

Participatory Planning in the Era of Public Private Partnerships: Complexities and Contradictions in a Migrant City in India

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Synopsis

This paper explores how local political factors, rural-urban divide and conflicts between multiple tiers of government, impact participation of the migrant communities in the urban planning and governance process in a dynamic urban region, through a case study of Gurgaon, India. In two decades Gurgaon transformed from being a small agricultural town at the outer periphery of Delhi, to Northern India's premier corporate destination and a global hub for the outsourcing industry. The new city is largely made up of migrants from all over India. However, this largely unplanned, market driven, rapid urban makeover has also created a complex settlement pattern marked by overlapping layers of socio-spatial relations. The everyday tensions and contradictions of this transitional journey, which came out sharply with the formation of a new municipal corporation, form the immediate backdrop the study.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era 'public participation' through involvement of non-state actors, NGOs and civil-society groups – have come to be recognised as one of the cardinal principles of planning in the democratic world. On the other hand, with the spread of neoliberal ideology, 'public-private partnerships' or outright privatisation have become the preferred mode of delivery for large scale infrastructure projects in the advanced capitalist economies of the Global North, and are being increasingly adopted by the emerging economies of the Global South. While a large body of research exists on both 'participatory planning' and 'privatisation of urban infrastructure' in the context of the well established cities of the matured democracies of the Global North, there is a gap in our understanding about how these abstract notions are shaping the cities of the newly industrialising, democratic countries in the Global South and particularly what role does planning play in this scenario.

This paper explores the interrelated twin issues of citizen participation and public-private-partnerships in delivery of large scale urban infrastructure in India. In recent years, India's impressive economic growth, particularly in the Information Technology driven knowledge economy sectors, along with the steady climb of the Indian cities in the megacities list, has attracted much international attention. Yet, despite the presence of a few megacities, and high economic growth rate, with only 69 percent urbanisation level, India as a whole, continues to be the largest rural country in the world. Sharp rural-urban dichotomy, has become a key feature of the Indian polity.

The case study location of this research, Gurgaon, exemplifies complexities and contradictions of this transitional journey. The city, which barely existed as a non-descript agricultural town, at the outer periphery of Delhi, in the early 1980s, over the next two decades, turned into a prime corporate hub for the office jobs outsourced from the West. The new city is largely made up of migrants as new economic opportunities attracted educated urban middleclass as well as construction labours and other lower-end workforce from all over India. However, this largely unplanned, market driven, rapid urban makeover led by the real estate interests and facilitated by parastatal agencies, has also created a complex settlement pattern marked by overlapping layers of socio-spatial relations. Simultaneous

existence of three layers of Gurgaon (i.e. rural, industrial manufacturing and IT services) in close proximity to each other is producing new claims and conflicts.

The paper argues that these socio-spatial dynamics has given rise to political contestation at multiple scales, in terms of rural-urban affiliations and of the interplay between class and caste interests and identities. The three dominant groups in the city: the existing rural population and people with ties to the old agrarian economy, the new urban middleclass tied to the knowledge economy sectors and thirdly the blue-collar workforce, made up of local poor but mostly migrants. Each of these groups has different ways of accessing the state and different channels of participation which ultimately impact the planning process and governance effectiveness. The underlying social and political tensions which came to the fore with the formation of a new municipal corporation in 2008, and its first election in 2011, forms the immediate backdrop of the study. The paper draws upon qualitative research involving field observations; interviews with state planning agency officials; corporate executives; and civil society activists. The next section of the paper provides a background about the participatory planning issues in India, by situating the urban reforms within the ongoing socio-economic and political changes in the country. The third section then provides an overview of the rapid transformation of Gurgaon from a small agriculture oriented township to a city of industrial manufacturing and then to an important corporate hub in the knowledge intensive IT-BPO segment. The fourth section then discusses the complexities and contradictions of participatory planning in the context of such dynamic economic restructuring. The fifth section concludes the discussion through a summary.

2. India's urban policy environment

With over 30 million people living in the cities, India has the second largest urban population in the world. But in percentage terms, India's urban population is still only 31.12 percent, even though the recent census shows that the decadal urbanisation rate has accelerated to 3.5 percent over the previous decade's fairly modest record of 2.5 percent. Such overwhelming domination of the rural areas had meant that in the democratic environment of Indian polity, urban development never received adequate attention at the higher echelons of governance. Rural areas matter more, when it comes to elections to the state and national legislatures.

However, closer integration of India with the global economy from the 1990s onwards has increased the importance of the cities – more particularly large urban agglomerations in national economy. Information Technology (IT) driven business process outsourcing (BPO), which have become fastest growing segment of the economy and the main export revenue earner for the post-liberalised Indian economy, are overwhelmingly concentrated in the extended metropolitan belts of Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune, having supply of large educated workforce. New economic opportunities in the service sector has contributed to sharp increase in the number of middleclass from barely 1 percent of the population in 1985 to 5 percent (or about 50 million) people by 2005 and this is projected to reach 20 percent of the population by 2015 (McKinsey Global Institute 2007). On the whole, contribution of the service sector has increased from 37.9 percent of the GDP in 1981-82 to 56.4 percent in 2011-12, while over the same period the share of agriculture and other primary sectors has decreased from 37.6 percent to 17.2 percent (Reserve Bank of India 2012).

Economic and political reforms in India began almost simultaneously during the early 1990s. In 1991, a major set of reforms were announced on the economic front, which opened up several sectors, through reduction in customs duties, easing of norms for foreign investments and scaling down of licensing requirements for setting up of industrial units. Since then the national government has progressively adopted market friendly policies, favoured closer

integration with the global economy, and had sought to facilitate private entrepreneurship by reducing regulatory role of the state - jettisoning earlier policies of import substitution and dependence on public sector.

Almost simultaneously, a major step towards administrative and fiscal decentralisation was adopted through the 74th Constitution Amendment Act (74CAA) of 1992. In the multilevel governance framework of India, the constitution and functioning of the urban (and rural) local councils had traditionally been under the domain of the state (or provincial) governments. The landmark 74CAA legislation explicitly recognised the urban local bodies as the third tier in representative democracy, which ensured regular elections and security of tenure for the local councils (A matching legislation 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, extended similar facilities to the rural councils). The act also provided for clear demarcation of administrative powers and financial revenue sharing between the state and the urban local governments (Jain 2003; Shivaramakrishnan 2011). One of the most crucial functions, which the 74CAA sought to devolve to the local bodies, was the function of 'town planning'. It was envisaged that devolution of planning to the lower tier will ensure greater public participation.

Economic liberalisation, particularly rolling back of the Central government's licensing and other regulatory controls over industrial investments have considerably strengthened the role of the state governments on economic matters, in India's federal political system. There is increasing economic competition between the Indian states to attract new investments. However, reluctance of the state governments to devolve power to the lower tier has come in the way of the urban local governments functioning in the way envisaged by the 74CAA. Thus, elections to the municipal councils are regularly held, but their functional and financial domains remains restricted to managing only the basic services. Even there, the Municipal Commissioner, a state government appointed bureaucrat, retains the executive power. This distribution of power often turns problematic when rival political parties are in power at the state and municipal levels. Thus in the post-liberalisation era, in the multi-governance framework of India, considerable power has got concentrated at the meso-level rather than at the local government level.

Urban planning and control over land use change are particularly closely guarded by the state governments citing technical capacity gap, despite explicit intents expressed under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution, to transfer these functions to the elected municipalities (Shivaramakrishnan 2011). Land use planning continues to be handled by bodies like Urban Development Authorities or Town Planning Directorates, which not only report to the state governments, but in the case of big cities, are directly headed by the state chief ministers. The keenness of the state governments to hold on to the urban planning powers, need to be seen in the light of the ongoing structural changes in the Indian economy.

Rapid growth in the IT-BPO and other knowledge economy sectors had substantially stimulated the urban land markets of the Indian cities. Measures such as, lifting of controls on FDI investments in the real estate sector and passage of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act in 2005, provided additional stimulus to the real estate market. According to a research by an international real estate consultancy, growth in the IT sector has been mirrored by the FDI inflow in India's construction and property markets, which went up from 3.4 percent in 2005-06 to 22.1 percent in 2009-10 (Jones Lang LaSalle 2010). By controlling town planning and land use functions, the state governments wish to retain control over this massive economic engine.

With rising domestic economic competition between the Indian states, the state governments are encouraging conversion of agricultural land at the peri-urban areas of the big cities to develop new townships and SEZ, to attract global investments in the IT-BPO sectors. In this neoliberal era, most of these new economic spaces, are being produced through public-private joint venture, with private sector real estate developers, building the gated enclaves,

matching quality specifications of the global corporate economy, while state agencies are prioritising delivery of trunk infrastructure. In spatial terms, these gated enclaves are located in the Panchayet (rural council) areas - beyond the jurisdictions of the municipalities or elected urban local governments.

While these high security and sanitised gated enclaves have emerged as the spaces of articulation for the globalised Indian economy – they have generated an utterly fragmented urban pattern split into multiple jurisdictions – rural *Panchayet* (council) areas, Development Authority areas, special economic zones and private townships. This multiplicity of jurisdictions has in-turn thrown-up fresh challenges in urban governance and ensuring participatory decision making, to meet the needs of the people from a diverse cross section. The new urban areas typically draw migrant population from a wide socio-economic stratum - from management professionals and software entrepreneurs at the up to humble construction labours and rural migrants. New tensions emerge in the process to reconcile the new middleclass, existing rural residents and the migrant labour. A graphic manifestation of these tensions is evident in the dramatic transformation of Gurgaon from a rural outpost at the fringe of Delhi, to Northern India's prime elite 'lifestyle' destination, as discussed in the following section.

3. Transformation of Gurgaon

Gurgaon district (and town of the same name) is located in the state of Haryana abutting the southern border of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It is just about 15 km from Delhi airport and part of the National Capital Region (NCR) planning framework. The First Master Plan of Delhi (1961-81) envisaged a multi-polar spatial structure at a regional scale to decongest Delhi and recommended development of the surrounding ring towns as counter magnets to Delhi's urban core. Amongst the satellite towns however, "only a modest growth [was] contemplated" for Gurgaon (Delhi Development Authority 1962). It remained a backward agricultural town until the mid-1980s and started to grow dramatically.

The economic pull of Gurgaon has drawn a large number of migrants. As Table-1 shows, between 2001 and 2011, the population of Gurgaon district increased by almost 74 percent, the urban population increased by a staggering 283 percent, while the formal urban limits also expanded by almost six times. Phenomenal urban growth of Gurgaon, and two other districts (Faridabad and Sonapat) bordering Delhi, played major roles in catapulting Haryana amongst India's most urbanised states, from previously being the most rural. Haryana's urban population has increased from 24 percent in 1991 to 29 percent in 2001 to 35 percent in 2011 (Census 2011). However, barring the areas bordering Delhi, the rest of the state has still remained, predominantly rural.

Table 1:

Population Increase in Gurgaon between 2001 and 2011

Census Year	Population of Gurgaon District	Population of Gurgaon Municipal Area	Decadal growth percent	Urban Area (in sq.km)
2001	870,539	228,820	73.93	35
2011	1,514,085	876,824	283.194	207

Source: Census of India (2011)

Development process of Gurgaon reflects the tensions of its particular geographic location, where economic growth is happening due to its close proximity to Delhi, but is being

mediated through the political culture of Haryana - the push factors of Delhi's restrictive planning process and pull factors of Haryana's liberal regulatory regime. The growth may be divided into two clearly discernable phases. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Gurgaon developed as Delhi's industrial and residential suburb. And then the growth momentum further picked-up as Gurgaon turned into a major business services outsourcing hub.

The industrial era of Gurgaon began with the establishment of the Maruti-Suzuki automobile plant and its ancillary factories in 1982. Later on several other factories in diverse fields like auto components, telecommunication equipment, and fashion garments started in Gurgaon. In 1981-82, two big Delhi based property developers, received licenses from the Haryana government to build large private sector residential townships, which began to be occupied from 1991 onwards. Gurgaon's land market, however, benefited from the concurrent shrinkage of real estate opportunities in Delhi.

Supply and control of urban land within Delhi is closely managed by the Delhi Development Authority, a public sector agency, through a restrictive planning regime. But, this rigid land use control mechanism ran into a major crisis during the 1990s, with the proliferation of illegal construction, leading to court cases over environmental degradations and Master Plan violations. The lengthy legal controversy virtually stopped building activities in Delhi from the mid-1990s, until a revised plan was notified in 2007 (Chatterji 2003). Supply constraints in Delhi during a vital phase of economic growth, stirred the property markets of the suburban towns in the neighbouring states. At this stage, Gurgaon's nearness to Delhi airport and availability of high quality real estate, turned it into a sought after destination for the business process outsourcing industry.

In sharp contrast to Delhi, Haryana had been following a liberal land policy since the late 1970s onwards, long before the advent of economic liberalisation on the national stage (Joardar 2006). The Haryana Urban Development (HUD) Act of 1977 empowers the state agencies to acquire agricultural land for developing residential townships and industrial estates and contracting out development to the private sector. Under the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas (HDRUA) Act of 1975-76, licenses are awarded to big private developers to acquire, assemble and develop a minimum contiguous 100 acres of land. Later on, encouraged by the impressive growth of the corporate economy and the construction boom of Gurgaon, Haryana government took steps to provide further impetus to the sector, by easing norms for conversion of industrial manufacturing zones to IT-Business parks under the state IT policy. Moreover, Haryana government enthusiastically encouraged growth of the IT-BPO oriented Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in Gurgaon, after the promulgation of the SEZ Act by the national government in 2005. Under this act IT-BPO oriented SEZs could be established on a minimum 10 hectares of contiguous land. These liberal provisions enabled large real estate companies to build up huge land banks in the state, particularly in Gurgaon near Delhi. They started churning out high quality residential and commercial projects in quick succession as demand started soaring from the mid-1990s. Interestingly, until 2008, Gurgaon region was mostly classified as rural and absence of a local regulatory regime, (in the form of a municipality) further fast-tracked the permits and clearances from friendly parastatal agencies (Debroy & Bhandari 2009).

GE Capital's decision to locate its call-centre facility in 1997 in a DLF business park set the trend for other companies in the IT-BPO sector (e.g. American Express, Erickson, British Airways) to establish their global business sourcing offices in Gurgaon. Almost as a rule, the global corporations operate from leased space in business parks promoted by the property developers, which provide large floor plates in mirror-glass office buildings, pleasant landscaping, big parking lots, round the clock power back-up to offset for frequent outages in grid supply, advanced communication and security infrastructure, matching the specifications of the global corporate sector. Leasing of space, rather than direct property ownership, provides them with operational flexibilities in scaling up and down their establishment sizes,

with the ebbs and flows of the global economy, but also shelters them from the messy dealings of land and property markets. The corporate real estate sector, in this situation, has come to represent global capital, as the point of interface between the global corporations and the local state. Three big real estate developers, DLF, Ansals and Unitech in particular, played pioneering roles in this shaping of modern Gurgaon.

Dramatic transformation of Gurgaon, within a span of two decades from agriculture to industrial manufacturing to hi-tech business services have drawn into close proximity people from diverse socio-economic strata and also migrants from different parts of India. However, this property development-led growth model with loose planning control has produced a patchwork quilt development pattern. Educated middleclass, which are closely associated with the corporate economy of Gurgaon generally, reside in planned gated apartment complexes and HUDA sectors. The modern city has engulfed several villages which have turned into urban slums with informal commercial and residential activities. Original local residents, people associated with the agrarian economy, usually reside in the village areas and have expanded their old village houses to several stories for rental and commercial purpose.

There are strong symbiotic economic relationships between the formal and informal settlements. Shopping malls and markets within the planned residential enclaves accommodate only a few high-end shops. Thus, most residents of the gated complexes depend on the informal village bazaars for their daily needs. The lower-end migrants, who started coming to Gurgaon during its take-off as an industrial city, and the subsequent construction boom, find their shelter in these urban villages – turned slum areas. Thus these informal areas now accommodate the entire service population of the formal economy. The security guards, electricians, and maids, who work in the business parks and the apartment buildings, reside in the nearby village pockets. Yet, the middleclass areas detest the presence of the rural enclaves.

Unplanned growth at a rapid pace has put severe pressure on Gurgaon's civic infrastructure. Seven to eight hours of power outage is almost a daily occurrence. Up-scale residential enclaves and corporate business parks all provide power back-up through diesel generators, along with good quality internal infrastructure. But the villages abutting the boundary walls of these enclaves are in abysmal condition due to inadequacies in water supply, sewage and drainage facilities. While the newly extended metro rail has improved connectivity from the commercial core of Gurgaon to Delhi, there is no public transport for inner city commuting. Corporate firms in Gurgaon regularly operate chartered bus and taxi fleets to transport their employees. For those without a personal vehicle, the only commuting option is to hitch a ride in crowded three wheeler auto rickshaws. Cycle tracks and pedestrian walkways are practically non-existent.

Management of Gurgaon's urban transformation has suffered due to institutional deficiencies and a multiplicity of agencies. Haryana Government's Department of Town Planning (DTP) was entrusted with responsibility for ensuring development coordination between public and private agencies. But, land configurations and project phasing by the private developers has tended to follow the logic of land assembling through negotiations with local farmers, rather than the phases prescribed by the DTP's Master Plan. This in turn has created difficulties for routing of trunk utilities (Biswas 2006). The absence of a strong locally based planning agency had further compounded the problems of development coordination. M.C. Gupta, a former chief secretary of Haryana, when interviewed on 4th January 2011, observed that 'Gurgaon needs its own development authority. Planners sitting in Chandigarh (*the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana*) cannot coordinate such a fast growing area on a daily basis'.

A number of state and local agencies are involved in plan implementation, each with piecemeal jurisdiction. Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA), a state level agency, having a local office, is responsible for developing roads and provision of water supply,

sewerage and drainage in the newer parts of the city, which includes master planned sectors directly developed by HUDA and the gated enclaves, developed by the private builders. For private enclaves, the developers provide internal services and pay External Development Charges to HUDA for trunk services linkage. The industrial estates, like Udyog Vihar, is under the Haryana State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC), The older part of the town, is directly under the control of the municipality, while state government's Public Works Department (PWD) is in charge of providing roads and services. The village areas had been traditionally under the jurisdiction of the local *Panchayets*.

The local agencies, the municipal committee and village Panchyets have been the weakest entities in Gurgaon's transitional journey, lacking financial, technical and legal capacity for urban management. Parastatal agencies like HUDA and HSIIDC, who have technical or financial capabilities, tend to act more like private entrepreneurs, in parcelling out new land developments, rather than enforcing overarching development controls or coordinating delivery of public services. A local municipal councillor complained:

For all these years, Gurgaon had been treated as Haryana's cash cow. Gurgaon generates half of Haryana's revenue. But what does it get back in return?
(Interview: 6 January 2012)

Similar resentments against the way Chandigarh based state leadership had handled the state of urban affairs of Gurgaon, were expressed by almost every politician and civil-society activist interviewed, indicating a rare degree of unanimity amongst the local elites in an otherwise fractious environment.

4. Politics of public participation

Incomplete devolution of administrative powers from the state government to the local government; a privatised approach towards city building, without a strong institutional set-up for urban management; and deep rural-urban social schism, have generated multiple problems in Gurgaon's transitional journey from a small town to one of India's prime international economic gateways. In this context, the formation of the Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon in 2008, encompassing 207 sq.km areas, generated much hope amongst a large section of the urban and rural population alike, in anticipation that it would become the overarching body for coordination of the developmental activities and become a platform for negotiation between the diverse stakeholders. However, the prevailing social divisions have come in the way of effective engagement between the urban middle class dominated civil-society groups and the elected municipal councillors with a rural background, turning the MCG's focus away from developmental issues and reducing it into another forum for power tussles between rival caste lobbies in Haryana politics. The first election of the newly formed Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG) vividly exposed these internal tensions, which had been simmering for two decades.

Residents of the rural and urban areas of Gurgaon follow separate paths to engage with the state on day-to-day matters. Residents of the urbanised villages tend to follow the party based political system, by seeking help from the political leaders, as the political leaders have deep local ties. But the middle class professionals residing in the planned HUDA sectors and private colonies prefer the 'apolitical' route. A large percentage of the middleclass is also not 'local' and has migrated to the region from other Indian states. In recent times, neighbourhood associations of the formal, planned areas, called Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) have emerged as the main vehicle articulating the voice of the middleclass. All HUDA sectors and builder enclaves have their own RWAs, elected by local residents. However, the RWAs are only consultative bodies. Management control rests with the original developers: HUDA for planned HUDA sectors and private real estate companies for the privately developed apartment complexes and townships, even decades after people

moved in. The private developers avoid obtaining Completion Certificates, by keeping a small part of their project incomplete, to retain possession of the areas developed. The Town Planning department, functioning directly under the Chief Minister's office, tends to extend the project time frames, in lieu of small fines,

The RWAs have taken up with HUDA the issues of infrastructure deficiencies and non-compliance with the Master Plan guidelines by the private developers, but without much result. During a meeting with several RWA committee members on 3 January 2012, it was frequently alleged that the private developers had not delivered community facilities as promised. An RWA executive committee member alleged:

The land which was marked for Community Centre has been converted into a membership-only club. Now there is no space to organise festivals like *Bhagwati-jagarans* or *Ram-leelas*.

During the same meeting, other RWA executives complained that in several apartment complexes, builders had converted areas originally marked for local convenience stores into air-conditioned shopping malls, encroached roads and children's parks and frequently hike monthly maintenance charges. Sanjiv Sablok, a prominent community activist expressed his helplessness about complaining to HUDA about private builders:

We keep doing rounds at HUDA office and submit petitions. They listen to us. Treat us to tea and coffee. But that's about it. They file the complaints and forget it. Nothing further happens. The builders are very powerful.

Initially content with playing second fiddle to the big developers and HUDA, the RWAs of Gurgaon have become increasingly active politically. Subinder Khurana, President of the Cyber City Welfare Association, when interviewed on 3 January 2012, held that the reluctance of the middleclass to engage with the political process, could be due to their transient nature. Professionals from different parts of India initially considered staying in Gurgaon only as a temporary step in their career ladder. However with the passage of time, they started growing roots, purchased property and taking more interest in civic affairs.

In 2005, more than one hundred RWAs of Gurgaon came together to form an apex body, called Joint Action Forum for Resident Associations (JAFRA), to more effectively lobby the local administration. Representatives of a few village areas were also accommodated, to give it a more inclusive character. Since then JAFRA has been at the forefront of demanding formation of a more responsive local government with overarching power over various public agencies for integrated urban development. But its effectiveness as a lobbying body is to a large extent compromised due to its internal contradictions. The day to day problems faced by the HUDA sectors and the private enclaves tend to differ, except on issues like mass transport or public parking spaces. There is also a huge trust deficit between the village areas and the planned enclaves. It is a common feeling amongst the educated elites of Gurgaon, that local rural people, many of whom had become rich overnight by selling land, lack 'education, culture and social manners'. Whereas, P.K Sangwan a political activist, originally hailing from Jharsa village observed:

Highflying people who live in these flats look down upon us, as rustic, uneducated blokes. They don't give us any respect. Our worlds are very different, though we live, side by side. (Interview: 6 January 2012).

Engagement between the civil-society activists and the local government received a major boost in 2008, with the formation of the municipal corporation. Like other municipalities of India, the MCG has two wings: a legislative wing consisting of the mayor and the elected councillors of each ward, and an administrative wing directly under the Municipal Commissioner. Since the urban middleclass in India typically consider urban local bodies to be 'corrupt' and 'inefficient', one of the first priorities of the newly formed MCG was to build

trust amongst the people. Mr. Rajesh Khullar, who was the Commissioner from 2008 to 2011, initiated several moves in that direction, by enhancing partnership arrangements with the civil society groups and augmenting e-government tools. According to Mr Khullar, the objective was to create a template for a 'transparent and efficient civic body' before the start of politicking, with the arrival of the elected councillors (Interview: 2 February 2011). 'Harnessing the power of the IT to break the barrier between the in-group and the out-group' became the guiding mantra of the nascent municipal body.

With the above objectives the MCG started to upload information about contracts and tendering for municipal projects on its website, apart from regular items such as property taxation, birth, death and marriage registration, and a section for lodging of complaints. To encourage public participation in local developmental issues, the MCG formed Citizen Supervisory Committees for each ward. Payments for small civic works, such as road repairs, were linked to getting a satisfactory report from the citizen committees of the concerned ward. Additionally, the MCG partnered with NGOs to launch environmental improvement programmes like creating shelters for stray cows, turning rubbish dumps into parks and cleaning of local markets. However, participation of the civil-society groups in urban governance took a downward turn after the municipal elections, due to the social gulf that exists between the urban elite dominated 'apolitical' NGOs and the 'rustic' political leadership which came into control of the MCG following the election. This, in turn, robbed the nascent body of much-needed technical and managerial capacity at a crucial stage.

The MCG, consisting of 35 wards, covering an area of 207 sq.kms and over 1.5 million people, had its first election in May, 2011, three years, after it was formed. Each ward elected one councillor for a five year term. The councillors themselves elected a mayor and a deputy mayor amongst themselves. The voting pattern was marked by sharp rural-urban polarisation. In the formal planned areas, voting was only 20 to 30 percent, but in the village areas it was between 80 to 90 percent (Times of India 2011). This general pattern was only defied in Ward-30. Here middleclass voters came out in large numbers to elect Ms. Nisha Singh an ex-Google executive as an independent candidate. Ms. Singh extensively used social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to mobilise her supporters. In almost all other wards, candidates with strong rural links, having caste and deep socio-political ties with the village communities, were elected. The election was fought along party lines. However, cutting across political divide, elected councillors mobilised along caste lines to elect the mayor. The caste and political mobilisation, in the MCG election, once again demonstrated the relative insignificance of the urban middleclass in electoral politics, despite its recent economic success.

Performance of the MCG has also been impacted by conflicts between multiple levels of governance. While the councillors have been elected from an extended jurisdiction covering 207 sq.km their real authority is extremely limited. Only old Gurgaon (about 35 sq.km), which was earlier under the Municipal Committee, and 37 village pockets which were earlier under *Panchayets*, are now under the direct control of the MCG, informed the Chief Engineer of the MCG when interviewed on 5 January 2012. Vast new developments, all HUDA sectors, HSIDC industrial estates, privately developed residential enclaves, and business parks, are effectively out of bounds for the MCG. According to Councillor Nisha Singh, at least the HUDA areas should have been handed over to the MCG, with the formation of an elected body (Interview: 24 December 2011). However, there is neither any time frame, nor any agreement between the two bodies on how to account for the civil works undertaken so far and the extent of pending tasks. Thus, even after assuming office, the elected councillors are unable to deliver and are getting discredited.

While this political tussle continues, the quality of life for both rural and urban Gurgaon continue to deteriorate with severe infrastructure deficiencies and other consequences of uncoordinated growth, putting a question mark on its status as the icon of neoliberal urbanism in India.

5. Chapter Title Conclusion

Through the example of Gurgaon, this article discussed the difficulties of implementing global concepts like participatory planning and public-private partnerships in transitional economies of like India. Rapid change of a small rural town to a centre of industrial manufacturing and then, a global IT-BPO hub, in an unplanned manner, over a short time has resulted in a complex and heterogeneous urban pattern with overlapping layers of socio-spatial relations. The transformational journey has been further compounded by Gurgaon's geographic location, where economic growth has occurred due to its proximity to Delhi, but where the management and consequences of this growth are mediated through the local political channels.

The state government encouraged a joint approach towards city building. But the parastatal agencies in the name of facilitating the private enterprise led growth machine had relegated their planning responsibilities. The liberal land policy and minimal regulatory control enabled the developers to amass large land parcels from the peri-urban farmers, to create production and consumption spaces for the IT-BPO-led new globalised economy. Rapid growth in property prices enabled a large number of farmers to move away from agriculture and become stakeholders in the new urban economy. By channelising new economic opportunities, the real estate sector turned into the bridge between the global investors and the local state.

The outcome is a highly unsustainable urban landscape, marked by environmental degradation and stark disparities between planned and unplanned areas. The development pattern has followed the ease of land assembly, rather than a coordinated plan and did not create any space for public participation. The politics of this urban transformation is marked by high degree of social stratification. In this scenario, creation of a new municipal institution, through direct election by the people, instead of facilitating participatory decision making, widened existing social cleavages - rural-urban dichotomies, caste rivalries and power struggles between local and state level politicians,

The urban middleclass preferences for indirect control over local governance through civil-society activism face strong challenge from the rural pockets, which follow the route of direct electoral politics. The political system, dominated by the entrenched rural rich, has reduced the influence of the civil-society groups over the local governance of Gurgaon. This contestation between the urban middleclass and the rural rich has also overshadowed and made invisible a third category of citizens - the informal sector workers and migrant labourers. Not registered as voters, they are voiceless in the local governance system and routinely bypassed. The rural elites have captured power in the newly formed MCG, but its power to implement developmental works is extremely restricted due to a complex interplay of institutional deficiencies, horizontal and vertical power relationships between the parastatal agencies and caste centric politics. The incomplete devolution of administrative power from the state government has made the elected representatives of local government ineffective

Lastly, the process of Gurgaon's transformation illustrates the difficulties migrants face in accessing power to influence urban planning and policy arena, even if they are economically successful. The astronomical growth of Gurgaon was made possible due to the forces of globalisation, which created the IT outsourcing economy. Migrant workers – from upper middleclass technocrats to seasonal construction labours, are the back bones of this success. But their participation in the planning process faces stiff opposition from entrenched local interests.

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