CHAPTER IV
SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS – A CRISIS IN URBAN PLANNING
OF KOLKATA

4.01. Overview
Squatter settlements have been an intrinsic part of Kolkata's landscape since the time of Partition. These settlements are widely visible throughout the city including the central business district and the peripheral areas of the city. The squatters are referred locally as “jabar dakhal”, which means 'forcibly occupied'. It is officially illegal. In Kolkata squatters have sprung up throughout the city wherever there are factories, market, shops, residential areas whether middle-class or affluent; in any place which is in need of cheap labour and informal services. These 'unregistered slums' are similar in physical characteristics to 'registered slums' in the way that they are densely populated mixed residential and commercial settlements constructed on semi permanent materials. Due to their illegal status of the squatters no information is available about them. Whatever information is available comes from private surveys that have been conducted in a few particular settlements. The authorities look upon them as eyesores, as hazard to public health, as illegal use of public land without paying taxes. In the last decade of the twentieth century almost 1,50,000 people lived in the unrecognized settlements within the KMA (Thomas, C. F., 1997).

4.02. Defining ‘squatters’

4.02.01. Squatters
The term 'squatter' can be defined as ‘take-over of vacant land by the homeless’. The ‘informal settlements’ or ‘squatters’ lack any legal recognition. Squatting is often the most reasonable and inexpensive way for poor people to move to the city (Sen, J., 1996). A squatter settlement therefore, can be defined as a residential area, which has developed without legal claims to the land and or permission from the concerned authorities to build; as a result of their illegal or semi-legal status, infrastructure and services are usually inadequate (Srinivas, H., 2003).

4.02.02. Slums and squatters- the difference
Not all slums are squatter settlements. The categories substantially overlap. The term ‘slum’ signifies a sub-standard living condition of life marked by deteriorated, unsanitary dwellings, social disorganisation and poverty. In simple terms it refers to the environmental aspect of a
dwelling place, while 'squatters' refer to the illegal occupancy of land. From the environmental aspect of the squatter settlements they can be called as slums (Srinivas, H., 2003).

4.03. Squatters, slums and government policies

4.03.01. Legal definition of slum

4.03.01.01. Bengal Slum Improvement Act, 1945
The Bengal Slum Improvement Act of 1945 defined a slum as a neighbourhood when "the condition of any area containing hut or huts and other buildings is insanitary or attended with risk of disease to the persons residing within or in the neighbourhood of such area by reason of the manner in which the hut or the huts and other buildings area constructed or crowded together or of want of drainage, sewage, or impracticability of scavenging or from other reasons (Nair, P.T., 1989).

4.03.01.02. West Bengal Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dweller Act 1958
The West Bengal Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dweller Act 1958 defined Slum as "any land containing a collection of huts used or intended to be used for human habitation" (Nair, P.T., 1989).

4.03.01.03. West Bengal Slum Areas -Improvement and Clearance -Act 1972
According to the West Bengal Slum Areas -Improvement and Clearance -Act (Section 3) 1972, an area is declared as a slum if the State structure is satisfied that the continued existence of such conditions would be injurious to public health or safety or to the health, hygiene or moral of the inhabitants of such an area (Nair, P.T., 1989). According to this Act the squatter settlements are illegal.

4.03.02. Laws related to 'slum clearance'
Legislative measures have been introduced to clear the slums, to stop their growth in the pre-independence period. The Calcutta Municipal Act of 1876, 1899 and 1923 empowered the Corporation to acquire lands and buildings for the purpose of development (Nair, P.T., 1989). The Corporation was actively engaged in slum clearance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to open up arterial roads. To cater to the needs of growth of Kolkata, the Calcutta Improvement Act passed in 1911 led to the formation of Calcutta Improvement Trust. The development schemes led to eviction drive in the city. These measures were re-modified and introduced in the post-independence period as well. The Calcutta Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dweller Act 1958 and West Bengal Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act 1972 empowered the State Government to take over slum areas for improvement of Kolkata. With the turn of the century there has been no changes in the above trends. Under the
pressure of development the 'displacement of the poor' had continued which were favoured by the Government Policies. The Supreme Court in 2006 stated that encroachers have no right on public land. Kolkata Municipal Corporation has welcomed the decision since encroachments are a serious problem in the Kolkata.

4.04. Squatter settlements of Kolkata: some inherent characteristics

4.04.01. Legal characteristics
The unique characteristic that delineates a squatter settlement is its lack of ownership of the land parcel on which they have built their house. These could be vacant government land or public land, or marginal land parcels beside railway tracts or beside canals or "undesirable" marshy land (Photo No.4.01-- 4.06). Thus when the land is not under "productive" use, a squatter for building a house uses it appropriately.

4.04.02. Insecurity of tenure
One of the biggest issues of urban poverty is their 'right to stay where they are'. Aside from material poverty, insecurity of work and exploitation of labour, one of the most persistent conditions that characterize the lives of squatters is 'dwelling insecurity' (Sen, J., 1996). Tenure security is an essential element of shelter for the urban poor. All those who has been forced to 'squat' somewhere by the lack of other affordable options are vulnerable, exposed to constant exploitation by those with power – dadas (local political or gang leaders offering 'protection'), religious or communal elements, the police, the municipal authorities and so on. Those who are poor and relatively powerless face constant pressure to move out from where they live – pressure from landowners, from real-estate developers, from neighbouring middle-class communities. And as soon as they are forced to move, their lives disintegrate.

4.04.03. 'Housing' and physical structure
To the squatters 'housing' is not just 'hutments' or 'buildings' but 'a place in the world' where they can live in security and with dignity'. Unregistered bustees are similar in physical structure to that of registered bustees. They are more densely populated mixed residential and commercial settlements constructed of permanent and semi-permanent materials. The distinguishing feature of squatters in Kolkata is in the form of 'kutchha structures built of mainly mud brick, bamboo, thatch or plastic' (Photo No.4.07 -- 4.10). The total structure is flimsy and unfinished. They are formed of high density of small dwelling units (Photo No.4.11). The dwellings have no space between the structures. Narrow pathways 6-8 feet wide serve as interior lanes, which are generally kutchha (Photo No.4.12). Streetlights are rarely present. In some households electricity is tapped. Most of the houses do not have any electricity connection. There is absence of drainage system. Even sanitation is absent.
Plate No.4.01
SOME FIELD EVIDENCES OF THE LEGAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SQUATTERS

Photo No.4.01
Squatter on marginal land beside Circular Canal in North-central Kolkata owned by Irrigation Department, Government of West Bengal.

Photo No.4.02
Road side squatter on vacant land in Central Kolkata.

Photo No.4.03
Road side squatter on footpath in North Kolkata.

Photo No.4.04
Road side squatter on an unfinished fly over at Khidirpur, West Kolkata.

Photo No.4.05
Squatter on marginal land owned by the Kolkata Port at Garden Reach, West Kolkata.

Photo No.4.06
Squatter on marginal land parcel beside Chakra rail tracks in Central Kolkata owned by Eastern Railways.
4.04.04. Socio-economic aspect

Most squatter settlement households belong to the lower income group or below poverty line, either working as wage labour or in various informal sector enterprises. On an average, most earn wages at or near the minimum wage level. But household income levels can also be high due to many income earners and part-time jobs. Squatters are predominantly migrants, either rural-urban or urban-urban. But many are also second or third generation squatters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box No. 4.01 Characteristics of Squatter Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Illegal Status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Dis-empowered from legal land tenure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Basic minimum infrastructure or no facilities available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Makeshift and substandard housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Inadequate water and sanitation services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Limited access to education or health facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Non-existent of solid waste disposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Low rates of garbage clearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Poor wastewater drainage, open drains and choked with garbage, sewage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Majority defecate in the open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ High incidence of illness due to poor sanitation. The squatters are dependant on private facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Safe drinking water is often a serious challenge due to poor sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ They are the 'vote bank' for the party of their patrons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ High sense of insecurity and fear of eviction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey. 2004-07

4.04.05. Socio-political aspect

The squatters have immense political links and influences. They are the “vote bank” for the party of their patrons. Many of the older slums enjoy the protection of local political parties. It is something kind of a ‘give and take’ relationship. The parties easily arrange for security of occupancy, provide Ration Cards and Voter’s Identity Card, access to water tap, provision of community toilets. In return the squatter dwellers are expected to attend the political meetings, rallies and processions, shout slogans on behalf, and vote for them. Political parties’ presence is a constant in squatter settlements (represented here by a political party’s flag), where community services are ‘bought’ by residents from politicians, in return for votes. The State and the Municipal Corporation remembers them only during election and dubs them as ‘illegal encroachers’ once their work is done.

4.04.06. Inadequacy of services

Due to its inherent "non-legal" status, it has services and infrastructure below the "adequate" or minimum levels. Due to absence of proper drainage, liquid waste tends to accumulate in and around the neighbourhood. There is no streetlight. No drinking water supply exists within the squatter settlement. Drinking water is available from the tube wells or Corporation taps in the vicinity of the squatter premise. There is no open space for gathering. Sanitary toilets are absent.
PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF SQUATTERS

Photo No.4.07
Rail side squatter structure made of plastic sheets.

Photo No.4.08
Rail side squatter structure made of bamboo mat and tiled roof.

Photo No.4.09
Canal bank squatter hut made of plastic sheet and bamboo sticks.

Photo No.4.10
Rail side low squatter house of 3-4 feet height under Tollygunge platform.

Photo No.4.11
High-density dwelling units along Beloghata-Circular Canal.

Photo No.4.12
Narrow pathways serve as interior lanes in the Galif Street canal-bank squatter.
Absence of environmental sanitation poses serious health hazards. Social infrastructure like schools, clubs, open spaces are not available.

4.04.07. Denial of citizen's rights
They cannot register to vote or obtain a ration card, which commonly serves as an identity card for all citizens of India. Without a legal address the squatter inhabitants are denied all rights and privileges of Kolkata's citizen in spite of the fact that they play a significant role in creation of wealth in Kolkata's urban economy.

4.05. Origin of the squatters
During its course of history, Kolkata survived and grew mostly by its migrant population. In the pre-independence period Kolkata had grown by the influx of population from its surrounding districts and provinces attracting the rural population. During the Indian Independence in 1947 there was huge influx of refugees from former East Pakistan (now, Bangladesh). 1951 Census identified 26.9 percent of the city's inhabitants, that is, almost one-fourth from East Pakistan. The displacement of a huge population at that time was not only a trauma to the refugees without any shelter food and other basic necessities of life, but it was a traumatic experience for the city as a whole. It changed completely the urban topography of Kolkata resulting in growing bustees, squatters, shanties and refugee colonies. The occupation of the vacant land along canals, rail and public vacant land started since late 1940s with the influx of refugees into the city and later by migrants from the surrounding States of West Bengal and even from the Southern Districts of the State. The proliferation of informal settlements in Kolkata has been, by and large, around the water bodies with major growth occurring along the drainage channels that are used for storm water run-offs. Long stretches of these areas quickly turned into squatter settlements and shanties (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.06. A typology of squatters in Kolkata
The socio-economic survey of the Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project of Kolkata Municipal Corporation reveals that inhabitants of the unrecognized slums or squatter settlements comprise 10 percent of the poor in the city (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). In the outer areas or the added areas an estimated 1,02,000 people live in unregistered slums, the majority of which are in Borough XI, XII, and XIII respectively (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). Here there are serious deficiencies in municipal environmental services. They are scattered throughout the cities in small settlements as near railway tracks, roads, canal-banks, parks and other vacant lands. They are of the following three types based on their site--
Chapter IV: Squatter Settlements — A Crisis In Urban Planning Of Kolkata

• Rail-side Squatters
• Canal-bank squatters (or khaldhar)
• Encroachments on road-side (jhupris)

This typology is important to understand the unique socio-economic character of urban poverty in the city.

4.07. Rail-side squatters

4.07.01. Site of rail-side squatters
Rail side squatters are found concentrated mainly along the Eastern Railway Line of the Sealdah Division, the Ballygunge-Budge Budge Line (Photo No.4.08) and the Circular Railway Tract (Photo No.4.06) on the western part of the city along River Hugli from BBD Bag to Sobhabazar (Map No.4.01).

4.07.02. Rural migrants
The older inhabitants of the trackside settlements are chiefly from Bangladesh, rural belt of North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas District (West Bengal), and also from Bihar and Jharkhand.

4.07.03. Threats of eviction – a common incident at rail-side shanties
The people of the Circular Rail-side Shanty are the worst sufferers of eviction drive. Very often railway authorities demolish their dwellings and they rebuild their broken structures on the same site over and over again.

4.07.04. Living with risk
Living close by the rail tracks these squatters’ lives are threatened by the danger of being run over by trains. The rail tracks serve as thoroughfare, binding the squatters and provided access to the narrow interior lanes. The residents use the racks to meet, sit, play, dry clothes and perform other chores. Similarly the residents of the rail bridge in Tollygunge were living in more hazardous condition residing under the railway platform in dark dingy cells.

4.08. Canal-bank squatters

4.08.01. Site of canal-bank squatters
In the city the canals designed for drainage purpose have for a long time provided shelter to thousands of poor people on their banks (Map No.4.01). Encroachment in some cases even extended to the side slopes almost to the low waterline of the canal. Canal-bank location heightens the risk posed to health on account of the unhygienic environment. Extensive squatter settlements occur on the banks of Circular Canal, Lead Canal, Intercepting Canal, TP Channel, Churial Canal, Monikhali Canal, Storm Water Flow and Dry Weather Flow channels, Tolly’s...
Nullah (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). Subsequent immigration has continued in these shanties till 1990s. In the recent past the largest concentration of informal settlements was found along the canals specially the Beleghata Circular Canal.

4.08.02. Status of the canal-bank squatters during 1980s
In the year 1983-84, Unnayan, a city based Non-Governmental Organization, specially concerned with housing and shelter for the poor, made a survey of the shanty-dwellers at 8 points along the city’s canals and open arterial sewers. The survey yielded the results as depicted in Figure No.4.01. The concentration has been higher in the canals (Bagjola, Circular and New Cut Canals) located in North Kolkata. In South and South-central Kolkata along Tolly’s Nullah, the
concentration of squatters were over 6000. While in the rest Palm Bazaar, Ballygunge Storm Water Canal and Panchannagram (East and South-east Kolkata) and Boat Canal (West Kolkata) the concentration has been comparatively lesser (Unnayan, 1982-83).

4.08.03. Status of the canal-bank squatters during 1990s

A Survey of Tolly's Nullah along with Boat and Keorapukur Canals (in West, Southwest and Southern part of Kolkata) conducted by the Environment Department of West Bengal estimated the extent of encroachers to be 27,000 residing in 5,400 households (CEMSAP, 1997). During the same time the Irrigation and Waterways Department highlighted the serious threat posed by the squatters in the Tolly's Nullah and according to their survey there were almost 3,800 dwellings along the Canal (Figure No.4.01 and Table No.4A).

4.08.04. Socio-economic profile of selected canal-bank squatters in 2000

4.08.04.01. Status of canal-bank squatters

According to the survey of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation in 2000, nearly 11,549 people lived in canal-bank squatter settlements along 5 selected canals (TP-Lead, Keorapukur, Monikhali, Churial, Intercepting) in 58 settlements spread over a total length of 33.875 kilometres (Figure No.4.02 and Table No.4B). TP-Lead and Intercepting Canal are located in South-east Kolkata, Keorapukur and Churial in South-west Kolkata, and Monikhali in West Kolkata. The highest concentration of settlements was found along Intercepting Canals and TP-Lead Canal. Keorapukur Canal had the least concentration. (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). In Keorapukur and Monikhali Canal the average family size had been the highest at 5 persons per family, 4 persons per family in Churial and Intercepting Canal
and 3 persons per family in TP and Lead Canal. (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.04.02. Occupancy of canal-bank squatters

According to the survey, the proportion of area along the canal-bank of 5 selected canals under squatter hutments was almost 38 percent. The highest proportion of area had been in Intercepting Canal being 59 percent followed by 43.5 percent in Keorapukur Canal (Figure No. 4.03 and Table No.4C). Comparatively along TP-Lead Canal and Monikhali Canal, the area under hutment was 28 percent and 27 percent respectively (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.04.03. Origin of the squatter households

On an average 46 percent were migrants while the rest 54 percent households were natives. The composition of migrant and natives was not so distinctly marked except in Keorapukur and Monikhali Canal. (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). In Keorapukur 67 percent were migrants whereas in Monikhali 64 percent were natives (Figure No.4.04 and Table No.4D). The migrants had come from the neighbouring States directly to the canal-settlements or to an intermediary settlement area before coming to this canal area. Except Keorapukur and TP canal the natives seems to outnumber the migrants in the rest of the three canal-bank settlements (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.04.04. Family size

Majority (45 percent) of the households were 2-4 members followed by 44 percent in the range of 5-8 members. Approximately 59 percent households were in this range in TP canal. Monikhali had 52 percent households with 5-8 members (Figure No. 4.05 and Table No.4E). The other
Canal settlements also had a higher section of the households in this range (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). Nearly three-fourth of the households were nuclear family type. Majority of the women headed households in these areas had a family size of 2-4 members. In Churial Canal 90 percent of the women headed households had a moderate family size of 2-4 members. In Intercepting Canal 31 percent of the women headed households had a family size of 5-8 members, and 5 percent had members of more than 8. (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.04.05. Occupation pattern

Most of the canal-bank dwellers were engaged in skilled and manual labour, service and business activities too. Roughly 35-45 percent squatter-workers were involved in manual labour, which includes rickshaw pullers and casual labourers. On an average 41 percent are manual labours (Figure No. 4.06 and Table No.4F). Proportion of manual labour was high in Keorapukur Monikhali and TP-Lead Canal. In Churial Canal skilled workers were dominant being 43 percent (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.04.06. Below poverty line population

According to the definition of poverty line in India Rs.1,500 was the average for a family of 5 members during 1999-2000. (Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2000). On an average 52 percent of the total canal bank families were BPL with a family income below Rs.1,500. The proportion of BPL family was highest in TP, Monikhali and Keorapukur Canal. Almost 70-71 percent of the households fell in the category of less than Rs.1,500. (Figure No.4.07 and Table No.4G). However in Intercepting Canal nearly 66 percent of the households reported an income over Rs.1,500 (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). Nearly 3 percent of the households were women headed families with the income below...
Rs.1,500. Considering the Churial Canal and Intercepting Canal near about 90 percent and 67 percent of the women headed households were BPL (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000).

4.08.05. Socio-economic profile of selected canal-bank squatters in 2005

According to the KMC survey in 2005 about 96 percent of the houses were kutchha. Majority were daily wage earners (82 percent) and the remaining was self-employed. The literacy rate of the population above 6 years worked out to be 77.9 percent. Near about 23 percent completed primary education and 31 percent completed middle school respectively. About 4 percent of the youth population was out of school. The survey showed that nearly 94 percent of the school-going children attended school (Kolkata Municipal Corporation, 2006). Almost 79.29 percent of the households had a monthly income between Rs.1,500 to 2,500 and the rest 20.71 had a monthly income between Rs.2,500 to 5,000. Nearly 76.25 percent of the families were identified as very poor families with income less than Rs.2300 per month. In TP and Keorapukur canal-bank squatters more than 80 percent of the families had an earning of Rs.2000-2500 per month (Figure No.4.08 and Table No.4H).

4.08.06. Effect of the Canal Improvement Programme of KEIP on canal-bank dwellers

4.08.06.01. Affected household and population

The squatter dwellers living in these squatter settlements are very poor and they will be facing the adverse impact of the Environmental Improvement Project in the city. The KEIP in its canal improvement programme in 2000 proposed a resettlement plan for 11,549 canal informal dwellers from these 5 canal-bank squatters (TP, Keorapukur, Monikhali, Churial and Intercepting Canal) comprising of 3507 households, out of which almost 67 percent of the households have been identified as BPL families. The estimated affected household and population in 2000 in
each of these canals are shown in Figure No.4.09. The increase in the number of canals and canal length to be improved in the KEIP project resulted in the increase in the affected families (and population) from 3,507 (11,549) to 3,626 (16,317). This is depicted in Table 4.01.

4.08.06.02. Resettlement plan

The project states to undertake the canal improvement work only after the relocation is complete. The resettlement plan package for 3,626 households and resettlement of affected families of the canal basins in different localities is depicted in Box No.4.02. The affected households are to be shifted at a distance of not more than 2 kilometres to 4-storeyed flats from their original habitation after completion of house building on the new proposed site (Photo No. 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15). Though the project supports rehabilitation, there are certain risks. The resettlement plan will have negative impact on their livelihood. Intercepting Canal has the highest number of affected settlements, while Keorapukur Canal has the least affected population (Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Asian Development Bank, 2000). The resettlement update till July 2009 is shown in Table 4.02.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>TP Main</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>6,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercepting TP</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>6,189</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>6,988</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead Canal (Indira Nagar)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead (Madurtala)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>843</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Additional Canals (Guniagachi, Ajay Nagar, Suti, Jamunanagar, Survey Park)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Keorapukur</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Monikhal-Jinjira</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>1,233</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churial Main</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1,145</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1,471</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churial Extension</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bridge Sites on TP, Monikhal and Churial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,507</td>
<td>11,549</td>
<td>3,626</td>
<td>16,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KMC, 2006
Box No. 4.02
Resettlement Plan Package For The Canal-bank Squatter Dwellers Under Canal Improvement Programme Of KEIP Project, 2006

- Some of the affected families of TP Basin will be resettled in Valmiki Ambedkar Shari Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) type of flats (190 square feet area), either purchased from KMDA or built by the Project, initially at the cost of Rs. 84,000.

- The beneficiary contribution of each family will be Rs.3930 and 3940 [Phase I], and Rs.5000 [Phase II and III].

- The flats will have basic amenities like water, electricity connections and personal toilets.

- The flat owners will enjoy legal title in the form of 99-year old non-resalable lease in the name of the female head of the family. They will be exempted from registration costs of their flats.

- They will be provided with a shifting cost of Rs.300 per family.

- The highly vulnerable people including those headed by women, the elderly persons and the disabled, handicapped will be allotted ground floor flats which have commercial possibilities and will be given access to land for social forestry and vegetable production.

- The shop owners among the Affected Families will be allotted ground floor flats so that they can continue with their livelihood (Photo 4.16).

- All the rest of the flats will be constructed by KEIP. The beneficiary contribution of each family will be Rs.5000.

Source: KMC, 2007

KOLKATA ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
RESETTLEMENT PLAN, 2005

Box No. 4.03
Geography Of Urban Poverty In The City Of Kolkata
Chapter IV: Squatter Settlements — A Crisis In Urban Planning Of Kolkata

4.09. Encroachments on road-side

These squatters are found scattered over the city wherever road-side land is available to them. Such jhupris are found in the Khidirpur-Garden Reach Dock Area in the West Kolkata where squatter have settled on Kolkata Port’s land. In the old Corporation area due to lack of space such jhupris are restricted. Some of the former jhupris that existed have been evicted during the 1980s. Such roadside jhupri exists on an unfinished fly over at Khidirpur. Several small shanties are found along the Eastern Metropolitan By Pass in the eastern part of the city where some vacant land is available. In addition there are unregistered slums adjoining the Dhapa landfill (Saifarbad, Durgapur, Ananta, Badal and Khanaberia) in the East Kolkata Wetlands. The residents of these settlements make their living as solid waste scavengers, rag pickers and agricultural labourers on the vegetable farms that occupy the older areas of the landfill. Road-side squatters are visible on APC Road in Central Kolkata where households have squatted on the pavements. Similar squatters are visible on Canal West Road where the evicted people of Beleghata-Circular Canal have settled on the pavements re-constructing their dwellings (Photo No.4.14).

4.10. Policy approach towards squatter settlements

Many policy approaches towards squatters have been adopted in the city during the last few decades.

• By the late 1960s Urban India was getting disillusioned with ‘public housing programmes’ (many of which were launched after 1960) as a solution to the proliferation of slums and squatter settlements. In urban planning of Kolkata — the shortcomings of this approach was evident on a number of counts. The 1970s saw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canal</th>
<th>Resettlement Site</th>
<th>Total no. of flats</th>
<th>No. of flats handed</th>
<th>No of flats allotted</th>
<th>No. of flats not handed over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TP Basin</td>
<td>Nonadanga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>352</td>
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<td>Phase I</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>Nil</td>
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<td>Phase II</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phase IV</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasbi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keorapukur</td>
<td>Purba Putiary</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooshkali</td>
<td>Sampa Mirza Nagar</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churiai</td>
<td>Kalagacha</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3365</td>
<td>2781</td>
<td>2333</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KMC, 2009
growing experimentation with the ‘sites and services’ approach. Settlement upgrading programmes, for example, the ‘Bustee Improvement Programme’ in Kolkata made a visible impact, with improved basic services and a marked improvement in the living conditions of the urban poor. These programmes viewed as an interim solution to redevelopment of slums. Government investments in these settlements also recognized for the first time the necessity of ensuring security of tenure for residents of these informal settlements. Despite some impressive results, settlement-upgrading programmes failed to create a citywide impact. In terms of physical upgrading, the investments were inadequate to make up for decades of neglect.

• In retrospect, the 1970s can be viewed as an important transition period when the traditional approach to public housing started giving way to new approaches of dealing with the housing needs of the urban poor. The shortcomings of ‘sites and services’ or ‘slum upgrading programmes’ provided important lessons to planners and policy-makers. It helped shape the emergence of the new approach in the late 1980s. The enabling approach put people centre stage, with governments committing to the role of facilitator. The approach also brought to the fore the key constraints that had dogged past efforts to meet the housing needs of the poor: lack of secure tenure; speculative land markets; inflexible housing finance systems; inappropriate planning and building regulations; and the inability of institutional frameworks to involve people in the development process. An instance of this approach was that the KMDA freed Rabindra Sarobar area from the shanties of refugees by constructing 266 low cost dwelling units in 1979-80 and 250 squatter families were shifted thus freeing 7 acres of land from forcible occupation (Nair, P.T., 1989).

• Though in the following years some slum re-housing work was carried out following these approaches, on the contrary eviction and slum clearance was adopted as a path towards urban development too. Hence the policies ranged from passively ignoring or actively harassing squatter dwellers to interventions aimed at protecting the rights of squatter dwellers and helping them to improve their incomes and living environments. A better option to summary eviction has been the policy intervention that has sought to promote settlement improvement through the relocation of illegal settlers, thereby releasing land for commercial use. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, after many twists and turns of politics and ideology, Kolkata seems to be preparing itself to receive a different kind of modernity, emanating from the West. In the present march of globalization-induced liberalization, the development has been proceeding in such an unprecedented manner that development has become almost synonymous to the term ‘eviction’. In many instances of development,
thousands of poor people are not only apprehending, but also facing the bulldozer of displacement.

- More indicative of real administrative attitudes towards the urban poor is the attempt of the State Government and Kolkata Municipal Administration to suppress or eradicate informal-sector activities. Such activities whether street trading, vending or constructing squatter housing have attracted increased antagonism because of the competition they posed to the expensive modernization schemes. The eviction of hawkers in 1983 and 1984 in Central Kolkata, Operation Sunshine carried out in 1996 in North Kolkata and in 2000 in South Kolkata reflects such an attitude. The objective of the planning technocrats is large-scale investments in modern Corporate Sector such as luxury hotels, shopping malls, mass transit systems all designed to impress foreign investors rather than to raise the living standard of the poor.

4.11. Eviction – an approach towards ‘re-modeling urban space’ in Kolkata

4.11.01. Eviction of squatters- a part of urban development

Eviction has been a common response to development in the Country in 1970s and 1980s. The early 1980s were a time of evictions and demolitions right across urban India: Bangalore, Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Chennai, Nagpur, Surat, and so on (Sen, J., 1996). Kolkata was no exception. There was a sudden, brutal and citywide wave of evictions in the city in 1983. The de-housing of poorer people – the seizure of their ‘homes’ and their ‘domestic security’ – is in itself was ‘a process of relentless impoverishment’. The fact is that ‘de-housing’ is as real and constant a social process as ‘housing’, and that indeed the two are interlinked. Since December 2003 to March 2004 more than a quarter of a million people were evicted in India (1,50,000 in New Delhi and 75,000 in Kolkata). This approach did not solve the problems of slums but shifted it elsewhere particularly in the periphery of the city where access to land is easier and planning control is non-existent.

4.11.02. Approach of KMC towards the squatters and eviction

In Kolkata development, beautification and infrastructure projects have been responsible for the large-scale eviction of urban poor. In the last two decades of the twentieth century Kolkata had witnessed several series of eviction throughout the city (Table No.4.03). Subsequent evictions in the last 5-10 years have shattered living of thousands of poor in the city (Photo No.4.13 -- 4.16). There have been instances in the city whereby the forces have been used to evict the squatter without planning any rehabilitation for them. The squatter dwellers have resisted and protested the eviction drive (Photo No.4.17 and 4.18). The threat of multiple evictions grimly looms over many more poor squatter dwellers in the city.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of eviction</th>
<th>Locality/ area</th>
<th>Approximate family/poplulation displaced</th>
<th>Carried out by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23rd May, 1980</td>
<td>Lake Camp, South Kolkata</td>
<td>59 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th November, 1982</td>
<td>NRS Hospital in Sealdah in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>70 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th December, 1982</td>
<td>Road-side squatters in Kolkata</td>
<td>150 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th May, 1983</td>
<td>Gos Bagan in North Kolkata</td>
<td>60 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th February, 1986</td>
<td>NRS Hospital in Sealdah in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>604 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th June 1983</td>
<td>Ulundanga, Belghata in North Kolkata</td>
<td>1000 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th July, 1983</td>
<td>Gourimata Park and Narendra Deb Park in North Kolkata</td>
<td>160 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th October, 1984</td>
<td>EM By Pass Park Circus Connector in East Kolkata</td>
<td>40 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th October, 1984</td>
<td>Kalighat in South Kolkata</td>
<td>100 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th October, 1984</td>
<td>EM By Pass, Kasba in South Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th October, 1984</td>
<td>Lohapul, Tilkai in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd January, 1985</td>
<td>Park Street in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>1000 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th February, 1985</td>
<td>Kasba in South Kolkata</td>
<td>49 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th April, 1985</td>
<td>SSKM Hospital premise in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th January, 1986</td>
<td>APC Bose Road in North Kolkata</td>
<td>145 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th February, 1986</td>
<td>SSKM Hospital premise in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>260 huts</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th April, 1986</td>
<td>Park Lane in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>2000 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July, 1986</td>
<td>Entally in South Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th July, 1986</td>
<td>Hatgachi in East Kolkata</td>
<td>400 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th July, 1986</td>
<td>Dhapa in East Kolkata</td>
<td>500 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st August, 1986</td>
<td>Marquis Square in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st August, 1986</td>
<td>Dhapa in East Kolkata</td>
<td>All encroachers</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th August, 1986</td>
<td>Hatgachi, Dhapa in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1986</td>
<td>Tirtti Bazar in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>200 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1986</td>
<td>Eviction threat at East Kolkata Township</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 1986</td>
<td>Eviction threat at Rashbehari Connector in South Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th January, 1987</td>
<td>APC Bose Road near Gem Cinema in North Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th April, 1987</td>
<td>Palmer Bazar Canal in Tilkai in East Kolkata</td>
<td>5,800 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th April, 1987</td>
<td>Tungra in East Kolkata</td>
<td>9000 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th May, 1987</td>
<td>Sobhabazar-Nintala area in North Kolkata</td>
<td>280 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Squatter Settlements — A Crisis In Urban Planning Of Kolkata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of eviction</th>
<th>Locality/ area</th>
<th>Approximate family/population displaced</th>
<th>Carried out by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30th May, 1987</td>
<td>Tolly’s Nullah (Near Shahnagar Ghat) in South Kolkata</td>
<td>270 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st June, 1987</td>
<td>Palmer Bazar Canal in Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>2700 people</td>
<td>KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th June, 1987</td>
<td>Metinbazar (S.A. Farooqui Shah Road in West Kolkata</td>
<td>2160 people</td>
<td>KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th June, 1987</td>
<td>Dhakuria Railway Station in South Kolkata</td>
<td>810 people</td>
<td>Railway Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th June, 1987</td>
<td>Palmer Bazar Canal in Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>800 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th August, 1987</td>
<td>Tollygunge in South Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th August, 1987</td>
<td>Alipur Road in West Kolkata</td>
<td>226 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th November, 1987</td>
<td>EM Bye Pass in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th February, 1988</td>
<td>Moila Canal in Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>9000 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th February, 1988</td>
<td>Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>1350 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th February, 1988</td>
<td>Topsia Canal in East Kolkata</td>
<td>500 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th March, 1988</td>
<td>Baubazar (within Kolkata Medical College Premise) in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>32 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th March, 1988</td>
<td>Bagbazar in North Kolkata</td>
<td>162 people</td>
<td>KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th April, 1988</td>
<td>Palmer Bazar in East Kolkata</td>
<td>2000 people</td>
<td>KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd June, 1988</td>
<td>Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd June, 1988</td>
<td>Bagbazar in North Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th June, 1988</td>
<td>EM Bye Pass in East Kolkata</td>
<td>42 shanties</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th July, 1988</td>
<td>SSKM Hospital in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>250 shanties</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th April, 1989</td>
<td>Behala in West Kolkata</td>
<td>12 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th May, 1989</td>
<td>Ramnath Dutta Street in North Kolkata</td>
<td>14 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th October, 1992</td>
<td>Canal West Road, Narkeldanga in North Kolkata</td>
<td>2000 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th June, 1993</td>
<td>Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>200 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th February, 1994</td>
<td>Park Circus, 4 No. Bridge in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>1000 families</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th November, 1994</td>
<td>Kasba in South Kolkata</td>
<td>800 people</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th November, 1994</td>
<td>Tiliaja in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th March, 1995</td>
<td>EM Bye Pass in East Kolkata</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th November, 1995</td>
<td>Park Circus in Central Kolkata</td>
<td>156 shanties</td>
<td>Kolkata Police, KMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unnayan, 1996

### 4.11.03. Squatter eviction in the first decade of twenty-first century

#### 4.11.03.01. Eviction along Tolly's Nullah

At Tolly's Nullah in South Kolkata in September 2001 almost 1,400 households with 20,000 people were evicted and rendered homeless (Photo No.4.15 and 4.16). The reason was to facilitate the extension of the Metro Railway and implementation of the Ganga Action Plan. The...
authorities wanted the eviction in order to continue the unhindered work of the Rs.40 Crore development scheme (The Statesman, 2001). The squatters have spent days running after leaders and organizing rallies and protests (Photo No.4.17). But all their efforts have gone to vain. The evictees had tried to settle on the first piece of land they come across in the vicinity. Their movements and protests slowed down and disintegrated after the eviction. The KMC, KMDA, State Irrigation Department had geared up for initiating the multi-crore project. Earlier in 1988 the KMDA had prepared a Rehabilitation Package for the Tolly Nullah Squatters under the Pavement Dwellers’ Scheme. The Centre had provided Rs.34 lakhs for the purpose and the State identified the families to be covered by the scheme. The State had also allotted land. The squatters were supposed to move to the allotted plots by April 1990. But the scheme failed due to a local political pressure (The Statesman, 2001). According to the evictees, prior to the eviction in 2001 the authorities had misled the people by promising them that hutments beyond 20 feet from the Nullah would not be demolished. But the promise was not kept.

4.11.03.02. Eviction along Circular Rail tract
In September 2002 around 1,000 families staying near Gate No. 9 of Circular Rail railway (in Central Kolkata) tract were evicted. These squatter dwellers mostly comprise of the working class community providing cheap labour to the commercial hub of Barabazar and Canning Street area. The cheap labour provided by these labourers makes it possible to keep the prices in the market low thereby leading to the prosperity of the market.

4.11.03.03. Eviction along Circular Canal
In December 2002 the West Bengal Government evicted almost 17,000 people from the sides of Circular Canal in Belghata, Narkeldanga, Maniktala and Shyambazar conducted along a 4 kilometre stretch Gazabbi Bridge in Kashipur to Orange Surah at Rajabazar in North Kolkata (Photo No.4.13 and 4.14). Almost 3,600 houses among 4,500 structures were demolished (The Statesman, 2002). The basic purpose was to improve the city’s drainage conditions and beautification of the area. The State Government itself settled these squatters here in the 1960s and 70s, when it needed to augment its vote bank. The affected families have to be content with a meager sum of Rs.2000 as shifting cost.

4.11.03.04. Eviction in squatter adjacent to Rabindra Sarobar
On December 16, 2005 almost 5,000 squatters from the railway land beside the Rabindra Sarobar in South Kolkata were evicted with an objective to improve the health of Rabindra Sarobar — the “second largest lung of the city and the only national lake in the state. Prior to that few eviction drive to clear railway property at Lake Gardens were called off following violent protests by shanty dwellers demanding their rehabilitation (Photo No.4.18). According to the squatters they had been mislead by the political leaders who had assured them that their houses along the
EVICTION SCENARIO

Squatter families at Galif Street along Circular Canal dismantling their huts after receiving eviction notices.

Squatter families along Belghata Circular Canal have relocated themselves after eviction on the footpath on Canal East Road.

Squatter huts at Tolly Nullah canal-bank being demolished.

A squatter family of Tolly Nallah Squatter reorganizing their household after eviction.

Kalikapur squatter dwellers receiving eviction threats have organizing themselves under the platform ‘Colony Uchhed Protirodh Committee’ against eviction.

Rabindra Sarobar squatter dwellers lead by the womenfolk resisting the police & RAF from evicting them.
railway track would remain untouched. Neither the local Councilor nor the MLA stood beside them. Earlier whatever promises were made by them proved to be false.

4.11.04. Resistance against eviction

In some areas like Beleghata canal-bank squatter and Rabindra Sarobar squatter, dwellers resisted their displacement. The squatter dwellers had put up road blockades prior to eviction and organized demonstrations to draw attention towards their plight and their demand for rehabilitation. Their protest could not sustain, but the city witnessed one of the tough public resistances from the poor working class community (Photo No.4.17 and 4.18).

4.11.05. Basic issues related to eviction and Kolkata’s development

Some basic issues that crop up from the incidences of eviction are as follows:

- The authorities claim that the Metro’s extension would extensively benefit the millions. Who are these million people?
- Will the poor squatters really benefit from the Metro expansion scheme and other beautification projects?
- Who will pay for the ‘social cost of eviction’?
- How can the evictees forget that their house was demolished to beautify the city?
- Who’ll guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the families who have been evicted?

4.12. Institution’s approach towards squatters and rehabilitation of squatters

4.12.01. The change in the approach towards rehabilitation of squatters

4.12.01.01. The market forces of rehabilitation operating in Kolkata

The ‘Rehabilitation’ of canal-bank squatters lies at the fate of the market forces operating in this present era of globalization. The State Government and the KMC authorities never showed any interest in ‘Rehabilitation’ of non-ADB Projects. The irony of the situation is inescapable. The market-driven financial agency-Asian Development Bank has virtually forced the State Government to ensure resettlement for squatters along the canals prior to evictions for the Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project. The bank insisted that all evictees of Canal Improvement Project (a part of the KEIP project) must be rehabilitated within a radius of 2 km from their present dwellings. At the initial phase of the sanction of the Project the State Government agreed to rehabilitate only those who have some ‘legal documents’. The state was at the verge of losing the loan due to disagreement regarding the ‘Rehabilitation of evictees’ of the Project. Finally the State agreed to follow the ADB norms in fear of losing Rs.1,600 crores.
Project. This brings out the double standard of the State and the civic body. On the other hand the poor shanty dwellers have become a part of a ‘game’.

4.12.01.02. Evictees: Victims of urban development

It is always told that eviction of poor people is necessary for development. Also in the name of beautification of cities, their slum dwellings are destroyed. Development-induced displacement is a traumatic experience for the poor. It seems that the development projects are for the affluent class at the expense of the poor. Once displacement occurs the anxiety is clearly over whether the government will be able to rehabilitate. In South Asia many urban evictions are due to infrastructure projects, such as the construction of new roads and expressways, road widening, canal improvement, flood control projects and beautification clean-ups to make the city attractive to tourists. Thousands of poor families are evicted without sufficient notice, consultation, compensation, and provision of alternative housing. Massive infrastructure projects and beautification clean-ups in the urban centers restarted in Southeast Asia with the recovery of their economies. This in turn resumed demolition of slums and squatters.

4.12.01.03. Post eviction scenario- squatters rendered homeless

The picture that unfolded in the city after eviction was that people were being de-housed continuously. This action is yet another incident of a long list of atrocities perpetrated against the city’s labouring poor in the last few years by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and the State Government. The eviction drives has rendered thousands of poor homeless in the city. Their household possessions have been destroyed. Their livelihoods have been disrupted. The homelessness of the squatter dwellers did not affect the development plans of the Municipal Corporation.

4.12.02. Violation of ‘human rights’

Forced eviction of millions of people from their homes every year constitutes one of the most common yet unrecognized violations of human rights. Forced eviction denies the right of the evictees to live in peace and dignity. ‘Right to housing’ is recognized in Indian constitutions. But without an enabling law, this right remains unrealized in the face of well-defined property laws. In countries where enabling laws have been legislated, implementation is quite poor. In addition to housing rights violations, forced eviction result in the violation of a number of other rights enlisted in Box No.4.04.

4.12.03. No trace of humanity in eviction drives

According to the squatter evictees, there was no trace of humanity in case of Tolly Nullah or Circular Canal eviction. They stated that not only the authorities denied them resettlement; extreme force was used in evicting the civilian population. Bulldozers, large police force and guns were invariably in sight. The Rapid Action Force was used in eviction. The evictees
complained that demolition was undertaken when people were already inside their huts. It was not merely a physical event, but a process in which people’s lives and memories had no place, in which their rights and freedoms were not merely violated but deemed “not to exist”.

In case of the Circular Canal Eviction, the inhabitants pointed at the police for setting fire at their huts. It did not take time to turn parts of the squatter settlement into ashes. During the interview of these squatter dwellers (after eviction) they complained that the police kept them away from their burning homes by beating them even though they tried to rescue their dear ones and belongings from their huts. They stated that the Fire Brigade Personnel were present at the site passively watching the scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box No. 4.04</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violation Of Rights In Case Of Forced Eviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to non-interference with privacy, family and home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to be protected against the arbitrary deprivation of property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to respect for the home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to freedom of movement and to choose one's residence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to education - often children cannot attend school due to relocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to life - violence during the forced eviction, which results in death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to security – often the implementing authorities rarely provide evicted persons with adequate homes or any form of compensation, thus rendering them vulnerable to homelessness and further acts of violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to effective remedies for alleged human rights violations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Centre on Housing Rights and Eviction, 2007

4.12.04. Housing scheme for the urban poor evictees

4.12.04.01. VAMBAY

VAMBAY (Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana) is a centrally sponsored scheme (formally launched on 2nd December 2001) targeted for providing housing to the urban poor with a view to ameliorating the conditions of the urban slum dwellers living below the poverty line who do not possess adequate shelter (Government of India, 2006). Under this scheme the Government provides 50 percent subsidy for the construction of dwelling units. The balance 50 percent to be arranged by the State Government with ceiling costs prescribed both for dwelling units/community toilets. The State’s share may consist of funds from any source in the form of subsidy or loan from Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) or any other agency. The cost of the land and infrastructure is being borne by the State Government. But the civic authority did not utilize this scheme during the eviction of many such squatters in the city.

4.12.04.02. Rehabilitation

Some of the evicted squatter dwellers adjacent to Rabindra Sarobar have been provided land in Nonadanga at Baishnabhata-Patuli Township (Ward No.108), long time after eviction (Photo No.4.19–4.22). The KMDA has handed over 10 acres of land in Nonadanga along Eastern Geography Of Urban Poverty In The City Of Kolkata
Plate No.4.04
REHABILITATION AND HOUSING PROJECT AT NONADANGA

Photo No.4.19
4 storeyed KEIP flats at Nonadanga, East Kolkata

Photo No.4.20
Premise of the KEIP flats provided to canal bank dwellers.

Photo No.4.21
KEIP construction of housing for rehabilitation of canal bank dwellers.

Photo No.4.22
Ground floor flat allotted to shop owner to let him continue his livelihood.
Chapter IV: Squatter Settlements — A Crisis In Urban Planning Of Kolkata

Metropolitan Bypass (in the southeastern fringe of Kolkata) worth Rs.20 crore to KMC to transfer it to the settlers. Shifting to Nonadanga their livelihoods have been disintegrated. Earlier staying at their own residence transport cost to their place of work was comparatively cheaper. Also these squatters economically subsidized the locality with cheap labour. Resettling at Nonadanga most of them have not been able to retain their present livelihood. There was no concern on behalf of the authority to assess the impact of resettlement on the squatter community (Hindustan Times, 2005).

On the contrary the squatters of the Circular Canal and Tolly Nullah have not been provided with any rehabilitation except a shifting cost of Rs.2,000.

4.12.05. Role of NGOs and social organizations

In the mid 1980s Unnayan (Progress) and Chinnamoud Sramajibi Adhikar Samity (Uprooted Day Labourers Rights Committee) were the two principal organizations that acted as advocates for squatter rights. They conducted inquiries into implementation of policies. On one instance Unnayan tried to negotiate with the KMC when KMC evicted around 100 families from Bagbazar area. Various NGOs work on social improvement of the squatter dwellers recently, providing them with education and health facilities. For example almost 17 canal-side non-formal schools were run by Prantik along Beleghata Canal. These NGOs were not too bothered with the eviction aspect of the squatter dwellers. A forum of organizations namely Uchched Birodi Jukta Mancha has been formed to protest the eviction drives since 2001 when eviction took place along Tolly’s Nullah. Other Organizations like Jhupri Federation, Hawker Sangram Committee and Association For Protection Of Democratic Rights were involved in resisting eviction during the Beleghata eviction drive in 2002.

4.13. Alternative approach to eviction

4.13.01. Discouraging eviction

There are possible ways in which Governments, NGOs and communities can play an important role in preventing forced evictions (Centre on Housing Rights and Eviction, 2007) —

- The Government can enact and enforce legislation guaranteeing ‘universal security of tenure’. This is one of the most effective actions a government can undertake to curtail the practice of forced eviction. It can reduce settlement density by facilitating housing provision to the poor. This can take the form of rapid land release programmes, provision of credit, supporting of savings schemes, subsidizing building costs, subsidizing rents, and building of new houses.
- The Community-based Organizations and NGOs can work on community mobilization, exposing and publicizing planned evictions, establishing ‘Housing...
Rights' campaigns; sharing information, ideas and strategies with other groups; persistent attempts to engage the government in dialogue about planned evictions, developing and publicizing viable alternative plans and legal action.

4.13.02. Recognition of 'Housing Rights'
The struggles in India seem to have also played something of a role in reshaping the debate about 'housing' at the international level. While the idea of 'housing rights' is not new — but the ideas have changed radically with time. In 1987 the Habitat International Coalition took up 'housing rights' in the new, larger sense as one of its central concerns and it is now lobbying at the UN for a Convention to the Right to Adequate Housing. At the same time, despite these gains, the Indian Government's recent consultation on rural housing show that government still conceive of 'housing' in terms of housing units and projects. The priority remains, with the achievements of construction of houses and not with the foundations of people's lives.

4.13.03. Pro-poor housing policy
The National Campaign for Housing Rights, for example, had a significant influence on the Indian Government's first national housing policy, finalized in 1992. But it also promoted much more radical ideas: a people's bill of housing rights, which envisaged the formation of dwellers' unions to whom planning powers, would be devolved. The Campaign argued that the right to housing should be included in the country's constitution. The idea is that the State has a responsibility to work towards and guarantee the conditions — economic, social, and environmental — under which everyone can live in security and dignity. According to International Human Rights Law (Centre on Housing Rights and Eviction, 2006), 'adequate housing' must provide more than just four walls and a roof over one's head; it must, at a minimum, include the following elements:

- Legal security of tenure.
- Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure.
- Affordability.
- Habitability.
- Accessibility.
- Location
- Cultural adequacy.

In case of the rehabilitation project of the evicted dwellers in the city, not all of the above mentioned elements have been given recognition by the government.

4.13.04. Focus on 'shelter'
Shelter at minimum acceptable standard of habitability guided by economically realistic building and planning codes is crucial to urban infrastructure. Those living in substandard shelter can be
given assistance in progressively improving their shelter. To help the poor in investing in their
housing, assistance can be provided in terms of granting land tenure, building materials banks,
technical guidance in construction, provision of affordable loans etc. 
The evictees were neither provided with any form of assistance for rebuilding their homes.

4.14. Emerging issues and considerations

- Kolkata is likely to face more such migration, silent or forcible in the future being
  the primate city of Eastern India. For the development of the city necessary eviction
  may take place. Displacement and eviction of one squatter will create a new one.
  Also eviction won’t make them go far away because the city needs their informal
  services (in domestic, transport and commercial sectors).
- Political parties’ presence is a constant in squatter settlements (represented here by a
  political party’s flag), where community services are ‘brought’ by residents from
  politicians, in return for votes.
- The problem lies in the methods in which KMC and the State Government handle
  evictions; the way poor communities are forced to negotiate with the city’s
  development.
- There is no short term or marginal solution to the question of squatter colonies. The
  forcible eviction of squatters, even if they are resettled in other sites, totally disrupts
  the economic life of the household.
- Apart from the further misery and degradation, which it involves, eviction of squatter
  is an ineffective remedy for decongesting the cities. So long as thorough land reform,
  re-grouping and distribution of resources to the poorest bottom half of the population
  does not take place, the poor in the Third World cities will go on increasing.
- Lessons from the past experience suggest that neither eviction nor resettlement can
  solve the problem of growing slums and squatters in the city. These plans have never
  improved the lives of the beneficiaries nor could eliminate the slums from the city’s
  landscape. The economic forces giving rise to these squatters will give rise to a new
  one attracting the former residents back to the same habitation site or a new site.
- True that these new developments in the Third World metro cities are succumbing to
  bourgeoisification. The brutal eviction and demolition drives point to the steady
  squeezing out of the unprivileged and poor working class.
- The solution to homelessness of the squatters, lies not in the supplier of ‘finished
  homes’ in form of ‘housing’, but in realizing and supporting the people’s creative
  energies in building and improving their homes and neighborhoods.
• Therefore, what is of crucial importance to the question of thinning out the squatters' colonies in metropolitan cities is to create new opportunities for employment in the rural sector and to spread the existing job opportunities, infrastructure facilities evenly in both rural and urban areas.

4.15. Conclusion

Slums and squatters are the only housing alternative available for the poor in the city. Eviction ignores the right to live in a city without any acknowledgement of the failure of the state to facilitate legal and affordable housing for the poor. The problem of ‘squatter settlements’ should not be viewed independently from the other problems of infrastructure and overall development of Kolkata. Hence, to address the problem of informal settlements, an integrated pro-poor development approach to rationalize ‘development needs’ would be necessary. Major components of this integrated approach should include identifying the root cause of migration of the people to Kolkata, rationalizing needs and priorities of the ‘poor’ in order to minimize social costs and maximize the potential benefits, rationalizing engineering design requirements and keeping in view the overall development objectives for the benefits of the larger society. ‘Employment Generation’ and other pro-poor policies should be oriented towards these people.

Key ‘Housing Rights’ issues should be addressed involving adequate housing, security of tenure and land rights through co-operative system to the poor. Provision of decent housing what may be called ‘shelter’ is an important basic need of the civilized existence. Housing developments in India are taking place especially for a selective elite class. These have yet to take the characteristic of ‘mass housing’ and ‘social housing’.

References


38. The Times Of India. 2001. RAF Deployed For Eviction At Tolly’s Nullah. Kolkata: The Times Of India. 15 September.
