

India's capital is marked by different settlement types, defined by diverse degrees of formality, legality, and tenure. As part of a larger project on urban transformation in India, Cities of Delhi seeks to carefully document the degree to which access to basic services varies across these different types of settlement, and to better understand the nature of that variation. Undertaken by a team of researchers at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, the project aims to examine how the residents of the city interact with their elected representatives, state agencies, and other agents in securing public services.

Through three sets of reports, the project provides a comprehensive picture of how the city is governed, and especially how this impacts the poor. The first, of which this is one, is a set of carefully selected case studies of slums, known as jhuggi jhopri clusters (JJC) in Delhi, unauthorised colonies, and resettlement colonies. The second set of studies explores a range of different processes through which the governing institutions of Delhi engage with residents. The third focuses on selected agencies of governance in Delhi. All reports are made public as they are completed.

Cities of Delhi is directed by Patrick Heller and Partha Mukhopadhyay and coordinated by Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda. The project has received funding from Brown University and the Indian Council for Social Science Research.

Negotiating Citizenship in F Block

A Jhuggi Jhopri Cluster in Delhi

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Introduction

This report presents the case of a jhuggi jhopri cluster (JJC) in Delhi, a squatter settlement located on public land. The JJC is one of seven government-designated categories of unplanned settlements¹ in Delhi; it is a category estimated to include nearly 4.2 lakh² households,³ about 15 percent of Delhi's population.⁴

Although 'JJC' is used interchangeably with 'slum' in many contexts, the two terms refer to separate types of settlements in the categorical hierarchy set out by the Delhi government. In this official lexicon, slum refers to a 'slum designated area' (SDA), a settlement identified in a piece of 1956 legislation. These 'notified' slums—part of a list that has not been updated since 1994⁵—are granted administrative recognition and assured some level of basic services, as well as due process in case of eviction or demolition. JJC, on the other hand, while officially recognised, are not granted the same legal protections; in the spectrum of Delhi's unplanned settlements JJC remain the most vulnerable. And although there is tremendous variation across Delhi's JJC, much of what occurs in these settlements is a function of a vulnerable community's insecure claim to the space on which it lives, a fact manifest in the repeated evictions and demolitions in the city's jhuggi jhopri clusters.⁶ These are, in general, spaces of compromised citizenship where residents have neither reliable access to public services nor secure land tenure.

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F Block of Punjabi Basti (*basti* is a colloquialism for a JJC used by residents), also known as Gayatri Colony,⁷ is a community of several thousand in west Delhi. The settlement sits on land owned by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), an agency of the central government whose mandates include developing housing for the city's residents. The community's recent history exemplifies many of the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by JJC residents across the city, most notably the threat of eviction. The F Block settlement came to wide notice in March 2011 when civil society organisations protested a demolition carried out by the DDA under the supervision of the Delhi Police.⁸ This demolition remains a key memory for F Block residents; it is also an incident that, according to community leaders, led for the first time to collective action by residents. This was the second demolition undertaken in F Block in a decade (another had been carried out in 2001), and it was followed by a smaller demolition a year later to make way for a DDA transit camp, leading to a pervasive feeling of physical insecurity among residents. Their interactions with various state actors, including elected representatives, officials and staff of implementing agencies such as the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), and police and DDA officials also reveal the high degree of vulnerability felt by F Block residents.

This paper is the result of repeated field visits to F Block by a team of six researchers over four months in the summer of 2013. A research protocol was framed in the form of an open-ended questionnaire with specific themes for collecting qualitative primary data from different actors. Respondents were identified using 'snowballing', and included residents, the *pradhan*⁹ (an unelected community representative), members of the Residents' Welfare Association (RWA), elected representatives, and staff of government agencies. Respondents were balanced across gender, and information provided by individuals was corroborated with other residents. In a number of cases, information provided by respondents was inconsistent and is reported as such. All the other findings we present are based on multiple responses that were consistent across respondents and that we judged, following the standards of qualitative research, to be robust enough to be reported as such.

The Place

F Block is an assemblage of roughly built *jhuggis* stretching across a largely rocky, uneven piece of land in the MCD ward of Baljeet Nagar (Ward 93) in west Delhi's Karol Bagh Zone. The *basti* is cut by a deep chasm at its centre, and a few *jhuggis* sit precariously on the edge of this gully. The JJC is separated from neighbouring settlements on one side by the wall of a large sports ground; on another, it is bounded by a recently paved concrete road that connects Baba Faridpuri to Baljeet Nagar (two neighbouring colonies); on the remaining sides, it abuts other unplanned colonies (Gopal Dairy, Taalibasti, Baba Faridpuri), an unauthorised colony (Rajasthani Colony), and the DDA transit camp built for Kathputli Colony¹⁰ residents.

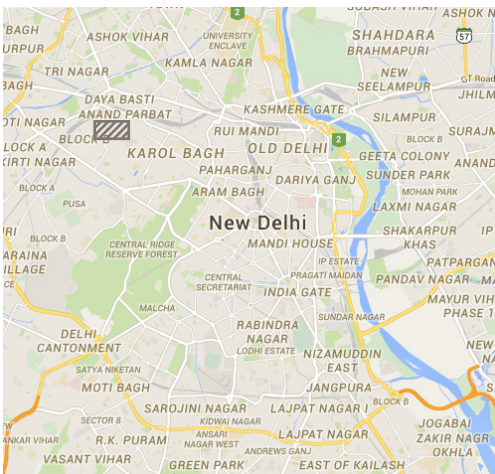
The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) estimates that there are 455 *jhuggis* in the settlement, spread over 1492 square metres.¹¹ Residents, however, report the actual number of *jhuggis* to be closer to 1000. Barring a few exceptions, the *jhuggis* are single storey, one or two room dwellings made of brick or stone; the interiors are often plastered, but the exteriors remain unfinished, capped by metal roofs. Some *jhuggi* residents whose houses were demolished in 2012—when a small demolition was undertaken to make way for the Kathputli Colony transit camp¹²—have rebuilt houses in a more temporary fashion using tarpaulin for the roof. According to the residents, *jhuggis* in the central area of *basti* are 40 to 50 years old, while those on the periphery have been built in the past 15 years. Narrow unpaved lanes, two or three feet wide, cut through the settlement.

There is little verifiable information available about the demographics of the *basti* or its history. The *pradhan* narrates one possible story of its genesis: in the decades following independence, the area was a stone mine. He reports that his great grandparents and other relatives worked as day labourers breaking rocks in the area where the JJC now stands, creating the raw materials used to build housing in the surrounding area for partition refugees. As the rocks were exhausted, he told us, *jhuggis* began rising in the mine's place.

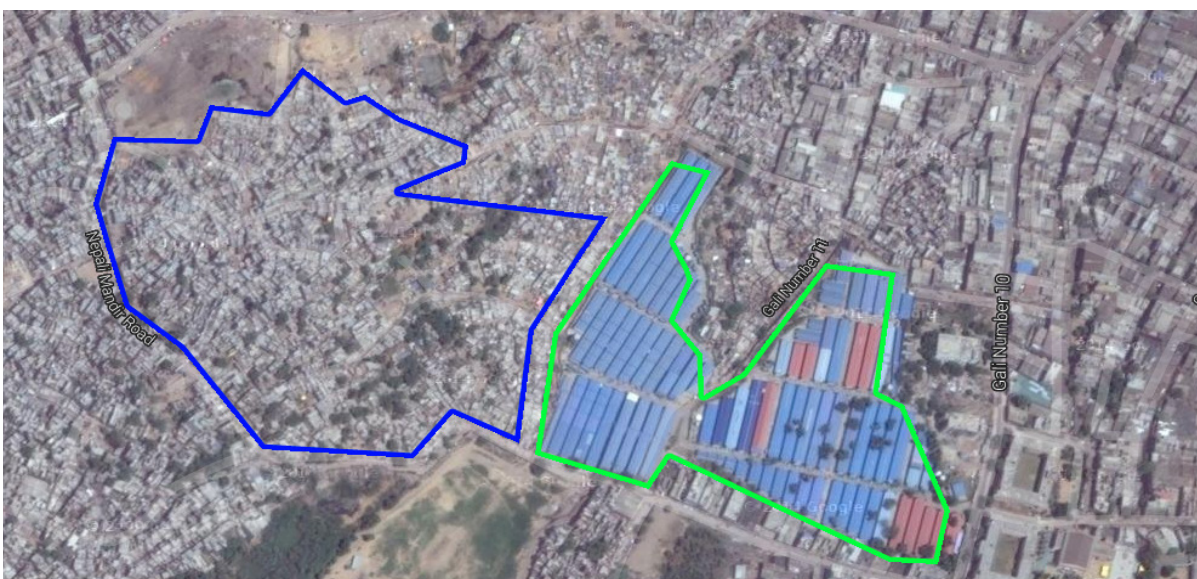
According to the *pradhan*, many of these newer residents came from surrounding areas like Faridpuri, Baljeet Nagar, and Rajasthani Colony, drawn either by the possibility of owning their own homes, or lower rents; others came from states outside Delhi, like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar. The *basti* appears to be fairly heterogeneous demographically, although the *pradhan* reports that the community is majority Dalit and Adivasi.

Most residents work in the informal sector: men are employed as street vendors, rickshaw drivers, security guards, carpenters, masons, and construction workers, with some travelling by metro as far as Gurgaon and Ghaziabad for construction work. The Anand Parbat industrial area, located a few kilometres from the *basti*, is another site of employment. Women either work from home, where they engage in basic work outsourced from factories, or as domestic help in the nearby middle and upper-middle class Patel Nagar colonies.

Internal politics in the *basti* are dominated by two forces: the *pradhan* and the Residents' Welfare Association (RWA). Both residents and external actors identify the *pradhan* as a community repre-



 = Area of Detail



The DUSIB-designated borders of F Block are outlined in blue. To the east, the Kathputli transit camp is outlined in green. The Ramjas sports ground is visible to the south. An interactive map of this and other research sites is available at citiesofdelhi.cprindia.org/map.

sentative and organiser, and a key point of contact for a wide range of grievances. He is unelected, and receives no explicit compensation for his work. The *pradhan* heads a community-based organisation (CBO) called Ambedkar Basti Vikas Sangathan, and is also an activist with the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

The Residents' Welfare Association is a community structure common in Delhi neighbourhoods, both planned and unplanned. The F Block RWA was registered in 2008, and has four office bearers who, like the *pradhan*, serve as community representatives in interactions with elected officials and frontline staff from government agencies.¹³ There is some friction between the RWA and the *pradhan*, who had previously held an office in the Association. The *pradhan* ascribed his differences with the RWA to caste politics. RWA officials explained that although they have ideological differences with the *pradhan*, they agree on issues like access to water and sanitation, and have acted together to resist eviction.

As in all JJs, ambiguous land tenure contributes to a range of daily challenges for residents in F Block. The process of buying and renting *jhuggis* in the absence of clear land tenure is facilitated through Power of Attorney (POA), also known as General Power of Attorney (GPA).¹⁴ Residents explain that they help each other to create powers of attorney, becoming sellers and buyers for one another without actually exchanging property in a conscious strategy to lay legal claim to their homes and generate other identification documents.¹⁵ It is crucial to note that while these transactions occur on stamp paper and other official paperwork is involved, such transactions do not transfer the kind of property rights associated with a sale deed.

F Block residents generally express confusion about the legal status of the settlement and the security of their own tenure.¹⁶ And while the majority understand that they do not have unencumbered rights to the land on which their *jhuggis* were built, they emphasise that the authorities didn't make any claim to the land until the residents had built it up and made it habitable. Community members living in one part of the *basti* recall that in 1996, before they settled there, the land was forested, an uninhabited area used by neighbouring residents for

open defecation. One female resident, who claimed to be one of the first to arrive in this part of F Block, remembers that it was dangerous: she kept two dogs with her for protection. During the rainy season, sections of the land were covered in knee-deep water. Despite these challenges, she told us, early settlers decided to clear the land and make it habitable. "Where was DDA then?" she asked, referring to their recent claims on the land and ensuing attempts at demolition. "We did all the hard labour and worked honestly to settle here."

A 15 year-old girl told us the story of her family's move to F Block, a narrative that exemplifies the experience of many newer residents. Tired of living in a rented home in neighbouring Baba Faridpuri, her family heard through word of mouth about a *jhuggi* in F Block that they could 'own' and decided to shift. The transaction did not involve any agents. By her account, the family worked directly with the 'owner' to register a GPA with a notary at Moti Nagar. Although the 'seller' came to F Block often, he didn't live in the community.

While this account reflects the perception of a large group of residents that no agent or group controls access to property in F Block, another group described a "*bhoo (land) mafia*" that operates through a nexus of elected officials, police, and private contractors. Through violence or coercion, local goons take control of land in the area, which they give to new residents, either for a monthly rental fee, or a one-time payment between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 40,000. It is difficult to determine which of these two narratives is most accurate, and the reality is likely a combination of the two.

The presence of a 'land mafia' is just one consequence of the unregulated and uncertain land tenure that pervades in the *basti*. Police and other government officials consistently engage in rent-seeking behaviour in the settlement, extracting payments both in exchange for basic services and with threats of demolition. Residents of F Block, like people living in JJs across Delhi, are forced to negotiate with official and semi-official agents throughout their daily lives for basic rights and services. We discuss this in depth in the final two sections of the report.

Service Provisioning

Water

Water distribution varies across Delhi's JJs in terms of source, frequency, cost, quantity, and quality. Residents access water from a variety of sources, including Delhi Jal Board (DJB) water tankers, piped water shared by groups of households, private or public bore wells¹⁷ in the JJ (known as 'borings'), taps at community toilet complexes, public taps in neighbouring areas, water tankers from private companies, bore wells in neighbouring areas, and households in neighbouring planned colonies.

Delivery should be overseen by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB),¹⁸ the nodal implementing agency responsible for water supply to areas under the jurisdiction of Delhi's three Municipal Corporations, including JJs. Indeed, the DJB has made a commitment that any settlement, regardless of its legality, would be provided with water,¹⁹ but the mechanics of this provisioning are not detailed in any policy. In the absence of any formal structure, the DJB's local staff have put in place a range of mechanisms to manage water distribution in JJs across the city.

Like most JJ residents, people in F Block access water through a mostly informal patchwork of mechanisms. There is no provision of piped water supply in the JJ, nor is there any public bore well. In our conversations, residents of F Block identified three main sources of water: DJB tankers, and bore wells and households located in neighbouring colonies.

The closest borings to F Block are long-standing wells in nearby Holi Chowk and Faridpuri colonies, but water from these is brackish and residents use it mostly for household chores. According to the treasurer of the *basti's* Residents' Welfare Association (RWA), six to eight borings were sanctioned in 2013 by the government for the entire Punjabi Basti, including F Block. Residents assumed that this meant they would have access to water from one of these

borings. Despite government promises, the four or five borings that were dug in the area were designated exclusively to serve the transit camp built as temporary accommodation for residents of Kathputli Colony displaced as part of Delhi's first in-situ slum rehabilitation project.

In F Block, water distribution through DJB tankers is structured in two different ways. The first involves the informal allotment of DJB tankers to collectives of eight to ten households, each household of which is referred to as a 'member'. The second is random distribution to residents on a first-come-first-serve basis; these residents' households are known as 'non-members'.

To arrange DJB tanker service to the JJ, residents of F Block approached officials in the nearest Delhi Jal Board office and submitted voter ID cards for groups of eight to ten households along with an application form. The residents refer to this process as getting a tanker 'passed'. In addition, residents report giving Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 to DJB officials through office staff, money for which they receive no receipt. It is important to emphasize that despite this practice, it is generally understood that DJB tanker supply to JJs should be delivered at no cost.

Once every seven to ten days these 'member' households receive around 200 litres of water each from a tanker carrying 1,500 to 2,000 litres of water. The tankers have no set schedule, and some residents report that each 'member group' pays Rs. 50 to the tanker driver on each visit. Officials of the RWA, however, claim that the groups pay the tanker driver something closer to Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. In general, residents do not seem to mind paying this money; they feel that drivers are doing them a favour by coming to the *basti*, and they are willing to compensate him. Residents weren't able to report the exact number of tankers serving the JJ, but did report that about half of the settlement's residents—largely long-time residents of the colony—access water through this system. It is a system that provides each family with close to 200 litres each week; according to residents, each family needs about 200 litres of water *per day*. (Indeed, even this estimate is far below the widely accepted standard for water needs, which falls in the range of 150-200 litres *per capita* per day, or 750-1000 litres per household per day.²⁰)

This disparity leads to water rationing, and the active pursuit of other sources.

The remaining 'non-member' households in F Block access DJB tankers on a first-come-first-serve basis. The JJC receives two tankers each week to serve this population, mostly made up of residents who have moved into the *basti* in the last three or four years. According to residents, these 'non-member' households receive water at the rate of Rs. 15 per 40 litres from the DJB tanker. The *pradhan* reports that about 200 people, or 40 households, get water in this manner each time a tanker visits, which often leads to a lot of chaos.

Indeed, in any JJC in Delhi, the arrival of a water tanker is a chaotic and spectacular event. As a tanker arrives, children and adults run towards it and then alongside it, chaperoning it to its final parking spot. Countless plastic cans and storage containers of all shapes, sizes, colours, and provenance emerge from the *jhuggis*. There is a fair bit of jostling and shoving accompanied with screams and shouts to establish the order in which individuals will be given water. The exit of the tanker is marked by the same chaos, as residents climb onto the tanker as it leaves the *basti* to get whatever dregs remain in the tanker's pipe.

To compensate for the inadequate supply of tanker water, residents in both 'member' and 'non-member' groups rely on bore wells and households in neighbouring colonies. This water is usually free, although owners of private taps sometimes charge Rs. 4 for 40 litres of water. During the summer, residents also request water from neighbours in the nearby Rajasthani colony, requests that, according to the *pradhan*, are often met with rejection and disdain from the colony's relatively wealthier residents.

The arbitrary scheduling of water tankers and high cost incurred in accessing sufficient water is an issue of constant concern for residents. Both 'member' and 'non-member' households emphasise that they have to call repeatedly to ensure that the tanker comes regularly, although there is no specific timing. During summer months, the money paid to the tanker driver can be as high as Rs. 500 per visit.

One female resident estimated that each household spends Rs. 1000 on water each month, a large portion of a household's monthly income. Because

residents receive water from a wide range of sources, there is no consensus on how much each household spends on water, but it is clear to us that residents across the *basti* view water as a significant living expense. The same female resident told us that the unpredictability of tankers was not only a source of inconvenience for adults, but also a problem for school-going children, who often skip classes and stay at home to collect water.

Sanitation: Toilets, Drains, and Solid Waste Management

Sanitation in Delhi's JJs is managed by three government agencies: construction and maintenance of sewer lines across Delhi is the responsibility of the DJB; construction and maintenance of toilets for residents of JJs is managed by the DUSIB; drains are constructed by the DUSIB and maintained by the municipal corporations; and solid waste management is the mandate of the respective Municipal Corporation of Delhi (North, South, or East).

There is no permanent sewer infrastructure in F Block. Until the early 2000s, residents defecated in the bushes around the sports ground adjacent to the *basti*. Since the ground was cordoned off by the construction of a wall about a decade ago, the area has been inaccessible for open defecation and residents have begun using the Community Toilet Complex (CTC) built at one end of the *basti*. The CTC has two toilets, one for women and another for men; women and children pay Re. 1 per use, and men pay Rs. 2. The toilets were initially maintained by the MCD's Slum and JJ Department (now the DUSIB), but are now being managed by a small-scale private contractor.²¹ In interviews, residents complained vigorously about the poor cleanliness and water availability in the toilets. They recall that the door of the toilet for women was broken for a very long time, and was only repaired after intervention from a lawyer from the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN).

Over the years, wealthier residents have also built private toilets inside their houses. According to the *pradhan*, about half of the homes in the *basti* have a private toilet with a storage pit, which is emptied by a suction machine operated by a private owner. Residents report that due to water shortages these private toilets are used mostly at night or in case of emergency.

During our visits to F Block we observed that there are no drains in the *basti*, a fact confirmed by residents. They complained that because of this, water-logging and flooding are recurring problems in the settlement during the monsoon.

The three municipal corporations are responsible for collecting and disposing of solid waste from areas under their jurisdiction, including the JJs.²² The respective corporation is responsible for collection of solid waste from common dumping points (known as *dhalaos*); door-to-door garbage collection, however, is not the mandate of the municipal corporation. In planned colonies, RWAs organise and hire private individuals to provide this service. Although F Block does have an RWA, residents reported no such practice for household garbage collection and disposal. The MCD has neither allocated bins nor assigned places for dumping garbage in the *basti*, and according to the residents there is no formal arrangement for garbage disposal in the *basti*. One MCD truck passes by the colony on its route, and the residents agree that they can throw their garbage in it only if it stops.

The municipal corporations are supposed to provide *safai karamcharis* (cleanliness workers) or sanitation workers for cleaning streets, drains, and other public places in the city, including those in JJs. During field visits to F Block and conversation with residents, we were told that no *safai karamcharis* from the municipal corporation have come to clean the area in recent memory.

Electricity

In 2002, private participation was brought into electricity distribution in Delhi, and the government's distribution agency, the Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB), was divided into three companies. Fifty percent control of each of these was auctioned to private players, resulting in three joint venture distribution companies (often referred to as 'discoms'): Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL), BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL), and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL). The remaining fifty percent of each is still owned by the GNCTD.²³

To understand the mechanism of electricity distribution in F Block, we have relied on information provided by the *pradhan* and corroborated by residents. F Block residents access electricity through three main avenues: legal metered connections; illegal hooking/tapping into electric mains; and sharing electricity with neighbours.

The large majority of *jhuggis* in F Block have metered connections installed by BSES Rajdhani Power Limited around 2006. BSES bills vary per household, but are reported to range from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1,600 per month. Those who borrow from neighbours are usually new settlers and pay a fixed amount on a monthly basis to the provider. Residents stated that supply of electricity has been regular since privatisation in 2002.

Tapping or hooking is done with the help of a private contractor (possibly a moonlighting BSES staffer) who taps electricity from the main line and brings it up to a point close to the *basti*. Anyone who wants a connection buys his or her own cable and draws it from the designated electric point to their home. People pay between Rs. 100 and Rs. 250 per month to the private contractor to access electricity through this system.

Residents are resigned to the reality that every two months the BSES²⁴ raids the *basti* and collects the wire used for illegal tapping. After a few days, new wires, distributed by the same contractor, can be connected to the electric poles at one's own expenses. Residents suspect collusion between the contractor and the DISCOM, and believe that the same confis-

cated wire is redistributed. People pay Rs. 250 for every new illegal connection. These contractors also pay a commission to BSES. Residents are generally comfortable with this arrangement. One explained: “*Koi Daftar mein paise deta hain, koi kahin aur, kya farak padta hai?*” [Some pay money in offices, some in other places, how does it matter?]

Identity Cards

Apart from their children’s school certificates, voter ID is the most widely accepted proof of identity for people living in F Block. Some residents report having paid a *ghoos* (bribe) of Rs. 1000 to a particular official to receive a voter ID. The residents readily accept paying a bribe, as long as they receive the card. Extremely poor families are unable to afford the payment and therefore often do not have voter ID cards.

Despite the enormous publicity the program has received, few F Block residents have Aadhaar cards. A camp was organised in early 2013 in nearby Patel Nagar to take biometric measurements for the cards. Residents, however, report that no government office yet accepts the UID card as proof of identity or residence.

Ration cards are issued to families depending upon their income level (i.e. Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Above Poverty Line (APL)). We were not able to determine how many families possess ration cards.

Different groups of respondents gave different estimates about how many residents hold different types of identity cards. According to the *pradhan* and a few residents, about 50 percent of eligible voters have voter identity cards, and only 20 percent of JJC households have ration cards. He reported that 75 percent of residents had receipts indicating that they had registered for Aadhaar cards, but only 20 percent have received the cards. In another account, RWA officials claim that approximately 80 percent of eligible voters have voter identity cards.

An array of identity cards are an essential tool for anyone living in India, necessary for daily processes from getting a gas connection or mobile phone to accessing government benefits. Cards are needed to satisfy both proof of identity and proof of address requirements. In settlements with uncertain tenure, such as JJs, it is this latter proof that is most difficult and important to obtain, a challenge that directly impedes access to basic services.

Three main forms of identity are accepted as proof of residence:

Voter ID Card

Any resident or non-resident Indian Citizen above 18 years of age is eligible to vote and receive a voter ID card.

Aadhaar Cards

In 2007 the Indian government began issuing multi-purpose national identity cards with a unique 16-digit identification number (UID). In theory, an Aadhaar card can be used to establish a bearer’s identity and to provide him or her secure access to benefits and services. A 2013 Supreme Court ruling, however, held that the UID card could not be a mandatory requirement for any service.

Ration Cards

These are cards for accessing food grains and other essential commodities from the Public Distribution System through a network of Fair Price Shops at subsidised prices. Different ration cards are distributed to people according to income.

Public Facilities

The JJC has no government facilities. There are no streetlights in F Block; the nearest bus stop and metro station are about a kilometre away, located in Patel Nagar and Shadipur respectively. Most people either walk or take a rickshaw. The nearest government primary and secondary schools are between one and two kilometres away in West Patel Nagar. The nearest government hospital is SVP hospital in Patel Nagar. There are no community centres or ration shops located in the *basti*.

Negotiated Citizenship

F Block's recent experience with eviction and demolition brought to the surface the underlying political relationships that have shaped life for residents of this and other JJs. To understand this history is to glimpse the vulnerable, marginal space the settlement's residents occupy in Delhi's political and legal hierarchy.

On the morning of 23 March 2011, DDA officers accompanied five bulldozers and a large detachment of armed policemen to evict residents from F Block and demolish their homes. Fact-finding reports claim that around 600 *jhuggis* were demolished.²⁵ Slum evictions and demolitions in Delhi have been commonplace since the 1960s, coming in waves and isolated incidents, and often go unnoticed, but the March 2011 action in F Block had important ramifications not only for the *basti* but for Delhi's JJs as a whole.

One of the residents of the *basti*, who was associated with a rights group, informed activists about the eviction before it could be completed; activists visited the settlement immediately, and began working on the residents' behalf. The Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), in association with a few housing rights activists, moved the court for a stay order while the demolition was in process. By that evening, the stay order had been granted, but not before 600 *jhuggis* had been demolished. The court went on to give a series of progressive interim orders to aid the community with its immediate circumstances; the DDA was directed to ensure that basic facilities like drinking water, sanitation, temporary shelter, and health services were available to displaced residents. The legal process that began on the day of the demolition ended with an order directing that a comprehensive survey of the area be undertaken to enable proper rehabilitation for the *basti's* residents. This court order was interpreted narrowly and only demolished households were surveyed, which left many rights activists and residents wondering whether only the households surveyed would receive rehabilitation, excluding several hundred households.²⁶

The threat of eviction for F block remains constant. Rumours of another demolition have been rife over the last year, and, in a remarkable turn, the DUSIB's latest list of JJs describes F Block as having "no

jhuggies".²⁷ It appears that, with a stroke of the pen, the state has silently removed an entire settlement from its purview, perhaps certifying in advance the effects of some future demolition. It is a move that typifies the kind of disregard that has slowly become the defining characteristic of the way F Block residents are viewed by state actors and elected representatives.

The 2011 demolition had many indirect effects on service provisioning in the *basti* and residents' relationship with key state actors. Residents report that after the demolition, the MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) asked concerned officials not to issue any new ration cards to F Block residents; this might have been intended to make it difficult for evicted residents to re-establish residency. But the demolition also provided a critical moment for collective action. The residents of the *basti* found a new base of external support in the civil society organisations and rights groups that became involved in the 2011 events. The Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), a prominent housing rights organisation, and other rights activists continue to support the residents of the *basti* in legal conflicts and confrontations with the police. They monitored the DDA survey that was undertaken after the demolition and have represented the residents, both in court and in their efforts to negotiate with agency officials about surveying, demolition, and rehabilitation.

The 2011 events and their aftermath have also unified the leadership within the *basti*. Throughout, the *pradhan* and the RWA have been active representatives of the settlement. Despite long-standing tensions, the *pradhan* and the RWA came together on issues related to the demolition.

The demolition was a key milestone in F Block's recent history, and serves to illustrate many of the settlement's vulnerabilities. It is, however, simply one dramatic example of the challenges that residents negotiate every day to access basic government services and protections.

As is the case across Delhi's JJs, water delivery involves constant negotiation with a range of actors, including elected representatives like the MLA. The residents of F Block had a complex relationship with their MLA from 2004 until 2013, and it grew partic-

ularly sour around issues of water provision in the final years of his tenure. Water is the responsibility of the state government, and elected representatives at that level can influence provisioning to some degree. His attitude is illustrated by an incident narrated by a resident: after she informed a DJB tanker driver that water delivery was insufficient, the driver asked her and other residents to approach the MLA and request another tanker. As one resident narrates, the MLA was “indifferent” to their problem and said that the tanker supply was sufficient. Others we spoke with confirmed this indifference, reporting that they visited the MLA numerous times to request more water to no avail. Residents have made similar requests for drains. He has either turned the residents away with disdain or heard their complaints without providing any assistance.

This was not always the case. After winning the constituency in 2008, the MLA sent residents of the *basti* letters thanking them for their support and assuring them that he would work on their behalf.²⁸ The community has often displayed this kind of political support through other means, even collecting Rs. 50,000 to fund a *jagran* (an all-night Hindu ritual) for the MLA. Residents speak about this as a gesture for which they expected some political patronage in return, yet they received none. What is perhaps most representative of constituents’ frustration with the MLA is his response to residents’ plea for help in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 demolition. After the incomplete survey was finished, many *basti* households went to him to ask if their *jhuggis* would still be demolished given that the survey has been completed. He replied by asking them why they had built the *jhuggis* in the first place, stating that it was government land and he could not do anything if the government “wants its land back”. Confused by these statements, members of the RWA asked why the MLA facilitated the issuing of voter IDs in the first place if he thought they had no right to live there.

The *basti*’s relationship to its councillor, who represents it at the municipal level, is somewhat ambiguous and to some extent reflects the very limited responsibilities of the position. The councillor is a member of the BJP, re-elected most recently in 2012. In general, councillors in Delhi have limited powers—solid waste management is the only basic service completely under their jurisdiction. Services like

water, sewerage, and electricity are controlled at the state level. In the case of F block, this is underscored by the residents’ claim that when they contacted him after the demolition, he told them that he could not do anything for them and that only the MLA could help. The councillor himself, however, reports that although he has no purview over the many development works required in the colony, he was regularly in touch with the residents of the colony and assisted them after the demolition. Residents, however, report that local workers from his party have often written letters to the government making a case for the demolition of *jhuggis* in the area. We can only speculate as to why the party would agitate for demolition.

The residents of F Block have a clear understanding of representatives’ functions. They expect that their MLA and councillor can help them secure basic services from the city and provide them with protection against eviction, and have gone to some lengths to express their political loyalty. They have moreover been active in making claims on their representatives by going to their offices and circulating petitions. On balance, however, their relationship to their representatives has been adversarial. Despite having displayed political loyalties, residents of the *basti* feel like they have never received any protection in exchange. Both the MLA and the councillor have consistently failed to offer protection to the community, even during critical moments like the 2011 demolition. A statement by one resident explains this despair: “We have supported everyone [referring to all politicians] but no one has done any work for us, the *basti* people.”

Many day-to-day interactions with the government happen between residents and police and DDA security guards. Our respondents did not distinguish between these two groups, as they believe that there is a nexus between the two. DDA guards patrol the area and police visit the area daily. Residents explain that the police and the DDA have been collecting money for habitation of the land for the last two decades. They report that they must pay a sum between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 to the DDA and the police (presumably, together) for constructing a new *jhuggi*, and thereafter, payments have to be made when a *jhuggi* is renovated. This second amount is based on individual negotiations and is required for any improvement, ranging from installing a door or

window to constructing a toilet or additional room. Residents claim that informants report to police and the DDA on new construction in the *basti*, and the consequences of not paying include demolition. As one respondent explained: “*Aap ghar ki unchaai badhaane ke liye do pankti eent daalte ho aur paise nahin dete, phir chaar pankti eent giraa dengey.*” [“If you add two rows of bricks to increase the height of your *jhuggi* and do not pay [the DDA and the Police], four rows of bricks will be demolished.”] After the 2011 demolition, the collection of money by the DDA decreased, but by 2013, residents report, “it was back in full force”.

Elections

The attitude towards the MLA and his unresponsiveness was evident in the December 2013 Delhi assembly elections, when many of those who had been supporters of the MLA voted for the opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). It is clear from conversations with residents that this move was premised on their desire for more agency and stronger rights. AAP ran on a platform promising better services and increased participation, especially for those living in the city’s informal settlements.

The lead up to the Delhi Assembly elections in 2013 provided us with an opportunity to understand what the residents of F Block consider to be important election issues, to observe their electoral loyalties, and document the strategies used by various political parties and candidates to campaign among residents of the *basti*. The following reporting is based on four field visits to F Block between 4 November and 20 December 2013, as well as meetings with party workers at local offices of the AAP, BJP, Congress, and BSP and observations of campaign events. During this period, there appeared to be some consensus among residents on key election issues. One central issue was protection from demolition, followed by the necessary steps for resettlement at the same site. Women in a focus group expressed this concern:

The only thing we want is that we not be removed from here. Our livelihoods are in nearby areas and our children’s schools are in nearby areas as well. If they want to rehabilitate us, if

they want to give us flats then they should do that in this place. After all we have been living here for more than ten years so we don’t want to move away from here. What will we do with flats that are far away from here?

Another woman pointed to a poster stating “*Jahaan Jhuggi Waheen Punarvaas*” (“Rehabilitation at the same site”) as her main demand to a prospective MLA. Beyond these issues, residents reported that regular water supply, proper sanitation, and proper electricity remain recurring and key election demands.

In the days preceding the elections, the *pradhan* reported that the frequency of tankers coming to F Block had been increased. Residents of F Block, who were accustomed to receiving water once every week, were suddenly receiving water daily.

Residents of the *basti* expressed that, as a collective, they do not have loyalty towards a single political party, nor towards a certain candidate. One of the residents explained: “We do not align ourselves to any one political party because if we did we would be bonded.” The *pradhan* was a party worker of the Bahujan Samaaj Party (BSP); at the same time, however, he had submitted his application to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to be its candidate for the election from the Patel Nagar Assembly Constituency. Members of the RWA of the *basti* worked as volunteers for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), but did not show their support openly until after the results of the elections had been declared and AAP came to power. “We were supporting AAP secretly because [the incumbent MLA] is a goon,” said one RWA official. “We feared that if he knew that we were supporting AAP then he would stop all services in the *basti*.”

Until about twenty days before the Delhi Assembly elections, held on 4 December 2013, there was no intensive election campaigning in the *basti*. At the twenty-day mark, however, residents who were AAP volunteers started campaigning quietly. These volunteers called residents and held small meetings with them at night to explain why they should vote for AAP. During these interactions, the volunteers emphasised that the residents had seen the inaction of the BJP (the Councillor’s party) and Congress (the

MLA's party) towards work in the *basti* and that this time they should give a chance to AAP. Residents informed us that in the week prior to the election, a public meeting was also organized by AAP in one corner of the *basti*.

Residents reported that one BJP supporter campaigned in the *basti*, but did not see any campaigning by Congress. They did report that they had received SMS messages from the MLA asking for their support. Interestingly, despite the fact that the *pradhan* was a BSP party worker, residents did not report any BSP campaign activities in the area.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won the Patel Nagar Assembly constituency, of which F Block is a part, with 37.9 percent of the vote. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was second, with 31.8 percent of the vote, while the Congress party received 24.4 percent of the vote. In F Block the election results may reflect the additional mobilisation by AAP volunteers mentioned above. A quick analysis of the election data for polling booths where the residents of F Block voted suggests that a little over 43.5 percent of residents who voted opted for AAP, substantially higher than the constituency average of 37.9 percent, while nearly 23.8 percent voted for the Congress and 23 percent voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Conclusion

Jhuggi jhopri clusters house some of the most vulnerable populations in Delhi. But even by these low standards, the residents of F Block have remarkably poor access to the protections and services promised by the state. Residents live under constant threat of demolition, lacking even the most basic protections of political patronage that shield many vulnerable settlements.

Residents' everyday lives are shaped by negotiations with various state actors and frontline bureaucrats for fundamental needs. For example, to access water from a DJB tanker, residents report having to bribe the zonal office to get a tanker sanctioned and then offer token payment to the tanker driver on each visit. Even then distribution is poor. The residents of F block do not approach the state as citizens with rights, nor even as clients of a patronage regime. They approach the state as supplicants in a woefully unbalanced bargaining equation. This imbalance is defined by their extreme vulnerability and the constant threat of eviction, and is reproduced daily through surveillance, harassment and continuous extractions by state agents, including elected representatives, local police, and DDA personnel.

F Block's fate remains uncertain. If the residents have always been vulnerable, they have now been rendered officially invisible. The DUSIB's most recent data on JJs in Delhi, released on 25 March 2014, does not register *jhuggis* in F Block. In fact, the accompanying map labels the settlement with a cryptic "no jhuggies?" It is not clear whether this is a survey error, whether DUSIB is anticipating a demolition, or whether the agency is simply refusing to acknowledge the existence of F Block residents.

Notes

1. Categories of settlements in Delhi presented in Economic Survey of Delhi, 2008-2009, page 169, citing Delhi Urban Environment and Infrastructure Improvement Project (DUEIIP)-2021.
2. 1 lakh = 100,000
3. DUSIB's List of 685 JJs in Delhi, 2011.
4. Calculated based on an average household size of five and the population of Delhi's Urban Agglomeration from the 2011 census data.
5. Gautam Bhan, 'Planned Illegalities: Housing and the 'Failure' of Planning in Delhi: 1947-2010', *Economic and Political Weekly*, (15 June 2013).
6. See "Kathputli Colony: Delhi's First In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation," another report of the Cities of Delhi project.
7. Municipal Corporation Delhi (MCD) website: <http://app.mapmyindia.com/mcdApp/> and interview with pradhan, 14 March 2013.
8. *The Cruel Side of Delhi's Beautification: Illegal Demolition in Baljeet Nagar*, Francesca Feruglio and Shivani Chaudhry eds, Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), June 2011.
9. The *pradhan* is an unelected, widely recognized, informal representative of a significant number of residents in a community. In this case, he also heads a recently registered NGO and was well known by residents.
10. See "Kathputli Colony: Delhi's First In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation," another report of the Cities of Delhi project.
11. Official website of Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board: <http://delhishelterboard.in/main>
12. See "Kathputli Colony: Delhi's First In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation," another report of the Cities of Delhi project.
13. The RWA, registered under the Societies Act 1860, on 17 October 2008, is called "Baljeet Nagar F Block Residents' Welfare Association" with an official address at "F-181 Punjabi Basti near Ramjas Ground Baljeet Nagar New Delhi 110008".
14. Originally designed as an instrument through which an individual can give another the power to manage his or her affairs, the GPA has also been used by individuals with property of "imperfect title who cannot or do not want to execute registered deeds of conveyance." GPAs also allow property buyers and sellers to avoid paying stamp duty and registration charges.
15. One sample GPA that we examined was written on a stamp paper of Rs. 100; it involved the 'sale' of a *jhuggi* of about 50 sq. yds. for a price of Rs. 2 lakh. In addition to details of the transaction, a typical POA or GPA mentions the cost of the material used to construct a *jhuggi*, which ranges from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000. The residents reported that 10 x 7 foot *jhuggis* on the side of the main road were priced between Rs. 2 lakhs and Rs. 5 lakhs. Both the seller and buyer have to present their ID cards (such as voter ID card or ration card) to prepare a power of attorney.
16. On 9 November 2010 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Union of India (DDA) in a case between Ramjas Foundation and Union of India. The contested land was ultimately acquired and owned by the Union. Punjabi Basti was one such piece of land that was lost by the foundation to the government. (CIVIL APPEAL NO.6662 OF 2004 and 2010)
17. Same as tubewells.
18. For details refer to The Delhi Water Board Act 1988: Chapter III 'Functions of the Corporation'
19. Interview with top DJB official, 5 July 2013.
20. Centre for Science and Environment, "Buildings: Earthscrapers - Environment Impact Assessment of Buildings", 2011. Table 4, pp. 19, titled "Norms and Standards for Water Supply in India"; Manual on water supply and treatment by CPHEEO, MoUD, 1999.
21. This is a common arrangement, in which a private contractor manages toilets. There are three ways in which maintenance of the CTCs in JJs and resettlement colonies in Delhi is undertaken: (i) by the MCD, (ii) by NGOs - other than Sulabh International (pay and use), (iii) by private contractors - where these contractors pay a certain amount per latrine seat to the MCD (pay and use). -- Source: Shahana Sheikh, "Public Toilets in Delhi: An Emphasis on the Facilities for Women in Slum/Resettlement Areas". CCS Working Paper No. 192. Summer Research Internship Programme 2008. Centre for Civil Society, New Delhi, India.
22. Chapter XVII Sanitation and Public Health, Conservancy and sanitation of DMC Act 2011
23. The private partner in Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) is the Tata Group, and the private partner in both BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) is the Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG).
24. Referred to as the DESU in interview, the BSES' former name
25. *The Cruel Side of Delhi's Beautification: Illegal Demolition in Baljeet Nagar*, Francesca Feruglio and Shivani Chaudhry eds, Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), June 2011.
26. Interviews with residents of the *basti* on 23 May 2013, while the DDA survey was in progress.
27. DUSIB list released on 25 March 2014
28. Residents showed us copies of this letter: "Dear Friend, The never-ending blessings, support and votes of you and your family has given me to chance to do development and strengthen the brotherhood [in this] constituency. For this, I thank you and [I am] grateful to you. I will always welcome suggestions given by you. '[I] have promised that I will serve you.' - MLA, Baljeet Nagar. "