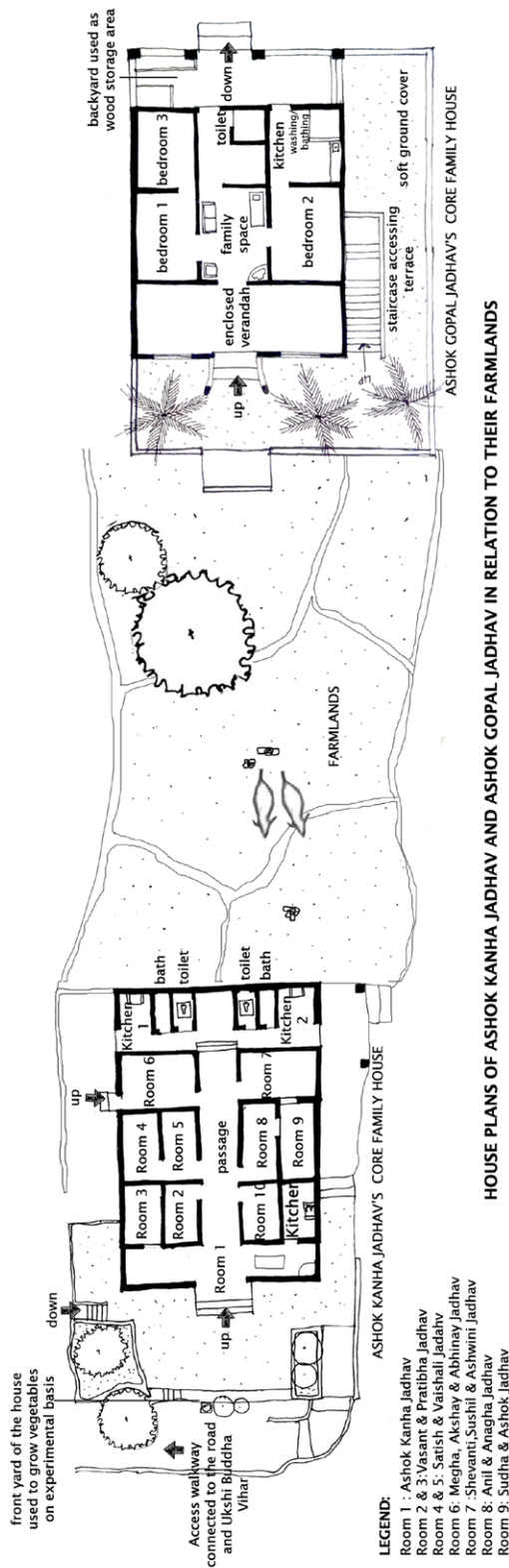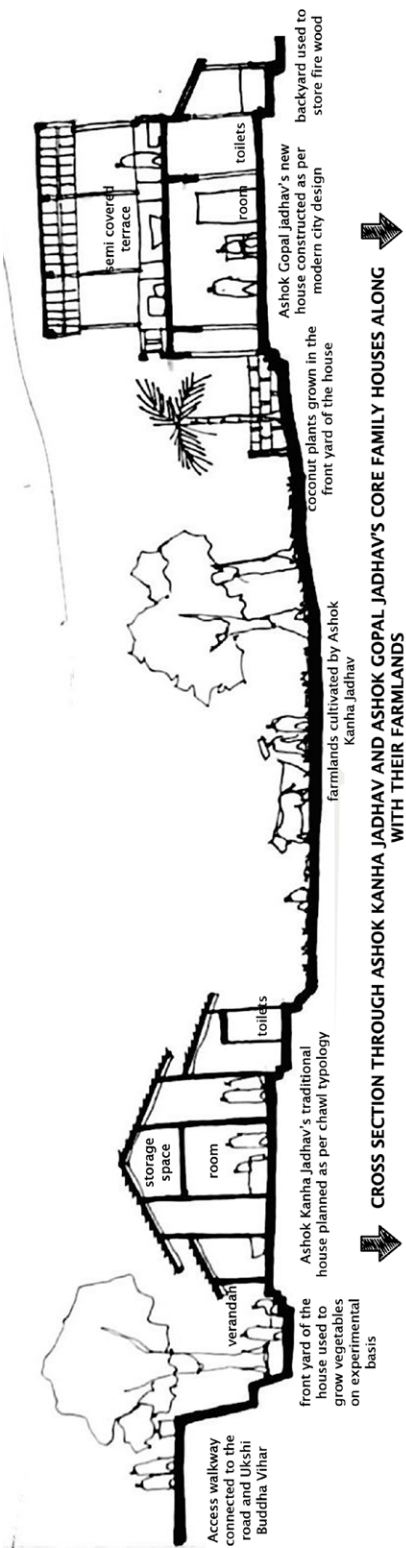13. Shankar Panda Jadhav
14. Deepaji Jadhav

Top; Map of Ukshi village, focusing on Buddhist/Dalit area where the Jadhav family live. *Bottom*; Map of Ukshi drawn by Anil Jadhav, brother of Ashok Kanha Jadhav.

Top; Ashok and his wife Ashwini Jadhav standing proudly front of their newly painted house. *Bottom*; Their house from the side before it had been painted.

Top; The house of Ashok Kanha Jadhav, which merges traditional construction techniques with living arrangements inspired by Mumbai's chawls. Each borther's family has a private room and kitchen. There is also a common area at the front. *Bottom*; Portraits of Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar, Shivaji, Jyotirao Phule who fought for gender equality and the abolition of caste, and Savitribai Phule – Jyotirao's wife, poet and social reformer.

ASHOK KANHA JADHAV'S traditional house planned as per chawl typology

Access walkway connected to the road and Ukshi Buddha Vihar

front yard of the house used to grow vegetables on experimental basis

verandah

storage space

room

toilets

farmlands cultivated by Ashok Kanha Jadhav

coconut plants grown in the front yard of the house

semi covered terrace

room

toilets

backyard used to store fire wood

Ashok Gopal Jadhav's new house constructed as per modern city design

CROSS SECTION THROUGH ASHOK KANHA JADHAV AND ASHOK GOPAL JADHAV'S CORE FAMILY HOUSES ALONG WITH THEIR FARMLANDS

front yard of the house used to grow vegetables on experimental basis

down

Access walkway connected to the road and Ukshi Buddha Vihar

up

Kitchen 3

Room 1

Room 2

Room 3

Room 4

Room 5

Room 6

up

Kitchen 1

bath

toilet

passage

Room 10

Room 9

Room 8

Room 7

toilet

bath

Kitchen 2

FARMLANDS

ASHOK KANHA JADHAV'S CORE FAMILY HOUSE

LEGEND:
Room 1 : Ashok Kanha Jadhav
Room 2 & 3: Vasant & Pratibha Jadhav
Room 4 & 5: Satish & Vaishali Jadahv
Room 6: Megha, Akshay & Abhinay Jadhav
Room 7 :Shevanti,Sushil & Ashwini Jadhav
Room 8: Anil & Anagha Jadhav
Room 9: Sudha & Ashok Jadhav

backyard used as wood storage area

down

toilet

bedroom 1

bedroom 3

family space

kitchen

washing/ bathing

up

enclosed verandah

bedroom 2

staircase accessing terrace

soft ground cover

ASHOK GOPAL JADHAV'S CORE FAMILY HOUSE

HOUSE PLANS OF ASHOK KANHA JADHAV AND ASHOK GOPAL JADHAV IN RELATION TO THEIR FARMLANDS

tin shed roof cover

precst balusters

RCC structural members

manglore tile roof covering

dish tv installed on the roof top

exposed laterite stone walls
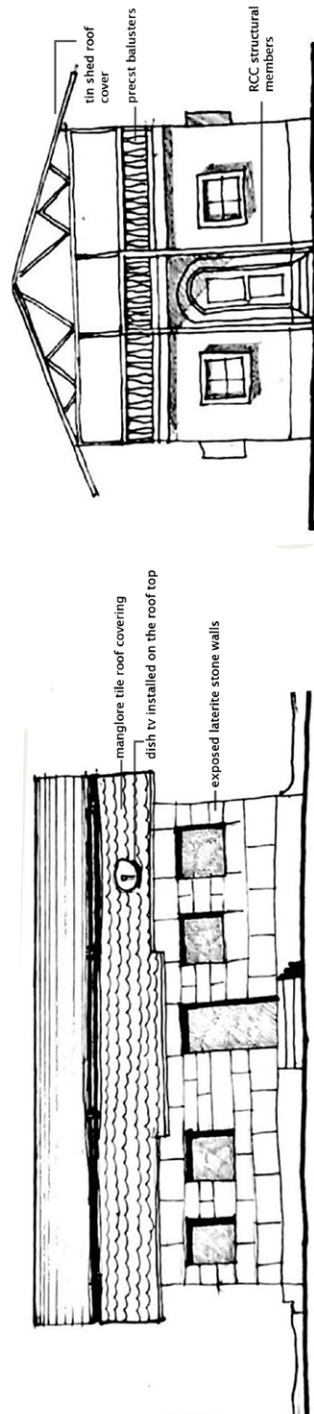
FRONT ELEVATIONS OF BOTH THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED HOUSES GIVING AN IMAGERY OF CITY AND VILLAGE IN THEIR LOOK AS PER THEIR INHABITANTS

Sections and plans comparing Ashok Kanha Jadhav's house and Ashok Gopal Jadhav's house. The most recent one has been built using traditional construction methods and materials by Ashok Kanha Jadhav.

Top; Amit Jadhav in the family home in the BDD chawl. *Bottom*; BDD chawl from the outside.
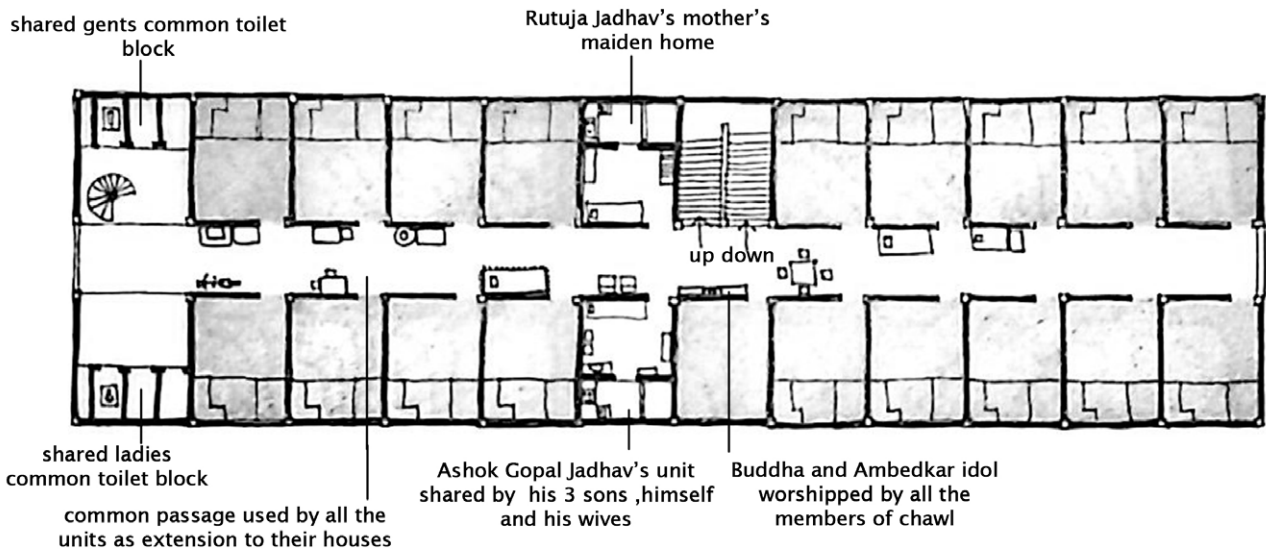
Ashok Jadhav's
Family house

common passage

stairway

Toilet block

Toilet block

Entry
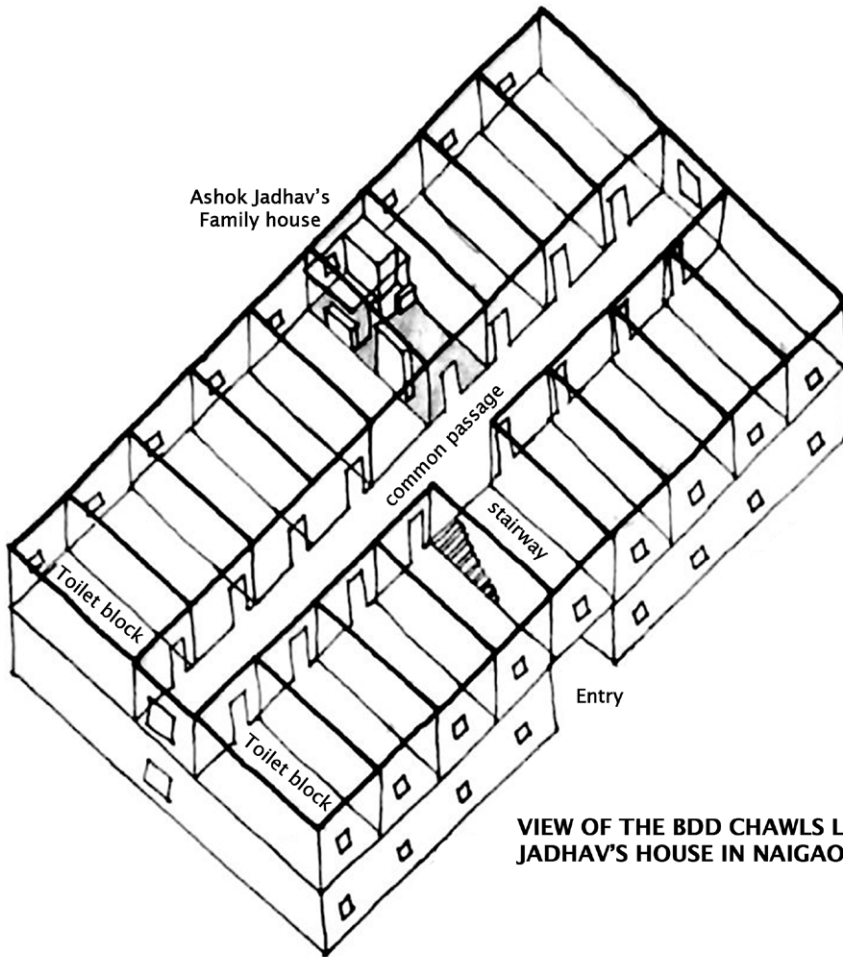
**VIEW OF THE BDD CHAWLS LOCATING ASHOK
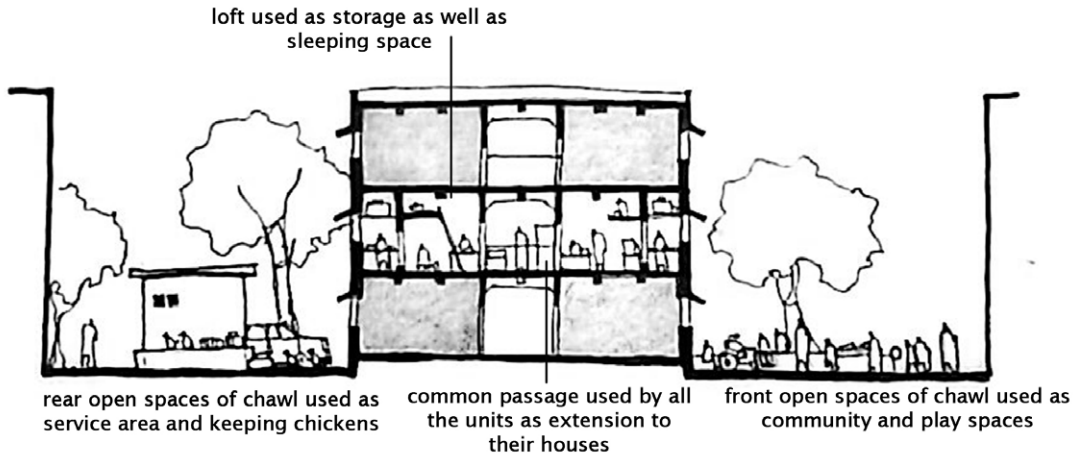JADHAV'S HOUSE IN NAIGAO MUMBAI**

**PLAN OF THE BDD CHAWLS AT NAIGAO LOCATING THE BUILD-
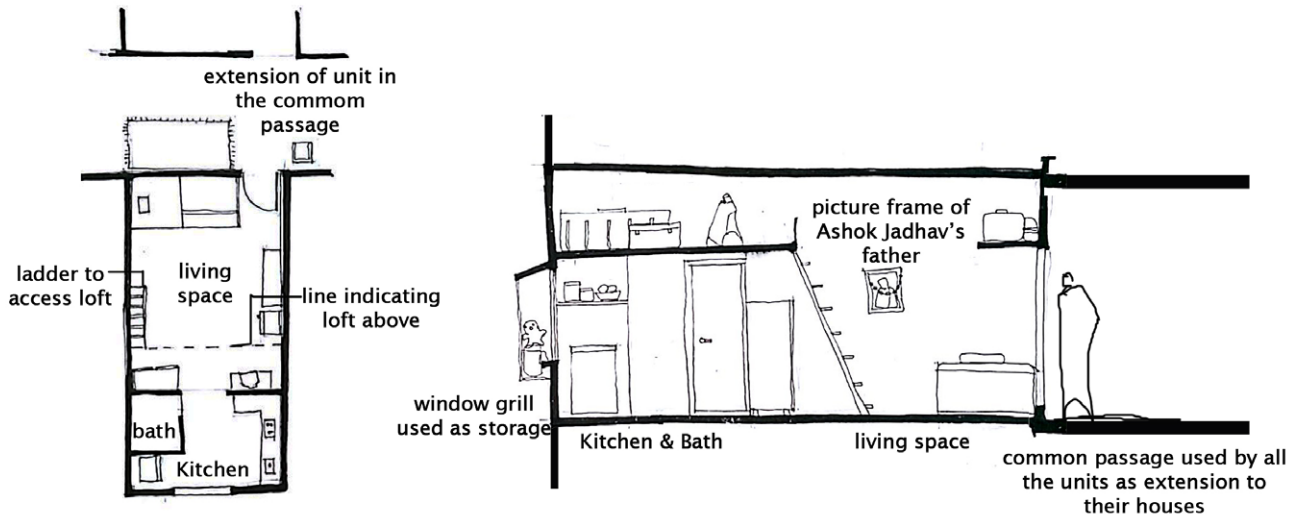ING IN WHICH ASHOK JADHAV'S FAMILY STAYS**

Drawing of BDD Chawl showing Ashok Gobal Jadhav's room, as well as the location of the building in the area.

shared gents common toilet block

Rutuja Jadhav's mother's maiden home

shared ladies common toilet block

common passage used by all the units as extension to their houses

Ashok Gopal Jadhav's unit shared by his 3 sons ,himself and his wives

Buddha and Ambedkar idol worshipped by all the members of chawl

up down

FLOOR PLAN OF BDD CHAWL NAIGAON SHOWING UNIT BELONGING TO ASHOK GOPAL JADHAV AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW's UNIT RIGHT OPPOSITE

loft used as storage as well as sleeping space

rear open spaces of chawl used as service area and keeping chickens

common passage used by all the units as extension to their houses

front open spaces of chawl used as community and play spaces

SECTION THROUGH THE BDD CHAWL SHOWING JADHAV'S UNIT ON THE FIRST FLOOR

extension of unit in the commom passage

ladder to access loft

living space

line indicating loft above

bath

Kitchen

window grill used as storage

picture frame of Ashok Jadhav's father

Kitchen & Bath

living space

common passage used by all the units as extension to their houses

**DETAIL PLAN & SECTION THROUGH JADHAV'S UNIT ON THE FIRST FLOOR**

Top; The plan of the floor where Ashok Gopal Jadhav, his son Amit and his granddaughter Rutuja live with other relatives. It is located right in front of Rutuja's mother's family. *Bottom*; The section and plan show how the 13.5 square metre room is organised.

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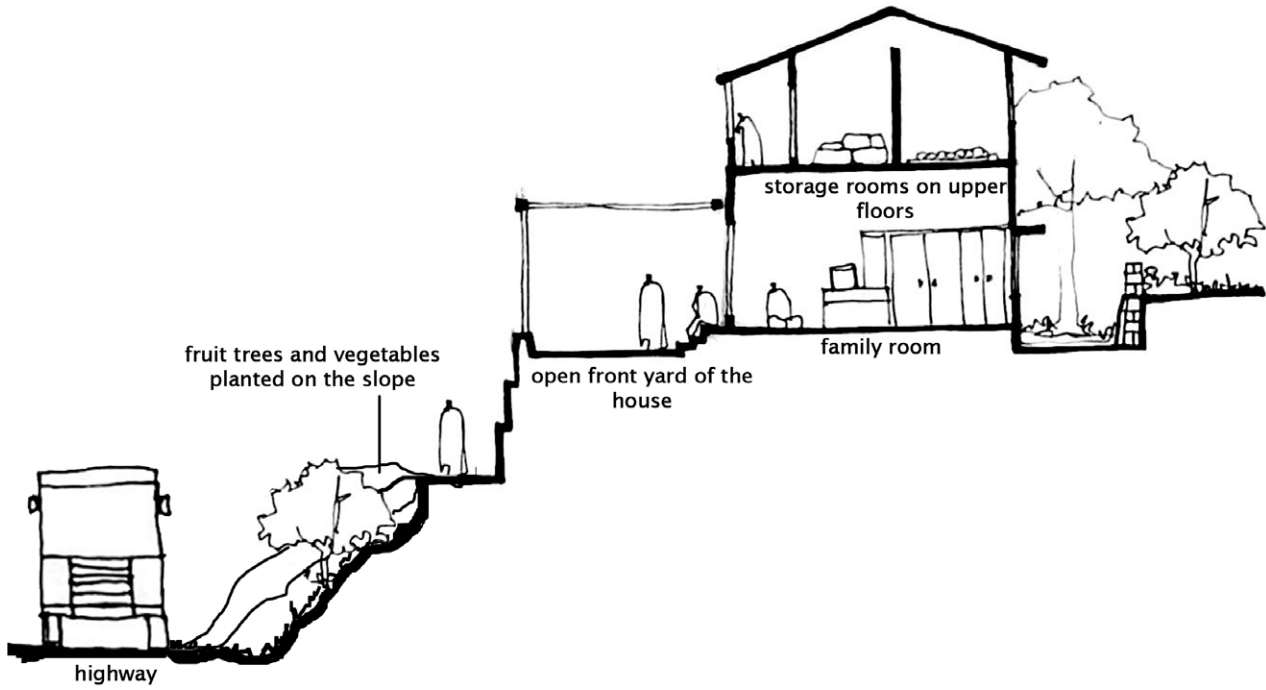
SECTION THROUGH CORE FAMILY HOUSE OF KULE AT KONDHE
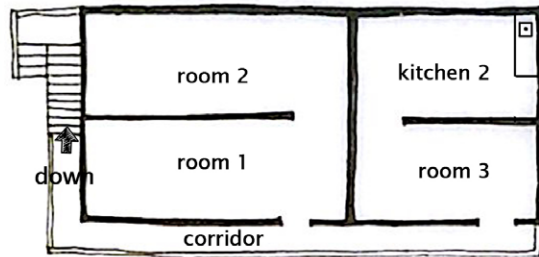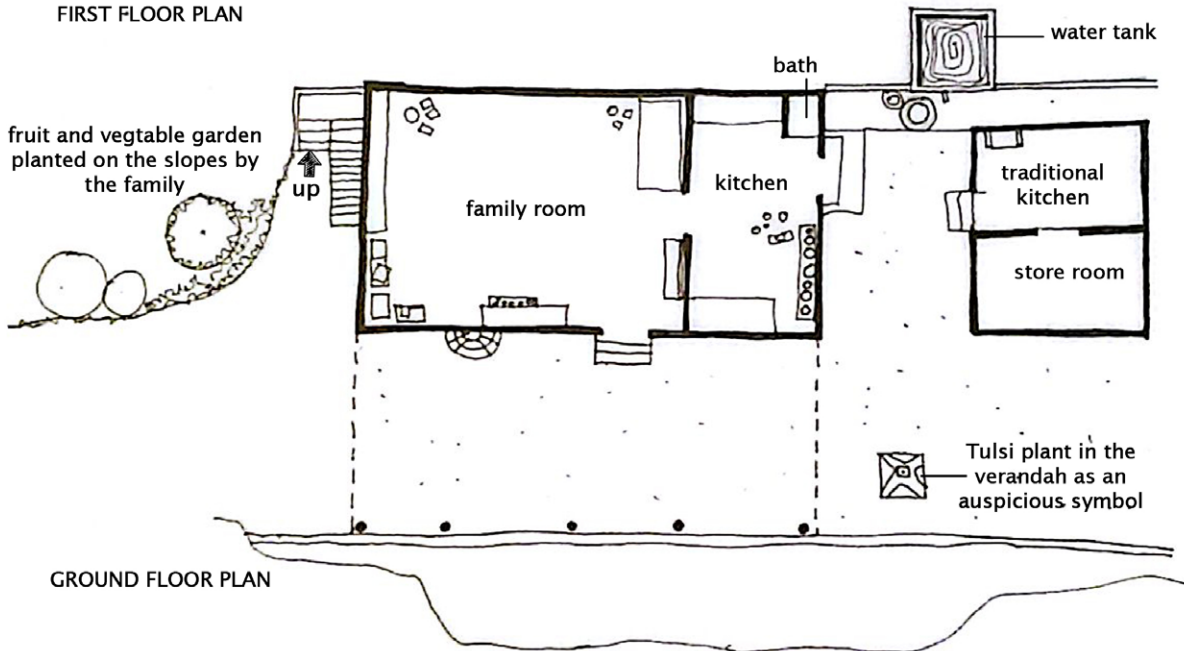
PLAN SHOWING CORE FAMILY HOUSE OF KULE AT KONDHE PHATA

Section and plan of Parshuram's house in Khonde village.

Top; The Mohite family home has two kitchens. The modern one is inside the house, the ther traiditonal one is inside th structure pictured. *Bottom*; The Kule house in Kondhe is a two storey brick and concrete structure.

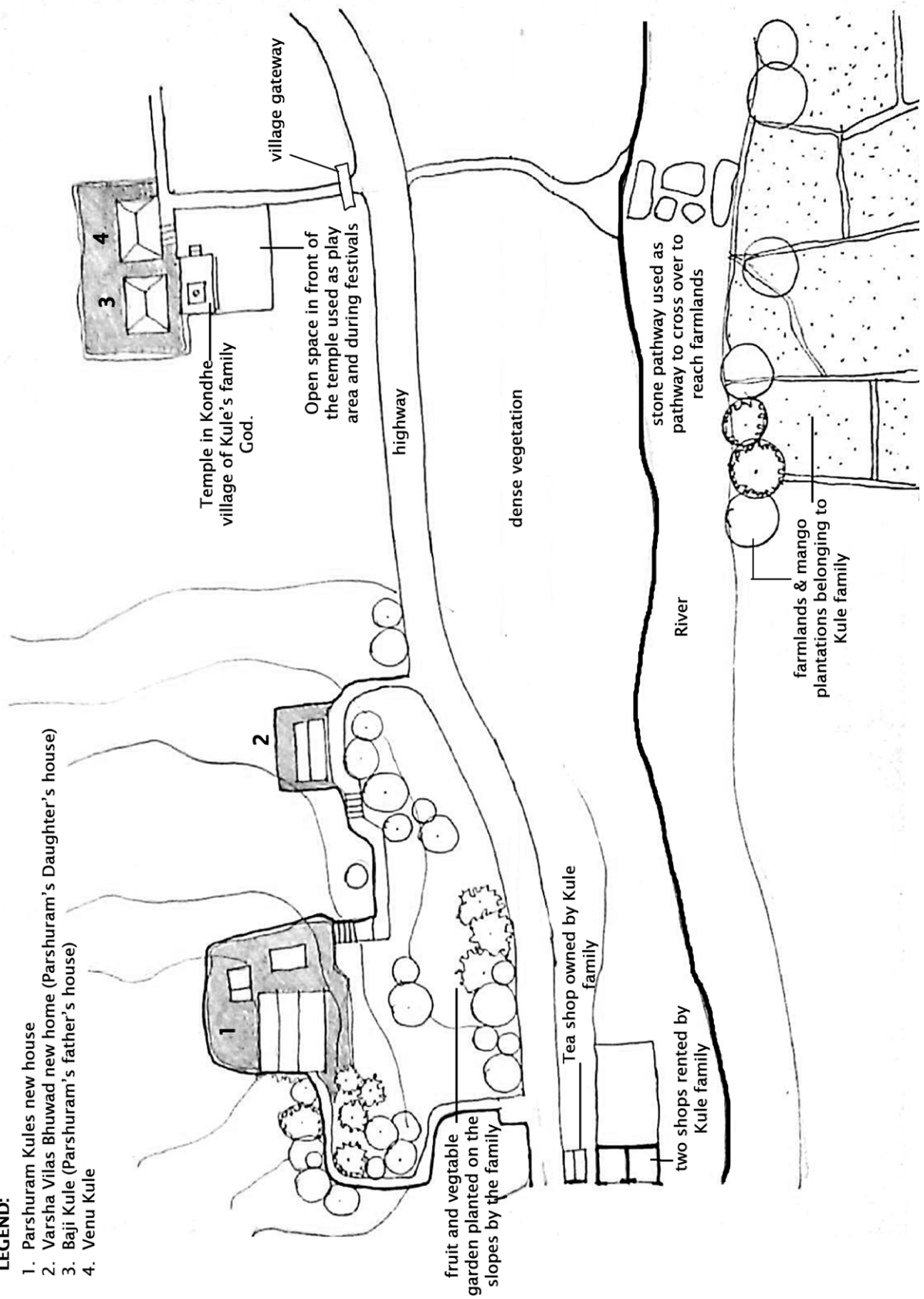*Inside the modern kitchen of the Mohite family home.*

Top; The living room of Parshuram's Kondhe house. *Bottom*; A frame photo of Parshuram's granddaughter Darshana and her husband Sameer Rane.

PLAN SHOWING SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF KULE FAMILY AT KONDHE PHATA

LEGEND:

1. Parshuram Kules new house
2. Varsha Vilas Bhuwad new home (Parshuram's Daughter's house)
3. Baji Kule (Parshuram's father's house)
4. Venu Kule

village gateway

Temple in Kondhe village of Kule's family God.

Open space in front of the temple used as play area and during festivals

highway

dense vegetation

stone pathway used as pathway to cross over to reach farmlands

River

farmlands & mango plantations belonging to Kule family

Tea shop owned by Kule family

two shops rented by Kule family

fruit and vegtable garden planted on the slopes by the family

Map of settlement pattern of Kule family at Kondhe showing Parshuram's house, his daughter's house, the family shops along the road, the ancestral village and temple and parts of their farmland.

A sign advertising a new housing complex near Kondhe with the slogan "It's not a village in the city but a city in the village!"

Parshuram in front of a new building in Kondhe, where he owns a shop. It is three minutes away from his home.

Top; Parshuram in front of his shop. *Bottom*; Parshuram's son in the yellow shirt runs a stand near abusy intersection in Kondhe. He was born in Mumbai and moved back to the village with no intention of retunring.
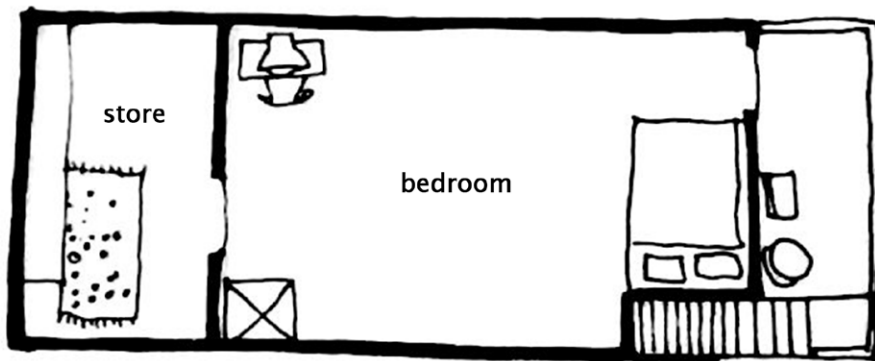
Top; A woman working on Parshuram's field at his home in Kondhe. *Bottom*; Parshuram's property is close to a busy road, which leads to Chiplun, one of the major towns on the Konkan coast.
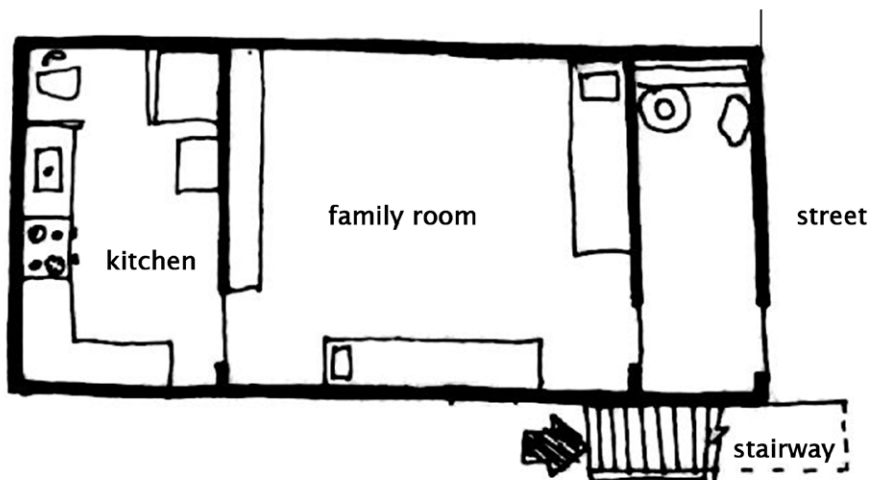
Top; View of Bhandup, Mumbai, where the Kule's have a house. *Bottom*; The house from the outside.
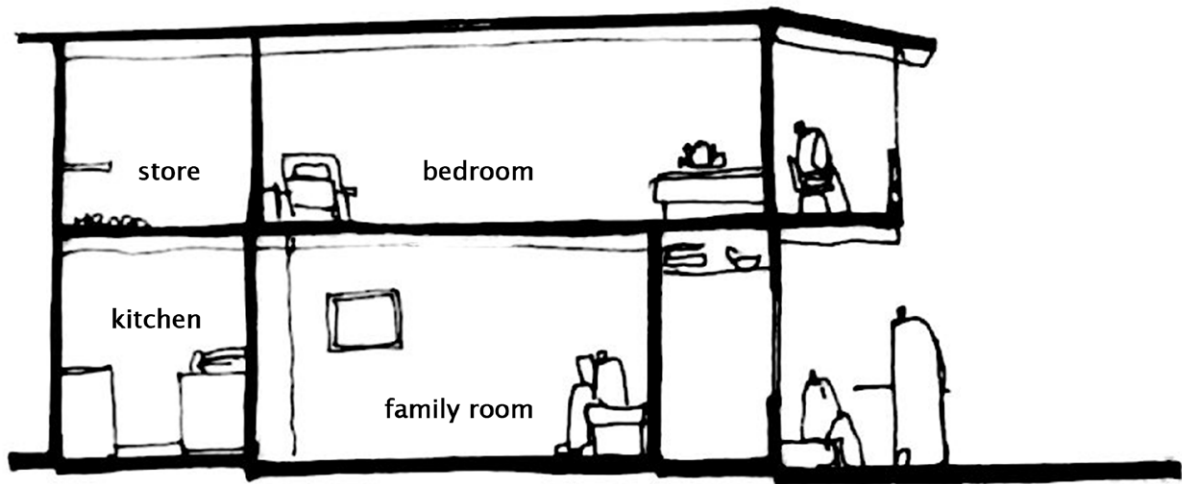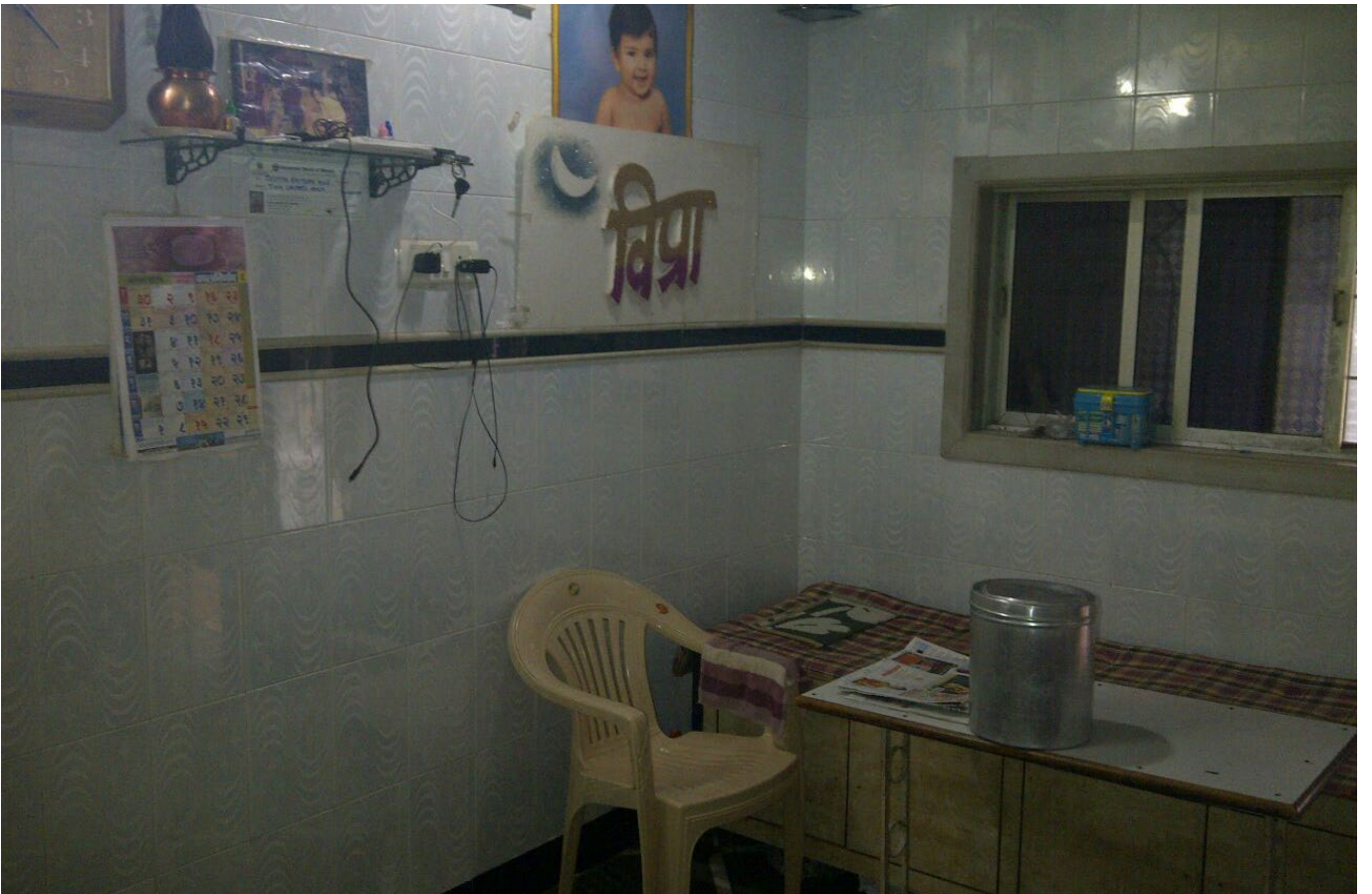
SECTION

UPPER FLOOR PLAN OF PARSHURAM KULE'S HOUSE AT BHANDUP

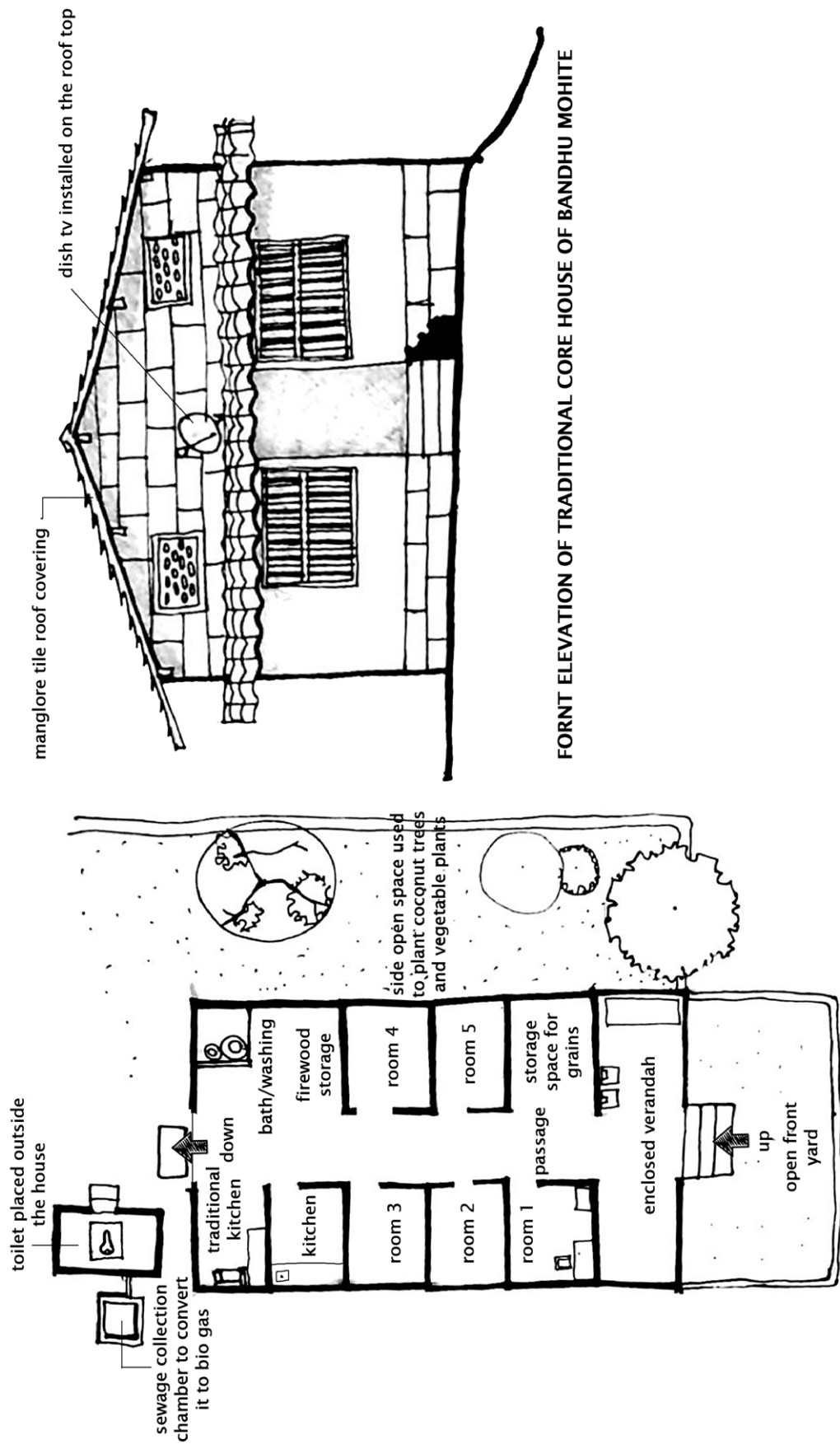**GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF PARSHURAM KULE'S HOUSE AT BHANDUP**

Floor plan of the Kule house. The house is 36 square metres and has two floors.

Images of the interior of the Kule house in Bhandup.

Images of Kotluk village. The village is home to followers of Dr. Ambedkar.

FORNT ELEVATION OF TRADITIONAL CORE HOUSE OF BANDHU MOHITE

dish tv installed on the roof top

manglore tile roof covering

side open space used to plant cocqnut trees and vegetable plants

toilet placed outside the house

sewage collection chamber to convert it to bio gas

traditional kitchen

bath/washing

firewood storage

room 4

room 5

storage space for grains

kitchen

room 3

room 2

room 1

passage
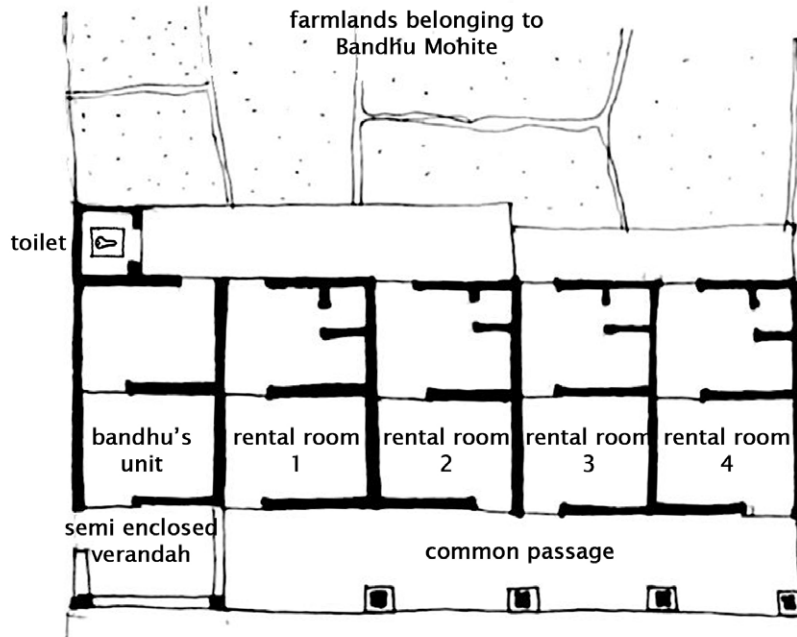
down

up

enclosed verandah

open front yard

PLAN SHOWING TRADITIONAL CORE FAMILY HOUSE OF BANDHU MOHITE IN KOTLUK

Floor plan and elevation of the Mohite's ancestral house, where no one resides permanently at the moment.
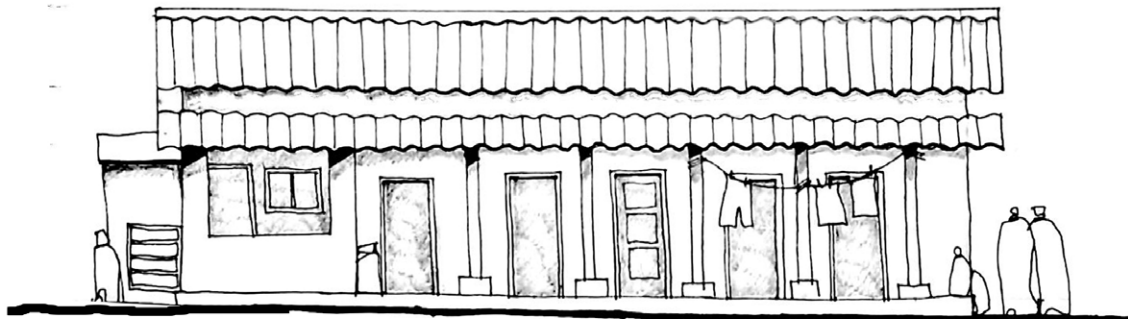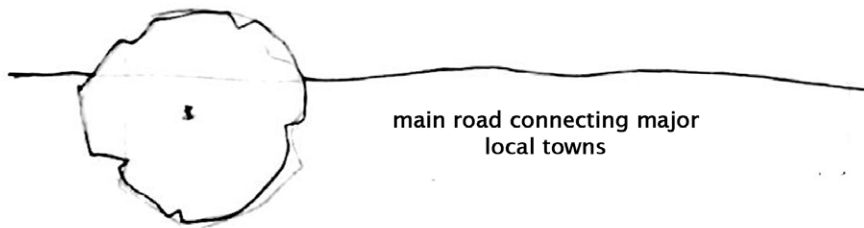
Top; A 'modern' house built by a family residing in Mumbai on their ancestral land in Kondhe. *Bottom*; Bandhu shows a system promoted a couple of decades back by the government to produce biogas for cooking with cow dung.
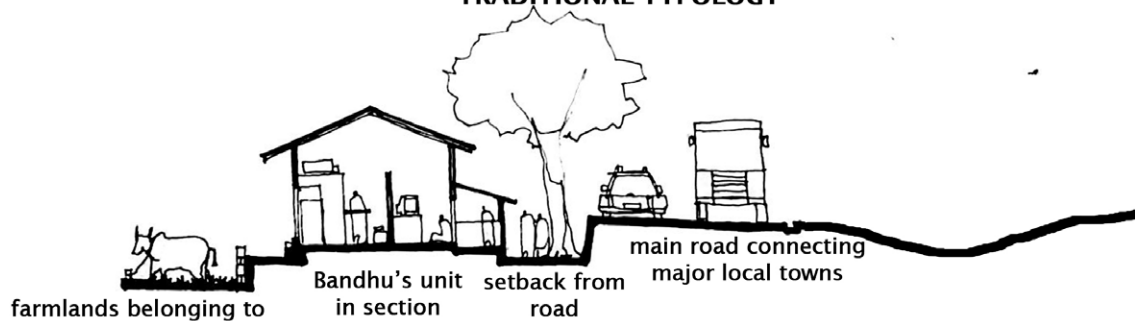
PLAN SHOWING NEW HOUSE BUILT BY BANDHU MOHITE AS RENTAL TYPOLOGY IN KOTLUK

farmlands belonging to Bandhu Mohite

toilet

bandhu's unit

rental room 1

rental room 2

rental room 3

rental room 4

semi enclosed verandah

common passage

front set back from the road

main road connecting major local towns

FRONT ELEVATION OF NEW HOUSE TYPOLOGY SHOWING BLEND OF MODERN AND TRADITIONAL TYPOLOGY

farmlands belonging to Bandhu Mohite

Bandhu's unit in section

setback from road

main road connecting major local towns

SECTION THROUGH THE HOUSING UNIT AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

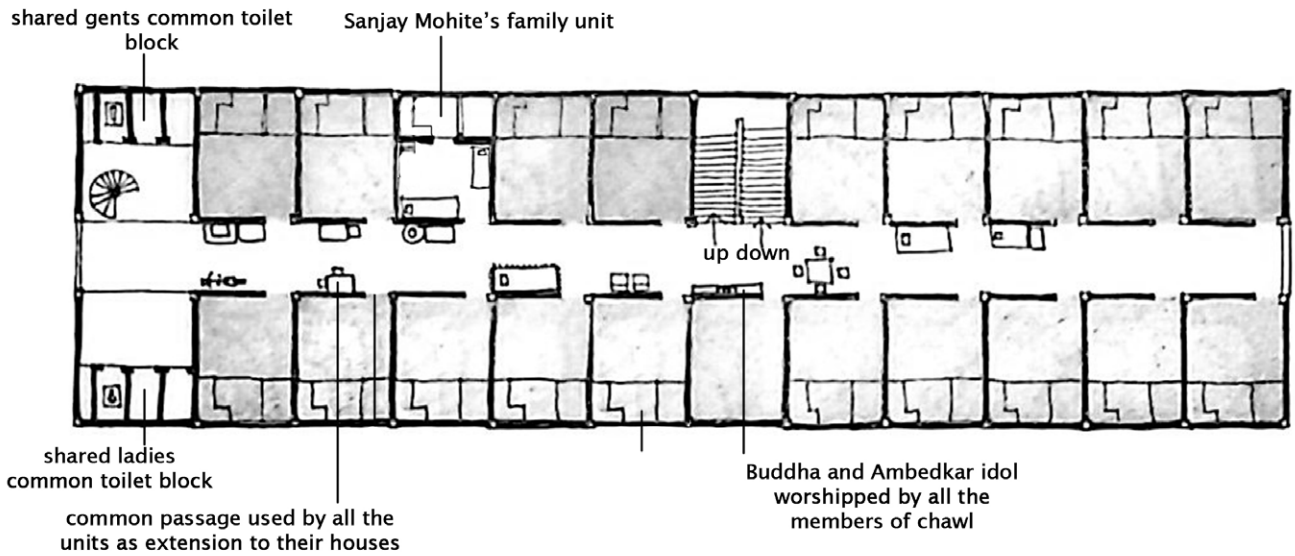*Plans, elevations and sections of Bandhu chawl in Kotlik.*

Top; A chawl-like structure in Kondhe with rooms for rent that can be used either as shops or residences. Bhandu Mohite is the owner of the structure that he developed on his family's land. He prefers to live in one of the rooms in the structure rather than his ancestral home, which is much bigger. *Bottom*; A close up view of the front of the chawl-like structure.

PLAN SHOWING SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF MOHITE FAMILY AT KOTLUK
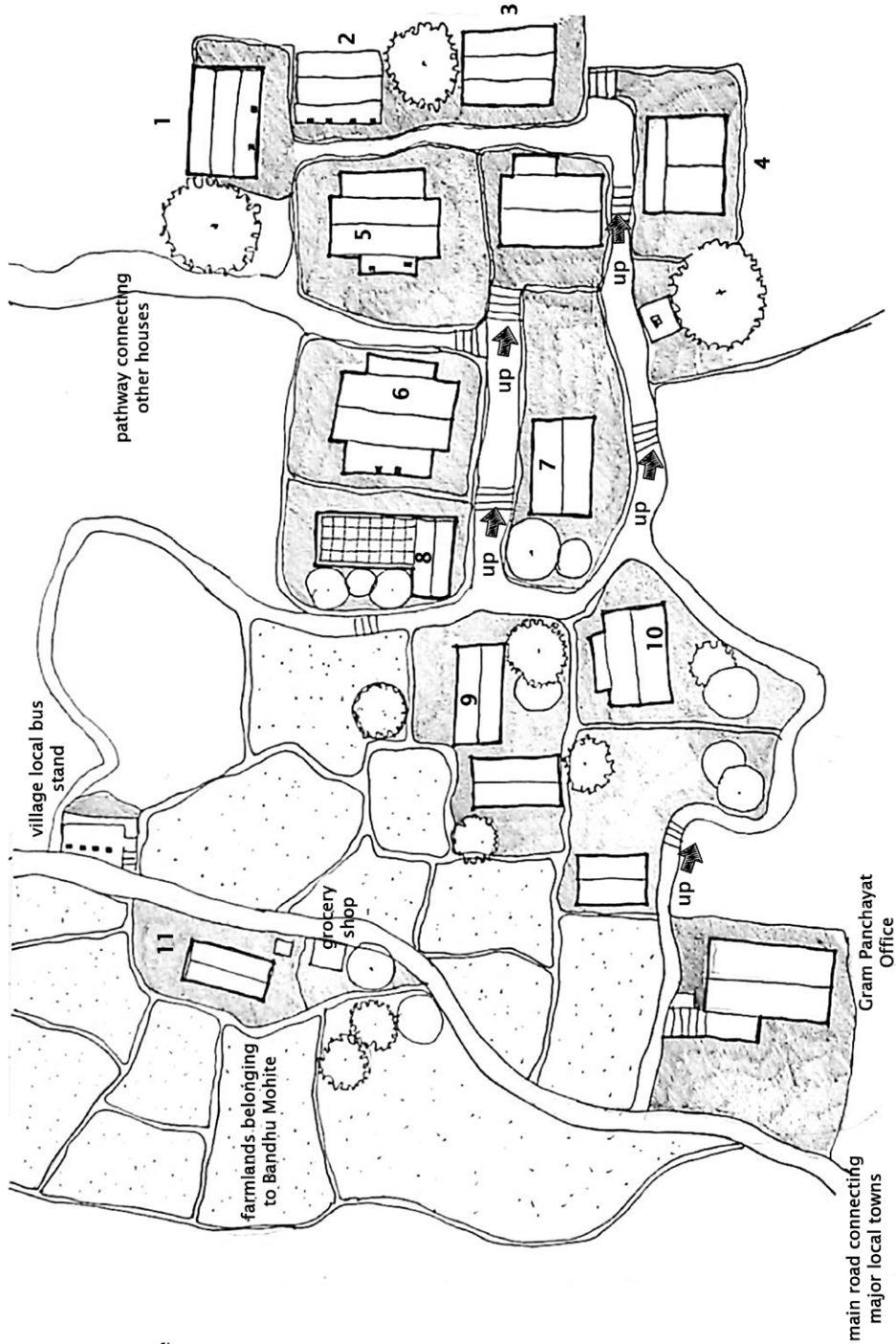
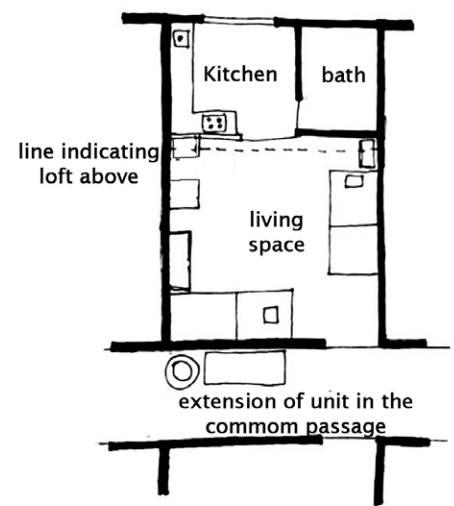**LEGEND:**
1. Sanjay Mohite
2. Shankar Kalya Mohite
3. Kau Kalya Mohite
4. Bandhu Mohite's old Family house
5. Barkya Bhaguram Mohite
6. Sitaram Baguram Mohite
7. Gangaram Sanjay Mohite
8. Ratnu Ganu Mohite
9. Shiva Guna Mohite
10. Bhikaji Sanjay Mohite
11. Banhu Mohite new house

Map showing the physical organisation of Kotluk village.

shared gents common toilet block

Sanjay Mohite's family unit

shared ladies common toilet block

common passage used by all the units as extension to their houses

Buddha and Ambedkar idol worshipped by all the members of chawl

up down

FLOOR PLAN OF BDD CHAWL NAIGAON SHOWING UNIT BELONGING TO ASHOK GOPAL JADHAV AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW's UNIT RIGHT OPPOSITE

Kitchen

bath

line indicating loft above

living space

extension of unit in the commom passage

**DETAIL PLAN OF MOHITE'S UNIT ON THE FIRST FLOOR**

Detailed plan of the Mohite room at BDD Chawl which is 13.5 square metres. Also floor plan showing spatial organization of BDD chawl as well as Sanjay and Siddhi Mohite's room.

One of the 42 buildings at BDD chawl. Some of the residents have created more space for themselves by extending their home using steel beams.

Top; The Avadhoot Baba Temple in Kandoshi, Ratnagiri. *Bottom*; The cave with the Shiva linga where Avadhoot Baba who travel several times a year attend religious ceremonies such as Datta Jayanti.
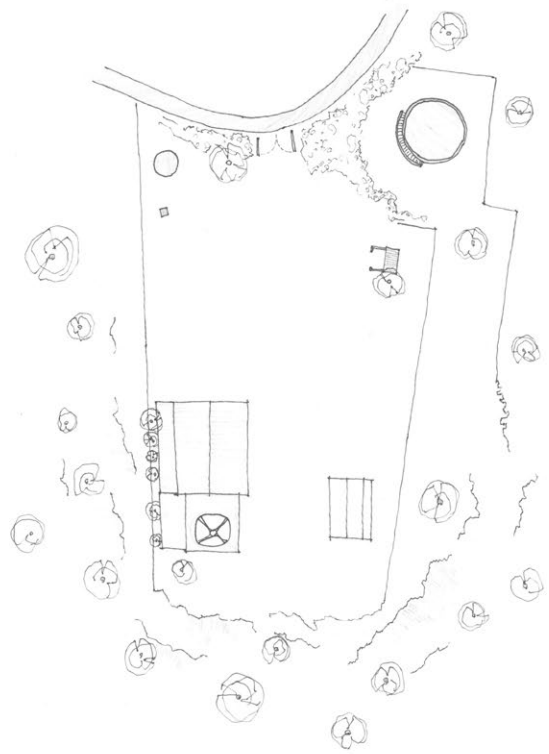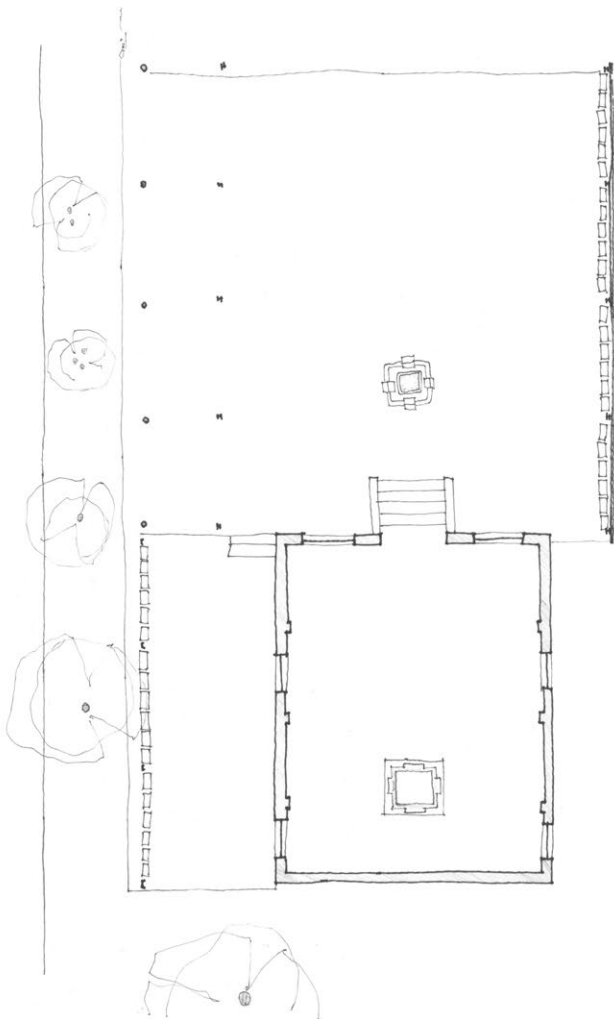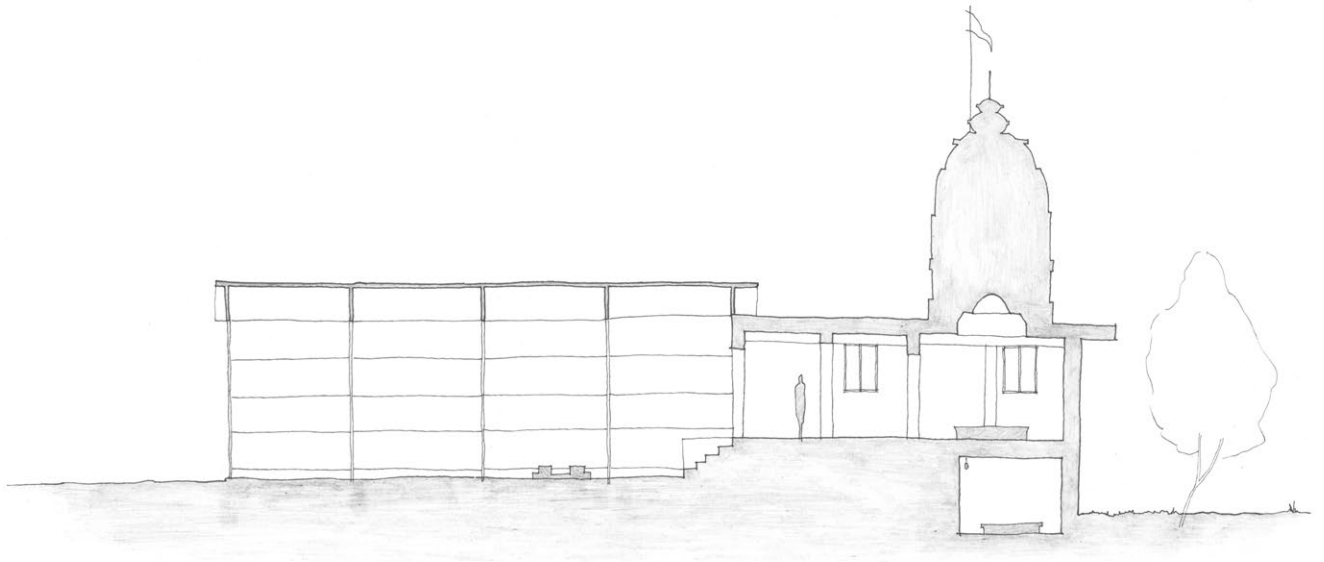
Elevation and plan of the temple at Kandoshi, drawn by UMEA students during a workshop organized by urbz in September 2014.
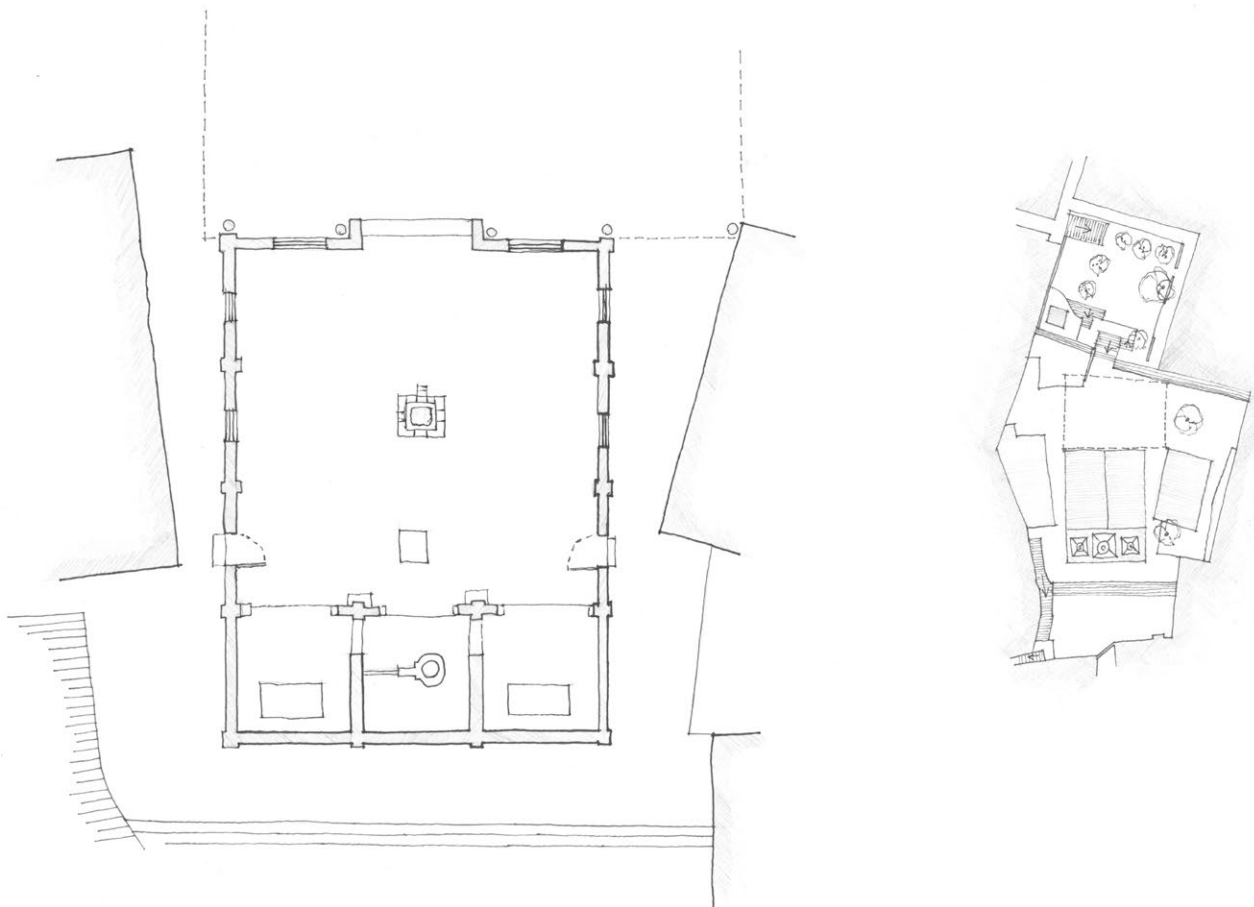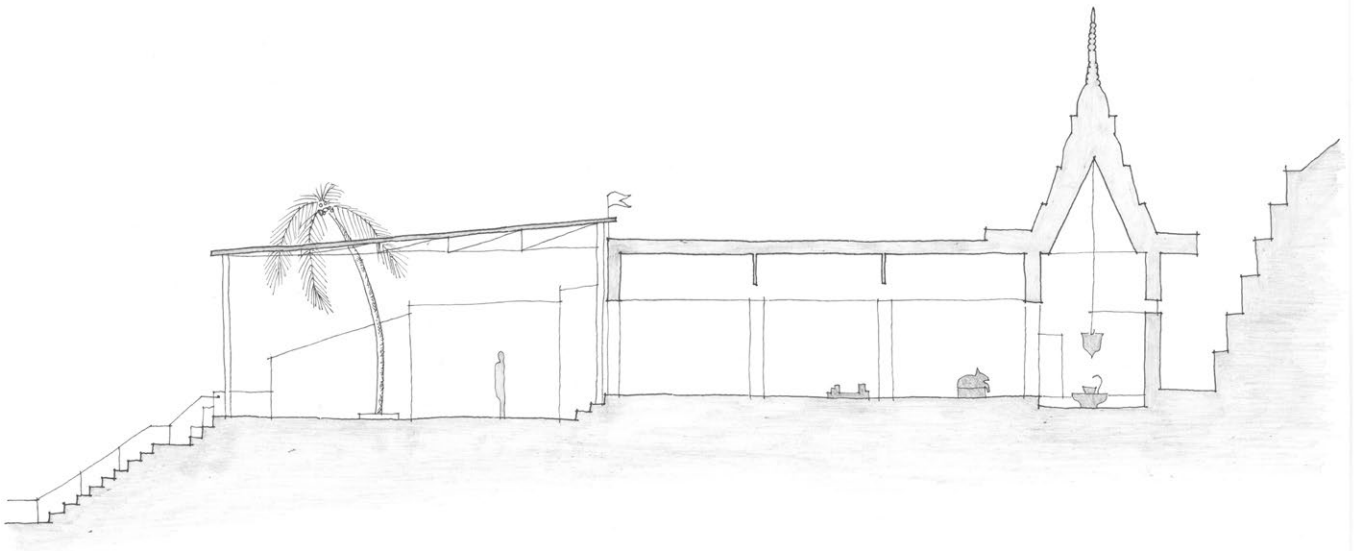
Bhaldar Chobdar at Kandoshi temple.

Top; Tai and the priest are standing in front of the Avadhoot Baba temple in Bhamdup. *Bottom*; Devotees attending ceremony at the temple in Bhandup.

Elevation and plan of temple in Bhandup.

Chapter 7: Analysis

7. 1 Key Observations

The four families we followed all had life plans that expanded over a rural-urban spatial field, as well as an intergenerational temporal field. The youngest generations in the four families were all projecting to find a partner who belonged to the same community as them. This was important to preserve the relationship with their families.

Their parents, who were either born in their ancestral villages or in the city, all invested in their ancestral land, consolidating or rebuilding their houses. Some of them purchased additional land in the village, where they could build a new house that corresponded to their aspiration. When making these choices, they always had their families in mind. No one in any of the families we followed pursued a purely individualistic project. Moving to the city meant getting closer to opportunities that would increase the welfare of their family, rather than the fulfilment of individualistic pursuits. Moving back to the village meant helping their parents or letting their children grow in a better environment.

The families' investment in their ancestral villages contributed greatly to the overall development of the villages. Many villages shifted from building houses in mud, hay and bamboo to building in bricks and concrete. With the rise of ecological consciousness, we also observed that some people were going back to traditional materials, while innovating on the design. Homeowners also made efforts to provide running water to their houses. The development of water infrastructure is typically an effort that extends beyond single families, and involves several houses that live nearby, which contribute either financially or in the form of labour for maintenance.

Of the families we interviewed in four villages all of them had some members living in the city. They also all aspired to have solid houses with modern comfort. It was very clear that choices made by some families influenced other families in the vil-

lages. Sometimes, this influence was not a simple straightforward drive to copy. For instance, we see very different choices made by the two Ashok Jadhav's from Ukshi. Ashok G. Jadhav was extremely proud to be the first one to build a concrete house in his village. The construction of this house was an epic adventure that involved bringing material from outside and finding ways of lifting it up all the way to his plot.

His neighbour, Ashok K. Jadhav was not impressed with the concrete house. He had also been exposed to urban life, during his stint in Ratnagiri city as a bus driver. All of his brothers also lived in cities. When they put their money together to build a house where they would each have a room for their families, they chose a design that was clearly inspired by the urban chawl typology. However, he was very clear that he would use the local laterite stone instead of concrete or brick, which he found to be much better in the hot and humid Konkan climate.

There is no uniform way in which villages such as Ukshi transform. The choices made by each families about how to rebuild their houses, and the fact that not all families have the same access to city money, means that villages such as those we surveyed are probably much less architecturally homogenous than they once were. They have become sites where new forms of vernacular architecture emerge, totally driven by the users. Outside of the Dalit enclave in Ukshi, there is a large Muslim quarter. There the level of development of the houses and infrastructure is at the next level. Not only are aesthetic choices following different influences, but the level of investment is something else altogether. This is because many of the Muslim families in Ukshi (and all over the Konkan) have members working in the United Emirates. The remittance they send are much higher than those sent by families with members in Mumbai. Their exposure to cities such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi is also clearly visible in their design choices. Houses are often much larger, colourful and grandiose. A large share of the Muslim families' remittance is also invested in community projects, such as schools and mosques.

The strong connection between Ukshi's Dalit community and Mumbai was not only visible in the form of houses' design and material. The beautiful-

ly built and very well maintained Buddha temple sitting at the entrance of the village shows the impressive ability of the community to come together for projects relating to identity, education and infrastructure. Temples in Dalit communities are without any doubt political symbols as much as religious spaces. They are physical testimony to the Dalit struggle to emancipate themselves from caste oppression. They are also a testimony of the impact of political events that took place in Mumbai from the 1920s to the 1950s on the identity of villages hundreds of kilometres away, even decades later. This is not the kind of influence that a government scheme for rural development could ever have. It was grassroots and community driven efforts to create a new identity and future for an entire caste. This emancipatory path is also visible today in Ukshi in the hard work and pride the community puts in the education of its children. Dalit groups from Ukshi meet every fortnight in Mumbai's Five Gardens – a public park in Wadala – to discuss the village affairs, including the maintenance of the temple, investment in water systems and financial support for children from the village to go and study in the city.

The early twentieth century wave of Dalit migrants has for long been absorbed into chawls and consolidated urban villages. The communities to which the Jadhav and the Mohite belong are, fully urban at first sight. In Mumbai, they live in the kind of architectural typologies that one would quintessentially associate with the twentieth century city: housing blocks for industrial workers. Culturally and politically also, the Dalit families that we followed seemed to be deeply urban, having adoted Dr. Ambedkar's doctrines, which endorsed modern lifestyle, education, dress code and a form of Buddhist secularism. It is all the more impressive to observe how much these urban populations have maintained their rural roots. For them just as much as other communities, the village represents a 'Heimat' that is much more than mere nostalgia[38]. It is also an active place, where one projects a future – as long as this future is urban, meaning, that it doesn't involve subsidence farming, lack of access to education for instance, poverty or discomfort.

The story is different for migrants who had to make a place for themselves in the late twentieth century, in the periphery of greater Mumbai. They settled in places like Bhandup, where different castes co-exists. Mumbai's urban and economic landscape had shifted to a post-colonial, post-industrial one. Factory jobs and the relative stability and access to housing they guaranteed were no longer available. Instead, newcomers had to build their own homes in the far out periphery and created their own livelihoods or worked as day-labour for some small entrepreneur.

This resulted in an explosion of slum population in the city. In the process of settling in the city and finding a job, community and village networks were absolutely vital. To the point that it is rare to find anyone from a farming background in Mumbai who has not come via these networks. People go where these networks already exist, relying on them as launching pads to their new life. Neighbourhoods such a Bhandup, which really emerged from the 1980s onwards, were at the time just fields with farms and villages. Newcomers who could afford it bought small plots of agricultural land, which they converted into basic settlements, using construction techniques they brought from their native villages, and mixing them with constructions materials available in the city – steel, bricks, cement. Because they had so little available income, they bought tiny plots incrementally building houses for themselves with rental units that would accommodate other newcomers. They fought against the nature – monsoon for instance, but also the topography or the terrain.

The Takle and the Kule families and the temple community had no choice but to build on the slope of a hill. They also fought with local mafias, which up to this day extorts money from residents and business owners in Bhandup. They sought protection from strong, nationalist parties such as the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and Shiv Sena that worked as political gangs, often working like the mafia, and defended the rights of Maharashtrians over those of communities from different states. Gradually, Bhandup was retrofitted with water infrastructure and electricity. But for a long time, residents had to rely exclusively on wells and water streams. Today it is a pleasant urban neighbourhood,

38   Heimat (pronounced [ˈhaɪmat]) is a German word that denotes the relationship of a human being toward a certain spatial social unit. The term forms a contrast to social alienation and usually carries positive connotations. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat)

with a strong sense of identity. But its small clusters of homes built around wells, its tight-knit and ethnically homogeneous community, its temples and the social organization revolving around them are all reminiscent of the rural landscape from which its residents have come.

In a way, what happened in the periphery of Mumbai post-independence, could be referred to as a ruralisation of the city. It is as if its growth was triggered not only by the arrival of workforce that was absorbed by the existing urban structure, but also by people who actually built entire new parts of the city from scratch using whatever means and skills they had. The culture that was brought to Mumbai by newcomers from all over India – not only from the Konkan of course – was firmly entrenched in a rural ethos, which places community and family at the centre of social life. Even schools, which usually act as a process of assimilation into a new culture, didn't quite fulfill this role for newcomers in post-colonial Mumbai. Municipal schools were built in new neighbourhoods at a relatively slow pace. And not all castes and religions were always feeling welcome. Throughout the city, but particularly in places which have been always been dismissed as slums by the authorities, communities themselves set up schools where their children would be accepted and socialized. Many of these schools would be teaching programs in the native language of the migrants to the city – Marathi, Tamil, Kanada, Urdu, etc. This strengthened further the attachment and reliance that second and third generation children had to their native communities. For instance Ankit, Yogesh, Akshay Takle, but also Deepak Kule of Bhandup went to a private (community-run) Marathi medium school in Bandhup. These community schools are now increasingly switching to English or Hindi as the languages of instruction. Their students are increasingly from mixed linguistic background, and their parents now prefer English as it is more usefully to those who pursue higher studies or want to enter the professional world after high-school.

Over the lifetimes of Shantaram Takle and Ashok G. Jadhav, the ways of remaining connected to the village have evolved tremendously. Before the construction of proper roads and subsequently of railway tracks, going to the city meant a long and difficult trip by road or sea. Now going back for the weekend is possible, and remaining connected by

voice phone or smart phone is easy. This has contributed to bringing the village and the city closer to each other, especially for second generations people such as Yashwant Takle who is building a home next to his father's ancestral home, or Vasanti Kule who was born in Mumbai but decided to move back to the village. She said that she feels equally at home in Bhandup and Kondhe. These are highly mobile people who are as deeply entrenched in the city as they are in the village. But what about the third generation, who has grown up in a much more comfortable and urbanized context than their parents? While some of them, like Deepak Kule, said they would go to the village, if it provided decent earning opportunity, others such as Rutuja Jadhav were very clear that they were urban kids, who loved to go back to the village for holidays, but could not imagine living there full-time.

In fact, educated young women in particular are very much reminded they are from the city when they visit the village. And even thought they would prefer marrying someone in their own community, which would allow them to maintain a strong connection to their native region and culture, they also know that they will have to adopt the village of their husband as their own. And anyway, where their husband comes from may matter less than who he is and what he does in life to them. What is unthinkable for many young women who have attended college in the city, is to imagine marrying in a village family and moving back there permanently. Even from the point of view of their parents who have invested in their daughters' education just as much as they have invested in their sons', it would not make much sense. The ideal husband is from the same cultural and regional background –perhaps from the same village even, but educated in the city with good prospects as a white-collar employee or businessman.

A trend that was apparent across all families that we interviewed and that was also evident from the family trees we collected, is that the generation born in the 1960s tended to have two or three children instead of three, four or more as the earlier generations did. This is a trend that is accentuating all over India, where the average number of children per women is now at 2.45 and seems to be further decreasing, with a majority of families having two children or less

for the first time in the country's recorded history.[39] This may affect the long-term relationship that second or third generation migrants have with their ancestral villages. As we have observed, one of the principal factors that allowed families to be actively rooted in more than one place is that they were large enough to have members living in each place. Furthermore, although we have not included any upper caste or upper-middle class family in this study, we know from first hand experience that although the emotional and cultural relationship to the village often remains very strong across the socio-economic spectrum, higher caste/class families tend to project their future closer to cities, especially when they own property there. However, what seems to be very clear from our ethnographic study is that even if the relationship to the village may possibly weaken over generations for families who are settled in the city, the relationship to the city remains and will remain vital for those who are in the village. This means that as long as city dwellers have close ties with family members living in the villages, they will keep returning and investing in the village's development.

Without speculating on what the relationship between the city and the village may become in the future, we can clearly see from our ethnographic study that the village remains a *Heimat*, as well as a very real and active space. The village has several dimensions: it is an actual, physical place where one returns; a social network and safety net one can always rely upon; a cultural and spiritual field to which one belongs and provides a clear sense of identity; and it the repository of memory, binding family members together. The village exists simultaneously in physical, virtual and mental states. These different states of the village are visited in different ways – by train or car; through screens and devices; and in thoughts and words. It is therefore present in the everyday life of the families we followed in more ways than one. It clearly exists beyond occasional visits – and as such, we could perhaps say that the village is a field rather than just a place. This field extends all the way to the city, and we could even say that in some way it merges with the city experientially, emotionally, socially and culturally.

These immaterial dimensions of the village, and the way they have been carried to the city by successive waves of rural-urban migrants, have been best described by the social psychologist Ashish Nandy. In "Ambiguous Journey to the City", (Nandy, 2001), he explains not only how in colonial times already, the city had achieved mythical status in the minds of villagers – through the tales of those who had been there as well as movies, which travelled as far in the country as the railway tracks allowed. He describes also how from the perspective of the dominant urban classes, the colonial city was the "self", and the village the "other", alternatively fearsome and idealized. Closer to nature, and hence less civilized, the village had to be developed and supported. Even in the Gandhian imagination, which makes a virtue of the village's lack of urbanity, the village is at the centre of the political project. In order to be self-reliant and emancipated the village also had to be industrious. But more than anything, it was the spiritual dimension of village life that attracted Gandhi, for whom the village symbolized "control over self", while "the city reeks of self-indulgence and absence of self-restraints". (Nandy, 2001, p.13). Whether it is imagined as wild infant, or as a wise elder, the village only exists from the perspective of the city. "There is no escape from travelling to the village from the city anymore." (Nandy, 2001, p.14).

The most thrilling part of our study was perhaps to have a glimpse at what the village represented for people who are rooted in both realities. The families and religious community we followed are furthermore, from an academic point of view the quintessential "subaltern", being from Dalit and OBC backgrounds, and living in chawls and slums. They too, like Gandhi, saw the village from the city. However, their relationship to it seemed to be much more pragmatic. They understood first hand the qualities and the limitations of village life. For them, the movement from the village to city and back was part of a larger strategy for social and economic uplifting. This mobility can be read as an important expression of agency, in the face of a generally adverse social, cultural and economic context. The reinvestment in the village is part of this strategic expression, just as much as the initial decision to move to the city. It is in the village that an urban-style middle-class house and lifestyle can be built and experienced, within one's lifetime. Accessing middle-class status and lifestyle in the city (as opposed to experiencing

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39   The World Factbook, CIA, 2016. (web source); Subodh Varma, "Now, majority of families have 2 or less kids", Times of India Mar 2, 2016

it in the village) is an intergenerational affair that can take more than two generations, and may well never happen.

When we discussed the village, and what it meant to them with the younger generation from all four families during a workshop we organized, they seemed to all agree with Rutuja Jadhav that if the village became more like the city then it would loose its appeal. It was precisely the difference that provided its value. Some things are accessible only in the city, others only in the village. This is why the ideal scenario is not one that physically merges one into the other, but rather one that involves distance and movement from the city and the village. This vision that emerged from our discussions is totally at odd with the twentieth century bourgeois suburban model, which tries to provide a village-like quality of life into the city – a small home with a garden in reasonable distance to the city centre. Instead, what emerged was a vision of a home or flat located at the heart of the city, providing direct access to the opportunities it offers. And far from the city's noise, pollution and stress, a village home that would provide full access to the best things the village has to offer: clean air, plenty of space, a green environment and a place where the family can gather and grow its home.

This ideal is interesting to juxtapose with Rabindranath Tagore's vision outlined in his essay "City and Village" (Tagore, 1928), written at the time Gandhi was developing his own vision of the self-sufficient village. Like Gandhi, Tagore criticizes the excesses and greed of the city, which accumulates to no end, preys on the rest of the country and ultimately destroys its own people. However, while he warned about the self-destructive and anti-social propensity of the city, he categorically rejects the notion that cities are intrinsically evil. He praises the energy and the creativity of the city, where "the pressure of the community is relaxed" and "the individual mind gets a chance to rise superior to the low uniformity of the mass mind." According to him, "A civilization which comprises mainly village life cannot advance very far. There the individual is unimportant, the community predominant. There we have [no] divine warrior." He did not have much esteem for the villages he visited and tried to help. He thought they lacked "self-respect" and were plagued by ignorance.

He considered cities as vital organs in the political body. Tagore even considers private property unavoidable, as it simply reflects a fundamental human urge, and provides the "only framework for the creation of a personal world." This thought came to life in our own study, when we witnessed again and again the drive that propelled the families to build their own homes back in the village, following only their personal aspiration and limited only by their means. The result of this drive to own and build is indeed the production of an aesthetic that reflects each family's unique journey.

Tagore's vision is one where the village and the city develop harmonious relationship, each drawing on the other's strength and advantages. Speaking of villages, and using a biological analysis again he argues that "It should be our mission to restore the circulation of life's blood into these maltreated limbs of society; to bring to the villages health and knowledge; wealth of space in which to live; wealth of time in which to work, rest and enjoy." He urges scholars and artists to contribute to the development of villages, which reflects the paternalism with which the urban elites have always treated the village (which Nandy so correctly pointed to). Tagore describes the village as ill patient, and blames the vital organs (cities) for concentrating and accumulating the energy they produce (by processing the fruits of nature) instead of allowing them to run through the entire "body politic" and insufflate it with the life it needs.

Tagore was a true visionary when he imagined that the "energy" of cities should be circulating to villages, just as the raw resources and labour force that powered the city's machinery came from villages. However, what he didn't totally foresee is that it would be the same labour force that –exercising their agency– would bring back to the village the resources that it needed to sustain and grow. It is them and not the political elite, who ultimately brought development to the Indian village. Tagore own experiments with a village close to Santiniketan, the university campus he had established, were not very successful. In fact, decades of agro-technology and Gandhian politics did not manage to do what villagers themselves, aided by means of transportation and communication technologies have achieved. The many Konkan villages we visited in our study

may have been lacking infrastructure, and signs of poverty were apparent in many homes, but they certainly didn't lack self-respect and exposure.

The main idea that we would like to keep from Tagore is one that resonates with our own observations and thoughts: The city and village function has one integrated system, and it is their relationship that makes up for their respective limitations. We found that this idea is best expressed in the formulation: two places, one space. These two places are distant and distinct, which is why they also preserve their particularities. But through the movement of the people who inhabit them both at once – who have in M. N. Srinivas words "one foot in the village and another in the city" (Srinivas, 1955, 1963) – they become complementary. It is, in our minds, this complementarity that should be leading the policy agenda, and not the desire to contain urban development nor promote a generic urbanization of villages.

7.2 Two places, one space

In the Handbook of Geographical Knowledge (Agnew, 2011) - the authors clearly articulate the distinct concepts of space and place that helps us analyse the experiences documented in this study.

Space is a dimension or grid in which things are located while place refers to a unique territorial location. Space can be more abstract and absorb the idea of relationships and bonds that can be expressed across geography through social imaginaries while places are particular points and locations, that are unique.

A home can be a socio-spatial dimension : spatial (for example, incorporating both city and village) and social (conjoined with a family or a community following the movements of the individual or group members, for which both places are homes). A place refers more precisely to the exact address of the house in the village or urban settlement.

Most of the respondents in the study spoke clearly of a sense of belonging that was attached to a family and community, connected to the identity of the ancestral village, but which spread across two places – the house in the village and the one in the city.

The circulatory regime between Ratnagiri and Mumbai emerged in every individual or familial journey and was located on two specific places, which were the two addresses, where people lived in – within the district or the metropolis.

While many of them spoke about the ancestral village as their "real" home, this was not borne out by the objective criteria of amount of time spent in both places – which was often fairly divided between the two places if one factored in the choices made by each family member – over a span of a life time, per family.

What was undeniable in nearly all the cases –was the socio-spatial convergence in terms of the family, the community, the relations ship networks and the way in which both places were seamlessly part of one world – in which the journey – whether annual or more often – always had an intensity that reinforced the bonds – of the people as well as to the locations.

This kind of movement, double-sided migratory impulse or dual affiliation to places – is not easy to classify, manage or conceptualize.

At a theoretical level the idea of movement has been traditionally co-opted within a nomadic but primitive ideal and that of sedentariness as a more evolved one in tune with contemporary con-texts. Except that, today, with the unleashing of mobility centered technology and communication – movement is being re-cast in reformulated at different levels and new normatives are being established as the enormous literature on mobility studies reveals (John Urry et. al).

However, according to scholars such as James C. Scott, (2013), between the archetypes of seden-tary and nomadic societies there always lay a world of enormous historical diversity and transformation. He points out that rigid archetypes created a false dichotomy between nomadic, hunter-gathering so-cieties and sedentary societies. Conjoined to this is a perception, connected to evolutionary narratives, that the former (mobile societies) are less evolved and more antique than the latter (settled). This mis-leads us to believe that any hint of movement (at a minimum) or explicit patterns of circulatory mi-gration (at a maximum) when seen within pre-dom-inantly sedentary societies or in a contemporary context must be anomalous in need of special ex-planations.

Doing a close reading of social formations in which economic organization and re-organization of groups constantly takes place, Scott points out that members are connected through kin and other means across these categories shaped by movement and staticity at any given point of time. In other words regionally anchored economic and livelihood specializations can transform groups into a broad spectral range of sedentarism and nomadism. In this process they simultaneously forge connections be-tween groups and within them - in all sorts of un-expected patterns. (Reference) This has been clearly demonstrated in all the cases in the ethnography de-scribed above.

We saw families that spread out their nuclear units in one case with husband and wife living separately (with the husband in the village and wife in the city). We saw a married (but separated) adult daughter managing her father's place in both, the village and the city. There were younger men who had given up the city fairly early in their lives to move to practice agriculture in the village. Entire villages sent mem-bers to the city where they came together and shared resources to help each other both, in the city, as well as raise resources to improve infrastructure in the village.

In a pre-colonial Indian context, where historical-ly land ownership was notionally part of common laws, but actually divided along caste lines, poorer or socially marginal families used both strategies a) being rooted in the village and b) looking for work elsewhere, to generate livelihoods for the unit of the joint family as a whole. At times, a peasant family would send off workforce as professional soldiers in armies while doing some trading on the side – during the off agricultural season. We see some ele-ments of those practices still prevalent.

In India when land sharing and ownership pat-terns changed, first tending towards monopoliza-tion through middle-men to facilitate the extraction of taxation (as happened during colonial rule) and then with uneven land reforms in independent India – land ownership played a crucial role in shaping people's ties to the ancestral villages and family/ community land.

As we saw in the case of the two Dalit (neo-Bud-dhist) families, individual title deeds of land were transferred in their name after land reform move-ments in the 1970s. While visits to the village exist-ed even before, the processes of building concrete homes was taken on with extra zeal in the 1980s.

In the future, as connectivity along the coast-al coast gets even more enhanced, old familial ties could well get another surge of investment with more kinds of developments taking place there. As some of the youngsters mentioned to us, especially when talking about the good life – they would not mind moving back to the village if they managed to get some livelihood activities going there– especially if the connectivity to the big city also was maintained.

During our conversations with some youngsters from the village itself – those who had not moved to the city at all – we came across quite a few who were commuting to closer towns where new job oppor-tunities had arisen. One could clearly see an active relationship with emerging urban centers. One that did not demand a wholesale move but worked more within affordable commuting distances.

For privileged families all over India (especially amongst the middle classes and upper caste groups), migration for education and upward mobility has been a factor for migratory movements for a long time and this is very much the case with the Konkan

as well.

Upper caste families from Goa, Mangalore and Ratnagiri followed their own trajectory that ran in parallel with lower caste and poorer families – each community forming enclaves in Mumbai that relied more on their own internal connections within the family mostly, but also sometimes with community support.

The poor or landless communities relied more on combination of community based livelihood opportunities and diversification of familial skills to produce collective security.

In both cases it did not cancel out rootedness to the village – especially when the presence of family and community allowed for some value to be extracted from land. Rootedness to the village has not always been sentimental as much as intertwined with material benefits accrued through patronage or the accumulation of surplus from land.

In the cases discussed in the study – we see that this is expressed in an articulation of a shared sense of space, forged on the bondedness of familial relationships and kin based solidarity. This has only added to the ease of moving across two places – both identified as home at different points of time, for different sets of people, who nevertheless all share some common basis of connectivity either as family, clan or community.

Space – as a dimension in which relationships and bonds are articulated can extend across geography through social imaginaries. Thus a shared space over two or more physical places would include a piece of land or home in the village and a piece of legitimate refuge or occupancy rights in the city.

In our cases within the study, we focused on families within a radius of 300 kilometers from Mumbai city. They had deep connections to the city going back, sometimes to a 100 years – even when rail technology was not active.

For the first time this year, the Economic Survey of India (2017) used railway statistics to show an increase in migration levels, acknowledging that earlier estimates were based on conservative figures. The amount of female migration is now showing much

higher rates than previously thought. Yet- no survey has been done which follows the trajectory of circulatory movements even though studies on migration have independently revealed that a lot of this movement is circular in nature.

What the 2017 survey confirms is a high degree of train based migration from places more than a 1500 kilometers away across states such as U.P., Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, to cities such as Mumbai, Delhi Chennai and Bangalore and states such as Kerala and Goa.

Even then, the survey limits its observations. It simply states that there is high out migration from certain states and in-migration into other states. It does not collect or analyse data in terms of circular migration at all.

Such surveys need to begin with different starting points. Migratory movements do not have to presume only distress signals. The fact that a settling down in a new place does not cancel out affilia-tions to the native village must be factored in and the notion that individuals and families can have dual households (even if one of them is relatively short term or attached to a specific life-cycle) even while identifying themselves as part of a shared identity should be made more explicit.

A sense of multiplicity of locations and identities should not be exclusively connected to technologies of transport and communication in which the technologies are seen as stimulating these expansions and possibilities. So it is not true to say that only today, thanks to modern technologies that people have begun to move more and connect more and started to negotiate multiple locations and lives. And it is equally inaccurate to say that in a context where such technology was absent or minimally present that people did not move or if they did move or migrate it was under stress and distress alone.

The arrangements of resources within families and communities have been important factors, which made people do both - move and remain connected. The quest for upward socio-economic mobility was very much a factor but it cannot be reduced to only that as people moved for reasons that were much more deep rooted.

The desire for young people to move to the city

was as spontaneous and taken for granted as the desire by some to stay behind. This happened independent of technology available or even when there was with very limited technology. To reduce all movements to a narrative of migration viewed through the lense of distress does not allow us to get a full grasp of reality and certainly does not do justice to the way in which the village and the city are both an integral part of people's lives.

7.3 Redefining the city & village.

The city is only hospitable when it becomes an extension of family and community networks. If there are no fellow members it is not possible to move to it. Conversely, if there are family or community networks anywhere in the world – it is super easy to move there – no matter what the challenges. The city itself is seen to be permeable enough for familiar networks to take new roots when the connections are there thanks to kinship ties.

What we have seen in our ethnography is that confidence is instilled in a new member from the family moving to the city when there is someone known to him or her to receive the new arrival. The city is therefore rarely a strange or anonymous place.

For many migrants from the Konkan region to places like Bhandup the move was not even very discontinuous in terms of landscape and cultural ethos. In fact the physical layering of homes on the hill often mirrored arrangements that were from back home. In Sai nagar and other related settlements in Bhandup we saw families recast their village homes – but of course in a more dense and populated context. The homegrown settlement allows for this to happen more easily as people often use exactly the same materials and know-how to construct homes. The successful management of wells in the Mumbai settlements showed an awareness of water management that people brought from the villages. When early settlors to Bhandup arrived in the 80s they in fact saw a terrain which was similar to the ones back in the village.

Of course, this was not the case with the stories from B.D.D. chawls. There the urban landscape was sharply distinctive. The stone colonial buildings were a contrast to the mud – homes that people had left behind. But what kept the connections active were the relationships. Even in the rigid linearity of the chawls kinship relations managed to reproduce a semblance of similarity by arranging or re-arranging themselves to match their social configurations back home. Often people exchanged rooms and over years grouped and re-grouped themselves to be surrounded by their own clans and networks. So while externally the chawls looked distinct from the village like homegrown settlements – their internal configuration was not so.

In either case – the city did not represent a disjuncture or break from village life thanks to the lubrication provided by family and kinship relations.

At the same time – the city definitely marked a break from stories of caste control – especially to Dalit families. There can be no doubt that for them the city meant more freedom than the village. Yet – the story is not always linear and simple. For many residents the city – for the very same reason that allowed them to navigate more smoothly thanks to social relationships at the familial and community level ensured that everyone else sharing urban space also brought in their own prejudices.

Mumbai city as the capital state of Maharashtra has an administrative infrastructure in the police, government offices and other departments that are connected to recruiting channels from all over the state. A government official who has a higher authority could very well be from a higher caste and may look at the lives of poorer groups in chawls or homegrown settlements in ways similar to the way he saw them back in the village and town he came from. As discussed earlier – communities create channels that are linked to grids that may not allow for as much interconnections across channels and moves to the city and back may not see many stepping off from the dedicated paths. These may connect people across large physical distances but not social ones.

The very structures that make mobility possible even against the odds of technological challenges are also responsible to curtail the transcendence of restrictions that would conventionally be expected in urban contexts.

This does not of course mean that the city has not been transgressive of community and caste. Dalit movements in Mumbai were very much and re-

main strong urban located and radical movements in which educational emancipation has been key to social emancipation. Yet the extent to which these transgressions should have pushed boundaries remain limited.

The city continues to be very divided on the basis of language, community, ethnicity and class. Dalit institutions have not been able to cross glass ceilings that limit their growth thanks to the limited way in which markets work and the lack of state backed resources.

The city still privileges English speaking or upper caste elite backgrounds for the most competitive jobs making it virtually impossible for people from backgrounds such as the ones described in our ethnography to break new ground.

The youngsters from our stories (Dalit as well as OBC) will most likely be absorbed at mid-level job opportunities and may not so easily be able to move away from the settlements and habitats that their parents created for them. They may have aspirations that are higher but the restrictive channels of growth will not help them. In this scenario – the village does not appear to be all bad. The historical oppression their fore-fathers faced, especially in the Dalit stories are certainly not as strong today (at least in the Konkan – though cases of atrocities against Dalits still make the news from other parts of the state and country) and for many the village does not appear too much more restrictive than those in the city. Yet the urban horizon is still full or more possibilities and that promise is often more effective.

From the cases we documented we came across several examples of families investing in urban style water distribution systems in the villages with tanks and piped water supply and families and communities organizing themselves to ensure that these amenities are also available in the villages. Similarly new homes made in the fashion of the city in remote villages are a sign again that the urban and rural are not as rigidly divided in the minds of the residents in both places. Elements from one can be brought into the other and yet the village and the city also retain their own characteristics.

Perhaps the tightrope of community keeps things in check on both sides of the spectrum. The city does not represent too many breaks (which could have good and bad repercussions) and the village does not mean an absence of urban conveniences. Some aspects of village life get reflected in the city and vice versa and yet a marked difference between the two is still clearly articulated.

7.4 The urban village

Our starting point in this study has been the officially termed slum (the neighbourhoods in Bhandup) and the chawl or the industrial tenement. (B.D.D. Chawls). As we described in the theoretical section – these two habitats have their own places in the larger story of housing, occupancy and ownership rights in the city.

Both of them are rather generically seen to be the result of an over-populated and resource starved city. This has in turn been attributed to rural-urban migration – which is of course presented as a one-way movement – especially when using urbanization as an index of development.

A close look at the settlements in Bhandup reveals a middle-class neighbourhood and the young family members in our stories see themselves not as slum-dwellers but as regular middle-class kids with their very urbane aspirations.

Their settlements may show some infrastructure shortcomings - mostly to do with roads, water and sewage supply. But are constantly being improved upon – no thanks to the powerful political patronage that the communities residing here manage to organize for themselves. The only contentious issue is security of tenure and ownership documents but these too are constantly negotiated with the government and it would be difficult to displace the families from here without a good fight.

However there is another element that enters the argument ,which has little to do with infrastructure or tenure, but has its own relevance for our study. This is to do with the form of the habitat or settlement itself. Very often, these low-rise high density places are closer in typology, to old historical villages that were once on the periphery of the city but now have been absorbed into its fabric – but not totally digested.

This has produced a paradoxical situation– in which the city's historical old urban villages have been treated or mis-understood as a slum, for example the fishing Koli villages scattered all over the city or the 190 odd Portuguese Maharshtrians – also called East Indian villages dating back at least a couple of hundred years ago. These village associations are fighting hard against the city's authorities who love to treat these settlements as slums – as they can then be cleared up for development.

The confusion is confounded when new settlements (new in relative terms as in the neighbourhoods of our protagonists in Bhandup which are 40-50 years old as opposed to the 200 year old villages) which get created by new settlers who create habi-tats that resemble these historical villages.

The reason for the similarity between the two is linked very much to the arguments we made earlier with regard to the way in which families and com-munities act as channels of connectivity between the village and the city. When people migrate from vil-lages and small towns encased in kin and community ties they bring in skills, both traditional and modern, they bring in sensibilities from wherever they come from and in a context where the city allows them space to shape and create their own environments produce settlements just as they would back home. In the case of the old villages, the same or similar processes also created them in the first place – mak-ing the similarities quite logical.

When the older members in our families first set up homes here – they saw a landscape very much like the one in Ratnagiri and they built-homes in the same fashion. The typological similarities in the neighbourhoods which our maps and drawings show, is a testimony to this.

However, in the case of the B.D.D chawls, the typology of the industrial tenement does little to change the essential ways in which people occupy these spaces. Familiar kinship and community struc-tures, reclaim the forms in different ways.

Moves from the village to the city are not seen to be major disjunctures as the protective shell of social relationships help the transition.

And because the city has historically allowed

for the emergence of a diverse set of settlements including a village like typology – we have been able to see greater feedback loops going the other way round as well.

As the ethnography showed, water tanks and piped water systems being installed in villages, people investing in shops and businesses back home and constructing city style homes, including in some cases apartment blocks.

At the same time, the need to maintain some distances between the form of the city and the village has also been emphasized by our protagonists. A lot in the village – especially a clean environment – needs to be protected and the city on this front seems to be understood as being at a point of no return. What strikes out most though is the ease through which the navigation is made between the city – with its familiar networks - and the village with its own strengths and limitations. All through the navigation the internal pathways based on kin and community remain a constant.

The need to question the rural urban dichotomy has to be connected to a recognition of the village as a valid urban form (especially in its avatar as a multi-use productive space) besides being part of a productive rural economy.

Secondly this need to be nourished by an awareness of the interplay between community life and urban built-environment that makes sense when discussing urban issues of over-crowding and den-sity. We have shown at several levels that commu-nities themselves, through the skills and resources in neighbourhoods, produce very quality urban en-vironments – especially when we don't get too rigid about what is urban and rural. And when they have the freedom to build on their own skills and resources to participate in the creation and maintenance of t he built environment – much like they do in villages in rural areas.

Thirdly the study asserts that rural-urban movements create a complex template for migration and habitats – a template that involves dual household families and infuses dynamism in what is other wise seen as a sterile and backward agrarian economy. The potential of building on this possibility for dis-cussions on urban futures, environmental concerns

and other related issues are quite strong and worthy of more attention than at present being paid.

7.5 The City as Point of Passage

Within such a commentary we cannot still forget the location of the city as crucial to the modern political ideal – as an escape from feudal ties and oppressive community networks.

The double edged narrative of community, which cuts both ways – slicing through individual choices on one hand and providing support and resilience on the other has to be factored in.

Can any of our protagonists say that the city of Mumbai is unimportant in their lives? Actually on the contrary. The city's attraction remains very similar to the promise of urban freedoms in the early 20th century that has been commemorated by intellectuals and political leaders alike. For Ambedkar – as we have mentioned earlier – the city was the most important rite of passage which could emancipate the Dalit. However at some point Ambedkar also realized that it was not enough and that a fundamental rejection of a belief system on which caste was predicated – Brahmanical purity and pollution was also needed. Conversion to Buddhism was as important as professing faith in modern education and institutions. Even while drafting the Indian constitution and putting in several clauses to challenge the tyranny of the caste system Ambedkar realized that by itself – any one touchstone is not enough. While the city always provided a powerful beacon of hope, its urban institutions did not always deliver.

Mumbai's poorer settlements are very much still populated by marginal ethnic groups including Dalits and other backward castes which cut across Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The richer neighbourhoods are more likely to house upper castes and dominant classes.

At the same time what exactly happens within the poor settlement? As mentioned above neighbourhoods such as Dharavi, Shivaji Nagar, and Sai Nagar in Bhandup are full of the other edge of community potential. Families and communities have invested in education, economic mobilization and use traditional as well as modern skills to improve their lives, physically and socially. There is co-de-pendence between different marginal groups and an economic vibrancy that comes with controlling their own activities and environments that strikes out.

An urban quality of emancipation is intertwined with issues of governmental apathy and decay – which – with a little bit of recognition and validation can completely transform the way in which the inhabitants live. However for this the city must genuinely keep its promises of being a beacon of modern liberating political values. It must itself shed prejudice that exists in its institutions – from the civic bureaucracy to local municipal offices. Cultural and educational institutions must genuinely become inclusive of all communities – especially those that have been historically marginzalied and its dominant economic ethos has to appreciate the different languages of entrepreneurship – from local street hawkers rights to those of industrialists. Unfortunately – this is far from being a reality. The city's elite institutions are exclusive and expensive – the economic actors who run its finances and industry belong to traditional communities that have controlled capital and resources for decades. Its real estate developers have created cartels that prop prices of mediocre structures and buildings because of monopolies and corruption. If the majority of residents who came to the city looking for a rite of passage for economic, social and political emancipation, then they achieved it against huge odds and facing tremendous challenges. In the process they made use of all the limited resources they had – and the ones that helped them most were their own social networks – which of course comes with strings attached – conservative values and a continued hold of caste. At the same time to reduce all dimensions of the story to a rigid narrative of community or static notions of the village and city does not get us too far. What a close reading of caste and community tells us is that the factor of mobility has historically been a feature of a community controlled society – but also provided a glimmer of defiance against it. Historians have pointed out that movement, mobility and circulatory channels have always existed on the sub-continent also as an anti-dote to excessive community control. People have left villages and settled down in new areas to launch fresh channels of movement and mobility. Anchoring has not meant being forever tied down to one place. Being mobile has allowed new community formations to emerge as well. These movements go beyond traditional

notions of sedentary and nomadic ideal types and are dynamic in a different sense. It is this sense of mobility between places that can be evoked when looking at contemporary dynamics in urban or rural contexts as well. Mobility in this context is more than simply movement. It is not moving to the city that actually liberates. Because the move comes attached to community as security as well. But the act of moving and being mobile itself.

In the Indian context the right to the city by itself has not necessarily proved to be liberating. Workers who were part of large textile mills in the early 20th century and forerunners of the trade union movement had to rely on resources from their village even then to make ends meet. The urban proletariat was constantly confounded by older capital controlling communities and caste prejudices that remained entrenched in spite of the city's modernist pretensions. Yet the city did provide for several avenues for mobility too – against all odds. But what it did best for many – is act as a passage – a via media – back to the village.

In our ethnography the story of Dalit Village associations – based in Mumbai but geared towards community life and improvement of village infrastructure is a striking story of this loop-which does substantially to improve things for everyone both, in the city as well as the village. In the village it helps consolidate people's needs and resources and helps those who want to come to the city by acting as a launching pad. An improved life in the village also helps to make the next generation stronger and claim more from the city.

At the same time the right to the city is not something that is entirely geared towards the village. Political involvement of different groups in the city involves strong organizational initiatives that also helps people consolidate their own position in the city. Taking part in elections, fighting attempts by the government to take away rights of slum dwellers , asserting the right of their economically productive neighbourhoods to exist are all part and parcel of urban life of many such groups and communities and it does not cancel out their continued involvement back in the village.

Every movement to and fro helps individuals and groups to become stronger, helps consolidate and change community configurations, and challenge the resistances of institutions to bring about change otherwise taken for granted in a city.

7.6 Housing vs. accommodation

Just like in the story of our protagonists, our experience generally with housing needs of the residents of Mumbai's homegrown settlements reveals that not all of them are looking for permanent residence status in Mumbai. In the five cases in the study, we saw the number of years being spent in the city and the village even themselves out per family, across its members. In some cases the patriarch had stayed for around 20 years in the city before returning to the village, with his son staying on in the city but building a house in the village clearly expressing his attention. In another case, dedication to the community was expressed by giving up life in the city, and helping build up infrastructure in the village for family and community members. The spiritual guru, who had established his spiritual kingdom in the city almost immediately spread it into the village and built an infrastructure that extended all the way into the forests surrounding his maternal home. This included space for his devotees to stay on both sides of the circulatory regime in his world.

Like in the stories in the study, many migrants to Mumbai are here for shorter periods of time, ranging from a few months every year on a regular basis, to 10 – 15 years of working during adult life before moving back to the towns or villages they come from.

Many residents spend the monsoon period -when labour is in high demand in the agricultural sector - back in the village. The need for accommodation for a variety of durations and periods of various residents is met through a range of systems – ranging from individual home-based rentals to familial and community based support systems that include home-stays. These are tied down to economic opportunities as well – since many of the workers and service providers live and work from the same space – where work sites double up as hostels and dormitories. For a vast majority of such residents – most of who are here for a livelihood for fixed periods of time - the slums provide an important service in a city that is otherwise extremely expensive. Besides accommodation, the flexible uses of space in slums

means they can also work and generate revenues in those places. In form and functioning these places often resemble their habitats back home – except in denser conditions. Their needs for accommodation also translate into revenue for those who are long-term residents with more permanent status in those very settlements.

As mentioned above, in the name of redevelopment or slum eradication programs this entire system of co-dependency tends to get erased, as the long term residents are promised new tiny apartments in buildings, thanks to schemes such as the Slum Rehabilitation program. This program basically allows private developers to take over slum land, by relocating some of the existing dwellers into vertical structures on that spot, but releasing most of it for private real estate development to sell in the market. Because these new vertical structures for the erstwhile slum-dweller gives them a valid occupancy right, it is a huge move for them. However, since the texture of the entire neighbourhood changes after such a move, typically the buildings get gentrified and the existing ex-slum dwellers move elsewhere. This happens primarily because the conjoined economic and residential fabric that once existed there, has now vanished.

The biggest casualties of this process are temporary residents, with part time accommodation needs who are dependent on livelihood being generated there and on its cheap rentals. In most cases they too move to another settlement that still responds to their needs, typically in a far off area of the city, till such time that the redevelopment project reaches its tentacles there. They also tend to get pulled into the speculative drama of converting occupancy rights into ownership ones through political negotiations after spending longer stretches of time in the city. This happens as much for their aspirations as the fact that security of tenure for poorer migrants looking for non-permanent but secure affordable accommodation is nearly absent. There are no systematic mechanisms to provide these. So political parties looking for electoral support exploit the situation and insert them into a narrative of "housing rights" for the poor connected to the assumption of one-way rural urban movements.

It is important to break up the narrative of housing into a more complex terrain. One where the needs of *accommodation* - understood as temporary and seasonal needs directly connected to livelihood issues vis-a-vis *housing* – which is the need for many (but not all) residents of the city, and is being imperfectly supplied by the market but being supplemented by homegrown settlements. The fact that half the population of the city lives in such conditions means that this entire arrangement is something that needs to be better understood and acted upon.

The fact that the early decades of urbanization in Mumbai saw several institutions and established that reflected the circulatory movements of people is an indication that the city provided more avenues in this line of practice. There were hostels and dormitories for members of specific communities, villages and regions from all along the Konkan coast and the hinterland. Villages in Goa would collectively rent out rooms in the city for their members needing temporary accommodation. These were called Kudds (or Clubs). These rooms would often have trunks rented out by individual villagers who would keep them there for years – using them whenever they passed by the city. Hotels would keep separate dedicated rooms for businessmen or others coming from Mangalore or Udupi to be used for a few months a year. Slums continue in the same fashion for a significant demographic – but the narrative has changed. Now most workers and members of the labour force get exclusively entangled in the narrative of a permanent move and all their needs are flattened out into the need for "housing". The fact that their lives are still enmeshed in villages through their joint families and communities is an inconvenient and inconsequential fact for authorities that is mostly ignored by them.

7.7 Right to the City, Village and Mobility

Our ethnography showed us how important it is not to measure habitats in terms of distance and proximity in linear ways in which technology alone becomes the main variable for enhanced connectivity. This is why we consider family and community to be important mechanisms of mobility.

The uneven ways in which the city and the village become part of the lives of our protagonists, at different points of time and in spite of distances, shows that it is difficult to box their choices into pre-defined lifestyles. To move from agricultural

rhythms to industrial manufacture, from setting up a shop in a village to managing trade in Mumbai, learning IT by the younger generation and also giving a lending hand on the field when needed, means that linear expectations are not always what defines people's lives here.

To understand the dynamics at work in cities, towns and villages, we need to locate them in deeper narratives of spatial and social arrangements, which are often uneven. It is limiting to see industrialization, transport, communication and urbanization processes as being linked to each other through channels of one-way, evolutionary movements.

Our ethnography shows us that a village-like form may exist in a city like Mumbai on one hand, whereas communication technology in Chiplun, a city in Ratnagiri district, may generate very advanced jobs and activities.

A village in Ratnagiri may be culturally closer to a settlement like Bhandup in Mumbai than a neighbourhood from within the city. The food products and tastes are part of the same world across 300 kilometers, the same saints are worshiped, same movies are being watched and similar mass SMSes are being circulated on phones sold in Ratnagiri or Mumbai.

Mumbai continues to offer access to diverse educational opportunities along with "urban" jobs, such as construction. But even within Ratnagiri town, a building is being constructed financed by the same channels and constructed by the same processes as in Mumbai.

We are reminded again of Anthony Leeds' claim that "a peasant is an urban man" which may as well be applicable to Parshuram or Ashok while they till their land in their respective villages. We see again how Leeds' arguments remain compelling about why the rural cannot be defined in opposition to the urban. It should rather be seen as "a subset of specialties of an urban society."[40]

Understanding the miner, the lumberjack and the fisherman as "operators or actors within [urban] sys-

tems of locality, of labor, of technical, institutional, and informal social organizational specialties, Leeds profoundly disturbs the neat division of countries as urban and rural. This undermines the notions that on the one hand India is still predominantly rural (over 70% according to the government's statistics), and the idea that "cities" are prime economic actors.

Defining Mumbai simply as an urban agglomeration – that is, as a space defined by a contiguous urban density level- is fundamentally limiting. Global city theorists have proposed to see cities as networked entities that could be defined by their relationships with the rest of the world. What structures this relationship is the flow of goods, people, information and capital across places, and its intensity. Those have an impact on the physicality of cities, which many globalization theorists have been at pain to demonstrate.

We are reminded of François Ascher and his emphasis on the role of infrastructure such as transportation networks and mobile phone antennas in shaping the city and showing us how, when these infrastructures extend and connect with others, the metapolis spreads[41].

The main value of his concept is that it understands city forms beyond their physicality. On one hand we need to acknowledge that political boundaries, as well as density levels (used to define urban agglomerations) cannot be considered to be sole defining features of the metapolis. Conversely, a complete reliance or dependence on transportation and communication infrastructure, which can only be provided by governments or corporations, deprives end-users of any agency in the way they choose to operate/subvert these networks or in laying the ground for their development.

In Europe, these infrastructures come at a high cost, which necessarily excludes people with low capital or resources who either become immobile or limit their mobility substantially.

In India, the story doesn't quite play out in the same way. This is partly because transportation and

40   Leeds, A: Cities, Classes and the Social Order, Cornell University Press, 1994.

41   François Ascher, Les Nouveaux Principes de l'Urbanisme , La Tour d'Aigues, France: Éditions de l'Aube, 2004

communication infrastructure are, so far, widely accessible to the poorest. Train fare and mobile phone charges are some of the lowest in the word. What the train lacks in speed and capacity, it makes it up in cost and accessibility. It may take three days to reach Mumbai from a remote village, but virtually everyone can afford the ticket, which reduces not only physical distance but also opens a vast field of economic opportunities to everyone.

According to Vincent Kaufmann, the continuous attraction of the city centre, even after its irrelevance in the face of advanced communication technologies is that it multiplies the possibilities for access and there by increases the capacity of users to be mobile. (Kauffman, 2004)

There is thus a centre-periphery divide, wherever those who can afford to live in the centre also get access to a broader world of possibilities and opportunities. This gap is bridged by investing ever more in efficient transportation systems that close the gap between the centre of the periphery. But this merely pushes the periphery further out, along with people who cannot afford the cost that comes with increased connectivity.

As Kaufmann points out, many factors influence individual motility. Including cultural ones.

In the stories in our ethnography, we see how these cultural factors, that include the support of family and community, hugely enhance motility levels against odds of simple technology. These networks allow individuals to navigate the terrain between village and the city in all kinds of challenges – during the years when transport facilities were poor in the past and now, when they have become relatively more accessible and easier.

These networks, these systems are key to the mobility question allowing people to be able to negotiate distances, to be mobile, to remain in touch in spite of physical limitations.

What it does is produce an imaginary of belonging, identity and connections that spill over neat categorizations about village-city linearities. A post-industrial rhythm becomes much more easily and unselfconsciously integrated into everyday lives. To look at these complexities only in terms of where they fit (or don't fit) in terms of political emancipa-tion defined solely as the Right to the City is very limiting.

If this has to be politically expressed at all - it has to be done so as "A right to be Mobile". A right to both, the village and the city through the right to be mobile.

This can only be conceived when we do not place social change and transformation on a matrix that sees the city as politically more evolved than the village – in terms of its promise for emancipation. As we have seen in our cases, the city is both emancipatory but also restrictive and like the village, it too can remain connected to older modes of social control. Paradoxically what makes it possible for people to negotiate change and aspire to political ideals (social and economic equality) can be the very institutions such as the community and the family that themselves are part of mechanisms of control. For example Dalits organizing themselves in the city as Dalits and developing mechanisms to improve infrastructure such as water – supply in their neighbourhoods in the city. And villagers getting together to pay for the education of a talented student from the village to go to the city and study are typical examples.

Ultimately, it is the very act of moving and being mobile, of navigating these movements themselves that helps push the boundaries of such restrictions. The right to the city, in this context, is often accompanied by a tacit, implicit belief, that the right to the village is intimately tied down to that of moving to the city. One does not exclude the other. It is through incremental acts of transformation, in which movement and mobility are themselves part of the change that ultimately can be more transformative than simply a one time movement to the city.

7.8 Mobile Nation

The railways in the Konkan re-did what the riverine, coastal and the medieval road system had done earlier. It enhanced mobility. Each system – the rivers, the sea, the road and the railways - was itself generated by movements that people initiated through their own impulses - either spiritual or economic or socio-cultural. Our earlier study (2013) pointed out that cultural (including educational) and economic reasons remain main factors why people

View of train travelling on Konkan railway from the road above.

use the

Konkan railways. In one direction they come to visit family gods and village deities, to participate in festivals and ceremonies, build homes and invest in businesses and in the other direction they go for education, jobs and better medical facilities.

As we had articulated earlier, paths forged by user needs provided the template, which shaped the creation of transport systems that in turn looped back into and expanded those needs. To visualize people without movement, without being possessed by the need to travel, migrate, without forging complex spatial modes of belonging - would create an inaccurate understanding of people and habitats in the region in particular and on the subcontinent as a whole.

Our cases in this study too reveal anecdotes about family members who had switched from steamships to roads to railways in their living memory. Their families had been part of the Konkan – Mumbai route for several decades, some for as long as a century.

It would be useful to revisit Vincent Kaufmann's concept of motility, in a manner that is connected to primarily to economic resources and access to technology. Kaufmann applies that concept to the study of contemporary society, in which the elite have more choices when it comes to their mobility and these have multiplied exponentially with the development of transportation and communication technologies throughout the twentieth century and the new millennium.

In our study, we re-adapted this concept in the context of the Konkan. We see that a high level of motility has historically existed on the sub-continent, at a collective level, even without technologically advanced modes of transport. This was made possible by family and community networks, which provided security to needs at both points of the mobility channels of individuals and groups as well as making resources available for the travel itself. This allowed people to move from villages and forests in search of work, to other villages, towns and return seasonally to points of origin.

As we have seen from the review of literature on the concerned theme, the Indian landscape provided

different kinds of habitats without sharp typological distinctions. Even nomadic societies followed circular routes and could travel to cities to work as construction labourers or within service industries and return to other habitats in different seasons.

This tendency may have had some tension with state machinery during different historical periods, but for the most part, such movements were absorbed within local infrastructures.

According to urban geographer Dilip D'Cuhna, most Indian cities were characeterised by the presence of the maidan – or the open ground on the frontiers or peripheries of political centers, forts, and cities. (D'Cuhna, 2016)[42].

These grounds were hosts to a range of different travellers and nomadic communities looking to set up seasonal residence while working in the urban economy.

Their transitoriness was an essential part of the dynamism of the shifting dimensions of rural, urban and nomadic contexts. In the Mughal era the dominant imperial rulers were themselves nomadic and had seasonally shifting political centers and very elaborate systems of movement of the royalty.

All of this changed substantially in the later part of English colonial rule with its bigger technocratic, emerging industrial systems and large bureaucracies seeking to organize people in terms of labour directed at specific revenue generating imperial projects. This needed people to be enumerated, settled down and transformed into labour based revenue and tax sources on a much larger scale.

People were forcefully settled, their identities were fixed and their movements controlled. Many historians of the caste system in India point out how much the colonial enumeration process produced a new regime of rigidity and fixity on the caste matrix – which had earlier allowed for more legitimate movement and some degrees of subversion of its fixities through these movements.

42   The Maidan as a Ground of Design, Dilip D'Cuhna, Anuradha Mathur. Unbound, A Journal Of Discourse and Practices - http://www.unboundjournal.in/?p=9

Historians such as Raj Chandavarkar and Christopher Bayly clearly show how the colonial moment imposed stability, and fixity through tools such as the census, in which people were connected to their native points of origin in a more permanent way. Taxation procedures and labour laws shaped rural landscapes, forest administration shaped nomadic and tribal habitats and zoning laws created new modes of urban settlements. The state tied people who would do multiple tasks into singular professions. It initiated, via settlement programs for nomadic communities, and controlled forests new regimes of administration. They created new zoning laws about tribal, rural and urban, which helped fix and stabilize populations. Caste shifted and mutated its characteristics under this system.

In fact some of the strongest moments of oppressive caste dimensions (like bonded labour) were expressed when communities were forced into settled long term patronage systems without being able to move, migrate seasonally or be part of diverse economic systems. Hyper specialization and enforced settlement, often accompanied by getting rid of ownership of collective commons, which used to be the norm in pre-colonial India, went hand in hand. These processes became more pronounced under British colonial rule, which created massive extraction mechanisms in rural India through landlordism and revenue collection mechanisms.

It is within such a moment of transformation that the imperial government introduced technologies like the railways, with the intention of consolidating colonial projects through organized cash crop production over large areas and at great distances from markets or ports (Tharoor, 2016). These accompanied transportation of natural resources from remote areas to feed a newly emerging industrial economy and the development of new urban markets in urban centers. This made it easier to see the village and the city as fixed points of embarkation and arrival.

Mariam Aguiar too suggests that the railways reinforced levels of mobility that already existed on the sub-continent and which the state was simultaneously trying to open up and control. The railways on the subcontinent expanded massively, connecting different parts of the sub-continent, hitherto unknown to each other. (Reference) The growing network changed traditional trade routes, opened

up modern industrial possibilities, and created new habitats in locations unknown and transformed old ones beyond recognition.

At the same time, this also managed to allow older movements to be re-expressed in newer ways. People used it for travelling to new lucrative destinations, and the cheap mode of transport helped most people to maintain two homes at two places. Seasonal hunts for jobs became easier and spiritual travel footprints were expanded.

It is this vision of the railways double-edged tendency that has shaped our study.

That's how we understood motility in the Konkan region. This capacity to be mobile existed prior to the formation of the Konkan railway, thanks to family and community networks, reinforced by older water and road routes.

What the railways did in the Konkan is what is has always done on the sub-continent. It gave people greater choices of destinations, allowed their various impulses, including religious, cultural and socio-economic to be expressed effectively, expanded their geographical footprint, provided seasonal employment opportunities and made it easier to function from more than one home.

In terms of the Konkan region as a whole, it allowed the presence of cities such as Mumbai, Mangalore and the state of Goa to now become more integrated into the Konkan system. Within each node on the Konkan route, it started to bring alive local identities of places more vividly and made it easier to discern the templates of urban systems that exist all over the region.

Our cases reveal how many families remain multi-functional in terms of their occupations, with farming and industrial activities both being integrated into their lives and this fluidity has been lubricated further by the use of trains.

This fluidity gets reflected in the complex landscape of the region as rural and urban settings get mixed in varied ways. It produces a Konkan style village within the metropolis of Mumbai on one hand (in Bhandup for example) and recreates a Mumbai suburb in a remote coastal, heavily forested town on the other (Like in Songiri or Hedvi).

The Konkan railways are now an integral part of the region.

Some studies (Ranade, 2009) directly corroborate our own data, about frequency, times of travel and reasons for travel. It points out that the heaviest periods of travel in the Konkan are April-May, November – December and September – October in that order. The heaviest traffic is between Mumbai and Goa. The periods coincide with holiday seasons when people return home to their 'native' place (April-May) or for religious festivals (September-October for Ganpati, a very popular festival on the coast and November-December for Christmas). However, since Goa is a very popular tourist destination, a good amount of this traffic constitutes travellers going there via Bombay but originating from all over the country.

For the rest of the year, the traffic is mostly dominated by residents of the Konkan coast going up and down the route for business and familial matters.

She unambiguously asserts that the Konkan railway is hugely popular and will become an even more integral part of the economic and social life of the region. This is supported by other observations such as "The Konkan Railway: A Dream Come True", by authors Menka Shivdasani and Raju Kane, published in 1998, which celebrates the completion of the 'missing link' – referring to the historical gap in connectivity between the major industrial ports of Mumbai and Mangalore which the Konkan railway now covers.

7.9 Visualizing Circulatory Urbanism

During the course of our explorations in both stages of our study we learned that habitats have deep capillaries that run all through the region. Active bus-networks from a district headquarters connect villages to urban hubs and act as daily commuting systems. The existence of spread out habitats and economic hubs – industrial estates, ports or tourist centers translate into multi- directional movements all the time.

Education and jobs, family visits and festivals, governmental office trips are the main reasons why people move everyday. Being in a village, with easy

access to urban amenities, produces systems of habitation that are diverse, connected and mixed use. Goa, a once quiet and largely dormant economic space is now counted as a highly urbanized state in the country, with its towns and historical villages seen as a networked urban system. This same logic is applicable to towns like Chiplun and Ratnagiri within the district of Ratnagiri itself.

These regions could well be characterized as urbanized, without questioning the status of villages that are part of its network - without having to de-ruralize or de-agrarianize the region – as its inter-mixture of economy and land use patterns is really what contributes to its economic vitality. Highly urbanized zones within these districts (like Chiplun town) act as intermediary spaces. People move in and out of them, sometimes daily, sometimes weekly. They can thus be both supportive systems (in their role as a hub and intermediary) as much as expanding systems (growing into the areas around).

As of now, the government only seems to recognize urban expansion as a valid mode of urbanization, especially as it helps increase land price through speculation. However, there may be a strong case for making mobility between villages and urban hubs itself – without necessarily changing the nature of the habitat - as being a marker of urbanism.

The urban system as envisaged by Anthony Leeds (Leeds, 1994) can act as an overarching framework to understand the Konkan region and the role of the railways within it in terms of urban policy, administration and governance. This framework would work at two levels. One in the form of a Mumbai-centric vision that connects the whole region directly or indirectly to this metropolis. This is the vision that is historically part of the emergence of the railway network itself. The second is of the many urban systems that make up the whole region.

Our research findings reveal how a transcendence of rural urban categories can help create another arc of perspective around urbanism – more suited to the region. In the Konkan - agrarian, trading and industrial activities have co-existed for long. People have mixed and matched their labour and skills across categories and sectors.

Travellers waiting for train at Ukshi station.

Man and woman riding scooter through the rain, Ukshi.

The same people have moved across economic stages, have commuted distances seasonally, have migrated to the big city but still have kept connections to their native points of origin.

The Konkan landscape reflects these juxtapositions too. The emergence of the urban does not over ride the prevalence of the rural. While migration to far off regions has always been endemic to the Konkan, things have smoothened considerably with the railways starting their services allowing the urban system embedded in the region to express itself in better ways. People definitely use the trains and use it in large numbers. At the same time buses are also patronized, and the road is still travelled upon, but mainly because the railways work on full capacity. If the trains increase their services, it will definitely impact the road users and take away patrons from buses.

The railways are also acting as a growth contributor. There is evidence of people from other states in India migrating to these regions and spending months at work here, much like residents from the Konkan once did in Mumbai. There remains a fair amount of people who use the transport system to commute which makes them more rooted to their original points of location.

As Kaufmann and Pattaroni[43] point out, the options that are enhanced by better modes of transport also contribute towards greater choices. These go beyond one way rural to urban migration. People possess more than one home, define homes in diverse ways and look at commutes as distinct from belonging to a place, which may have little to do with place as a destination for work.

Today, most places on the Konkan region look in both directions, on one side Mumbai and on the other the region as a whole. People have begun travelling all over for vacations, pilgrimages and now increasingly for jobs as well. Towns such as Chiplun, (with its ports), Dabhol (with its power plant) are becoming economic attractors in their own right.

However, it would be useful to remember and remind ourselves that the migration into the Konkan

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43   https://www.espacestemps.net/articles/mobilites/, Kauffman V. and Pattaroni L. Mobilités, EspacesTemps.net, Traverses, 25.04.2007

Inside an auto rickshaw in Ukshi.

too is not a one way traffic. People are coming here again in seasonal rhythms, as members of larger families with one foot each in two places.

Migrants into the Konkan are also a part of the same mobility networks that Konkan residents were part of in Mumbai.

User generated patterns of mobility produce conceptions of habitats that go beyond simplistic classifications. Both transport and communication channels are allowing for a greater choice of movement and habitats in the region and this means that authorities are being stressed and challenged here too.

Yet, municipal councils in the Konkan are following the national norm. They work in a manner that concentrates services within smaller territories or manage to annex villages around them by hastening the conversion of land use patterns into non-agrarian activities. This happens even as political leaders and members of corporations, are well aware that the boundaries of towns continue to function in porous ways. They are aware of the active connections that exist between agrarian and non-agrarian sectors in the region. Unfortunately, the tools of governance provided to them remain sharply divided between

rural and urban categories and administrative institutions work through these divisions.

In spite of the region being a vast network of movements they have to encompass this complex experience within a singular, site-specific definition of the urban.

At this point, we can only say that habitats arranged in a complex way need equally complex frameworks of understanding them. The concept of Circulatory Urbanism is one such possibility that we would like to explore in this direction. It captures the diversity of and inconsistency in the nature of habitats that emerges with a very mobile and multi-local, multi-skilled population in which the metropolis is not a final destination.

We remain inspired by Lefebvre and his expansive vision about urban space. His vision transcends formal boundaries and follows the logic and patterns of use, intention and movements to open up the idea of the urban to become more encompassing of such dynamics.

In the context of the Konkan region, there appear

to be two circles of urban imaginaries co-existing, which are connected to mobility systems – specifically to circulatory patterns of mobility. Movements of residents to and fro Mumbai shaped the landscape of the city. It produced village-like settlements in areas designated as slums reminiscent of coastal habitats in Ratnagiri and Chiplun. This added to the city's own list of official urban villages (reportedly 189), which are themselves, connected to the history of the Konkan coastal communities like the East Indians and Koli (fishing community of the city)[44]. Outside Mumbai, there is a contiguous landscape extending down the coast, with apartment styled blocks standing amidst lush paddy fields and coconut orchards. These structures have emerged from the lives of the very same inhabitants who share a common sense of home in both places and want to reproduce inter referential versions of each other on the two sites of their affiliation.

Circulatory urbanism seems to be the shape of a mobility-nourished form of an urban system as understood by Anthony Leeds.

In India the notion of the urban system as a network of villages and towns is not exactly unfamiliar in terms of an administrative unit. Historically it coincided with colonial district maps that were drawn primarily for revenue extraction. The administrative category of the district – commonly used since colonial times - actually functioned as an urban system and in colonial British India, the railways played a crucial role in making them behave even more like urban systems.

Yet tools for administration today rarely factor this internally networked system. They simply count population density and the presence of non-agrarian activities in distinct units – villages, towns or cities. Subsequently the dynamism of regions with mobility networks between villages and towns rarely become part of urbanization statistics.

Today, in the Konkan, the railways have become, within a short span, a prime tool of spatial arrangement for understanding the region. It acts with a double purpose – deepening the relation of the region to Mumbai city, and shaping the emergence of new networks and urban systems all along the region.

It is important today to visualize cities as more complex and inter-related systems following this approach. To identify processes through which multi-directional and cross sectoral movements act as important mechanisms that enhance their functionality. It is crucial to distinguish these processes from that of speculation fuelled modes of urban arrangement which inevitably create centres of value around specific nodes of land use. To identify other modes of urban formations that are equally functional and not based exclusively on this tendency is the prime challenge for administrators struggling with change.

It is for this reason we believe that the Circulatory Lives of our protagonists in this study, is actually a description of a deeper concrete formation – that of Circulatory Urbanism itself.

By calling this explicitly so, we can shape better policy and evolve more effective tools of administration in a country like India. Circulatory Urbanism on the sub-continent folds into itself and includes villages and the rural – just like the persistent urban villages of a gigantic metropolis such as Mumbai continues to be part of its complex urban reality. In the process, the movement and mobility of people, shaped by community and family histories that defy standard categorizations, energized by a cheap and effective railway network, makes this a living, breathing entity.

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44   While a specific academic reference for urban villages in Mumbai are hard to find, the media constantly circulates stories about them. See – Manoj Nair – Let Mumbai's Urban Villages Live, Mumbai Mirror http://mumbaimirror. indiatimes.com/columns/columnists/manoj-r-nair//article-show/15960541.cms? Or Manjula Sen – Grace Under Pressure - https://www.telegraphindia.com/1070624/asp/7days/story_7965226.asp (June 2007)

Chapter 8: Towards Policies for Circulatory Lives

8.0 Introduction

Policy-making is always a fraught activity, a challenging exercise that rarely manages to convincingly tame complex observations of an even more complex reality into straightforward lists of dos and donts. The more simple and straightforward the policy recommendations, one can be sure the contradictions and complexities that exist on the ground are more ferocious. However, as both scholars and urban practitioners, we rarely shy away from making recommendations. So this chapter is dedicated to articulating with as much clarity, what we feel needs to be integrated into policy.

At the same time we have been cautioned by the Forum members for possible contradictions in our observations and objectives, leading to a problematic set of recommendations. For example, while we reiterate the idea that the village and the city are intimately connected, with the village being a sub-system of the urban dimension, we also speak about how much the village is a necessary ideal in the lives of urban residents, as a distinct habitat of a village itself. Yet we speak of transformations happening in the village and the city, thanks to circulatory movements of residents, which leads to the creation of policy recommendations that may well land up causing a dissolution of the village itself, or causing peri-urbanization or transforming them into dormitory status for towns. All of this would eventually lead to an increase in frequency of travel creating patterns of mobility similar to what is seen in Europe, making the question of distinction of context, as important axioms in this study, redundant.

Before reading the policy recommendations we would like to point out why this caution, while being valid at one level, may not fully cover the observations and analysis we make in this study:

1. The village as a habitat is a persistent one. Mumbai city has around 200 official villages with their own distinct regulations under the Gaothan Act (meant for urban villages). These villages have an internal structure of familial and community networks that still shape their choices. The overlap of perception between the village and the slum is a constant cause of worry and caution. What defines the village as a village – besides its official recognition – of course remains a matter of discussion. Rather than agricultural land or access to the sea for fishing (which shaped its traditional political economy), the city itself has become the source of income and livelihood. Ownership patterns and occupancy systems keep shifting over the decades, new migrants come in and old move on, but the structure of the village or habitat persists – even under huge land pressure, in many cases (though not all). If villages can exist within the dense fabric of a 16 million plus metropolis, then villages in Ratnagiri district can certainly sustain their form to a large extent. In this light, the urban village of Dharavi Koliwada, that is surrounded by a cluster of contested settlements and notified and identified slums, still has its own identity as a village. The fishing community has modernized and diversified without giving up its stake in the city defending itself through a structured organization. Many activists and practitioners belive that Mumbai would really solve many of its urban civic issues by accepting the form of the urban village and the homegrown settlement as a valid part of its urban fabric.

2. Villages in Ratnagiri have been part of mobile labour networks even before the emergence of the metropolis of Bombay. It is not as if movements and mobility started with the migration to the big city. The western coast of India has been part of navigation trading sea routes before the British with Portuguese networks and prior to that through Arab trade. The presence of armies and political kingdoms were additional nodes of non-agrarian activities that complemented traditional village life, seasonally. The general acceleration of modern economies in the 19th century all over the world, that transformed older mobilities by new ones, definitely changed contexts here just as it did elsewhere. The nature of urbanization

itself transformed and the emergence of Bombay city played a significant role in the lives of the residents on the Konkan coast, those living in distant Ratnagiri as well as those villages that existed around the emerging city.

3. Urbanized sensibilities among the protagonists in our study makes them want to preserve the village like structure of the village – but at the same time, they want to also introduce urban comforts. Such contrary ideals do change the quality of life in the village but do not change the fundamental ways in which people define and understand the village as home. That is ultimately connected to community and family history. The ideal of ancestral roots is strong and in most cases is the fundamental connecting link. Yet - the home in the city is also part of the story in familial lives, without contradicting the larger geography of identification with the village hundreds of miles away.

4. Cities themselves are very diverse habitats. Not just in India, but elsewhere too, mixed use spaces and the rise of urban farming create urban categories that increasingly rely on contradictory urban-rural axioms. Why cannot we project these complex categories for the future of habitats on to villages in Ratnagiri in our study? Why should the future only be dormitory towns or per-urbanization? Why cannot it be modernized networked habitats with some farming, some other industries co-existing with mobile movements of people between the village and Mumbai city? And why cannot we project a modern metropolis that has also revived its fishing economy, thus helping in regenerating and revitalizing its old fishing villages and several other habitats that make up its diverse fabric?

Policy recommendations are based on hard understanding of ground realities as well as visions projected onto the future. As both scholars and urban practitioners, we step into this land-mine fully aware of the strengths and limitations of both.

We begin with a historical understanding of policy recommendations in India, before stating our own.

8.1 Urban policy in post-independence India

According to urbanist Lalit Batra, the city as an autonomous object of official engagement in India is relatively recent, being clearly articulated only in the 1990s, when India gave up its socialist moorings and the country embraced neo-liberal policies in which cities were seen to be stimulators for economic growth (Batra, 2009). Prior to that, Indian policy was primarily geared towards rural development and the expansion of rural infrastructure.

However, we would like to qualify this observation with a closer reading of what happened during the years in which the city was allegedly absent from the national planning imagination. More than an absence, it can be argued that the city was in fact subsumed within a larger narrative of economic planning, which was in turn encased in concerns of balanced regional and industrial development. In this scheme of things the colonial infrastructures created for the Indian Civil Service, Army cantonment towns and the Indian Railway played an important role – one that has often been over looked by commentators.

Post – colonial rural India saw the rise of several stand-alone factories or clusters of manufacturing and processing units, or hydro-electrical energy projects set up in districts designated as "backward" or in need of critical economic inputs. These were surrounded by settlements that were both rural and industrial in nature – with farmers and workers typically working on fields as well as the factory. Such undefined habitats emerged in response to the need of planners for balanced regional development.

This kind of investment was made possible thanks mainly to the huge prior presence of a colonial infrastructure. Civil service networks, army towns and the Indian railway created scaffolding that gave the government the confidence to pursue their development agendas in all kinds of remote places.

At one time, the railway was so important to the national economy that the annual ritual of presenting financial budgets was divided into two performances – the national budget and a separate railway budget, which usually was presented a day before.

This happened until as recently as this year (2017) when for the first time, the two were combined and the railway budget got subsumed within the national budget.

In the past, railway budgets were often the barometer for the country's economic health. Railway ministers competed with each other to set up new train routes – all of which were narrativized as a move towards balanced regional development. In fact for a long time the absence of an urban planning paradigm was not a sign of an absence of an understanding of urbanized habitats but the fact that it was subsumed within a larger imaginary of places networked through the colonial infrastructure like the railways or the Civil Service. Significantly, these became reference points for the shaping of new settlements that were set up or emerged around new development projects.

Typically, a government colony was arranged around the main office with different members of the bureaucracy being housed in graded systems with the highest authority being the power center and the others radiating around in strict hierarchy. The government colony was fenced off from the native local town/ settlement that lay around.

There could be remote railway stations in the middle of routes with no major settlements except for the houses that belonged to a handful of government employees. The fact that a railway station existed in the region, meant that there was a greater chance of the place being the preferred destination of investment at some point by the government.

The railway colony settlement or Civil Lines areas for the bureaucracy had been themselves modeled on army cantonment towns, which existed from much before. These army cantonment towns were usually set up close to the military power center – either a fort, the king's palace or a colonial office.

Such settlements implicitly questioned a dichotomous rural-urban narrative. They were mapped on a national grid in which the mobility of the central government employees played a very important role. Typically a railway employee – especially of a higher rank – was a temporary settlor. Even though the whole family moved, there was an awareness his transfer was imminent. However during the stay,

they often had access to the most recent technologies, especially communication and transport related as well as very contemporary lifestyles (at least among its elites) – even if they were geographically distant from metropolitan centers. Distance from metropolitan centers was made up through high mobility and communication so the sense of disconnect was never overwhelming. During the colonial and well into many decades into the post-independence period, Army and Railway Hospitals as government institutions provided good quality medical care. Educational infrastructure was for a long time provided by missionaries, especially in distant parts. Colonial India was networked with missionaries of different orders, from German Lutherans to Scottish groups, from Jesuits to Selesians and Fransicans – all of which were part of the expansive colonial infrastructure providing services to elite officers and native populations.

The railway network reached beyond that of the civil services and army towns thanks to the extent of the system itself, and due to the possibilities of its technologies. In places that were out of reach, the railways had a system of coaches which were fully equipped for different officers and ranks to travel in comfort, often with a retinue of service providers, medical supplies and even a doctor on board. These caravans were designed to respond to needs in remote places.

Such experiences and infrastructure were crucial in shaping the planning imagination in post – Independent India too. It was not that the city was absent – in as much as the approach was much more integrative of different habitats and had been enriched by the history of mobility networks like the railways.

Similar things happened through other economic sectors such as mines – capital-intensive steel factories or energy projects. Typically settlements got formed around the central project. The gated colony was the most important form of habitat housing officers and staff members that emerged from such experiences.

According to Batra both Gandhi and Nehru remained silent on the question of cities especially in the context of the future of India (ibid.) However, this observation does not do justice to the complex influences that Nehru and Gandhi also had on shap-

ing urban and rural policies.

It was not as if Nehru did not have an urban vision – otherwise he would not have taken such pains over the creation of Chandigarh – a new city in post-partitioned Punjab, built largely under the tutelage and creative eye of Le Corbusier with full support from the government. Chandigarh eventually became the defining paradigm of modernist planned urban development in the country and Nehru, a modernizer who was firmly committed to the principles of planning, saw Chandigarh as a template for new Indian cites. Two decades later, it helped create New Mumbai, colonial Bombay's delayed twin city. (Shaw, 2004)

Unlike Nehru, Gandhi was certainly no urbanist. His opinions on the modern Indian city were shaped mainly through his experiences of living in Bombay. The city epitomized all that was wrong with urban planning which made him view the Indian village as a refuge from that mess. He projected his own idealized vision on the traditional Indian village, which was derived mainly from his experiences of running a rural commune in South Africa, (Nandy, 2007). So Gandhi's village was not necessarily an endorsement of the traditional Indian village as much as an invitation to produce utopian alternatives to modern industrial lifestyles which he saw as the cause of urban misery in India.

If Nehru's urban visions produced New Mumbai as a shadow child of Chandigarh, along with several industrial townships, (all planned on grids, integral to the organized, socialist, public sector imaginary) – Gandhi spawned several city-rejecting life-styles that contributed to contemporary idealized versions of the Indian village. Though many would dispute it would not be inaccurate to say that Gandhi's spiritual – idealistic rural utopia also had its own progeny –Auro-ville, a French flavoured, alternative village-city that fructified in the 60s in the state of Tamil Nadu. The desire to reconstruct rural India was very much in continuation of an approach that looked at habitats as worthy of serious investment – even though not always in terms of an iconic city.

One more important name engaged in rural reconstruction was Rabindra Nath Tagore – a looming figure in the world of the emerging Indian nation of the early twentieth century. Tagore believed that Indian villages needed investment in educational infrastructure and that they could be clustered into local markets for products made through local skills. Towards this end he set up two important centers around Calcutta. Shanti Niketan (a school of learning set in natural surroundings) as well as Sreeniketan – an experiment in rural reconstruction and planning based on the principles of an integrated cluster of villages. Interestingly, Tagore had several exchanges and discussions with planner Patrick Geddes around the times these institutions were being set-up.[45]

All of these examples need not be seen as ignorance or denial of the urban imaginary. They can instead be read as expressing inherent complexities about urbanization in India. The problem may not lie with their particular visions as much as the fact that the conventional policies of the government, especially as that controlled by the bureaucracy, fell in between the tendency of administrative structures to bifurcate rural and urban areas into distinct realms, which was very much the global fashion.

Nehru, with his socialist leanings, felt that industry could be planted in remote, agrarian landscapes to stimulate the growth of new development, and Gandhi continued to endorse manual technology in rural areas to create self-sufficient regions. They were both expressing a confidence that urban visions or utopian lifestyles could be created afresh from India's socio-economic raw material that was very diverse and complex. It included villages, cities and towns across landscapes. However the conventions of policy and administration, and the exigencies of dealing with poverty and economic development goals may not have allowed these to be fully expressed in ideal ways.

In Batra's narration of urban planning in post-independence India, the story moves from a lack of acknowledgement of the city to a full fledged neo-liberal worship of the urban form, that started with economic liberalization from the late 90s onwards, espousing a clearer narrative of the city as an engine of urban growth. This was initially expressed in the form of special economic zones with new planned cities. However, the special economic zone

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45   Viswa Bharti Press and Edinburgh University Press: Rabindranath Tagore and Patrick Geddes, the Correspondence – (2004)

approach to urban growth ran into several hurdles in the form of land acquisition from the very early period (i.e. in the 1990s) itself.

Attempts by the government to ease acquisition of rural land for urban development was always caught up in several political and bureaucratic hurdles, but the chief cause was that farmers were not willing to give up their land as easily as governments imagined. The idea that people could be re-located from agricultural areas or that they could be absorbed as labour on land converted from rural to urban areas in the new economic zone was not something that could be imposed upon the rural population.

This resistance was often showcased as an anti-urban sentiment among Indian peasants. The companies and regional governments that forcefully took over agricultural or forested land, often referred to the protesting locals as anti-development. Whenever compromises were made or a compensation bargained it was showcased as an example of either greed or a sell-out.

In reality the resistance to land acquisition needs to be understood in more complex terms. The so-called rural labour force in India is not exclusively rural to start with. They are part of a complex system of movements between villages and cities in which they belong to and are engaged in distinct, though inter-related activities. For families to be deprived of an opportunity for supplementary income does not make sense when the government talks of a take-over of agricultural land. Nor does this mean that they don't value urban economic activities in their lives. Networked rural-urban family systems working as a unit is the norm and to deny the validity of such arrangements does not make sense. However, current urban policy, with its sharply divided boundaries between cities and villages, tend to convert a dynamic system into an unnecessary battleground between these integrated systems.

Such a dynamic system instead, needs to be understood and nourished by policy. It is a system in which people are comfortable with moving between villages and cities for work. They have little problem spreading themselves out as families with dual households. But to convert their own villages into urban enclaves or get swallowed up by the colonizing city is not something they can so easily endorse.

Not many projects within the New Economic Zone policies have so far progressed, - barring the moves towards planned urban development along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial corridor. This really is in continuation of the mobility related approach to urbanization that was part of the colonial imagination and not really a new paradigm.

The new cities being planned in India are all political capitals of new region-states and more or less follow a tabula-rasa approach with Chandigarh being their role-model. Ranchi, New Raipur and Amravati are the most dynamic spaces these days but are not showing any major departure from older conventions of urban planning.

The newly elected central government in 2014, has brought in an element of innovation within this conventional urban planning system, connected to the use of information and communications technology as tools of shaping and managing cities. Referred to as smart cities, they have become the holy grail of urban planning in India these days.

8.2 Contemporary Urban Policy

Urban studies scholar Amitab Kundu (2011) provides all sorts of counter-intuitive data about the patterns of urbanization in contemporary India. He shows periods where there was a decline in the growth patterns of urban populations, reveals lower levels of urban growth than the figures that get circulated in the media and also reveals a trend indicating lower rates of net migration into urban areas. At the same time though, he projects an increase in the supply of rural labour on a natural demographic increase and presents this as a strain on rural lives. Thus in spite of low levels of urbanization, he still sees rural-urban migration as the "only solution" to declining agrarian incomes.

This kind of analysis shows how persistent the flaws are in our reading of data about rural urban realities when viewed through standard narratives. Rather than see these figures as indicating a more integrated rural-urban context with a shared labour force, the whole experience of low urban and higher rural growth gets re-cast in terms of a necessary demographic shift which is inevitable becoming the "only real solution". It is this limitation that contin-

ues to shape current policies in India as well. Behind all attempts at managing, improving and upgrading Indian cities lies the looming fear of mass migration which ultimately gets converted into a narrative of managing slums – as these are the immediate consequences of such flows of people.

The Smart Cities Initiative of the present government, seems to be focused mostly on upgrading and managing a clutch of existing cities to create models of good governance and best urban practices and somewhere along the way, manage the "slum problem".

The "Smart cities" paradigm is shaped by consulting dialogues with Bloomsbury, New York. The aim is to create a constellation of a hundred odd smart cities that are equipped by the most advanced modes of technological management systems incorporating information and communication mechanisms and other such tools.

According to the government the smart cities mission is simply about driving economic growth and improving the quality of life of urban residents through developing local neighbourhoods and strategically using technology to achieve smart objectives.

This process involves retrofitting and redeveloping neighbourhoods that include slums along with enhancing the liveability of the whole city. There are also planned expansions into areas around existing cities to provide space for the expanding urban population and applying smart solutions like integrating IT and other technologies to improve infrastructure and surfaces.[46]

The methodology of the Smart Cities Program is based on a systematic process of upgrading existing cities. The municipalities in these cities have applied to become part of the program across the country. The government selected those cities that it felt showed the highest level of capability as well as motivation. However, the burden on infrastructural growth and equipment is largely left to the local municipality and state government who are supposed to raise investments by attracting global capital.

At the same time principles of smart urban governance are circulated in the public sphere through the media to be absorbed into the general approach of urban planning and management.

These become particularly strong when a new city is being created. At present, the biggest new urban enclave being envisioned is Amravati, which is being envisaged as a smart city. This is the new capital city of SeemAndhra, a state that bifurcated from Andhra Pradesh in response to the demand of a separate Telangana state with its old capital of Hyderabad – a city also slated to be part of the smart cities program.

At one level, the smart cities project is an intelligently conceived program that seeks to transform the existing urban context in India to upgrade into better urban environments. However, these problems are conceived of as being essentially related to mismanagement and victims of poorly executed past schemes that need to be better administered.

Still following twentieth century global trends, and being located in a growth story that abounds in narratives of cities as "engines of national development", the smart cities mission is also oriented towards moves that seek to urbanize India in demographic terms. A lot of speculation and projection about how many Indians will live in cities in a certain amount of time, has become the template against which the present government is anxious to create a higher bar of urban standards.

Given the existing global narratives about urbanization and development as a collapsed space, the government is using the "smart city" rhetoric strategically to attract capital for economic development.

At the same time – in parallel to the smart cities program the government has also invested in the smart villages program - Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission[47], launched in 2016, to balance the urban direction of the more media attractive smart cities mission. In many ways the setting up of a smart villages program and the use of the word "Rurban" is commendable. It shows that in spite of all the con-

46   (http://smartcities.gov.in/writereaddata/What%20 is%20Smart%20City.pdf)

47   http://rurban.gov.in/

ventional narratives, the reality from India's villages always strikes back – and even if the corporate sector does not always pay attention – the government cannot ignore it. The Smart Vilages program as part of the government's rurban mission is something that emerged from the previous government (before 2014) through its PURA program – which is an acronym for "Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas". The actual conception of the program is credited to the late President Abdul Kalam.

The smart village initiative basically uses the same principle of the smart cities project at the scale of the village. It is about better administering the villages and making it so attractive to local residents that villagers do not feel the need to migrate to cities.

When one looks at the data on these two distinct channels of communication from the government we see each of them emphasizing the two sectors separately. So what should essentially be an integrated program becomes trapped in a classical bureaucratic separation thanks to ministries and departments.

Thus we have the smart cities mission pointing out that the demographic projections for urban India are going to be high making the smart cities initiative essential to future urban growth. At the same time, the smart villages mission points out how high rural population continues to be in India and how this cannot be ignored either.

The smart villages programs aim at bridging the divide between the rural and urban, providing high quality amenities to villages and making sure that villages are economic and productive hubs as well.

The Mission seeks to develop rural "growth-clusters" which will be identified and acted upon for their potential for growth – and then trigger economic development for the whole region. The cluster of smart villages would then be equipped with similar technology and infrastructure for stimulating economic activities, local skills & entrepreneurship. The clusters would typically be geographically contiguous village networks with a population of between "25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas"[48]

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[48]   (http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=126934)

The Rurban mission program is to be managed by the Ministry of Rural Development while the Smart Cities Program is managed by the Ministry of Urban Development.

Since both these programs – the Smart Cities and Rurban Missions are fairly new, with the Rurban Mission only being launched in 2016, it would not be possible to review them with fairness in terms of performance. However, the smart cities program has already been exposed to a very high degree of critique, mostly because of anxieties about creation of enclaves that – especially if global corporate capital is their main resource of funding – may attract investment that is lead more by real-estate lobbies than serious economic players. If these real-estate lobbies lead the process, then, a labour surplus economy such as India will continue to be stuck with significant populations that won't fit into the smart cities as well as smart rurban village networks.

A close look at the objectives of the stated urban mission shows a fair amount of attention paid to slums and housing for the poor – but the main fear is that these may be over-ridden by the larger objectives of attracting investment for implementing policies.

Given the fact that most urban governments are actually ruled by several authorities – often working at cross purposes with each other – this could be a real fear. To illustrate – most cities slated for smart up-gradation are state capitals. The civic authority – usually the municipality or its equivalent looks after day to day management, but policy making for urban development is part of the state governments initiative and the concerned departments belong to a much more complex constituency. These may have been elected from other parts of the state, often rural parts and find their concerns directed by issues other than local urban development. Ideally, the state leadership should be working with an integrated approach, that includes rural and urban areas but the layers of power and authority are so cross-wired that their own interests get pitted against each other.

Added to this, the Rurban Mission has a very low investment outlined to it (around Rs. 5000 odd crores, or approximately 700,000 Euros) and at least so far, does not show a clear-cut approach to

fund raising. Global capital is not by itself attractive to dispersed rural regions with a perception of its consumers essentially having low purchasing power.

The fact that the urban and rural ministries themselves may be at odds with each other is a real concern. Not only in terms of differing approaches but also in terms of competing for similar investment. The rurban mission seeks to network villages with urban amenities and also make it attractive enough so that rural urban migration is curtailed and that rural areas themselves become sort of urbanized. So the desire to attract investments between established cities and newly emergent networks will prove to generate its own challenges.

The fact that a Rurban mission has been conceived is itself a move ahead. At the same time the fact that existing rural and urban ministries work at cross-purposes as a result of an older history of administrative procedures – sometimes dating back to the colonial era – is something that can well and truly subvert the aims of the Rurban mission.

We feel what is needed is a conception of habitats that sees a continuous movement of people between villages, towns and cities and within each of those kinds of habitats. This movement has been facilitated heavily by the affordable railway network and has created a template of habitats that are used by a vast majority of the Indian population as means of mobility.

While the smart cities and village networks are excellent strategies for managing existing habitats and improving that management, the dynamics that actually exist – in terms of mobility and circulation, of double-rootedness and ways in which community, familial and small capital and labour function and move between places is something that needs to be seriously factored. In other words, the smart habitats are actually accompanied by deep-rooted dynamics of smart movements, which are more difficult to visualize, but have deep impact and need to be factored in if these programs have to be made into successes.

Having said that, it is also true that the previous and present governments did/do invest heavily into seasonal employment guarantee schemes in rural areas, which actually recognize that circulation of labour is a reality and that to sustain families there has to be non-agricultural supplementary activity in rural areas that generate livelihood. So guaranteeing days of employment in villages for certain periods (which are lean in terms of agricultural activity) is an indication of a move towards a policy that acknowledges seasonal movement of labour across rural and urban regions. But these are not accompanied by a conscious articulation of mobility between rural and urban India, within the policy framework, which is absolutely mandatory for the concerned context.

8.3 Mobility Sensitive Rural-Urban Policies.

According to American urbanist Elizabeth Mylott, (Mylott 2007) public policies tend to look exclusively at urban or rural areas as separate dimensions. According to her, effective policies must look at social and structural realities of urban and rural areas, in terms of the whole region and strengthen the ties between urban and rural sectors.

Migration specialists in India have highlighted circular and seasonal patterns as dominating trends, but see no serious efforts from the government to address needs of seasonal workers. Needs that focus on accommodation, rather than the generalized need for housing, which gets caught in arguments of tenure and ownership.

Authors like Sumana Chatterjee, who focuses on "Rurban" spaces speak about the need for recognizing non –agrarian economic activities in rural areas as an important policy change, creating accommodation for seasonal and cyclical migrant workers in rural areas too, since rural-rural migration remains very high in India (Chatterjee 2014). She also asks for a change in investment patterns from governments. At present these mostly allocate specific budgets for rural and urban areas – with rural areas focusing on agricultural credit but rarely civic infrastructure, while urban areas – even if they are surrounded by agricultural fields do not get to integrate agriculture as part of their economic agendas. While transport systems within cities are allocated high investments, transport channels between villages and towns, rarely become beneficiaries of special schemes.

Perhaps the lack of adequate responses is due to

the inability of the government to factor in mobility between habitats, rather than simply a mechanically integrated vision of connecting the regions.

To some extent – migration scholars like Deshingkar and Start (Deshingkar, 2003) touch upon this fact – when they speak of the need to recognize and support migration as a Livelihood Strategy. Their claim is that migration is commonly seen by the government as a distress response, when often it is a response based on choice and is part of conventional family strategies to complement incomes. These modes of migration need special help – either for accommodation or credit, flexibility in terms of educational facilities for children and also medical help – all of which need to be geared up for their status as temporary citizens in a specific place at a given point of time.

D. Parthasarthy (Parthasarthy, 2013) believes that institutionalizing rural-urban connections more smoothly can help in rationalizing investments and integrating places more efficiently across the sub-continent. Right now – political mobility through political leaders from villages feel they have to rise up the ladder of authority by moving to centralized political centres that are almost always urban. From there, they channelize resources and policy measures towards their places of origin as they want the rural areas to catch up with the infrastructure or lifestyle of the urban. This once again disrupts any possibility of a more integrated system, that pays attention to the needs of rural-urban movements that actually make up a substantial part of the lives of the citizens.

Real estate development – often controlled as much by rural elites as by the traditional urban ones – has become a tool for a short-hand urbanization trend in mega-cities, small towns and even in some rural areas – as a marker of urban lifestyles in an extremely abstract sense. It superficially creates a narrative of growing urbanization without any supportive processes of economic or cultural growth, which is a fall-out of a faulty understanding of urbanization in the first place. One that does not do justice to the ongoing dynamics of mobility that shapes it.

The fact that labour in urban areas has predominantly rural roots is something that was always tacitly been acknowledged by the government. When this urban labour also brings its rural roots into the city through political alliances then there is a shift in the way power in cities start to operate. Old presidency cities such as Bombay-Mumbai, Calcutta-Kolkata, Madras-Chennai, Bangalore-Bengaluru have seen their old urban order taken over by rural leaders with significant power to control urban destinies. These leaders have a regional appeal and since the urban poor – with their rural roots -votes them in, there are frequent conflicts over how the city's resources will be allocated. In local elections within the municipalities, the middle-class and older urban elites have often to make way for representatives from slums and settlements that have deeper connections with rural areas.

In other cases - state parties, which rule municipalities, also dominate the state and are voted in by circulatory urban-rural slum dwellers with the appeal of parties spreading across a huge realm of population from villages to towns.

In the pre-liberalisation days – this state of affairs was resented by the older elite a lot more. They accused regional or nationalist political parties as working against the interests of the city at large. Vote-bank politics was seen to be the dominant way in which slums arose. Government land was often dedicated to the development of settlements in which political parties patronised their voters and promised them security of tenure.

However, in post-liberalisation years the situation is a lot more complicated. There are new interests that shape the urban landscape. Urban real estate developers and their interests, fuelled by speculation and hunger for investments by a growing middle class, has unleashed a regime that is in more direct conflict with working class, slum neighbourhoods (Jaffrelot, 2003).

As market principles throw larger nets of speculative possibilities on urban land, the existing occupied land by the politically strong but economically weak slum-dwellers – with their divided loyalties between cities and villages, develop renewed conflicts.

What subsequently emerges is a set of contrary policies – the most common of which is the Slum Rehabilitation Project (formulated in Mumbai but

now widely prevalent in several other cities) in which political parties bargain over a cut-off date in which migrants to the city get sifted out. Those who have come before a certain date are entitled to a free flat on the same ground-space on which their dwelling presently stands. The builder uses a portion of land to build a set of apartment from the market and uses the profits to construct the vertical structure in the neighbourhood, which now houses the erstwhile slum dwellers.

There are several problems with this approach. On the one hand the dates (cut-off dates marking legitimate from illegitimate migrants) is constantly negotiated politically. Secondly, the older settlors – who also happen to have been more settled and financially stable – utilize the scheme as an investment for sales or rentals. The more recent migrants – who are typically also poorer and more likely to have a small shop, manufacturing base or some other business in the settlement are often pushed out to another slum or lose their livelihoods. Many people who have been re-settled into apartments often sell and move off elsewhere because they cannot sustain a livelihood in the new urban environment.

The other scheme instituted a few years ago by the central government, was based on the principles of in-situ development – in which settlements were recognised and provided security of tenure and could improve their dwellings. This was based not on collective or co-operative ownership of land but on individual title deeds. This meant that essentially the well-meaning scheme had privatised ownership and made the settlement vulnerable to real-estate take-over, which happened in many cases. Though more progressive than the first – there is a strong danger that in a speculation driven market, even in-situ development will ultimately go against the interest of the slum dwellers. It will only act as a stepping-stone through which slums get re-organized in terms of private title deeds which then get taken over for the real-estate market.

In both these scenarios – the needs which a significant number of migrants in the city have – of accommodation (either short term or long term based on seasonal and cyclical needs) gets co-opted by the right to housing narrative and becomes organized around political goals rather than real needs of the people concerned. If there is a reflection of ignorance or a refusal to acknowledge the reality of circulatory migration in India – this is an excellent example.

Bureaucratic structures in India are multiple and overlaid by different interests, in both rural and urban contexts. Dynamics are complex, and there is little recognition of these complexities. People are perpetually vulnerable to dynamics that are not recognized and could be more easily preyed upon by factors that are insensitive to local interests – whether they be local, regional, national or global.

A multi-local rural-urban framework at least should be attempted at. Both through more flexible administrative structures, which allow local decentralization of power, irrespective of rural-urban divisions and a greater sensitivity paid to mobility of people, which becomes the basis of creating rural and urban infrastructure.

Rather than look at the political dimension as opposing rural and urban interests or privileging only corporate interests (as is happening more now) the organic links between rural and urban political establishments can be recognized and encouraged to work with rather than against each other. This can be in the form of a greater interest by urban populations in the rural regions (irrespective of where they come from), either in social, cultural or economic terms and encouraging of greater mobility between both these places.

This, accompanied by decentralized political systems in local levels that cut across rural and urban sectors could well see more complex formulations of governance and lifestyles. We provide concrete suggestions for the same in the following sections.

8.4 Proposals from the Circulatory Lives Study

Neil Brenner and Christian Schmidt (Brenner, 2014), have provided a good template for us to move towards a better set of policy formulations in tune with the arguments we make. Their template critiques the existing perspectives that shape our understanding of the urban but it does not reject it. It demands a re-wiring.

As we assert above, it is true that the policy question needs us to look at the rural-urban com-

bine through a mobility lens. However, the urban is definitely the dominant force of gravity that pulls in the large force field of rural-urban movements. The question of policy has to be ultimately framed through this space.

According to Anthony Leeds (Leeds, 1994) as well, what is true of the past remains true for today. The urban system is the logic through which rural spaces are shaped. The rural is the sub-set of the urban. Any re-wiring has to be done through the narrative of the urban. The following propositions are attempts in that direction.

Thesis 1: *The urban and urbanization are theoretical categories, not empirical objects*

Thus the terrain which the urban (or any related administrative policy) can cover should be able to include villages as well – agrarian and related activities along with conventional urban –industrial scapes. This simple assertion has far-reaching policy consequences. It immediately brings in the question of the spaces around the urban center into a relationship of accountability. It makes the agrarian sector integral to the urban economic map and accepts the fact that labour, especially when it is mobile, can be part of dual or multiple sectors and is not bound by simplistic co-relations between where people live and their skills. As movements of labour cover increasingly larger distances, as the city's physical needs of energy and fuel get to be satisfied by systems that are distant, the urban imaginary, especially through advanced communication and information technologies gets a much more complex frame to work with – one which is not narrowly locked into the city. How we look at labour, mobility, work and space thus need to factor these dimensions in a more relevant way.

Thesis 2: *The urban is a process, not a universal form, settlement type or bounded unit.*

Therefore the mobilities it encourages can be seen as an expression of this process and the circulatory regimes it stimulates should also be engaged with. The mobilities here represent the agency and engagement of the labour force that, either in the quest for livelihoods or as a matter of choice has consciously used movement and migration as part of their strategies. If the urban is an arrangement of live, work

and people, in concentration and density patterns of different gradations, then the development of urban spaces can be seen to be part of the movements that the labour force responds to and also shapes. Historically, urban formations have happened in different ways. Concentrations of labour and their activities linked to availability of resources have caused their emergence. Or they have followed trails that previous concentrations have attracted them or have consciously attracted them to come. Such moves do not necessarily have to be seen as a permanent one – but as part of an ongoing process. Policies to do with urban housing in particular need to factor this in. The provision of accommodation, temporary housing, and shelter have to be integrated more consciously rather than simply reduce the sharing of urban space into one of permanent housing.

Thesis 3: *urbanization involves three mutually constitutive moments— concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization and differential urbanization.*

At present, there is more emphasis on concentrated urbanization with extended urbanization largely seen in terns of expansion into the periphery or suburbia. Differential urbanization – which would involve an acknowledgement of diverse built environments within an urban fabric, needs to be acknowledged at the earliest. Concentrated urbanization encourages specific ways in which space is used and evaluated. It has a tendency to coalesce and create value through that cohesion. If economic policies encourage speculation around space – there is a greater tendency to cut off concentrated urbanization from extended urbanization and an increasing rejection of differential patterns. Such policies tend to encourage the idea of urban space as a scarce commodity that needs to enhance its exchange value over its use value. When space really is scarce (through restricted use) it expands into territories around it and attempts to convert these regions into new zones of concentration. If we encourage a policy in which urban space is high on use-value and if intensive use of resources, including space, dominates the choices, then there is greater differential urbanization in terms of forms and uses of space. The fact that space can be used in multiple ways does not reduce the areas around urban concentrations into peripheries, suburbia or agrarian enclaves. It produces a richer template of activities, landscapes and economic sectors developing degrees of co-dependency.

Thesis 4: *the fabric of urbanization is multidimensional*.

When people coalesce space and time by living and working in one unit – as we have described in our commentaries of the tool-house (Echanove, 2009), they then create a new dimension within their fabric, which allows for multiple uses of space through time sharing etc. Similarly when they use mobility as part of their socio-spatial arrangements, allowing resources from homes far away and when their mobility is something that is integral to their lives as urban citizens they once more expand possibilities. Cities, which are confident of their multi-dimensionality, allow for more flexible use of their resources, their spaces, their multi-zonality and other such elements. Contemporary cities these days do not allow for such flexibility thanks to a more one-dimensional understanding of urban space and city forms. Our own work in Urbanology, through our Mumbai office is dedicated to understanding how homegrown neighbourhoods are excellent examples of the multi-dimensional fabric of cities. Whether it is a slum like Dharavi, a self-improved settlement like Shivaji nagar, or urban villages, these settlements are living examples of a multi-dimensional fabric, which is not recognized as such. All these neighbourhoods also have a high degree of residents who are part of circulatory movements that connect them to their villages back home. The mobility factor also allows them to use urban space in a more creative and flexible way as it becomes part of much larger networks in expanded territories and the availability of resources is enhanced.

Thesis 5: *Urbanization has become planetary* –

It covers the planet through its influence and thanks to the way in which new technologies of communication and transport have brought in scapes together. This thesis needs to be mediated by more specific recognition of patterns that exist within the planetary map. As geographers, Brenner and Schmid see the world through a cartographic imagination. The same processes that we see from the ground at our work, is also seen through their own satellite imagery. The point at which the worm-eye and the bird-eye view coalesce is when specific patterns in the planetary urbanization start to appear. These patterns are not just of cities networked with each other or cities expanding into frontiers. They are shaped by circulatory, user-generated movements. When people move, as migrants or otherwise, they are actively shaping the circulatory regime that gets produced by these movements. This is certainly true of societies in India, Africa and China, where two way movements across territories of labour is more pronounced. But it is also becoming more vivid in advanced societies, which allow more flexibility through improved technology. In all cases the imagery of planetary urbanization is definitely becoming more and more recognized, whether through popular memes on the net describing different forms of world interconnectivity or environmental movements that are becoming more specific in terms of describing how resources are consumed, produced and networked. If we add to this more specific maps that describe how people shape habitats through their movements, how many urban forms are created and sustained through such movements, if we encourage more policies that recognize people as essentially dynamic entities as opposed to fixing them into addresses and bureaucratic regimes of control, our understanding of cities will transform. This will be specially useful for cities in countries like India which are considered to be less urban or semi-urban when in fact they reflect a different form of urbanization altogether.

Thesis 6: *urbanization unfolds through variegated patterns and pathways of uneven spatial development.*

Therefore there is no universal trajectory to the life of a city. A city does not have to look as if it is pre-fabricated to fit a standard imagined future – which today is mostly high-rise and concentrated in terms of specific economic activities and built-forms. We need to recognize that what we consider to be urban normatives are those that have evolved over several decades if not centuries, representing specific alignments of live, work and place conditions. Some contemporary modes of urban planning that are still in vogue today, can be located to specific historical moments, such as post war Europe and the U.S. China has produced its own high-speed-constructed cities that are shaped by a desire to shift the demographic of its nation from rural to urban. Today China has shifted this emphasis somewhat as we will see in the next section. It has realised that compressing the history of urban development shaped by a

specific form of how a city looks like from the Euro-American context into its own national economic development produces some stresses and strains. The economy takes time to catch up through a tilt of demand and supply at different points of time. These moves could have been made with less wastage of natural resources and expenses if we were not fixated on only one form of urbanization and one form of a contemporary modern city. In comparison India, with its messy urban scapes and in spite of its best intentions to produce contemporary city is caught between two very differing realities. A highly mobile work force, a composite sense of urban-rural identities and urban forms that are still flexible and malleable. Unfortunately all of this is seen to be an example of its backwardness and most existing policies do not reflect creative possibilities. They are all aimed at force-feeding dominant narratives into a system that is wired differently.

Thesis 7: *the urban is a collective project in which the potentials generated through urbanization are appropriated and contested –*

Therefore it will always have a political trajectory in terms of use of land and resources. It is best to make these as explicit as possible. Today, most cities around the world are in some state of crisis. Either their ethnic composition is incompatible with each other producing social discontent (as in Paris), or the urban areas are extremely divided in terms of class, or have become very expensive. What we see in cities with more extreme scenarios, such as in Mumbai or Nairobi, Dhaka or Rio, are existent in different degrees in most urban spaces. If we evolve policies based more on the true trajectories of urbanization rather that the one we consider to be the most appropriate, then perhaps many of these issues can be resolved across the urban world. We need to recognize that the urban spaces are essentially collective and geared towards working and living for people. If the space on which these activities are carried out themselves become conflicted, through a regime in which ownership of space dominates use, where exchange value of space outstrips its use-value, then the ability of a city to fulfill its own ambitions gets severely restricted in the long term. However, it is not simply a political project. Infused in this is a philosophy and practice of urban life that needs to be integrated into the project as well. If we abstract political principles from what we understand and conceive of the

life in which they are embedded – and today this life is coloured by a specific way in which we look at most aspirational urban lifestyles - then the attempt at transformation will be an abstract one.

8.5. Policy Recommednations:

A. *In Brief*

a) We must look beyond city boundaries – and try creating inter-municipal and interstate mobility strategies to evolve administrative units that do not distinguish rural and urban sectors so sharply.

b) Consider the village as i) a neighbourhood in an interconnected national polity, and ii) as a valid habitat within a city.

c) Favour affordability over speed for public transportation systems

d) Enhance connectivity between train stations and villages

e) Recognize the multi-local nature of family's income strategies

g) Allow employees to follow seasonal rhythms and go back to the village for agricultural work during monsoons and harvesting.

h) Learn from informal labour arrangements: formalize "relay" labour arrangements, where people from the same family and village become part of the labour supply on a seasonal basis.

i) Rather than only focus on owning or renting homes, give importance to needs of accommodation as well that range from short term to long term strategies.

j) Encourage home-based economic activities and homegrown development both in villages and urban neighbourhoods. This encourages a large fabric of multi-sectoral activities across habitats.

k) Reduce the pressure on commuting within cities by encouraging more work-live con-

ditions at every level. At the same time facilitate movement from city to the countryside.

l) Encourage cross-sector mobility (across primary, secondary and tertiary sectors)

m) Encourage personal investments in villages (for home and collective infrastructure)

n) Recognize the role of family, clan and community as facilitators for mobility, and motors of economic development.

B. *In Detail*

1. We must recognize a high degree of circulation of people and families in India as a reality that has already produced a regime of built environments - like homegrown settlements in mega cities, (mostly treated as slums). These actually allow dual or multi-household families to simultaneously exist in rural and urban contexts. Let homegrown settlements, urban villages and other kinds of habitats be seen as a marker of the intrinsic mobility of Indian's urban population. Encourage co-operatives to maintain them, provide occupancy rights, facilitate the use of resources from rural and urban areas to each other, through the channel of circulatory migrant families.

2. Recognize changing rural, farming and *non-farming* activities such as retail and services for local residents in villages and also new approaches to traditional farming. As part of new emerging scenarios in rural India there are already changes happening in the realm of construction of homes with a local industry growing around building activities. This accompanies the development of urbanized civic amenities, water supply and sewage. We need to further facilitate the transfer of technology and resources between urban and rural contexts for this. The fact is that at any given point of time, rural areas continue to have non-agricultural economic sectors to some extent. Encouraging this will not necessarily change the rural to the urban or the village to the city. It will only bring about some improved infrastructural facilities to villages and will also encourage more circularity of move-

ment between families living in both places. As long as land ownership patterns remain tied to family and communities and these are primarily aimed at agricultural production the dominant economy will remain agricultural, even if there is some expansion of non-farming activities. Also the exchange will facilitate a change in the approach to farming – introducing new markets and products. For example, in Ratnagiri, one of the prime agricultural products is mango – a fruit whose local variety is exported all over the world. Families traditionally involved in this will, through more urban-rural exchange, optimize their capacities and expand markets more efficiently.

3. Encourage "leave" (at work) policies in urban areas to recognize special seasons like harvesting in the monsoons as a valid reason for taking off . Especially those who have access to land or who can earn some extra money by tilling land. In a country that is predominantly agrarian – recognizing the seasonal move by providing job security to the worker on return – akin to paternity or maternity leaves – would be a very important symbol of an integrated policy. The shortfall in labour can also be filled in urban areas through a relay system –where someone else from the same person's network fills in so that security of the job to the same channel is maintained.

4. Create more contexts for accommodation for circulating labour and migrant groups in rural as well as urban contexts. This would also mean increased income for people who open up rental facilities by extending their homes as accommodation sites for transient workers. Since several migrants are looking for affordable accommodation for long stretches before (and if) they move to purchasing their own properties, this process would be an important stepping stone.

5. Treat the Railways in India as a commons that primarily benefits the working classes in rural and urban areas. Do all one can to increase quality and standards of travel. Make affordability a very important criteria of improved services – that cannot be compromised – even if it means subsidies. This has indeed

become a lifeline for a large part of the labour force in the country. Any positive intervention there – without compromising on affordability, will be a huge acknowledgement to the value of Circulatory migration.

6. Continue with existing policies that make mobile and internet use cheaper for the poorest segments across rural and urban contexts. Mobile phones have undoubtedly transformed local businesses and also forged new networks across greater distances than ever before. It has allowed people to coordinate manufacture, distribution and marketing goods by the most economical and efficient channels, thanks to connecting it to cheap railways and due to availability of labour in far off places. The increase in internet services and literacy will help energize this even more.

7. Reject zoning of economic activities and residential places in rural and urban areas for non-hazardous and non-polluting industries. Circulatory Migration works on the principle of multiple use of space and skills across territory and time. One way in which migratory groups have managed to survive in big Indian cities, is through the space of home-grown settlements that allow for businesses and economic activities to happen in a free context – without restrictions and zonal classifications. The home itself is a major space for production, thus savings in rents as well as local travel. In rural India – the amount of non-agrarian activities is also increasing and one way it is doing so is by allowing economic activities to be active with less or no restrictions. At the same time, such a policy would clearly have prohibit non-hazardous and non polluting activities for the sake of the workers as well as the neighbourhood itself.

8. Encourage train travel facilities that legitimizes the transport of small amounts of goods for ordinary passengers for commercial purposes across villages and cities. Similar to the above point – the restriction on carrying goods in passenger compartments in India is very tight and is basically geared towards discouraging businesses and forcing people to use freight services – which only helps large-scale users. Legitimatization of transport of small amounts of goods on trains – at nominal costs would also be hugely beneficial.

9. Encourage greater variety of land use policies in small and big towns which validate agro-practices in appropriate contexts. Conversely, facilitate the tendency of manufacturing and non-farm activities in rural areas. Traditionally, urban fabrics could accommodate small amounts of agrarian activities – especially in the peripheries. Usually real-estate speculation works against this. However – pro-active moves to encourage use of urban land for non-industrial and finance, or, service activities that includes gardening and urban farming, can help to improve environments but also provide alternative incomes. These can be integrated into dense settlements. Conversely – the acceptance and encouragement of non-agrarian land-use in rural areas can also add value to village life in significant ways.

10. Encourage a system of governance that does not bifurcate rural and urban sectors in most of the districts in India. At one level, many districts in India, already function like urban systems i.e. as integrated habitats consisting of villages and towns. It was the colonial government that had created a massive administrative structure of revenue extraction in which it treated districts as holistic units with a District Collector playing the most important role in administering rural and small towns. Like the railways themselves, such governance strategies were also part of a narrow colonial agenda. But just as the railways were co-opted by local user needs – the district too can be re-formulated into integrated rural and urban networks. This can allow for better local regional planning and a more effective use of local circulatory migratory tendencies. Smaller footprints of circular migration in India is very high. Most national data considers a 200 km starting point to qualify as migration. The majority of people in rural areas navigate under that cut-off point.

11. Encourage travel and tourism in more off-beat places all over the country through train travel. A general improvement of safety

and affordability will stimulate a lot of travel and expansion of local business opportunities for locals as well as people from outside. Given the way in which community and caste operate – long distance travel helps liberate people in terms of overcoming inhibitions and expanding life opportunities. But travel for pleasure can also be a trigger.

12. Encourage pilgrimage routes for Hindu, Buddhist, Dalit, Muslim, Christian and other sites. In the same light, religious and spiritual routes can be an important component of the travel charters.

13. Facilitate the creation of festivals and events across the country to attract local and international tourists and restore the confidence in safe travel for everyone, in a class inclusive manner. This idea - of seasonality and religious events being one of the most important stimuli for people to travel, can become more cross-cultural, encouraging people to expand the geography of their circulatory regimes to include a larger horizon of festivals. Perhaps even special cultural seasons linked to agriculture or cultural cycles. These can also be a stimulus for new business ventures.

14. Encourage the development of educational and other institutions and traditional and modern manufacturing activities inter-linked to them, on as many routes as possible. Educational and medical travel is also an important cause for travel and already there are examples of regional integrated systems, that include colleges and institutions in states such as Maharashtra and Tamil nadu are very high in number. An improvement in quality as well as connecting these networks to international flows will help enhance the charisma of these institutions. In the process, the government could subsidise the growth of hostels and temporary accommodation for students along existing railway stations and routes and use them for future expansion aiming at an increase in educational and medical institutions

15. India's version of the federal government - called the Central Government has in

place a massive infrastructure that is meant for the benefit of its own employees. These range from railways to armies to government banks and public sector undertakings. There are special accommodations for children to enroll in schools across the country on a priority basis – aimed at children of these "extra-mobile" families. This existing model can act as a template on a much larger scale. So rather than restrict the horizon of mobile living to children of employees of the central government work force, the same approach, policies and facilities can work for the general public – with different associations and groups forming similar networks and infrastructures. This model has worked well in many sectors, and could go a long way in opening up the imaginary that comes with treating circulatory lives as the norm in administrative policy.

8.6 Making Five Circulatory Family Lives Easier

We end this section with a brief set of recommendations keeping in mind the lives of the protagonists in our study. This emerged through our interactions and discussions with them.[49]

a) Enhance quality of railway transport between the city and the village without compromising on affordability.

b) Improve the quality of local education in both villages and cities so it is easier for individuals in families to do a few years in either of the places. It should not be an administrative problem to move from one place to another.

c) Improve medical facilities in villages and small towns so that is not the only reason why individuals from villages are forced to travel to the city.

d) Make transport of processed and raw goods easier between villages and cities so that business opportunities in both places can be enhanced through increased co-dependen-

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49   A more general set of policy recommendations have already been presented in the Summary of this report

cy of processes.

    e) Create cheaper modes of accommodation in cities.

    f) Encourage economic activities that are non-agrarian in villages.

    g) Request urban employers to give valid leave during the monsoon and harvest seasons.

    h) Keep prices of internet on smart phone services cheaper.

8.7 Policy – post-script: The Train as Icon of Circulatory Urbanism

From the Icon of skyscraper to the Icon of the Train

The contemporary city has a tendency to take upon itself its iconic status very seriously. It tends to mark this iconicity with specific forms of architectural landmarks. In the global market for investment, the city has become an important cheerleader and magnet. It has become highly proficient in the techniques of self-mythologizing, especially with easy to the world of culture and art as tools for such myth making. Cities almost seem to have media managers and image consultants managing their representations. These can grow organically in some cases – especially in cities with strong media industries. Or they can be specially and consciously shaped and molded. Like when governments compete for organizing major sports events, which usually bring in resources and the construction of major architectural landmarks.

Places, like people, have charisma in different proportions. The ways in which cities, use, abuse, celebrate, build on and exploit this charisma for tourism, for the media industry, for garnering resources for governance are easily recognized.

In the contemporary urban imagination, iconic connections to architectural landmarks, in particular the skyscraper, is easily recognizable. When the city as a whole showcases its identity – then a new landmark is usually in the shape of a tall building. From the Empire state in New York, to the Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur to higher goals in Dubai and still going strong – the iconic quality of a city is now increasingly crstallized by the tall building – growing taller.

In the same vein, the Railways have also produced strong mythologies about themselves. The station has often been a site of huge architectural attention. In Mumbai the Victoria Terminus station is a very good example, which even has a UNESCO world heritage site status[50]. In India the train itself has been a major symbol of nationhood. It has mainly been used to express an important political aspiration – that of unity of the country. Metaphors and allegories connected to the train abound in popular culture. In cinema, in TV and photographs, the train itself has been India's most favoured symbol of nationhood (Aguiar, 2011).

While the railway has indeed been celebrated as a symbol of national unity, the train itself has not been much of a symbolic statement on its own. With its simple, eternally perennial retro-look evocative of a past era, it is only now that there is some attempt at a makeover. In terms of policy formation – we definitely feel there is much more to the train as a symbol that needs to be explored – especially in the context of places, urban iconography and the very idea of mobility itself.

In the Konkan region – the Konkan railways has a special story – in terms of the city, as well as the region at large. It needs to build on this mythology more consciously. It needs its own identity. Its design and visual grammar needs to express this identity more strongly than it does. To start with, it needs to pay more attention to the stories of the circulatory lives that make up most of its passenger list – and the places they come from. For this of course, the world of circulatory lives and the urban field that it generates needs to be taken seriously first.

In India each train tells a story – of lives on the move, of places and cities that are destinations, transit points and homes at different points of time. Each of them has a potential to become a powerful symbol of that beat. And can be represented as such.

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50   http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/news/CST%E2%80%99s-hiddenheritage/article14481526.ece

realignments – and this larger story continues to unfold even in the contemporary context.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 The Universal Dimension of Circulatory Lives.

The deterministic reduction of urbanization to rural-urban migration as an axiomatic explanatory device does not do full justice to what constitutes urban growth and development in many parts of the world. The twentieth century was a period of full-blown urban development in most parts of the world. In Europe and the Americas, the growth of urban population was a combined factor of rural-urban migration and cross-national migration. From industrialization, to war torn displacement, from colonial realignments of national boundaries to mechanization of agriculture, from erstwhile slavery or indentured labour systems - there were many reasons for urban demographic growth. Rural-urban migration was part of a much larger story of movement and

It is difficult to compare the complex configurations of plantation linked, slavery based practices that involved trafficking of people from Africa to the Americas. To equate what the terms "rural", "village" or "home" meant to them – with what the rural means to those living in many African nations or in the Chinese or South Asian contexts is not possible. Likewise, it is difficult to collapse the stories of indigenous communities in the Latin American context with the Spanish origin populations there. When an African-American immigrant moved to New York in the early twentieth century – the sense of the rural and the urban meant something totally different than for the low-caste migrant from a village in India, who often returned to reclaim identity and status.

Through this flux in the twentieth century, the urban became more than just a spatial category. It became synonymous with the modern, with the future and was infused with narratives of development and economic growth, with desirable lifestyles and with

Locals waiting for auto rickshaw, Khed.

the idea of progress. The city as Neil Brenner (2012) suggests, became an ideological space. Statecraft, urban management and planning, and common consolidated markets played their part in making successful cities sites of the successful expression of capitalism.

The ideal of the megacity became a poster symbol of this entire process. London, Paris, New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Moscow, became the best-known icons of the megacity, especially from the 1960s and 70s onwards. Postwar urban planning strategies, especially those tried out in Europe became global standards for the world. And demographic figures were often touted as signposts – both for measuring economic growth in terms of rural-urban ratios as well as for individual cities.

However at the turn of the century, new city states such as Singapore and Dubai appeared on the horizon, replicating the successful urban models in shorter time periods and without paying much attention to other modernist ideals such as political freedom and cultural openness. Simultaneously in other parts of the world, the megacity, developed in a more dystopian type. For example, Mumbai, Delhi, Dhaka, Karachi, Lagos, Mexico City or Rio and combined their own economic growth with national population growth, and produced unintended urban forms and low living standards.

Images of crowded cities circulated (and still do) widely – especially of over population and destitution in rural areas of the respective countries. Slums in particular became a symbol of over-population *and* failed megacities. Theorists like Mike Davis (2006) saw the growth of slums in these cities as a function of neoliberal economic regimes unfolding globally, while David Harvey (2012) saw revolutionary potential in the mass of urban labour servicing the city and being denying basic rights to it.

At the same time, along with attempts at controlling population growth, the recipe in most cases continued to remain more efficient planning and management of megacities. The most accepted narrative in this regard was of one-way rural urban migration and the constant projection of future growth in terms of more urbanization. The outcome of this unstoppable one-way flow is of course seen as an unpending disaster that threatened the migrants

themselves along with the city's urban order, and by extension the political stability of the countries to which they belonged.

In China, most of urban development from the 1980s onwards followed the model of Singapore and Dubai. Its main innovation was to supersize cities to uprecented scales, which producing the impression that the type of urbanization that was happening in China was something new altogether, when it was (and still is) in fact, only a twentieth century typology – the megacity – gone "hyper", with no fundamental qualitative change.

India had conflicted rural-urban loyalties till the late 1980s. It refused both capitalism and conventional urbanization in the first half of its post-independence years. It (unsuccessfully) embraced twentieth century megacity urbanization from the latter half of the 1990s. That too, with a completely different wiring in place – thanks to its political, bureaucratic, regional and national level conflicts. It is now applying the same all reciepe that consists in transforming, in one way or the other, the statistical 70% rural India into predominantly statistical urban population. The magical thinking at work is that growth and development is to be found in the statistical urban. The numbers have barely moved since the 1990s in India, while China has become predominantly urban in statistical terms as well as in the global imaginary.

However, in China too, during the first two decades of the twenty first century, some cracks started to appear – with its millions people floating population, stuck in between their rural administrative entities and their urban geographic and economic locations. The continued presence of older 'urban villages', with lower standards in brand new cities such as Shenzhen – where they are said to provide accommodation to half of the population. Moreover, many Chinese agglomerations are experiencing the phenomenon of empty flats locked by investment, with speculation driven urban development. and the presence of urban villages with a lower standard of life within large mega-urban conglomerations.

No wonder that, as mentioned earlier, in the year 2014 the Chinese government drafted a plan for a new urbanization model that speaks of pre-urban areas, rural urban linkages, more sustainable prac-

tices and combined agricultural and manufacturing activities.[51]

In India too, we see on one hand the smart cities initiatives, which seems to be the perfect conceptual hook to attract global speculative capital, and on the other, the push for Rurban Mission project. However half-hearted, the attention to the village is still there.

No matter how attractive the urban ideal is for Indian business and parts of the ruling elite, the rural is too strong a presence for any democratically elected government to ignore. As we have suggested above, rurban missions that lock rural and urban channels in firewalled administrative departments do not do justice to what actually transpires on the ground – in terms of movement and mobility.

China and India share some similarities in terms of policy orientation. Especially since both of them have a history of socialist ambition at some point of time. While China has moved to a more efficient system of managing market impulses without giving up governmental control, India opened up markets with more openness to privatization with an increasing openness to global corporate capital.

In the past, both China and India were primarily geared towards their rural horizons combining industrial and working class rhetoric in a manner that did not give too much leeway to urban middle class and elite interests. However China started changing strategies in the 1980s and by the 1990s had set up a goal towards urbanization that had such speed and efficiency in implementation that it attracted attention from all over the world. Especially since this was combined with manufacturing activities in urban, rural and per-urban centres using its massive labour surplus. This surplus was always a mix of rural and urban people and remains so.

India changed its socialist moorings a bit later – in the 1990s and without the same degree of processing of its population through education, like China. In fact India still has a low track record in terms of education and literacy. Compared to China,

India was always cluttered and messy – thanks to its multi-party electoral system, centralized and regionalized bureaucracy, and cross-layering of local, regional and national interests. China had a centralized authority with more clear cut – single party control, even though it did encourage some level of localized decision making choices within that system. What the world saw there was the growth of major urban centres and the presence of global standards in urban lives in many parts of the country. Since this also coincided with considerable economic growth and the dominance of China in the global manufacturing circuit, the idea that urbanization and development are collapsible became further reinforced.

However, cities in China also became part of local and global speculative interests with the urban middle class and upper class elite dominating the new landscape. There was an uneven landscape in the peri-urban areas (workers vertical dormitories often comparable to Indian urban working class habitats) as well as within the cities– in the form of urban villages where the countries vast "floating populations" lived. These populations were also the main source of labour energies for construction of the cities as well as maintaining and servicing them .

This phenomenon of the floating population is a legacy of the Hukong system of China which basically controlled the migration of villagers to cities and tied them up bureaucratically to places of origin. So a system of permits and a parallel system of unrecognized permits started to emerge which was manifested in the form of shadow cities around the urban villages in the biggest Chinese cities.

In India on the contrary, migration, movement and circulation of labour was a democratic right. However, this right was and still remains highly contested. It is perennially questioned by regional interests which still see migrants from other states as outsiders.

Even though legally Indians from one part of the country could move freely, and settle down elsewhere, in reality they faced lots of restrictions. They needed special modes of identification to prove their domicile before getting basic services. However, since by law the migrants always stood on stronger grounds and the central government was mostly committed to that right – it remained a ground for

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51   http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/publications/files/BB910.pdf (Zhihua Zhou - China Launches a New Urbanization Plan 2014-2020)

conflict.

The regime of slums are an outcome of such conflicts too. Usually central government land become the sites where migrants from other states reside, and regional state government land provides space for migrants from the local region. This multi-party and many layered system of interests cuts across rural and urban lines and is responsible for the way in which habitats in India look and get administered.

In the case of China, too, with its official restrictions on movement and migration, with its commitment to higher standards of urban living, its lesser inequities, and a single party system – similar urban shadows exist. Urban villages in China are analogous to slums in India in terms of being symbols of floating populations. Both countries acknowledge – but not fully –the persistence of the rural and the peri-urban within their urban mainstream.

In both places urban areas are growing physically and spatially but are relatively more populated by investment and capital rather than people and human resources. The fact that the relatively poor in both places also happen to be people of rural origin but with strong urban ties is a similar reality. And in both cases, that population tends to occupy places that are neither fully urban or rural even within the fabric of the big city.

The main challenge in India is to ensure that the real estate forces do not overwhelm the social objectives of affordable housing projects. In most cases local governments collude with the market in the name of slum redevelopment, which only pushes unplanned settlements (where most working classes live) to the periphery. It lets the prime parts of the city be taken over by real estate development for privileged classes.

Europe could potentially be a model for both India and China (and one imagines for several parts of the African continent too), for an urban imaginary which is based more systematically on inter-connectedness, and one which uses technologies of communication and transport more effectively. Interestingly, the European Union too has a Rurban mission in place[52]

which refers to rural urban connectivity very significantly in its manifesto.

The European experience of urbanization, like its modernity as Bruno Latour observes, is fractured and incomplete when seen in linear terms. However, given the argument we are making here, twenty-first century sees its significance more clearly, especially from the vantage point of strong and populous economies such as India and China. The need to transgress the rural- urban divide, can be encouraged by those histories of the European Union – which fall on the margins of its 75% urbanized status[53] and which show high standards even outside the big city footprint. The critical caution there is that the European economic, urban and cultural landscape may have lost some of the rich texture that comes with highly differentiated lifestyles and habitats. Thanks to the ease of travelling from one place to the other in Europe, many villages have become defacto peripheral dormitory suburbs. Village-dwellers who commute to the city are not rooted in both places, but rather in none of them. The resulting sense of alienation from "place" – any place – may be the source of a certain rural European malaise.

According to Marie-Laure Augere Franier of the European Parliamentary Research Service in her briefing to the European Parliament on January 2016[54] - in Europe, traditional rural-urban dichotomies seems to have become irrelevant from the point of view of development of territories as a whole. As transportation infrastructre keeps and developing and linking places, boundaries between different realms become fuzzier. Socio-economic and technological changes connected to transport and communication have made traditional geographic definitions redundant.

In all the above examples, we see strong rural-urban linkages active in some way or the other. In the case of China, it is in the administrative anomaly of the floating population and urban villages. In the case of India it is seen in its slums and persistent importance of the rural. In Europe there seems to

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52   http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ BRIE/2016/573898/EPRS_BRI(2016)573898_EN.pdf

53   Which by the way, already includes cities and towns which in some cases are smaller than modestly sized villages in India and China

54   (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ BRIE/2016/573898/EPRS_BRI(2016)573898_EN.pdf

be a shift away from measuring urbanism in definite terms and embracing more openly, the idea of rural-urban blurriness. Yet, we feel that these models have to be energized into active policy by factoring in mobility, movement and circulation of people outside both paradigms of rural-urban migration and daily communting.

9.2 The Particular Dimension of Circulatory Lives

In many parts of the urban world, especial-ly among nations from the African continent, South Asia and China, rural to urban migration does not spontaneously translate into a total relinquish-ing of village ties (Muzvidziwa, 2010; Hugo, 1982; Deshingkar, 2008; Hu Feng, 2011). Double-rooted-ness is very much a reality with families dividing themselves between the village or town of origin, and the big city.

Often considered an unstable arrangement, the phenomenon is commonly perceived to be transitory, merely a strategy for survival in an insecure urban context where investment in rural homes is seen as little more than self-financed old age social security. It is explained away as an inevitable but passing phenomenon that is part and parcel of traditional, rural nations transitioning towards development. (Tumbhe, 2016; Jain, 2016)

In the process, especially in a country that is self-identified as "developing", most national authorities look at this reality impatiently. The hurry towards being urbanized (and developed) means that people in between villages and cities are often considered illegitimate. In China, they are referred to as a "floating" population and an administrative headache causing urban infrastructural stress. In India they are perceived to be a sign of weak urbanization – as people don't seem to be ready to give up a life in a backward rural economy. Or they are considered to be a drag on urban infrastructure, since most migrant populations in cities tend to live in shanties and slums.

This impatience converges into a narrative arc, a globally accepted one, about urbanization and development defined predominantly in demographic terms (Brenner 2014). However, the convergence seems to end in an uncertain horizon the moment we step out of the framework of national concerns. It becomes lined by visions of mega cities, megalopolises and large urban agglomerations that throw massive challenges to mainstream urban planning practices, which envisages a dense and overpopulated urban future (ibid). Subsequently, calculations of scarce urban space and demographic growth create anxieties about dystopian comings, which merge into environmental concerns to convert collective stress into despair. The rural hordes arriving in the city become cause for administrative and environmental worry, even as their (inevitable) transition to becoming urban citizens is seen to be good for the economy. The Urban Age invites celebration, resignation and fear at once.

In theoretical terms scholars such as Neil Brenner and Christian Schmidt have shown how this urban age narrative is tied down to a history of limited commentaries, which tend to reduce urbanization to purely demographic features. (ibid) Such a reduction goes hand in hand with a set of assumptions about capitalist expansion, obfuscation about the use and abuse of natural resources (as they are seen unfold in spaces beyond urban horizons) and speculation and financial control of land and territory. Brenner and Schmidt, by rooting themselves firmly in Lefebvre's vision of the urban – in which it moves away from being anchored to a specific form such as a city and becomes a condition - develop a narrative of planetary urbanization which provides a richer template to understand and explore what is happening in many parts of the world – especially the kind of scenarios described in this study. They question the teleological narrative of the urban age and allow a space in which the movements between the city and the village, the urban and the rural, along with dual affiliations and unresolved questions become a part of the discussion – without being shadowed by conventional assumptions.

This study makes a case to pay greater attention to these complex realities and examine more systematically, the relations that continue to exist between rural and urban dimensions. It believes that there remains a significant part of the world's population who continue to factor in trans-local connections, where village ties remain strong, where circulatory movement of lives to and fro are still significant. These must be reflected in contemporary policies to substantially greater levels than what is in practice

today, which tends to almost universally work with a divided approach to urban and rural dimensions.

Like Brenner and Schmidt, we see a more uneven trajectory almost counter-intuitively, in directions that demand a more layered understanding of urban reality. In this study we highlight specific patterns of movement that constitute the dispersed and networked human geography these scholars allude to in their theories. The patterns are circulatory in nature, tend to engage with a wide variety of habitats, work with multiple uses of space and land and include mobility and communication as tools for shaping habitats.

This study presents a slice of such circulatory lives from the city of Mumbai, a mega polis of enormous density and urban stress and its immediate Konkan region, specifically the district of Ratnagiri. It reveals how people use familial and community networks to be mobile – even in the absence of quality infrastructure. How the coming of infrastructure makes things better for sure – but is not the prime cause for instigating mobility. Mobility between places is part of a deeper impulse that several historians and commentators have alluded to – connected to community, familial and (in the case of India) caste relations, which we discuss in detail.

This to and fro makes lives part of expanded terrains in which the village remains very much embedded in the minds and lives of the city dweller. In the process, space, place, home and community work in tandem with each other – totally in line with urbanist Jean Gottman's powerful observation that – "territory, although a…. concrete entity, is the product of…. psychological features of human groups" (Gottman, 1973:15 in Muscara, 1998)

Muscara paraphrases Gottman in a manner that directly applies to our work. Especially in his formulation of geography as an expression of material and psychological factors in which *circulation* of people, ideas and goods work together – even if in tension – with *iconographies* – which are more territorial symbols that represent static group identities (ibid). This expression of geography in which places develop iconic value and are conjoined with group, community and social identities, speaks a lot about the way in which the village, the city, caste and community, plays out in our ethnographies and

how movement and circulation become intrinsic to the process of place making.

Our ethnography, historical and theoretical investigations reveal how circulatory lives define a large part of the Indian reality. Its places, villages, towns and cities are always imbued with community and kinship networks. Patterns of people's movements and the spaces they inhabit over a lifetime create a complex urban template, more in tune with Brenner and Schmidt's Planetary Urbanism than the one-way rural-urban flow, which is the dominant belief. Policies connected to cities and mobility need to reflect this urgently.

8.3 Vision for Circulatory Urbanism

We would like to conclude this report by imagining what a society that recognizes and anticipates the circulatory paradigm would look like. These lines are written with conviction but also with enough creative licence to imagine new patterns of urbanization and ways of life.

The City

It is time for urban planners and policymakers to imagine a city of arrival that is not an end point on a migratory path, but an edge from which the journey takes a new turn.

Why should we assume that unlike the migration of any other species on earth, human migration is necessarily unidirectional and finite? In biology, migration refers to a circular movement of species that goes back and forth, seasonally or otherwise. Species usually migrate in search of resources and opportunities, or to accomplish specific tasks. Then they go back or move forth.

The circulatory paradigm asserts that humans, like other species, seldom find everything they need in just one place. More often than not, they move within a space that contains several places, each with specific resources and functions.

Newcomers that come from all parts of India to Mumbai in search of safety or economic opportunity do their best to grow roots and feel at home in their new milieu. Many aspire to blend in their new environment. Many also aspire to keep the link to their

native *heimat* alive. The circulatory life is one where these two aspirations converge, to a maximum.

This convergence happens through a variety of strategies. These include: physically moving back and forth; harnessing a broad and diverse social network and sustaining emotional, cultural and economic ties with faraway places. In the process, newcomers often create a spatial field – real, virtual, and mental – that contains multiple places.

Policies and plans based on the notion that migratory flows are unidirectional, tend to freeze otherwise mobile populations. Understanding migration as a loop, rather than as a one-way street, may help us design cities and policies that could benefit the native place, the host city and the migrants themselves.

Progressive urban policies would in our mind, lower the barriers to enter the city and provide affordable and accessible accommodation located in dense and busy economic centres. The policy would focus on the provision of temporary accommodation rather than permanent housing. These would allow newcomers to kick off their lives in the city with a focus on finding jobs, starting their own business, or educational opportunities. After a few years, these newcomers would either settle in other parts of the city or move back to their villages with more money, experience, network, or education.

It is nearly impossible to capture this phenomenon quantitatively, but if the statistics for net-migration to urban Maharashtra is any indication (- 1,350,679 from 2001 to 2011), we can infer that people don't just come, settle and increase the population figure. They also move back and forth from there on. Experientially, this movement is evident to anyone who has lived in a large city for a few years and who has met other people who have also come for certain amount of time. How much time one decided to stay in a city, depends on many personal and contextual factors. Some stay for a project, a course or a personal matter for a few months; others come for work, education, or to live with someone and stay a few years. Many stay for a decade or more and then move to a place that corresponds better to their changing means and aspirations. Rather than regarding the propensity to leave only as a symptom of the city's failure to house its population adequately, we

could take a more pragmatic approach and argue that cities need not be end-points for everyone (across the socio-economic spectrum), and that we should instead focus on making them accessible to as many people as possible for a short period of time.

Right now in Indian cities, slums are fulfilling this function. Not only do they provide substandard quality of life, they also have the disadvantage of trapping populations in a narrative of poverty and illegality, when these populations actually see themselves as law-abiding middle or lower-middle class citizens.

New typologies that resemble temporary accommodations more than permanent housing, seem to be emerging in cities that have looser control, such as Dhaka, in Bangladesh. A young PhD scholar from Cambridge who is currently interning with us in Mumbai, Shreyashi Dasgupta, has discovered that in the past seven years or so, new forms of accommodation, modelled on college dormitories are emerging spontaneously in the city centre. These accommodate either single men, single women or families in shared rooms inside mid-rise buildings. They are far from perfect, but they are centrally located and provide much-needed access to the city to families that could otherwise not afford it, or who would have to find a place to live in a slum in the periphery. This would mean long commutes, bad living conditions, and a degraded status as slum dwellers. This new form of accommodation is only acceptable because it is temporary and serves a key function, providing an access to the city for newcomers.

In Mumbai, another typology, which we call the tool-house, has served as a similar access point. Tool-houses are either small homes or workshops where residential and working activities overlap. In the first case they are often where family members from the village land up when they come to the city. It provides them with the bare minimum space they need: a floor to sleep on, and a job to earn something – hopefully enough to bring back to those who have stayed in the village. Workshops employ workers coming from villages, who work and sleep there. Rather than family ties, it is the clan or community, which provide access. We have observed that in Dharavi (the homegrown neighbourhood where our Mumbai office is located) the time these workers stay in the city can vary widely. It can be a few

years, with at the very least one trip to the village per year, or a few months. A worker who goes back to the village is replaced by another who comes from there. The workshop manager, who is usually from the same community, is the only one who needs to remain in place for the production to happen.

This last example is of particular interest to us as it seems to indicate that the live-work strategies of mobile villagers sometimes defies the industrial organization of time that has always structured the city spatially and socially. To us, it expresses perfectly what the circulatory paradigm is about, and hint at its potential, if it was taken seriously at policy and planning levels.

Many urban jobs do not require a constant presence in the city. In the example above, a worker can be willingly replaced by another. In the case, the job is a resource shared between members of the same community. This specific cannot be reduced to the exploitation of a victimized labour force. It also shows the capacity of a mobile labour force to self-organize and exercise agency. This helps understand something that always intrigues Europeans when they visit Dharavi for the first time: by European standards, the working conditions in many of the workshops in Dharavi are abysmal. People perform repetitive tasks such as cutting leather in specific shapes or sew a motif on a piece of cloth all day long, they sit on the floor in cramped, moist and dark rooms with little or no ventilation. Yet, in many of these workshops the workers seem jovial and far from depressed. They do not seem as oppressed by their working conditions as they should be. Why things appear to be this way is a complex story of course. But what is certain is that most of them do not feel trapped in their reality. They have a broad horizon in mind, which includes the village and possibly other places that their community network could give them access to. The ability of being mobile is an important aspect of their lives. This is provided by their family and community networks as well an affordable transportation and communication infrastructure besides policies that do not discourage movement between the city and the village (as opposed to the policies in China). Another factor that is important is that they work in small-decentralized units rather than at top down industrial scale.

Obviously, people are limited by their own conditions, their lack of education, their caste and economic status. As it is, the situation of migrant workers is far from representing an ideal. It rather expresses the inherent inequality that characterizes countries like India, which has a socio-economic spectrum that ranges from sub-saharan Africa levels of poverty to European levels of wealth in parts of Mumbai. However, as we have seen in our ethnographic study, even communities, which have been historically oppressed, can to a certain extent overcome their condition through access to education and earning opportunities in the city. The passage to the city is potentially transformative. It is precisely this possibility that progressive policies should promote.

There is no question that the city has helped millions to improve their conditions. The worry however is that as cities develop and consolidate, they may become even less accessible to migrants from remote rural areas. This is why a policy of keeping it open to temporary workers, traders or students by actively promoting affordable and centrally located accommodation is essential. Because settling for the long-run may become increasingly difficult, it is all the more important that newcomers maintain their link to the places they come from.

Rural populations have forever used cities as places of work in between two harvesting seasons. However, the only way in which the city has absorbed them is as informal, low skills, low-wage workers. Perhaps there could be another way in which the urban economy could deal with mobile populations. After all, why should cities be stuck in the industrial rhythm, when their economy has for long shifted to post-industrial time? This is an important in particular for labour activists and policymakers who are interested in improving the conditions of work in what is called the "non-organized" sector in India. We should not improve working conditions in the workplace (in all these small insalubrious workshops) at the cost of fixing a population that could otherwise be mobile, and which, through its movements, helps the urban economy as well as rural development. The right to the city should not come at the cost of having to renounce to the village.

We agree with David Harvey that "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources" (Harvey, 2012). It is a right that

is collective rather than individual, which according to Lefebvre must be claimed by the working class. It is a right to participate in urban life, says Lefebvre. It is the right to transform, shape, and reinvente urban space and time. It is without doubt because this right was denied to them for so long, that many working class migrants living in slums have invested so much in their ancestral village. But to reduce the movement from the city back to the village only to an expression of class oppression would amount to denying these mobile populations any agency. By putting faces and words on an unidentified mass of urban workers with ties to the villages, our ethnography shows that 1) the urban realm cannot be reduced to the city; 2) the right to urban life is being exercised in the villages as well; 2) the city should not be seen as the necessary end point of all journeys and aspirations; 3) the right to be mobile goes hand in hand with the right to urban life.

The Village

The Indian village functions, and should be allowed to keep functioning, in a different time zone. Arguably, one of the principal reasons for the decline of village life and culture in Europe is that it has been absorbed in the city's time zone. The objective of policymakers in Europe is always to reduce the commuting time from the village to the city. It is this process that has eroded the distinction between the village and the city. Many villages may still look like villages, but they function more like suburbs. As argued earlier, it is the village's distinction from the city that makes it culturally and socially relevant, not its proximity to it. The city and the villages may exist within the same urban space, but if they are to remain two distinct places, they should also preserve their respective rhythm.

For different time zones to coexist within a single space means that they need to be constantly negotiated by those moving from one to the other. Unlike the industrial city, which required fixity and regularity of a Fordist production line, the post-industrial city could perhaps allow for a variety of lifestyles and use of time. This would provide an opportunity to recognize, defend and perhaps promote different kinds of relationships with the city, not based on permanence, but on facilitating access. We saw that decentralized production processes where production happens in small units rather than large integrated

sweatshops, allows for an organization of labour that is more adaptable and flexible. This means that it is also more exposed to market related risk and less likely to follow safety standards. In this context, workers ability to maintain their relationship to the village as a safety net, and to invest in its development is vital.

In no way do we argue that the village should be preserved in a static form. It is not a typology that should be fetishized, but rather one that is dynamic and which should embrace its ambiguity. Movements back and forth between the city and the village accelerates user-generated transformation. Moreover, we do not think that the village should necessarily be defined by its relationship to the rural, agrarian context. This may be one dimension of the village, but it doesn't have to be a dominant one. In fact, it probably doesn't have to be a dimension of village life and economy at all. A village economy could be based on artisanship, tourism, or even long distance services. In other words, a village can be urban. If a village doesn't have to be defined

by its economic activities, it could even exist at the heart of a city. A village is a village

because of its history, its cultural identity and perhaps its form. Mumbai has about 200 urban villages, which are officially recognized as such, and are mostly struggling for their right to remain villages and not getting misrepresented as slums, which eventually leads to their forceful transformation into housing blocks. That process effectively makes the village disappear altogether. We should rather celebrate the village as one of the few places where residents can actually exercise their right to urban life.

Mobility

Imagining a new relationship to places and the time that separates them necessarily imply a reflexion on mobility. Work and learning by projects is becoming the norm for the white-collar classes, yet cities are still being shaped by static vision of space and time. The working class and small traders class represented in this study are in many ways already moving relatively freely. The Takles for instance, who run a family business trading spices, have the freedom of going back and forth as long as someone is staying back to take care of everyday business. The fact that certain roles can be played by different members of the family shows that the family struc-
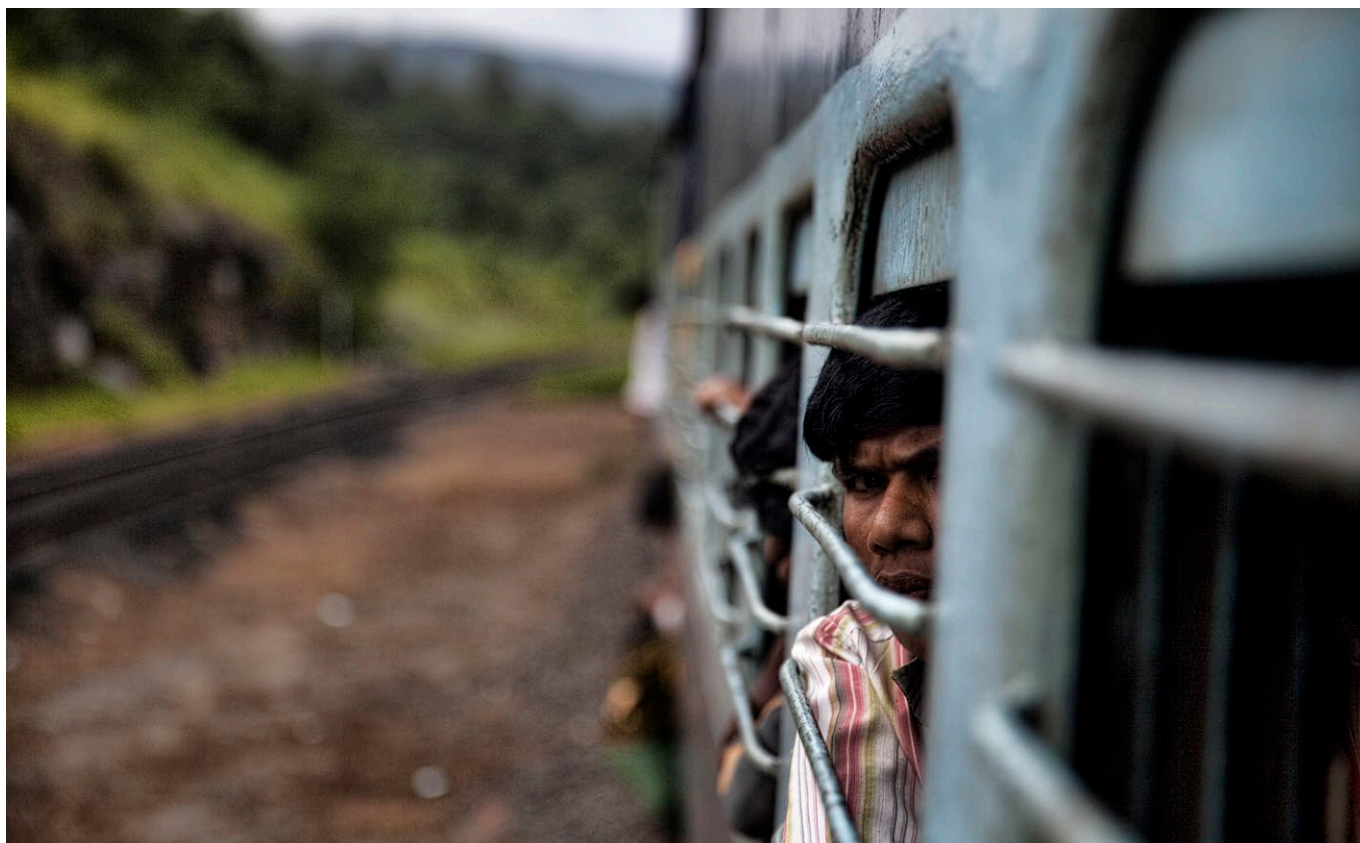
Man travelling on Konkan railway.

ture is an essential source of motility for all its members. We also see that people like Ashok G. Jadhav spontaneously chose to live in between the village and the city as soon as he was liberated from work. Others like Ashok K. Jadhav or Umesh Kule decided that no money could buy the luxury of living in their village and decided to settle there. Motility after all, is about the capacity of choosing to be mobile - or not to be.

The true potential of the circulatory relationship between the city and the village will not be expressed by reducing the time that separates them through faster transportation. Rather, its expression would require a professional structure that allows one to be at the best place at the best time. This choice, in the case of contemporary India, is unlikely to be an individual choice. Avadhoot Baba's closest followers are very much living this lifestyle, which is made possible by the fact that their professional, social and spiritual lives are intimately linked.

In terms of transportation strategy, the full potential of circulatory urbanism would be fulfilled by affordable means, with a broad, deep reach within the countryside, rather than speedy ones. The Inter-net and the spread of the cellular network to remote parts of the country can also become an important support for circulatory lifestyles.

Concluding Remarks

Our findings suggest that many families and social groups in the Konkan have structured their lives and livelihoods along the circular movements of some of their members. These movements create 'fields' or 'territories' that are at once rooted in specific locations and are floating above them - connected as they are to media, cultural, political and financial institutions and infrastructures. Transportation infrastructures and digital networks do not cause the movements – as historical analysis shows that they existed prior to modern systems – but they enable and accelerate them in tune with technologies of contemporary times. Users inhabit them and anticipate them in unexpected ways. Paying attention to their movements can help urbanists, policy-makers and industrialists in making strategic decisions.

Using empirical observations based on interaction with various groups of people who are part of the Konkan circulatory lives story, we have created

a template for visualizing the region in a more integrated way. One in which the dominant metropolis is not the only anchoring point – but where each users point of starting or ending the journey becomes integral to the story of the region. This helps us understand the peculiar configuration of urban horizons in India. They are being shaped by the pull of the metropolis for sure, but they are also influenced by the space of the 'non-urban' – which Neil Brenner calls the 'black box' – a conceptual basket in which we throw everything that we can't conceptualize – outside the realm of the urban (Brenner, 2011).

Such circular movement needs to be understood and negotiated in order to produce a relevant urban policy framework in India (where the railways continue to move people by the millions from one part to another on a spectacular scale) and in other countries, which are also searching for new ways of conceptualizing and engaging with the urban-rural field.

What this research suggests is that there are alternatives to the conception of the city as an all-absorbing centrality. A long tradition of pitting the city against the country and the urban against the rural, has produced schizophrenic and psychotic scenarios where the city is at once an 'engine of economic growth' and inexorably sprawling over nature, nature that needs to be preserved from human destruction fuelled by urban needs.

We must get out of this intellectual dead-end. What can be helpful is to find inspiration for alternative visions and scenarios in the life of people who, in their daily practices, are bridging diverse realities.

Through this study we do not suggest easy answers to some of the most pressing needs of our civilizations, such as social and economic integration and ecological balance. However, we do portray a more complex picture, one that will at least give us indications of what needs to be addressed, to provide a more fertile ground for creative thinking and practical interventions.

Our observations from the ethnography can be summarised as follows:

1. People occupy space through social imaginaries that are strips of reality transcending rural-urban categorizations.

2. Locating a sense of home is a complex task – especially when there are multiple choices that vary across a person's lifetime.

3. Spatial connections between two locations such as Ratnagiri and Mumbai are infused with a temporal element connected to the life cycles of individuals, families and communities. Increased speed and transport and communication have added their own dimension to this. Through acts of construction of homes, retirement from jobs, new children being born and migrating to cities for schools – the connections and circulatory patterns start to become patterns that make a worldview that goes beyond the existing concepts of belonging and habitats – especially when dealing with those of the city and the village.

4. Enhanced communication, across geographical variables, (for example through the use of mobile phones), represent strong familial bonds across distances. At the same time we cannot forget that distances have always been transcended because of the very existence of these bonds, even in the absence of technology. Emerging technologies only enhance existing bonds, they don't create them. This distinction is important to make. Technologies did not create physical mobilities, as people were mobile using whatever means was available to them – ranging from walking to the use of bullock carts and simple boats. Even before modern technology was available – the fact that people moved across terrains, in cyclical, seasonal and circular patterns is evidence that old mobilities – as Tim Cresswell argues[55] - provided a template for new mobilities to lay themselves on.

5. At the same time, it is undeniable that fields of circulation that are like user-generated maps, which were created through the historical movements of users criss-crossing space and time, have today become enhanced by the use of phones and transport technolo-

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55   http://www.dtesis.univr.it/documenti/Avviso/all/all181066.pdf. Constellations of Mobility - Tim Cresswell (Year of publication not provided)

gies like the railways. But this enhancement must not be read as something that was created by technology – rather they exist in a spatial configuration in which the pathways had been chartered from much before these modern technologies appeared on the horizon. The ability of the family and community to sustain bonds and connections across time and over distance was the key feature, which made this possible.

To re-paraphrase: The study attempts to understand how circulatory patterns of mobility play out in everyday life, imagination and experiences of the people documented in the ethnography. Furthermore, it looks at the way their movements contribute to shaping their environment and the way they look at their habitats and homes.

The previous study (Echanove and Srivastava, 2013) presented, through empirical evidence, the existence of a circulatory movement of people that went beyond the physically and conceptually constrained categories of urban and rural life and demonstrated how the Konkan region has historically been and continues to be part of a larger Mumbai-centric imaginary and an inter-connected and overlapping urban system.

We quote from the study:

" The conversations and observations we made on our journeys point towards some fundamental aspects of space making and transcendent elements of rural-urban categories. They show us that in this region, agrarian, trading and industrial activities have co-existed for long. People have mixed and matched their labour and skills across activities of different natures; the same people have moved across sectors, have commuted long distances in a seasonal way, have migrated to the big city, but always kept connections to their native points of origin…" (Echanove, Srivastava, 2013, page 107).

Such observations helped pave the way for this study which further demonstrates how individuals in families and communities express modes of belonging through specific ways of being connected to 'a home' that can exist in different places.

This study portrays how individual members within the institution of the family maintain affili-ations to two places across the apparently divergent typology of habitats – the village and the metropolis. What emerges is the transforming landscape of the Konkan region through these five stories that can be used to understand a clearer picture of discontinuous nature of India's urban landscape.

The research describes how people carry bits of the places they belong to, wherever they move, which transforms those places, making them cross-referential habitats, organically linked to those movements. A bit of Mumbai emerges in Ratnagiri's remote villages, for example, through a piece of urban architecture reflected in a new house or the bringing in of piped water supply to a cluster of homes. At the same time, rural life also gets represented in the urban homes of the metropolis, for example, the settlement in the suburb of Bhandup reveal many physical elements of the village physically reproduced there, including wells, styles of construction and the reproduction of flora.

This makes circulatory movements an intrinsic component of the habitats as much as it is in the lives, habits and culture of the people. We show *how* people navigate circular routes of belonging between their homes in cities and their continued sense of affiliation to ancestral points of origin. The central observation we make is that the family as a unit of organizing the life of the residents, along with their community ties, play a major role in shaping this circular pattern endemic to their lives. These have now been complemented and enhanced by technologies such as transport infrastructure, primarily the railways and communication technology such as the mobile phones.

We feel that it is only when we understand the ways in which people live their lives in an urban landscape shaped by the configuration of circulation, that we will be able to create policy frameworks that reflect the urban-rural complexities of this region, and subsequently of India as a whole.

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