

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 (JJs) 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.

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## Planning the Slum JJC Resettlement in Delhi and the Case of Savda Ghevra

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August 2014

### Suggested Citation:

Shahana Sheikh, Subhadra Banda, and Ben Mandelkern, 'Planning the Slum: JJC Resettlement in Delhi and the Case of Savda Ghevra'. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (August 2014).

### Introduction

This report presents the case of a resettlement colony in Delhi, built to house residents evicted from jhuggi jhopri clusters (JJs), squatter settlements located on public land. The JJ is one of seven government-designated categories of unplanned settlements<sup>1</sup> in Delhi; it is a category estimated to include nearly 420,000 households,<sup>2</sup> about 15 percent of Delhi's population.<sup>3</sup> The city has experienced a long history of policies designed to remove JJs from the city centre and relocate their residents to Delhi's periphery. Many of these have involved allotting JJ residents plots in 'Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) Resettlement Colonies'.

Since India's Independence, Delhi has seen three waves of relocation: in the 1960s, in the 1970s, and, most recently, in the 2000s. The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) reports that between 1961 and 1977, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) established 44 resettlement colonies under the retrospectively named 'Old Plan Scheme of JJ Resettlement'.<sup>4</sup> In the first nine years of this policy, 18 JJ Resettlement Colonies were established.<sup>5</sup> After a five-year break, the DDA undertook a massive resettlement push, relocating another 240,000 JJ households in just two years.<sup>6</sup> By 1977, the Agency had built 26 additional resettlement colonies, bringing the total to 44 colonies.<sup>7</sup>

The most recent wave of relocation in Delhi was marked by eviction and resettlement of JJC residents to make way for infrastructure projects necessary for the Commonwealth Games, held in Delhi in 2010. During this period, residents were relocated to 11 sites, mostly in north, northwest, and west Delhi. These newest resettlement colonies—which include Savda Ghevra, Bawana, Holambi Kalan, Papan Kalan, Rohini, and Narela<sup>8</sup>—bring Delhi's total number of resettlement colonies to 55.

There is no official estimate of the population living in these 55 colonies. The most comprehensive figure available is a September 2013 estimate by the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), which concludes that 250,000 households (approximately 1.25 million people) live in the 44 resettlement colonies established as a result of the first two waves of resettlement. This estimate does not include those living in the 11 newest colonies.

Officially referred to as 'Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) Resettlement Colonies' by the government, these settlements should logically be understood as 'planned', implemented as they are by government design. As Gautam Bhan observes:

[Resettlement colonies] are explicitly included within the development area of the master plan in a zone marked for residential use, laid out according to standards and norms for resettlement colonies in the master plan and, critically, they fulfil all these conditions at the time they were built.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, while it places resettlement colonies physically inside the 'planned' city, the government of Delhi treats resettlement colonies as a distinct category, separate from planned colonies. This may be a tacit recognition on the part of the government that even though they are 'planned', as we document in this report, many resettlement colonies have not been provided with basic services and are in many ways being overtaken by informal arrangements. In other words, even as JJC

residents are shifted into colonies designed by the government they remain officially within the framework of the marginal, 'unplanned' city, subject to vulnerabilities similar to those that mark the JJC's the policy is meant to displace.

The government's relocation of JJC residents is explicitly motivated by the concept of 'rehabilitation', an impetus that suggests resettlement sites should have the basic services like water and sewerage that JJC's so often lack. In reality, however, these colonies are rarely serviced before residents arrive. Rather, services follow residents after they are relocated, resulting in the same disorganised and incomplete service delivery present in the JJC's these colonies are meant to 'rehabilitate'. This means that resettlement colonies, though planned, end up having many slum-like characteristics. It is a reality that has led scholars to label such resettlement colonies 'planned slums'.<sup>10</sup> This report documents an example of this phenomenon in one of the city's most recently established resettlement colonies, the Savda Ghevra colony in west Delhi.

This report is the result of extensive field visits to the community, by a team of six researchers over seven months, between March and October 2013, with follow up work in summer 2014. A research protocol was framed in the form of an open-ended questionnaire with specific themes for collecting qualitative primary data from respondents identified using a snowballing technique. Respondents included residents from different blocks of the resettlement colony, members of the residents' welfare associations (RWAs), elected representatives, staff of government agencies, and members of NGOs active in the colony. 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

The Savda Ghevra JJ Resettlement Colony was established in 2006 in Phases I and II of Savda Ghevra. Sited on 250 acres on the western periphery of the city, it is the newest resettlement colony resulting from the most recent wave of evictions and relocation in Delhi. Records of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) describe these two phases of the colony as including 8,686 plots.<sup>11</sup> A third phase of the colony remained undeveloped until August 2012, when construction of 7,620 EWS (economically weaker sections) flats began.<sup>12</sup> Although work on these five-storeyed buildings continues, there are no residents in these flats.

It is difficult to find an official estimate of the population living in the colony, but an NGO active in the area reports that it exceeds 46,000.<sup>13</sup> Electoral rolls indicate 14,707 voters from the colony. Located off National Highway 10, the colony is about 30 kilometres from Connaught Place, the de facto centre point of Delhi. It is part of the Mundka assembly constituency and the Mundka municipal ward.

The colony was built on agricultural land that had been



 = Area of Detail



Savda Ghevra JJ Resettlement Colony is outlined in blue. The surrounding farmland is visible, as is the low density of development, compared to the rest of Delhi. An interactive map of this and other research sites is available at [citiesofdelhi.cprindia.org/map](http://citiesofdelhi.cprindia.org/map).

shared by the neighbouring villages of Savda and Ghevra.<sup>14</sup> The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which had come to own the land, <sup>15</sup> sold it to the Slum and JJ Department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which managed the allotment of plots to JJC residents during 2006 and 2007. <sup>16</sup> From this time until 2010 the Slum and JJ Department governed the Savda Ghevra Resettlement Colony; in 2010, along with the Department's other responsibilities, governance of the colony was transferred to the newly created state-level Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB).<sup>17</sup>

JJC residents were relocated to Savda Ghevra from communities located a substantial distance from the new colony. The closest of these, located at Tagore Garden, was 20 kilometres distant, while the furthest, at Lakshmi Nagar, was 44 kilometres away. Residents also moved from JJC at Karkardooma, Shahdara, Palam, Raja Garden, Lodhi Road, Nizamuddin, Geeta Colony, Dilshad Garden, Khan Market, Yamuna Pushta, Pragati Maidan (Naglamachi), and Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. Savda Ghevra and other recent resettlement locations have set a new standard of peripheralisation for the urban poor in Delhi; resettlement colonies established in the 1960s and 1970s were located more centrally, within 20 kilometres of Connaught Place.<sup>18</sup>

Residents give different accounts about the transparency of the relocation process, and whether or not they received government assistance to make the move. While most residents reported that they were simply given provisional identification slips and subsequently relocated to Savda Ghevra, a place most had never seen, a few claimed that they had been shown the location of Savda Ghevra before they were actually assigned a plot and made the move. Further, while some residents told us that they had received transport or an allowance to shift their belongings from their previous residences to Savda Ghevra, others said they received no moving assistance from government agencies.

What is certain is that when relocated residents arrived at Savda Ghevra in 2006 and 2007 they found no roads or services. One female resident described the area as

forested and “village-like”. Another recalled the challenge of meals in this relative wilderness. Worms were a major

concern; when they cooked a meal they had to keep it on a chauki (a small table about six inches above the ground) and consume it within 30 minutes to prevent it from being spoiled by worms.

The DUSIB's plot allotment system did not ensure that people who had been neighbours at a particular JJC would live near one another at Savda Ghevra. In fact, people who had previously been living in the same JJC were allotted plots in different blocks in the resettlement colony. We do not know if this separation was intentional, or the result of a random lottery system, but this fragmentation of existing communities has meant that Savda Ghevra remains relatively disorganised, without the structure of pradhans present in many established unplanned settlements.

With the exception of F block, plots in A through O blocks of the colony—fourteen blocks—have been allocated to relocated JJC residents, although some contain only a few plots. Residents recall that the most recent resettlement of a JJC to Savda Ghevra happened in 2009 when households from a colony near Khan Market were relocated in the lead-up to the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Although more than 1,000 plots remain vacant and ready for resettlement according to a DUSIB official, DUSIB's records show that no JJC households have been resettled to Savda Ghevra in the past year.<sup>19</sup>

The size of the plot assigned to a given resident at the time of resettlement was determined by how many years he or she could provide proof of residence in the JJC. Allocation was determined by two different ‘cut-off’ dates: 1990 and 1998. If the documents presented by a JJC household showed residency prior to the 1990 cut-off, it received an 18 square metre plot. Those who presented documents satisfying the 1998 cut-off date were allotted a plot of 12.5 square metres. Residents proved residency with traditional forms of identification such as voter ID and ration cards, as well as V P Singh tokens, a form of residence proof held by some long-term JJC residents



in the city.<sup>20</sup> These plots are dramatically smaller than those allotted to resettled JJC residents in the 1960s, when plots measured 80 square yards (67 square metres).

## Service Provisioning

### WATER

By 2004, the Delhi Jal Board had extended its formal, piped water distribution network to include many of Delhi's older resettlement colonies, those established in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>29</sup> According to the DJB website, a resident living in an area covered by the DJB water distribution system can apply for a water connection by submitting a form to the Zonal Revenue Officer (ZRO) along with documents for proof of identity, property ownership, and residence.<sup>30</sup>

Resettlement colonies established in the 2000s do not benefit from this water distribution network. In these settlements, public or community standposts installed by the DJB (referred to as *totees* by residents) and public hand pumps are the main sources of water. DJB and private water tankers supplement this groundwater supply.

Unlike newer resettlement colonies in Delhi, Savda Ghevra does not have community water standposts or hand pumps. For the first six or seven years of the colony's existence, water was supplied mainly by DJB water tankers and private bore wells. Since 2013, residents have also been able to buy drinking water from 'water ATMs', water dispensing machines installed across the colony by a private provider contracted by the DJB and DUSIB, as well as a kiosk constructed by an NGO.

When Savda Ghevra was established in 2006 access to water was an enormous problem. Residents relied on DJB tankers, two or three of which visited the colony each day at three chowks (crossroads). Residents would often queue at a water tanker around 1 p.m., only to receive a single bucket of water at 5 or 6 in the evening. A woman resident recalled that accessing water was tense and disorganised, and that, "maara-maari ho jaati thi".

("Physical fights would happen.") Residents augmented this supply with water from public taps in neighbouring

areas such as the Ghevra village and the Ghevra Railway Station.

According to residents, the water situation has improved since then, although there is still no piped water in the colony. Today, while there is no fixed schedule for the water tankers, each household is able to access a DJB water tanker once every two or three days and residents report this provides them sufficient drinking water. No payment is made for the water received through DJB tankers. On average, six or seven water tankers come to different blocks in the colony on a daily basis. In case the water tankers do not come at the expected frequency, residents say that they contact the DJB office at Karala from which the tankers are sent.

One DJB water tanker provides water for thirty households; however, water distribution through these tankers appears to be disorganised. NGO workers in the colony explained that because there is no fixed schedule for the tankers, residents organise their lives around water, with children often skipping school to collect water.

Households are not guaranteed a fixed quantity of water from DJB tankers. An NGO worker explained that the amount of water a household gets from the tankers "depends on how many people the household has to carry water". Residents often store extra water in a drum since they are not sure when the next water tanker will come.

The relatively limited supply of water from DJB water tankers is used for drinking. Bore wells supply other needs, but, according to residents, the ground water is saline and polluted by fertiliser runoff from surrounding farmland. Nonetheless, it is sometimes used for drinking in cases of shortage. Many households have dug their own bore wells, and some have grouped together to share a single well.

Residents informed us that the exercise of digging a bore well (about 60 feet deep) and installing a pump costs around Rs. 10,000. In cases where inter-household agreements exist between people who have dug a well and others who want water, a household can get one

drum daily at the rate of Rs. 200 per month from the household that has dug the well.

The water ATMs that have been in operation since October 2013 are maintained by Sarvjal (literally, water for all), an organisation founded by the Piramal Foundation and run by Piramal Water Private Limited, which, according to the Sarvjal website, “is a for-profit social enterprise which creates affordable access to safe drinking water for the under-served at the last mile”.<sup>31</sup> Piramal Water Private Limited has a contract with both the DUSIB and the DJB to run the ATMs.

Sarvjal's main water treatment plant is located in J Block of the colony, on land owned by the DUSIB. Raw ground water is first extracted from a bore well, which was sunk by the DJB specifically for the plant, and then treated to be safe for drinking. Potable water is sold at ATMs throughout the colony for Rs. 0.3 per litre; residents can also buy water from an ATM directly at the treatment plant for half this price.<sup>32</sup> A resident can draw up to 20 litres of water per visit. In November 2013, about 400 litres of drinking water were supplied by these ATMs each day. In April 2014 a newspaper article quoted the project's operations manager, who reported that while daily use had increased to between 2,000 and 2,500 litres, the project had only been able to reach 20 percent of the population in the colony.<sup>33</sup>

The Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), an NGO that has been working in the resettlement colony for several years as a part of the Sanjha Prayas<sup>34</sup> initiative, has offered another solution to the challenges of water distribution. In March 2013 CURE began working to create non-profit ‘water kiosks’, and has completed two kiosks to date, of which only one is operational. This two-storey building—marked with a sign reading Shudh Jal Ghar Samiti (Pure Water House Collective)—houses a water tank on the upper floor, filled with groundwater treated on site. A machine for this process is on the first floor of the kiosk, and the resulting drinking water is sold in 20 litre cans for Rs. 10.

## SANITATION: TOILETS, DRAINS, AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

As it is in much of the city, sanitation in Delhi's resettlement colonies 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 resettlement colonies is managed by the DUSIB; drains are constructed by 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).

The DJB presents ostensibly clear instructions for obtaining a new sewer connection on its website, instructions that suggest any Delhi resident can apply for a connection.<sup>35</sup> The site does not mention, however, that a consumer is only eligible for a sewerage connection if a trunk sewer system already exists in his or her area. There is no sewerage system in Savda Ghevra Resettlement Colony. NGO workers claim that sewerage in the area is not included in the Master Plan of Delhi. In the absence of a trunk sewer system, residents mostly use community toilet complexes that are connected to septic tanks. Residents who can afford it have also built toilets in their homes, connected to individual septic tanks or less formal cesspools.

One community toilet complex (CTC) was built in each inhabited block of the colony around the time of original settlement. Residents recall that when they were relocated to the colony, many CTCs were locked, and some have remained sealed to this day. One respondent explained that residents had little incentive to get these toilets unlocked because, “the open farms are always there”.

A typical CTC has twenty latrine seats each for men and women in separate sections; three or four of the latrine seats in the women's section are often reserved for children. These numbers should be compared with the number of plots in each block, which ranges from 600 to 1,250, each of which is meant to house a family. As a result there are often long queues at CTCs. While a few

residents said that the toilets were being maintained by the DUSIB, others said that toilets were being run by residents who had received 'contracts' from the area's municipal councillor. A woman who was maintaining the CTC for H Block explained that she had been running the CTC for six years and had been "told to run the toilet complex by the councillor". Like most of these caretakers, she has no formal contract. We did meet one caretaker who had a somewhat more formal arrangement. He held an official letter from the municipal councillor granting him "permission for maintenance" of one CTC.

The contractors maintaining the toilets charge adult men and women Re. 1 per use; it is free for children. Some residents complain that the CTCs are often poorly maintained, dirty, and lacking sufficient water supply. While a large number of residents use the CTCs, respondents told us that there are too few complexes and their hours are too limited: they are open from 5 a.m. until 10 or 11 p.m.

Many households have constructed toilets to use during late night and early morning hours. Though many of these are constructed inside homes, some have been built just outside. Toilets constructed outside a house are usually small, temporary enclosures made of bamboo poles covered with reused flex sheets<sup>36</sup> for privacy. Since there is no sewerage system, some of these toilets discharge waste into underground concrete tanks, which most residents refer to as 'septic tanks'. These tanks have to be cleaned when they fill up, at an annual cost that one resident estimated at Rs. 500. Waste from private toilets without 'septic tanks' flows either into a storm drain outside the house or is simply routed to a cesspool. The colony has many cesspools ranging in size, including several parks that have been converted to large common cesspools full of green water.

CURE, the local NGO responsible for developing the water kiosk scheme, has also undertaken a project to construct a community septic tank (CST) system. This decentralised system designed to give residents access to sewerage despite the colony's total disconnection from the trunk sewerage network. CURE staffers told us that,

together with community input and the help of a visiting British architect, they have designed a project that will bring a toilet inside every home. The construction work for the pilot stage, funded by Mahila Sewa Trust, began in April 2013 in one part of A Block. A system of underground pipes aggregates sewage from groups of houses and carries it to a sewage treatment plant that CURE received permission to build in an area demarcated as a park. Residents whose toilets are connected through this system will pay Rs. 30 per month for the system.<sup>37</sup>

While this decentralised approach to sewerage might present an innovative solution to sanitation challenges in unplanned settlements across the city, implementation in Savda Ghevra has faced many difficulties. A resident said that during the construction process, "the lanes were left uneven due to the digging of manholes and laying of pipes. Children would fall while playing and at night it was all the more difficult to walk through the lanes." After a year of often frustrating delays the sewerage network became operational in March 2014. Since then about 70 households have connected their toilets to the system. The lanes are yet to be re-laid, and continue to be treacherous.

The cost of using a CTC or constructing a private toilet means that the colony's poorest residents defecate outside in neighbouring areas. Young children often urinate and defecate on roads and into storm water drains. Although storm water drains had been constructed at Savda Ghevra at the time of settlement, during visits we observed that most of these drains were either full of stagnant water or clogged with solid waste. One resident observed that the drains are poorly designed and have no slope.

The three municipal corporations are responsible for collecting and disposing of solid waste from areas under their jurisdiction, including resettlement colonies. Door-to-door garbage collection, however, is not the mandate of the municipal corporations according to their governing legislation, the MCD Act. In planned colonies, residents' welfare associations (RWAs) organise and hire private individuals to provide this service.

There is no single system of garbage collection in Savda Ghevra. CURE has organised door-to-door collection of garbage for a few blocks of the colony. When the service began, the fee was Rs. 10 per household per month; now the fee is Rs. 30 per month. CURE collects garbage from households and separates biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste; the biodegradable waste is dumped at a composting site and non-biodegradable waste is collected at a point demarcated by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, known as a khatta or a dhalao. Despite this system, many residents throw their garbage in open spaces around the settlement.

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation's safai karamcharis (cleanliness workers) are responsible for sweeping the streets and cleaning the drains in the colony. Some residents complained that these safai karamcharis rarely appear, and that when they do, they often ask the residents for chai-paani<sup>38</sup> as compensation for cleaning the street or drain outside their house. A CTC caretaker told us that 20 to 25 safai karamcharis come to the colony regularly, out of a much larger number assigned to the area. He explained that the safai karamcharis often have to travel from distant areas like Shahdra (East Delhi), and can easily pay their supervisor Rs. 2,000 each month—from a salary of Rs. 7,400—to ignore their absence.

## 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.<sup>39</sup>

Savda Ghevra residents recall that at the time of resettlement, there were electricity poles in the area but no electricity supply. After a few months the issue of electricity was resolved and the Tata Power Delhi

Distribution Limited, formerly the North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL), has been providing electricity to the area since.

Residents reported that it is relatively easy to get electricity connections, and even those living in kaccha (the least formal) structures were able to access power. One female resident told us that, "chatayee par hee bijli ka connection lagaa diya." ("They put the electricity connection on a mat roof itself.") Residents told us that the cost of getting a new electricity connection is Rs. 600, after which there is a per unit charge, which used to be Rs. 2.4 and has now increased to Rs. 5.

Residents did not have any complaints regarding the electricity supply per se, but many felt that the meters are inaccurate and run faster than they should. While some residents reported paying a monthly electricity bill of Rs. 600, others claimed they received monthly bills as high as Rs. 1,500.

## 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 JJsCs, 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.

In 2008, one to two years after resettlement, residents were issued new voter ID cards listing their current Savda Ghevra addresses. Today, they report that nearly all of the over-18 population in the colony have voter ID cards. One woman explained that elected representatives ensure that the population has voter ID cards so that they can “come and ask for our votes”. Another resident added that, “If one wants to get a voter ID card made fast then they may need to pay anything between Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,200. ... It can be done.” Respondents across the city have reported this exchange.

Most residents reported that they have Aadhaar cards, and one resident estimated that about 75 percent of the residents have an Aadhaar card. However, a few residents explained that some children could not get an Aadhaar card made since they did not have birth certificates.

Residents had many complaints about ration cards. A few residents told us that although they have above poverty line (APL) ration cards, they cannot access their ration. Another resident said that even those with ration cards certifying that they are below the poverty line (BPL) do not get rations.<sup>40</sup> Other residents, who have been living in the colony since 2007, explained that they had still not been successful in getting ration cards at their Savda Ghevra address and so had no choice but to buy wheat and rice at the market price

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

There are three large government schools in the area including a Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, a government co-educational middle school, and an MCD school. While most residents seemed satisfied with the government schools in the area and stated that almost all children attend schools, a few complained about their poor quality. All residents we interacted with complained about

the lack of a government hospital in the colony. They explained that there is only an MCD dispensary in the colony, where one can get basic medicines; the closest government hospital is the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri. This hospital is located a little over 13 kilometres from the colony and patients rushing there in autorickshaws have been known to die before arriving.

When residents were first resettled at Savda Ghevra there was very poor bus service, but service to the settlement is now quite good, with at least three Delhi Transport Corporation bus routes that begin and terminate at the colony.<sup>41</sup> The main bus stop for the colony is situated at a four-lane crossroad between blocks A and B of the colony.

The closest metro station is the Mundka station, about 7 kilometres from the colony. It usually takes 15 or 20 minutes to cover this distance in a private vehicle, but if the railway crossing south of the colony is in use it can take 30 or 45 minutes.

## **Negotiated Citizenship**

If the Savda Ghevra JJ Resettlement Colony stands at the city's geographic margin, its residents occupy an even more peripheral place in the government's gaze. Indeed, in many ways the settlement is more poorly serviced than the unplanned settlements it is designed to replace. Despite residents' widespread frustration with poor service provisioning and frequent demands for improvement, state actors have made very few

interventions. The government's decision to ignore the colony's needs has been facilitated by the fact that interactions have nearly all been on an individual basis. This lack of organisation is in part a consequence of the resettlement process itself, which split JJC communities across blocks of the colony. Nongovernmental organisations have emerged to fill parts of the gap left by the state in Savda Ghevra, providing services such as drinking water and garbage collection.

There are no government offices in the resettlement colony, with the exception of a DUSIB office in Phase

III, quite far from most residents. The state's absence in Savda Ghevra is further reflected in its representatives' infrequent presence in the community. One respondent told us that, "They [the MLA and municipal councillor, both members of the BJP] do not come to this area ... they only come when they need our help and during elections." Another said, "Wo apne kaam se aate hai waise kabhi nahi aate." ("They only come for their own work, otherwise they don't come to this area.") Although the MLA rarely comes to the colony, he often summons its residents to swell the crowds at rallies in exchange for small payments or gifts. One resident said that, "The MLA has never visited us. ... but whenever he needs people for a rally he comes to us for that. He gives gifts or money to those who attend his rally." He mentioned one recent rally for which residents had received Rs. 500 each for their attendance.

In our conversation with the MLA, a member of the BJP, he did not substantively dispute these perceptions. Although he listed the various projects he had overseen in his constituency, none was located in Savda Ghevra. He agreed that the colony is plagued by poor servicing and other problems, but did not accept any responsibility. Rather, he blamed the then Congress-led state government that had organised the resettlement. The process, he said, "was not planned initially and thus people suffer on account of many issues, especially water".

Attitudes towards the municipal councillor were more varied. A few groups of residents disagreed strongly with the perception that the councillor has been absent, asserting that he has been active in accomplishing a range of tasks. While some dismiss his accomplishments as transactional, an attempt 'to get votes', one resident described him as "like a guardian, not just a political leader". Others echoed this praise, some in the strongest terms. One respondent told us that, "When we came here seven or eight years ago there was nothing here. Everything has been given to us by [the councillor]". Another resident said, "Humaare kehene se pehele hee woh humaari samasyaon ko mehsoos kar lete hain. Jaise ek Maa apne bache ki bhoonk samajhti hai waise hee woh humko samajhtein hain." ("Even before we articulate

our problems he knows and feels our problems. ... He understands us just like a mother knows the hunger of a child."). Residents emphasised that what allegiances are present in the colony are based on individual politicians, not party. Many of those who spoke so fondly of the councillor were explicitly opposed to the MLA even though both are members of the BJP.

The process of resettlement, which split residents of relocated JJs across the new colony, has left Savda Ghevra relatively disorganised as a community, with no single pradhan or leader. What organisation has happened has been largely under the direction of nongovernmental organisations. In a direct attempt to strengthen community structures, CURE, an NGO active in the colony, has promoted the formation of residents' welfare associations (RWAs) in certain blocks.

We met with NGO workers from CURE together with office bearers of the RWA in C Block of the colony, which was established under CURE's direction in October 2012. According to both NGO workers and RWA officers, the NGO has continued to "handhold" RWA members, providing them training on how to conduct the RWA's activities. The RWA's officers explained that they were motivated to form the association by their impotence in the face of everyday problems, especially poor service delivery in the colony. One officer explained, "RWA ke banane se pehle log yahaan sangathit nahin the, isiliye sarkar ne sunvaayee nahin ki". ("Prior to forming the RWA, the people here were not organised, that is why the government did not hear us out.") Another officer of the RWA emphasised that they had formed the RWA to claim their rights: "RWA isiliye banayee ki humaare adhikaar ko maang sakein". ("We have made an RWA so that we can demand our rights.") Like others in the community, they attributed the block's disorganisation to the fact that residents from many JJs—Lakshmi Nagar, Geeta Colony, Shahdra, and Kakkardooma—had been relocated to C Block, a pattern repeated across the settlement. Although officers of the RWA claim that the association has no political affiliation, during our later visits to the colony other residents referred to the RWA office as a party office for the Indian National Congress.

Savda Ghevra is one of 130 locations in Delhi that has a Suvridha Kendra (SK) Gender Resource Centre (GRC). GRCs were established by the GNCTD as a part of an initiative called Mission Convergence, which was started in August 2008 to consolidate access to government schemes under one roof. Management of these centres is contracted to NGOs, which serve as intermediaries between area residents and various government departments.

Since 2008, the GRC at Savda Ghevra has been run by the Ray Welfare Trust. The centre is managed by a director and coordinator from outside the colony, and staffed by two community-based workers. The centre's primary role is to provide access to various application forms—such as ration card application forms, laadli (girl child) scheme forms,<sup>42</sup> and pension scheme forms—and then send completed forms to the proper government office. Apart from this, the GRC organises monthly nutrition camps, bi-monthly health camps, remedial classes for under-performing students, adult education classes, classes for out-of-school children, vocational training, and legal and counselling sessions. Once every six months, the centre organises large public meetings, which are very well attended. Local officials representing police, schools, and other local institutions are present at these meetings to address community concerns.

We attended one such meeting in September 2013. The meeting was called Awaaz Uthao—Jan Sabha (Raise Your Voice—Public Meeting), organised to discuss issues like harassment of women and girls in public spaces. Girls and women made up a majority of the audience and principals of government schools were present. During the meeting, representatives of Mission Convergence encouraged the formation of women's collectives to take on the responsibility of “monitoring of those elements who might harass women and girls” and ensure that “everyone is alert”. After a short play performed by a theatre group, the local station house officer (a senior police officer) addressed the gathering. He identified substance abuse (nashaa) as a fundamental challenge in Savda Ghevra, claiming that men in almost every household have problems with drugs or alcohol. He

called on the community's women to influence men to stop substance abuse, as well as for an increase in women's collectives.

In addition to the GRC, there are 11 NGOs working in Savda Ghevra in a range of areas, including education, health, microfinance, and vocational training. While some of these had been associated with residents in bastis prior to resettlement, many have come up since relocation. It is clear that this density of nongovernmental actors has emerged to fill two needs in the settlement: the organisational void left by the fracturing of resettlement, and the exceptionally poor servicing provided by the state.

## Elections

The run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections in 2013 provided us an opportunity to understand what the residents of Savda Ghevra Resettlement Colony consider to be important election issues, to observe their electoral loyalties, and document the campaign strategies of various political parties and candidates in the colony. The following reporting is based on four field visits to Savda Ghevra by seven researchers between 25 October and 18 December 2013, as well as meetings with workers at party offices of the AAP, BJP, and Congress, and with an independent MLA candidate.

In interviews, residents emphasised access to basic services as a key criterion in their electoral decision-making. Other respondents mentioned pensions for the elderly as an important concern. Although residents' ten-year licenses will expire in 2016 or 2017, no respondent mentioned license renewal as an election issue.

The BJP had originally announced that the sitting MLA would run as its candidate for the 2013 election. The area's councillor had hoped to receive the ticket but was denied. To express his frustration he resigned as Mayor of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and some thought he would resign from the BJP entirely. A core group of residents that support the councillor was also

very upset about the BJP's decision to pass him over and organised a mahapanchayat, or meeting of the villages and colonies in the constituency, to discuss who should represent the party in elections. This mahapanchayat received much media attention at the time.<sup>43</sup> Following the meeting, the BJP reversed its decision and announced the councillor as its candidate.

Like residents we spoke to across the city's unplanned settlements, many respondents in Savda Ghevra approached the elections with apathy. One woman told us, "They [elected representatives] don't do anything for five years and then they come just before elections, fold their hands in front of us and ask us to vote for them". Another voter explained that people make decisions based on the gifts they receive in advance of the election: "Whichever party lands up and gives them money the night before the election wins". In the months leading up to the election, residents reported receiving cash and gifts like saris and steel pots from candidates who were expecting to fight the elections. They noted that candidates specifically targeted women with voter identity cards.

Savda Ghavra was also the site of the most interesting electoral story we witnessed during this phase of our fieldwork. In addition to candidates from the major political parties, a local landowner and political novice stood for the election as an independent candidate from the Mundka Assembly constituency. He introduced himself as a samaajik karyakarta (social worker), claiming that he had won an award for distinguished service to the elderly from the President of India in November 2012. His supporters told us that he had financed and organised a vast array of social services in the constituency including providing free water tanker service, housing for homeless and poor, primary healthcare, and a photocopying service. He had also, they claimed, distributed 51,000 steel pots and 50,000 bed sheets to residents, as well as given a monthly pension of Rs. 200 to 70,000 women in the constituency. While the magnitude of these claims cannot be verified, our interviews leave little doubt that he had been running a parallel private government in the constituency for some time.

In December, this social worker-landowner won the election, with 34.3 percent of the vote. This was the only constituency of Delhi's 70 assembly constituencies where an independent candidate was elected as the MLA. This is an important and revealing story: an individual, by filling the void left by the absent state, was able to win the popular support necessary to become a part of that state.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was second, with 29.6 percent of the vote, while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was third with 15.6 percent. The Indian National Congress finished fourth, receiving 12.5 percent of the vote. Elections at the Savda Ghevra Resettlement colony did not mirror these larger, constituency-level results. A quick analysis of the election data for polling booths where the residents of Savda Ghevra voted suggests that 26.28 percent voted for the Indian National Congress, while 23.68 percent voted for the independent candidate. Further, while 20.3 percent voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), 17.31 percent voted for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

## Conclusion

Resettlement colonies were designed to house the residents who have been evicted from Delhi's JJs over more than four decades. In Savda Ghevra JJ Resettlement Colony, one of the city's most recently established resettlement colonies, residents were relocated from JJs across the city, breaking community ties and removing residents from their sites of employment. This disruption

was not balanced by clearly improved security of tenure: residents' property rights remain severely limited, and they are not legally guaranteed protection from another eviction.

Savda Ghevra presents a case of what some scholars have called a "planned slum": even as these residents are explicitly shifted out of 'encroachments', they maintain similar, poor access to government services. It exemplifies a mode of settlement in which the state has in effect designated an unserved zone for specific populations on the periphery of the city.



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In the absence of the state, nongovernmental actors and market actors have emerged to provide services as basic as water and toilets. These solutions, however, have proved inadequate to the needs of the more than 40,000 residents of Savda Ghevra. Into this vacuum, we witnessed the rise of an entrepreneurial individual who established his own system of service provision.

We watched him leverage the resulting support of the community into political capital that he used to win an election. The fact that he was able to win is testament that even the poorest and most marginalised voters ultimately do expect certain goods from the state, and they will express that expectation with their votes.

## 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. DUSIB's 2011 List of 685 JJs in Delhi
3. Calculated based on an average household size of five and the population of Delhi's Urban Agglomeration from the 2011 census data.
4. [http://delhishelterboard.in/main/?page\\_id=86](http://delhishelterboard.in/main/?page_id=86)
5. micro Housing Solutions (mHS), 'Report on Self-construction: Enabling safe and affordable housing in India' (October 2011).
6. Ibid.
7. <http://delhiplanning.nic.in/Economic%20Survey/ES%202005-06/Chpt/14.pdf>
8. City Development Plan 2006 for Delhi
9. Gautam Bhan, 'Planned Illegalities: Housing and the 'Failure' of Planning in Delhi: 1947-2010', Economic and Political Weekly (15 June 2013).
10. Usha Ramanathan, 'Illegality and Exclusion: Law in the Lives of Slum Dwellers', in State of Justice in India: Issues of Social Justice (Sage, 2009).
11. Interview with DUSIB executive engineer on 11 June 2013.
12. Ibid.
13. <http://worlddesignimpact.org/projects/project2013/29/>
14. Note by Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) on Sanjha Prayas Ajeevika Karyakram (SPAK) in Savda Ghevra (2013).
15. There is no public record of the exact date of acquisition by the DDA. We do know, however, that in 2005 a land use change for "252.4 acres of land at Savda Ghevra for relocation of Slum/ JJ squatters was approved by the Authority [DDA]". Source: [http://www.dda.org.in/about\\_us/pop\\_ups/MAJOR%20FUNCTIONS%20](http://www.dda.org.in/about_us/pop_ups/MAJOR%20FUNCTIONS%20) (12.12.pdf)
16. Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT) and micro Home Solutions (mHS), 'Re-thinking Re-settlement Colonies: Savda Ghevra', Collaborative Study on Savda Ghevra Resettlement Colony (April 2011).
17. Interview with a top DUSIB official on 2 May 2013.
18. micro Housing Solutions (mHS), 'Report on Self-construction: Enabling safe and affordable housing in India' (October 2011).
19. The JJ households who have been resettled by the DUSIB have been moved to EWS flats at other locations.
20. In 1989-1990, during V P Singh's tenure as Prime Minister, these tokens were issued to JJ residents as formal proof of residence. The tokens were the result of a four-month long survey by Delhi Administration—the governing body that preceded the GNCTD in Delhi—that aimed to enumerate every slum household in the city. Source: D. Asher Chertner, 'Calculating without numbers: aesthetic governmentality in Delhi's slums', *Economy and Society*, 39/2 (2010).
21. An example of a Red Slip (dated 4 August 2006) cited in Nikhil Joseph and Pascal Goodman, 'On the Outskirts of Legality: Policy and Legal Aspects of Slum Resettlement in Delhi', Centre for Civil Society Working Paper No. 197.
22. Condition 12 of the agreement, the entirety of which was shared by a resident during a field visit in March 2013. The agreement also states that the allottee must take possession of the plot within 15 days of signing the agreement and mandates that he or she construct a habitable house within six months. The agreement also binds the allottee to any additional strictures that the government might establish: "From time to time, the conditions which are put out by the Department will be acceptable to the allottee."
23. Rs. 5,000

24. Rs. 2,000
25. [http://delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/cddf87804coa6eacbe16bf8696242497/Urban+Development+107\\_134.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&mod=80287145&CACHEID=cddf87804coa6eacbe16bf8696242497](http://delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/cddf87804coa6eacbe16bf8696242497/Urban+Development+107_134.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&mod=80287145&CACHEID=cddf87804coa6eacbe16bf8696242497)
26. Order no. 234(7)/UD/BSUP/2012/17270-17281, Department of Urban Development, Government of NCT of Delhi. 20 June 2013.
27. 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.
28. Julia King, ‘Early Results from Savda Ghevra Field Work, Delhi’ (April 2011). (<http://web.mit.edu/incrementalhousing/articlesPhotographs/pdfs/Julia-King-ARTICLE-e.pdf>)
29. <http://delhiplanning.nic.in/Write-up/2003-04/Volume-II/Water%20supply%20&%20sanitation.pdf>
30. [http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi\\_djb/DJB/Home/Customer+Section/Water/](http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi_djb/DJB/Home/Customer+Section/Water/)
31. <http://www.sarvajal.com/#sarvajal>
32. To buy water, a resident needs a refillable debit card. These are available for Rs. 100, which includes Rs. 50 of credit.
33. Damini Nath, ‘Not many takers for water kiosks’, the Hindu (26 April 2014).
34. Sanjha Prayas (literally, common endeavour) is a scheme started by the GNCTD in 2007. It was envisaged as a bhagidari (partnership) between residents of JJsCs and resettlement colonies in Delhi and the GNCTD mediated by NGOs.
35. [http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi\\_djb/DJB/Home/Customer+Section/](http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi_djb/DJB/Home/Customer+Section/)
36. These flex sheets, which are also used in construction of some
37. kaccha houses, are usually old advertisements. The project has produced two promotional videos that outline the plan: <http://vimeo.com/65895143>; <http://vimeo.com/69853486>
38. Chai-paani (tea-water) is a phrase often used by lower level government staff to describe small off-the-books payments for services.
39. 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).
40. A family qualifies for a BPL card if its annual income is below Rs. 24,200; it is considered APL if its income is above this threshold. APL cards are further categorised as ‘stamped’ and ‘unstamped’, identifying families whose income is, respectively, below and above Rs. 1,00,000. Source: [http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi\\_food/Food/Home/Citizen+Charter/](http://www.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doi_food/Food/Home/Citizen+Charter/)
41. These bus routes provide access as far as Sarai Kale Khan (949EXT), the airport (947), Bhatti mines (947A) and Shahdra and Dilshad Garden (236EXT), residents reported that a bus leaves the colony every 20-30 minutes.
42. The laadli scheme was begun by the GNCTD in 2008 to improve the social status of girls through education. As part of the scheme, the GNCTD makes periodic payments in the girl’s name, establishing a fixed deposit account to be redeemed along with accrued interest when the child turns 18 and completes Class 10 as a regular student. (Source: <http://wcdel.in/eligibility.html>)
43. See: ‘Ticketed, BJP leaders on exit mode’, the New Indian Express (10 November 2013); Twisha Hans, ‘Mundka voters eye transport, civic amenities & water’, the Statesman (29 November 2013).