CHAPTER 6

Nature, Community and Livelihood: Locating Uran in a Larger Discourse
6.1 Transformation and Reconstruction of Landscapes

Chapters two to five traced the evolution, construction, destruction and reconstruction of landscapes in the study region and the larger processes that influenced them. It was seen that the history of Uran taluka is embedded in the history of evolution of the North Konkan coast and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) of which it is a part. The region was known to be the site of interaction between people and the environment for centuries since at least the first millennium BCE. Horticulture, paddy cultivation, hunting, fishing, salt production, weaving, pottery and craft production were among the activities undertaken both for subsistence and exchange as communication and interaction took place between communities located there and communities from across the Arabian Sea. The region got differentiated into areas of production with optimally located centres created for manufacturing, collection of items for trade, and to effect exchange between communities. From the ancient to medieval period gradual transformation of landscapes was associated with innovation, discovery of tools and exchange of resources, knowledge and technology resulting from community-nature interaction as well as intervention by various power structures.

The initial key phases of regional transformation were linked to the shift from a pastoral to an agrarian economy, in turn linked to changing patterns of trade. The original symbiotic relationship between trade, religion and agriculture changed into a more feudal structure with the decline of trade in the 3rd century. While North Konkan had attained heightened levels of economic prosperity under the Mauryan Empire (321 to 185 BCE), Uran emerged into a sub-centre of importance during the Shilahara reign in the 5th century AD. From an upland village in Karanja Island, Uran was established as a sub-divisional administrative centre that served to strengthen the production base of the surrounding region with establishment of many gardens, orchards and coconut plantations. These were enlarged and added to with the introduction of new fruit-bearing plants during the subsequent rule of King Bhima in the 11th century, thereby further expanding the original livelihood base of fishing and paddy cultivation. The current social composition of the study region has its origins in this period when various castes and tribes were encouraged to settle along with those (Pathare Prabhus, Pachkalshis, Bhandaris, and Agris) who followed the king from Gujarat and served as administrators, clerks, carpenters and cultivators. The socio-cultural landscape of the region had in previous centuries seen constant changes with combined influences of immigrants,
invaders and traders comprising inland communities ranging from Dravidian to Aryan, and overseas communities that included Grecian, Persian and Arab groups (Cunha, 1900/2004). An amalgam of these influences was seen in the cultural (language, paintings and frescoes), economic (livelihoods, coins, revenue systems) and physical landscapes in terms of vegetation as well as differentiation into village settlements, trading and administrative centres.

Economic networks that integrated localised exchange between harbours on the west coast and long distance trade across the ocean had evolved by the first millennium AD. Related primary, secondary, and tertiary hinterlands had developed that were essentially influenced by the terrain (Thapar, 1996). The coastal strip formed the primary hinterland that was mostly based on communication along the shore since overland contacts were curtailed by the numerous east-west flowing creeks and rivers. The ghats running along the coast formed the secondary hinterland and served as vantage points for defence with limited mountain passes providing access to the inland tertiary hinterland. The unregulated, demilitarized trade of the Indian Ocean in the late-first millennium was replaced by regional differences in trading patterns in the second millennium (Heitzman, 2008) with variations arising from differences in political economy, changing demand for goods and environmental features. The mutually conducive relationship between trade and production in the hinterland revived considerably from 8th to 15th century. The second millennium also saw rapid technological advances related to water transport and military arsenal that paved the way for expansion of control over land and sea. Initial Chinese dominance was followed by attempts to establish monopoly over trade by the Portuguese, Dutch and finally the British. The period from 1500 to 1800 AD therefore saw a reorganisation of the economy of the region with the rise of strong maritime and continental power groups.

The region was crucial for trade and accumulation but, until the 18th century, the physical features of the region made its occupation and control a difficult proposition. Karanja Island was at that time one of the more productive of a group of twenty-five islands ranging in size from a few yards to a hundred square miles in area (Cunha, 1900/2004) along the North Konkan coast. Monarchs largely relied on local chiefs to control their territories along the narrow coastal strip and these proved subsequently inadequate against the superior military forces and technology of European powers. The Portuguese who first took control of the west coast were however unable to sustain their position due
to their failure to reinvest an adequate share of their revenues to enhance the productivity of the region and defend it. It was noted (Heitzman, 2008) that the Portuguese endeavours in Asia were typically crown undertakings having close links with the Church whereas efforts of the Dutch and British were driven by companies that more closely resembled those of modern capitalist organizations. The only commonality they shared was the desire to establish and maintain monopoly control.

The nature of urbanisation in India, and the rest of South Asia, was seen to undergo a shift as continental powers competed to develop port-enclaves protected by their own military forces. Many urban centres subsequently grew into significant coastal trading towns and cities. Urbanisation due to commercial expansion in this region differed from the nature of urbanisation in Africa, specially the central African Copperbelt, in the colonies of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo, where towns for capitalist production were centred on mining operations (Freund, 2007). In both, exogenous factors rather than spatial interactions within a region, became the driving force for urbanisation thereby encouraging a dichotomous conception of urban and rural spaces (Reddy, 2014). Mumbai (then Bombay) was initially considered an unlikely central place, and required capital inflows from other centres to sustain it. A combination of factors (Chandavarkar, 1994) including the decline of Surat, defeat of the Marathas, opening up of trade with China and support from indigenous credit networks facilitated the development of Mumbai as an administrative and political centre.

The establishment of colonialism and rise of Mumbai city had tremendous impact on the transformation of Uran taluka. Uran town was established as a municipality while under colonial rule in 1867 (GoM, 1964) and administrative reorganisation led to the shift of Uran petha and Panvel taluka from Thane to Raigad (then known as Kolaba) District in 1883. Since Thane taluka was developed as the main conduit for trade and exchange, this effectively turned Uran and Panvel into areas of secondary importance. During the colonial period the key shift that took place in the economic landscape of the region was from a space of extraction for imperial profit to a source region subservient to the subsistence needs of a growing population in the port city. The initial phase saw intensification of cultivation that necessitated an inflow of peasant or tenant cultivators. Land settlements were undertaken with the idea that individual ownership of land was conducive to developing profit-oriented farmers whose surplus could then be appropriated to support industrial development in Britain. The bourgeois ideology of
nature that directed colonial interventions in India and other colonies saw the rise of scientific forestry, commercialisation of agriculture, and associated changes in the relationships between communities and their environment.

By the 1850s tremendous advances took place in the establishment of communication systems between key nodes within the country and also between the main centres and the seat of colonial power that enhanced control over resources and populations. A significant leap in altering the limitations imposed by the region’s physical environment was achieved by breaking through and establishing a railway line across the Western Ghats. Railways in most colonies, whether in Africa or Asia, acted as instruments of imperial control as well as the means of transport (Ziltener & Künzler, 2013). Roads and railways were built to prioritise the export trade and facilitate extraction for the metropole. Infrastructure therefore invariably led to the sea. Regions situated along the trunk routes achieved new prominence while others were marginalised and deprioritised. Strategic development of transport networks expanded the hinterland of the city to interior parts of the country from where heightened extraction could take place. Control over Uran taluka conversely, was enforced through the lack of development of infrastructure. The only road that connected Panvel with Uran was deliberately left unmetalled (Bombay Government, 1892) by the British to prevent locals from engaging in unregulated trading of goods. Shifts in property rights, technological advances, industrial and urban policy changes and associated development of communication infrastructure created distinct phases in which access to natural resources of the area, and therefore access to livelihood and employment opportunities were significantly restructured. As seen in other colonised regions market exchanges had increasing importance, leading to intensification of cultivation and greater exploitation of labour (Redclift, 1987). Accordingly the relationship between the colonial city and hinterland evolved as parasitic (Carter, 1995) rather than a mutually beneficial one. This was particularly so in the colonies of Latin America, South and South-East Asia.

The initial phase of the study region’s de-prioritisation consisted of the conversion of the area into a source region for food and fodder for the rapidly growing metropolitan city. This gave no importance to the needs of the local communities in the region, and the focus on agricultural production and grass cultivation changed relationships between communities and nature. The question of biodiversity too lost importance and the socio-economic landscape changed as several communities moved out of the region. The upper
Caste communities invariably showed decline due to improved employment opportunities provided by growth of the port city, while tribal communities declined due to greater impoverishment caused by their loss of access to forest and varkas lands with changes in cropping patterns that prioritised the city’s market demands at the cost of subsistence requirements of local communities. Manufacturing and non-agricultural production base of the region was deprioritised and relocated. Colonialism thus provided the base for the development of Mumbai as a primate urban centre that dominated smaller cities and towns and deprioritised them in the region to create an uneven pattern of urban development. Such transformations were seen in other countries such as South Africa and Brazil, where symbiotic relationships between urban and rural areas were replaced with one of dominance by a few major centres (Carter, 1995).

By the late 19th century Mumbai had become the third largest cotton market in the world (Chandavarkar, 1994), complemented by a valuable grain and oilseed export trade, a thriving bullion market and had also become the country’s most important base for cotton textiles. By 1900, Mumbai had become the premiere port for India's overseas trade and the main centre for the distribution of imports to internal markets (Chandavarkar, 1994). Simultaneously, concentration of land holdings and control was facilitated by property laws, including the recently debated Land Acquisition Act of 1894, that were introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The new laws and policies inevitably favoured moneylenders, wealthy traders and businessmen belonging to the region and the growing port city. Growing population densities leading to land scarcity caused a rise in land values and rents (Maddison, 1971). This in turn facilitated financial speculation through land deals for the first time. Profitable areas in the study region and related peripheral areas of the city became new sources of accumulation thereby initiating another restructuring of community relations with their environment. The early 20th century thus saw increased concentration of landholdings and the rise of local moneylenders and businessmen who accumulated vast holdings in the study area. Simultaneously, the increased rates of taxation saw increasing loss of occupancy rights and impoverishment of the peasantry. A combination of a rising urban elite along with an increasingly rebellious peasantry that included poor peasants and newly dominant upper caste groups created grounds for an emergent nationalist freedom movement based on the temporary integration of conflicting interests. The latter culminated in award of some autonomy in 1935 followed by the end of colonial rule in 1947.
Independence marked a phase when the nation could choose to build on regional resources and re-establish functional and symbiotic relationships between urban and rural spaces for development. However, the post-Independence growth of Mumbai city continued to keep Uran taluka subservient to the needs of the city. Already established urban bias and structural hierarchies were retained in the mixed economy model that was followed throughout the country. At this time, the periphery and most of the city’s hinterland was characterised by stagnation, decline and impoverishment. In the initial phase growing economic depression in the hinterland compounded the problem, as land reforms, community development and area development programmes of the 1950s failed to facilitate a reorganisation of rural power relations (Cleaver, 1976) in favour of the peasants. Wide disparity and uneven development was seen with spatial variations related to already existing economic activities such as paddy cultivation, firewood collection, salt production, fishing and newer market-oriented activities that were seen along transport and communication lines. Land reforms were partially successful in giving direct ownership of land to a large portion of the peasantry in the 1960s and undermining the dominance of moneylenders and savkars. The success of redistributive land reforms in the later phase could perhaps be attributed to people’s mobilisation and resistance to exploitation that grew in the study region between the 1940s and 1960s. Formation of indigenous village, cluster and taluka-level associations for local governance strengthened village and sub-regional leadership. This was accompanied by establishment of a salt pan workers’ union and various cooperative societies that facilitated collective power to effectively counter exploitation and impoverishment. Internal organisation, external support, and integration of horizontal and vertical socio-political networks were key factors in the achievement of micro-level social transformation. The 1950s and 1960s thus saw considerable efforts to modernise agriculture and improve conditions of work, education, health and housing in the region. Although these achievements were considerable, they could not however counter the larger structural bias due to which the State continued to neglect the hinterland and concentrate investment in Mumbai city.

In 1960 the erstwhile Bombay Presidency was reorganised to form two regional states, Gujarat and Maharashtra, with the latter’s boundaries drawn to include all Marathi-speaking areas. This was achieved after four years of intense struggle based on combined efforts of a rising regional elite in the hinterland and leaders of trade unions and dalit workers in the city. The location of Bombay (Mumbai) was a matter of considerable
contestation between the largely Gujarati business elite and Marathi-speaking groups that included urban workers and sections of the peasantry. The decision to retain the city of Mumbai as the capital of the regional state of Maharashtra alienated non-Marathi city elite considerably and led to shift of the economic base of Mumbai towards international and national rather than regional markets. This also produced conflicts and negotiations among different power groups in subsequent developments. The most significant of these for the study region that purported to contribute to decentralisation and regional development in the state, was the formulation of the New Bombay (Mumbai) twin city plan. Conceptualisation of the plan and its subsequent translation in practice made dominance of business interests evident. The New Mumbai project aimed to create one of the world’s largest planned cities with a target population of two million inhabitants by 1991. Using a technocratic approach, it was an ambitious attempt to combine expertise in urban and transportation planning, engineering design, architecture & housing, economics & finance, marketing and estate management. The City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) Limited was set up on 18 March 1970 as a subsidiary company of the State Industrial Investment Corporation of Maharashtra (SICOM) Ltd. The organisation was to plan, develop and initially administer New Mumbai. The special planning region was decided to be established over an area of 132.70 square miles (343.7 sq.km.) covering 95 villages of Thane and Raigad districts.

Twenty nodes were planned to be developed as self-contained townships that would be located in close proximity along mass transit corridors in a ‘poly-centric plan of development’. Dronagiri in Uran taluka was to be the largest of these nodes. The transport system of New Mumbai was planned to have road, rail, water and air transport facilities and infrastructure that would complement each other and get integrated with the overall transport system of the MMR. A comparison of the land use prevalent in 1973 and the land use proposed for the establishment of New Bombay shows the almost complete obliteration of all productive uses of the land considering its ecology and natural resource base. The initial phase of development in the study region saw the establishment of state and central public sector enterprises related to energy and transport that enhanced industrial and export-oriented business interests in Mumbai. These were seen to absorb only a marginal proportion of people displaced by the new activities leading to widening disparity between and fragmentation of the populace. With no substantive developments in the region for a period of almost twenty-five years between 1986 and 2009, and in the absence of alternative livelihoods, majority of the population
continued with their traditional livelihoods of cultivation, fishing and salt production.

Initially the State appeared to accept the need for providing alternative employment opportunities and consider the number of people displaced, albeit in a piecemeal project-to-project approach that was left to the negotiating strength of directly affected people. The concerned public sector organisations made an effort to accommodate Project Affected Persons (PAPs) in the offices created within the region and outside. Gains from the new activities were however distributed unevenly within and across PAP families and communities, resulting in enormous disparities in income, living conditions and access to newer livelihood options. The consequences for ecosystem-based livelihoods were severe as family and community social relations of production were increasingly disrupted and destroyed. The integration of this region with trade-oriented and metropolitan commodity markets had effectively started from colonial times. The money exchange economy was subsequently widened in the post-Independence period. Although the extent of monetisation was disputed (Chandavarkar, 1977) it was generally agreed that there were no non-monetized sectors in the sense of a purely self-sufficient isolated sector. At the community level most cultivators had no cash reserves as unequal market exchange kept them at subsistence, at times even below subsistence levels. With no capital investment in the region and practically non-existent cash reserves, production was organised around labour and commodity exchange in kind. Thus intra and inter-community relationships were mostly mediated by mechanisms such as values and customs of reciprocity as seen in relations between primary producers in other regions also (Kavoori, 1994). This continued until the 1980s when land was acquired for establishment of industrial units and the Nhava-Sheva port. This led to breakdown of erstwhile social arrangements, commodification of land and labour, and increasing monetisation of the local economy. This has made cultivation an uphill struggle if not completely unsustainable in the few areas reserved as ‘green’ spaces. Livelihoods were also dependent on ecological flows between sea and land as also uplands, midlands and lowlands. These flows also saw disruption as the establishment of new economic activities were developed by appropriating critical ecosystem zones and establishing road networks that redirected existing water flows. Wider environmental consequences of human activity such as climate change and associated sea-level rise also have had clear implications for the nature of transformation visualised in the region. Regardless, since the 1980s the push for modernisation of the metropolis and its immediate periphery has been inexorable.
By the early 1980s pressure to begin development of the international port facility increased and intensified presence of police and paramilitary forces were seen in the region. The failure to intimidate people led to a violent conflict in the mid-1980s during the forced takeover of land from twelve (now expanded to 18) villages for the Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT). The 1980s also saw a shift in the attitude of the State towards the people of the region as decisions were increasingly centralised. All negotiations for compensatory employment and facilities for PAPs had to be conducted at the state or central/national level. In the 1990s the State depicted a hardening stance towards compensatory employment where the PAPs had to compete among themselves and outsiders for limited jobs within the region itself. This was in contrast to the approach adopted in at least the limited absorption of PAPs in the first three projects where job qualifications were generally disregarded and on-the-job training provided. The trend since then has been to insist on educational qualifications and clearing selection tests in a context where none of the PAPs had been given inputs to prepare for livelihoods that were completely alien to their previous existence. This is typical of neoliberalism in which the ideal of meritocracy is projected, while in actuality a hierarchical and highly unequal set of social relations are valorised and used to promote individualised competition in the marketplace (Gilbert, 2013). The projection of responsibility for employability on the applicant also served to disguise the reality of reduced labour requirements despite expansion of production and services. This attitude is tied in with a shift in the structure of economic activities and related land-use envisaged for the region with globalisation and neoliberalisation. In the current era, corporate profits are increasingly realised by reducing the organised labour force, introducing labour-reducing technology and exploitative contract or wage labour. Accordingly, in the expansion of port facilities and industrial production in the study region, public-private partnerships, multi-layered private contracts and sub-contracts have predominated. The co-option and manipulation of labour unions by managements and vested interests have complemented the process of ‘profit inflation’ thereby minimizing space for negotiation by labour in the region. Gradual reduction of spatial inequality as anticipated due to initial belief in a four-stage development of core-periphery urban systems (Friedmann, 1966), existing core-periphery inequalities are further enhanced and polarized development takes place. Investment thus is concentrated in Mumbai with resources and labour in the periphery becoming increasingly subservient to the ongoing requirements of the restructured metropolis.
Although typical neo-liberal rhetoric takes a radically anti-State stance, actually existing neoliberalism is found to be characterised (Gilbert, 2013) by a consistently interventionist approach. Interventions undertaken by the State include economic and extra-economic measures that facilitate contemporary projects of global capital. These include land acquisition, changes in development plans, flexible land-use policies, rollback in protective legislations, tax benefits and concessions for corporate endeavours. In many instances the effort required to reframe legal and policy statutes to facilitate projects have been avoided by sheer manipulation of facts, records and institutions together with outright duplicity. Current and proposed transformations in the study region depict a growing nexus between commercial interests, political institutions and the State. The basic elements of change are seen to be privatisation of public assets, contraction in and centralisation of democratic institutions, deregulation of labour markets, and active encouragement of competitive and entrepreneurial modes of relation across public and commercial sectors (Gilbert, 2013). Negotiations are already underway for privatisation of public sector enterprises like the JNPT. With three port terminals, of which the latter two were developed through Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) projects that are completely privately managed, JNPT has also entered into a public-private partnership for management of their first terminal. Villagers’ scope for livelihood depends on their ability to compete among themselves for various contracts that are given out from time to time. Village settlements in Uran constitute interstitial unplanned spaces where CIDCO, the region’s planning authority, controls State resources for village development but does not take responsibility for planning or regulating development activities within the settlement boundary. This undermines the village *gram panchayat* and leads to ad hoc, haphazard growth of houses and other buildings in the village.

Broader economic changes have resulted in growing complexity of social and economic relations and increasing marginalisation of the locals as new ventures are imagined and introduced. Much concern has been expressed (Fisher, 2009) regarding the resulting fragmentation of society and related lack of effective political challenge. In situations where the structural context makes existence a difficult prospect, daily survival too is seen as a form of resistance (Clark, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1976). Unlike many such sites, resistance in the study region did not fall into the category of mere ‘survival as resistance’ although uncertainty is endemic and the daily struggle for existence is critical for many. Displaced and dispossessed groups of western Uran actively and significantly contributed to struggles in associated parts of the region. This was evident in the people’s
landmark struggle against establishment of the MahaMumbai SEZ in eastern Uran and Pen that recently succeeded in revoking the plan (Mujumdar & Menezes, 2012). Although eastern Uran also constituted a source region for Mumbai, its relative distance from the city and existing ecological features had made for a different pattern of livelihoods. With proportionately more midlands and uplands, communities of eastern Uran had a greater engagement with livestock and cultivation relative to fishing and salt production. Since colonial times a significant proportion of people in eastern Uran had become dependent on sand mining which fed into the intensive construction activities of the city. Since the mid-1990s this part of the region has also entered more actively into the larger design for modernisation of the MMR, requiring drastic restructuring of the landscape to incorporate globalised economic activities.

Dualist conceptions of nature permit planners to treat the physical landscape as if land exists only as absolute space. Each aspect of the landscape viz. field, forest, mountain or wetland is treated as a separate entity. Thus parcels of land are marked off and either quarried or filled in as if there is no connection between this piece of land and the other elements of the environment. Hills that constitute a part of the natural boundaries between eastern and western Uran, and the adjoining taluka of Panvel, are being quarried with no regard for the consequences. Alteration and decimation of these hills will affect water flows not only in Uran taluka but also in the adjoining talukas of Pen and Panvel. Altered water flows are likely to result in the destruction of productive fields, many of which are still double-cropped. Subsequent loss in exchange value of these lands would be of enormous benefit to the vested interests attempting to buy land in these parts for the extension of real estate and business interests. The cultivating community and others such as artisans, agricultural labourers and fisher folk whose livelihoods are dependent on these lands and associated water bodies face terrible losses. Escalating land markets have led the middle and business class of the city to invest in residential properties that are expected to provide huge returns in the future. These too have adversely affected the livelihoods related to land as inter-generational rifts emerge between people’s views of nature. There is also a growing trend among the salaried and business class of Mumbai city to acquire farm house property and holiday homes outside the city limits that permit the harried urban mind to recuperate in more ‘sylvan’ surroundings. A much touted selling point for today’s real estate developers is the promise of homes set in ‘nature’s lap’ (NRDL, 2014). New enclosures are created that appropriate the environment while excluding and isolating local communities from each other and from their sources of
sustenance. This is already seen in the Navi Mumbai SEZ (NMSEZ) that has constructed high walls and created new access routes that have broken earlier interaction patterns and disrupted ecological flows in the entire taluka.

The lack of value in the post-Independence period for the history of people-environment relationships, constructed and reconstructed over several centuries, is clear from the dismissive description of the region as a ‘common, undeveloped expanse...which was once a marshy sanctuary to salt pans and paddy fields’ (CIDCO, 2012). It is this view that informs the development trajectory of this region today. Deprioritisation of its productive potential has been an integral part of its reimagination by existing power structures as an important part of the new form of centrality being created for the globalising city of Mumbai. It is evident that renovated centralities in world-wide metropolitan cores as anticipated by Lefebvre (1996) are accompanied by complementary renovations in third world globalising cities and their associated peripheries. The communication and transport network currently being developed in order to connect the central business district of the metropolis with expanded port, rail and air services incorporates a large part of western Uran. The post-Independence logic of topographical limitations, viz. wetlands and hills, used to justify lack of infrastructure development in the region is seen to have conveniently disappeared in current planning discourse.

The consequences of these developments on the prevailing resource-based economic activities have been drastic. Cultivation in the artificially demarcated ‘green zones’, where farming is legally permissible, is found to be increasingly cost-intensive and unsustainable given the wider context of commodification and loss of common property resources. Given the lack of employment in the region, many families persisted in trying to cultivate their land in the remaining tracts of undeveloped land, where farming is considered ‘illegal’. Cultivation and salt production have become unfeasible too, particularly after 2009, as drainage lines and watersheds were completely destroyed or disrupted. The latter developments have also impacted fishing as an economic activity as fish populations declined and access to fishing locations curtailed or obstructed. Commodification of labour has made fishing also an increasingly costly activity that is difficult to sustain. The beginning of feminisation of labour in creek fishing is seen in some places as one of the coping strategies. Small-scale fishermen have been the most affected, with many having to give up this activity and resort to ad hoc daily wage labour
to survive. These impacts have been heightened in recent times as urban development and trunk infrastructure have been accelerated since 2005.

What is inescapable is that the process in its entirety effects something of Polanyi’s concept of ‘indirect compulsion’ to global interests: enfolding local livelihoods and other cultural lifeworlds into the determinations of desires and values established in distant locations and spread globally via incursions of development aid, conservation finance and capital. (Sullivan, 2010)

Modernisation of the region has already resulted in tremendous impingement on land rights and livelihoods. The location of Mumbai at one end of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor gives added significance to the transformation of the study region as a corollary of Mumbai’s new urban form. The recent concept plan (Surbana, 2013) for MMR development in the next four decades visualises the transformation of the entire region, covering an area of 4,355 sq. km, into city fringe and suburban areas to create the ‘largest metropolis in the world’. The plan visualises transformation of Mumbai from a globalising city into a ‘world-class city’ by 2032 and thereafter into a ‘global city’ by 2052. For this purpose the current land-use of urban (15%), ‘nature area’ (31%), agriculture and open space (54%) is proposed to be changed (Surbana, 2013) by converting 1134 sq km of agricultural, waste and scrub lands into urbanised areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6.1</th>
<th>MMR CONCEPT PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT: PROPOSED LAND-USE PATTERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAND USE</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest/wetland &amp; water body</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/ waste/scrubland</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanized area</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Surbana, 2013)

This proposes further displacement of lakhs of farmers, agricultural labourers and fisher folk when no viable livelihood options have been created for a large majority of those already dispossessed as seen in the case of Uran taluka.

Displacement, dispossession and environmental degradation have become integral structural components (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) of contemporary processes of growth and development in India and many other parts of the world. While dispossession has served non-agricultural interests in countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Banerjee-Guha, 2013), the process has been used for the establishment of large-scale farming and
ranching in Africa (Patnaik & Moyo, 2011). In all cases transformation has been driven by transnational corporate capital, aided by international institutions such as the World Bank and respective national governments. In India growth has been based on appropriation of natural resources and exploitation of labour leading to a shift in income distribution from wages to profits (Patnaik, 2008). The associated decline in real wages for the working masses compounds the problem of a simultaneous deterioration of conditions in the primary sector in general and food crops in particular. The latter has already led to a decline in availability and consumption of foodgrains, particularly for agriculture-dependent populations (Patnaik, 2008). Appropriation of land for economic activities in current times, as seen in the case of an SEZ in Rajasthan (Levien, 2012), often leads to loss of subsistence and consumption inevitably accompanied by loss of other assets such as livestock and water. Level of food consumption among a large number of the displaced population in the Rajasthan SEZ reduced even lower than in areas with single-cropped agriculture (Levien, 2012).

The currently deepening agrarian crisis is leading to the creation of a cheap land market that is exploited by corporate capital with seeming impunity. Cheap land markets had similarly emerged in the past under colonial rule together with a family labour force getting free from institutional restraint and expanding land frontiers (Redclift, 1987). These conditions resulted in increasing monopoly of land by large farmers and agro-industrial interests in the 19th and 20th centuries. The current making of cheap land markets has vastly profited transnational companies and global capital. Processes unleashed in the 1990s with introduction of the New Economic Policy and the subsequent SEZ Act of 2005 have led to large-scale appropriation of land that is part of what is today seen as ‘global land grab’. Estimates (Borras, Hall, Scoones, White, & Wolford, 2011) of land appropriated globally between 2005 and 2009 range from 20 to 45 million hectares. The post-2006 surge in global land grab (Hall, 2013) has been variously conceptualised as ongoing primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), and accumulation by encroachment (Patnaik, 2008).

In an epoch that is touted as one that emphasises and foregrounds human rights, land rights are consistently violated or destroyed and the right to land is significant by its absence. Therefore there arises a need to look critically into the evolution and trajectory of land rights and acquisition. The following section traces the discourse on land rights and the process of commodification of nature that has accompanied the dislocation and
alienation of people from their environment, taking Uran as a case in point. It is also seen that popular resistance and challenges by affected communities has led to the emergence of a parallel discourse on compensation and rehabilitation that aims to create a basis on which the current trajectory can continue uninterrupted.

6.2 Land Rights, Land Acquisition and Issues of Compensation and Rehabilitation

Varied interactions have led to evolution of society-nature relationships characterised by changing practices and related construction of concepts. Central within these has been the notion of property that determines entitlements with respect to use, inclusion-exclusion, and alienation. Entitlements thus refer to privileges, claim-rights, immunities and power to alter privileges and claim-rights. The significance of this lies in the fact that property has today become the central mode of regulating multiple forms of nature (Mansfield, 2008). Accelerating processes of accumulation by dispossession in this century are characterised by the control and/or ownership of land, forests, water and mineral resources being transferred from peasants to private corporate entities. Transfer of ownership and/or management of business and industry from the public to the private sector has also become a trend. In addition, property relations are being extended to new forms of nature such as genetic information and biological processes (Prudham, 2008) that have profound implications for how life is now being restructured. Society-nature relationships are therefore continuously altered as ecosystems, livelihoods and identities are remade with creation and imposition of newer property regimes (Liverman, 2004).

The idea of property with regard to movable resources such as tools is believed (Breakey, 2012) to have existed since the Stone Age while the association between land and property is said to date back at least ten millennia. The three basic forms of rights that evolved were a) private, where entitlements pertained to particular individuals, b) collective, where entitlements were held by the state, and c) common pertaining to all members of a community. The complexity of practices, regulations and definitions of rights with respect to different types of resources over space and time, led to the formation of the Bundle Theory\(^1\) which maintains that ‘property’ is not a suitable concept. Any item that may be termed property actually encompasses a consolidated set

\(^{1}\) Bundle Theory is attributed to David Hume who held that any object is actually constituted by a bundle of qualities (Robinson, 2014).
of entitlements, metaphorically termed “bundle of sticks” (Breakey, 2012). However, the criticality of resources, particularly land, for purposes of accumulation led to dominance of the theory of Full Liberal Ownership which holds that ownership can be defined and land rights can be reduced to land titles. Property as a physical thing, or the legal principle of ‘corporeal property’, became dominant in the 19th century (Congost, 2003).

Until the early 20th century the theories of Oriental Despotism and the Asiatic Mode of Production prevailed in which it was assumed that there was no private property in Asia in the pre-colonial period. However, early epigraphic evidence (Thapar, 1996) indicates the existence of a mix of small-scale landowners, more wealthy land-owners (gahapatis) and state ownership of land from Vedic times. The high-level merchants and financiers (setthis) of ancient times typically originated from gahapati families. The latter often had their lands cultivated by tenants who paid a rent. Transfer of land through sale of property was also known to exist from policy statements that privileged kinship ties and creditors in such transactions. Extensive crown lands that belonged to the government headed by the king were cultivated either by tenants, voluntarily or forcefully settled shudra peasants, wage labourers or slaves. These lands were apart from areas held by the ruler as personal property. With clearance of forests, expansion of frontiers for cultivation, and the Manusmriti principle that land belonged to the one who first cultivated it, the number of private lands grew gradually over time.

Lands such as forests, sacred mountains, and religious places constituted a category of communal or common ownership and usufruct rights, which could not be claimed by individual or crown (Kumar, 1996). Throughout history it was seen that the grant of land to religious institutions (monasteries, temples, mosques, and churches) and individuals such as priests, loyal soldiers and administrators developed the idea that property represented special status. In the history of North Konkan it was seen that coconut groves and entire villages were granted in recognition of individuals’ significant contribution to rulers of the time. Given the myriad ecological and social contexts on the peninsula and associated complexity of socionatures as they evolved in India, varying combinations of common, collective and private ownership of land are likely to have existed within and across regions. The degrees of freedom over use of land, production and the extent of public protection of these rights in ancient India had been issues of considerable debate (Kumar, 1996). However, what is conclusive from the evidence available is that eviction from land was rare until colonial times.
In Europe private property became prominent and was legitimised with the promotion of liberal democracy during the Enlightenment Movement of the 18th and 19th centuries. This was in keeping with the growing emphasis on political, social and moral rights of the individual (Barry, 2007). According to medieval principles of natural law, the natural state was one where all individuals were equal and thus had rights to life, health, liberty and possessions. In keeping with natural law and puritan ethics Locke proposed that although Mother Nature belonged to ‘all her children’, the natural right to life made individual rights to at least some property a necessity (Whitehead, 2010). Labour transformed land into property as a “natural” right and could be marked by the spatial enclosure of individually-worked land. Concern regarding the nature of property rights relate to perspectives on its significance for economic change and development. Individual or private rights were held to be necessary for efficient use and protection of resources as potential benefits generated within individuals the desire to do so. The idea that private property was the only means to guarantee benefits to people and thereby ensure proper management and protection of resources was subsequently greatly supported by Hardin’s ‘tragedy of the commons’ (Hardin, 1968). Thus enclosure of the commons and ‘wasteland’ became a necessary condition for economic development and progress (Whitehead, 2010).

Linking labour and land rights worked in favour of poor farmers under conditions of abundance of land and social equality, as was also seen in Vedic times when similar maxims were followed as an incentive to clear forest land and expand cultivation in India. However, development of a market, inter-generational ownership rights, resource scarcity and social inequality arising from accumulation of money and land made Locke’s labour theory of property ‘politically explosive’ (Wolford, 2008). Locke was said to have considered property unjustifiable in conditions of resource scarcity (Haddad, 2003). However, when land became scarce for English farmers dispossessed by the enclosure of land in Scotland and England in the 18th century, colonial expansion to fulfil their needs was rationalized (Whitehead, 2010). A moral call was made to ‘give to mankind’ (Locke, 1988) by improving vacant, common or wild uncultivated lands lying waste in regions such as the Americas. The logic for appropriation of such lands was  

---

2 A waxy substance produced by whales much valued for use in perfumes that is found and collected with considerable effort.
naturally applied to all other areas in the world where settled agriculture did not take place.

Locke’s theory of property thus had considerable influence on laws, practices and policies introduced by colonial administrators in India between 1793 and 1878 (Whitehead, 2010). The consequent differential treatment of field and forest led to oppositional ‘civilised versus savage’ conceptualisations of castes and tribes that translated into inequality in property laws. These dualist conceptions were in line with the bourgeois ideology of nature that defined nature as a set of external environmental resources from a completely utilitarian perspective. Multiple property regimes were subsequently established, causing diverse types of transformations of society-nature relationships. In the study region it came in the form of transformation of landscapes as discussed earlier, in which the livelihood base was restructured with differential valuation of landscapes and construction of differential social subjectivities. Such variations produced an uneven distribution of vulnerability (Whitehead, 2010) to accumulation by dispossession in both colonial and postcolonial times.

The State has therefore played an important role in the definition, creation and enforcement of property rights. The latter role was actually advocated by all liberal theorists from Adam Smith to Friedrich von Hayek (Mansfield, 2008). Land rights were thus structured by the status of ownership as legally recognised in a context where privatization was the norm. Legal centralism allowed the process of privatization to assume disciplinary, regulatory dimensions where land had to be used productively in order to justify ownership. Privatised nature-society relationships facilitated people to become more fully integrated into commodity markets by turning people into civilised and rational individual subjects. As a result, wealth and poverty become the sole responsibility of the individual. Wealth was understood to accumulate when individuals made appropriate use of labour on the land, whereas poverty was the outcome of mismanagement.

This logic still drives the ongoing privatisation of nature. Using the same logic, De Soto’s proposed solution to the problem of underdevelopment has been incorporated in the development aid projects backed by international development agencies. De Soto (2000) suggests that establishment of formal land titles will ensure security and prosperity for the poor. Nature, when transformed as property through enclosure, can then be owned, controlled and transferred. This will in turn facilitate the success of
capitalism in places where it has failed in the past. A historic parallel may be seen (Home, 2004) between current enclosures and those of 17th century England when communal rights were eliminated and individual rights promoted. Forces of globalisation and neoliberalisation ultimately translate into the transformation of nature-society relationships by redefining property relations and rights. Commodification, marketization and deregulation are thus based on processes of enclosure (Mansfield, 2008) where nature is split into its various constituent elements and turned into commodities that can be bought and sold. Commodification of nature and land thus evolves as a significant issue in which although the economic function is but one of many critical functions (Polanyi, 1944/2001), it is artificially separated out for the benefit of the market economy.

What we call land is an element of nature inextricably interwoven with man’s institutions. To isolate it and form a market out of it was perhaps the weirdest of all undertakings of our ancestors. (Polanyi, 1944/2001, p. 187)

Prior to mercantilist contact in the 16th century, societies were essentially organised around kinship and units of economic production were relatively small. Such pre-class societies were referred to as ‘natural economy’ (Redclift, 1987). Inequality and differentiation based on age, sex, religion, and occupational specialization were known to exist but class per se did not constitute the foundation for organisation of society. Monetisation of exchange was limited, commodity production was confined to a limited external trade, and most production was undertaken for purposes of subsistence. The penetration and destruction of such natural economies by capital took place in stages (Luxemburg, 1951) leading to increasing exploitation of natural resources and labour until a complete dislocation of nature-society relationships took place.

The initial stage involved the development of settled agriculture in which although consumption took place continuously, production became periodic. The generation and storing of surplus became possible and necessary to sustain families through unproductive periods. These conditions were conducive to the establishment of market linkages and gradually the pattern of resource and labour exploitation became linked to exchanges within a wider system (Redclift, 1987). Monetisation and the ability to exchange commodities through the medium of money transformed commodity markets which in turn caused transformation of the dynamics of production. Production increasingly became restructured for purposes of exchange rather than subsistence, or as
an outlet for surplus production (Prudham, 2006). Commodification thus refers to the process of change from production for use value to production for exchange with two distinct dimensions. In the development of commodification one finds an ongoing extension of market relations that expand spatio-temporally. Such ‘stretching’ is accompanied by a simultaneous ‘deepening’ of commodification as more and more goods and services are brought within the ambit of commodity markets (Lysandrou, 2005). The associated transformation of production relations was characterised by development of power structures that effected a shift from control over the means of human reproduction, such as subsistence goods and the family, to control over the means of production itself (Meillassoux, 1981).

Thus integral to the market economy was the separation of human beings from land and the reorganisation of society to meet the requirements of a real-estate market (Polanyi, 1944/2001). Land mobilisation and accumulation began with commercialisation of soil in Western urban centres and England in the 14th century. Feudalism was gradually abolished with pre-capitalist relations getting assimilated and appropriated over a period of five centuries. Mobilisation of land in this phase was accomplished by a range of interventions that included individual force and violence, revolution from above or below, war and conquest, legislative action, administrative pressure, and some by ‘spontaneous small-scale action of private persons over long stretches of time’ (Polanyi, 1944/2001, p. 189). Here the State constituted one of the most powerful actors.

This phase was followed by the commodification of food and raw materials to meet the escalating requirements of industrial populations within those countries. Subordination of the land for this purpose was achieved through trade that was in turn facilitated by advances in transportation facilities and legal interventions as also the symbolic equation of backwardness with agriculture and the idea of progress with industrialisation. With rapid urbanisation and agglomeration of people in industrial towns in the second half of the 18th century, local market restrictions were removed to allow trade to become first regional, then national and finally international. The third phase was thus constituted by the expansion of this system of surplus production to colonial territories on other continents. The process of land accumulation that took five centuries in Europe was accomplished within the span of a few decades in the colonies. A critical factor here was investment in and development of steamships and railroads that opened up entire contents. These processes were seen for example in the process of integration of land and
natural resources with capitalist markets as the coffee frontier in Latin America was expanded to meet world demand for coffee (Katzman, 1975).

The process of land mobilisation was not without contest. Agrarian movements and revolts were seen in Europe and the colonies, the latter constituting a bid for freedom from imperialism. In Europe, agrarian protectionism succeeded in stabilising the countryside with the introduction of agrarian tariffs and land laws (Polanyi, 1944/2001). European peasants, particularly in countries such as Finland and Austria, supported rather than threatened the market economy. Although commodities predate capitalism, the development of capitalist political economies culminated in the commodification of labour that worked to deepen the process of commodification of nature (Prudham, 2006). Struggles of land and labour that sought to challenge market forces often developed divergent moral economies in Europe (Polanyi, 1944/2001) and Asia (Herring, 2002). Polanyi (1944/2001), speaking of transformations prior to World War II held that the dislocation of society-nature relationships caused by exploitation of land and labour remained the same whether the purpose was mineral extraction or surplus production of food and raw materials. Whether the compulsion to undertake production for accumulation through exchange was direct or indirect also did not make much difference to the destruction of entire social and cultural systems of existence.

At the time of Independence land rights in different parts of India were determined by the nature of land-tenure systems created during colonial rule (Banerjee & Iyer, 2005). These were broadly classified into zamindari or landlord-based, ryotwari or individual-based and mahalwari or village-based systems. Within these broad classifications several regional variations such as the khoti tenures in the Konkan belt (Rodrigues, 1998) and the community based property relations of various indigenous tribes (Kjosavik & Shanmugaratnam, 2007) were also found. Uneven integration into the market economy led to skewed concentrations of commercial agriculture. Increasing stratification of the peasantry and fragmentation of holdings were also found (Rodrigues, 1998) in different parts of the country. Dispossession due to forest enclosure, insecurity of tenure, loss of occupancy rights, and exploitative rents had become critical issues by the end of colonial rule. Apart from demographic pressures on land, waning cash crop prices from the early 1920s led to agricultural depression. Therefore security of tenure, and food production were priorities from 1935 onwards when provincial autonomy was introduced.

Promotion of the concept of land as a source of livelihood became essential to the ‘grow-
more-food’ campaign of the late 1940s. The right to property was included as a fundamental right in the Indian Constitution and land reform policies were concretised (Bandyopadhyay, 1993) in the First Five Year Plan (FYP) (1951-56). The emphasis in the First Plan period was on legislation to secure tenancy rights, abolition of intermediaries and promotion of individual peasant ownership and control. This was followed by efforts to confirm ownership rights and impose maximum and minimum ceilings on land holdings in the second and third Plans. During this period efforts were made to expand agriculture and improve irrigation facilities. Common property resources including vast tracts of forest land were cleared for this purpose and several regions such as Wayanad in Kerala (Kjosavik & Shanmugaratnam, 2007) saw the dispossession of forest dwellers and pastoralists (Kavoori, 1994). Caste-class dynamics led to differential access to and control over land and resources. The inability to counter these forces led to devolution of responsibility to the state in the 1960s and land reforms was made a state subject.

From the mid-1960s commodification of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers occurred due to introduction of Green Revolution technology, with active dissemination through the Intensive Rural Development Programme and the 1971 Garibi Hatao (poverty alleviation) programme (Banerjee & Iyer, 2005). This largely benefitted the dominant groups, particularly in irrigated tracts. The use of high-yielding varieties and chemical fertilizers introduced a new set of dynamics and ecological conditions. In the present study region it was found that although productivity improved, development of transport and communication infrastructure led to the declining relevance of Uran as a source region for food. Simultaneously the region was also re-imagined as a site for industry and urbanised activities facilitated by State support for the creation of large planning regions around core metropolitan cities at that time. This however required large-scale land acquisition from the peri-urban belt around Mumbai that was immediately challenged by local communities. They opposed land acquisition with rising fervour throughout the 1970s but only limited interventions could be undertaken. Urban development activities were initiated in Vashi which was the least populated node. In the present study region only three projects impacting a few village communities could be established, that too in the late 1970s.

At the larger level, the state concentrated on cadastral surveys and record-keeping from the 1970s onwards with implementation of land reforms becoming the responsibility of civil courts, land reform tribunals and land committees at the village and block levels
(Bandyopadhyay, 1993). With increasing investment of the state in metropolitan cities, land came to be viewed as an important resource for urbanisation. It was already widely acknowledged (Frankel, 2005) that land reform efforts failed to bring about structural reforms and lip-service continued to be given to agrarian sector even in subsequent Plans. In reality, several state-owned land banks were created for industrialisation and urbanisation while agrarian reform receded into the background. In the early 1980s widening urban-rural and intra-rural disparities were seen that reflected a disconnect between industrial and agricultural growth (Banerjee-Guha, 1999). Disproportionate concentration of wealth in the largest cities, and agricultural improvement in limited areas characterised by input-based technology continued to be the trend into the early 1990s as well.

The process of commodification and accumulation of land entered a new phase in the period of globalisation. Global capital continues to require an unrestricted supply of land, raw materials, labour and technology as exchangeable commodities on the market (Sarkar, 2011). However, with excess ‘freeing’ of labour from industry due to technological advances and jobless growth (Bhaduri, 2008), as also from agriculture due to the ongoing decline in the primary sector (Patnaik, 2008), the land question has gained priority over the labour question (Sarkar, 2011). Growing resistance and opposition to land acquisition in different parts of the country have made this question more serious for neoliberal globalisation. The landmark referendum resulting from people’s struggle against the Maha Mumbai SEZ, discussed in the previous chapter, is a case in point. The conflict between the use of eminent domain and people’s resistance to dispossession has pushed to the forefront a discourse that refers to land as a commodity that can be sold and/or bought rather than as a source of livelihood constituted through a set of social relations.

The impetus for accelerating commodification of land derives from the deepening crisis of capital that now requires a new form of ‘frontier’ expansion entailing the acquisition of large tracts of land in various parts of the world. Among other activities, Special Economic Zones (SEZs) constitute new economic spaces that require extensive tracts of land. By 2011 up to 150,000 hectares of land had been acquired for the establishment of SEZs. Existing land-uses are being completely replaced to create exclusive territories for industrialisation in economically active zones, many of which like the present study region, are located in and around metropolitan cities. The distribution of SEZs within and
across regional states indicates (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) that massive appropriation of land is taking place in better developed areas with locational advantages in terms of already established infrastructure and therefore scope for real estate development and land speculation. In the present study region more than 2000 hectares of land acquired for establishment of New Mumbai was reallocated for the establishment of the NMSEZ, ideally located for the concerned corporate group to benefit from port, airport and trunk infrastructure development currently underway. Apart from metropolitan peripheries, the areas earmarked for SEZs include fertile agricultural lands and almost the entire coastline of the country whose appropriation has enormous negative consequences for existing people-nature relationships and is leading to destruction of various ecosystems. Growing resistance to these processes has led to considerable debate with respect to processes and legislature created to facilitate land acquisition. This brings us to the questions of land acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation that are currently restructuring society-nature relationships in India to a considerable extent.

‘The Law doth punish man or woman who steals the goose from off the common, but lets the greater felon loose, who steals the common from the goose’. [Anti-enclosure rhyme] (Barry, 2007, p. 45)

Legal provision for land acquisition by the State was introduced in the colonial period with the Land Acquisition Act (LAA) 1894. In the post-Independence period the Act was used (at least notionally) to achieve redistributive justice to break the existing pattern of skewed concentration of land holdings and allow enforcement of land reform legislations. Opposition by existing landlords and zamindars succeeded (Sampat, 2013) in revoking such progressive use of eminent domain in all areas except to varying extents in West Bengal, Kerala and Maharashtra. It was seen in this research that in Uran taluka, after the initial phase of manipulation by landed elite in the region, majority of the cultivators gained some security in land rights through land reforms. By and large, however, land reform legislations were viewed as contradictory to the Constitutional right to property and were rescinded by the Supreme Court of India (Sampat, 2013) within the first two decades of development planning in the country. Subsequently, the State’s power of eminent domain was recast as Constitutional canon in 1951 through a Parliamentary amendment. Almost three decades later the right to property was removed from among the fundamental rights listed in the Constitution, in order to facilitate numerous projects in the name of development. It was estimated (Fernandes, 2002) that post-Independence state-led land acquisition displaced 60 million people between 1947 and 2002. In the State of Maharashtra this includes peoples displaced by dams such as
the Koyna and Narmada as well as industrial and urban development projects. In the researcher’s study region, prior to large-scale displacement for the establishment of New Mumbai in the 1980s, water supply and defence establishments were responsible for displacements ranging from a few families to an entire village. Most of the people who were displaced in this period received little or no compensation. In Uran taluka those displaced by the Ransai Dam in the 1960s are yet to receive any compensation.

Earlier it was assumed that majority of the infrastructure development constituted public purpose as these in themselves constituted a social good while also contributing to provision of other social goods. However, in practice, since colonial times, infrastructure development has been actively implemented in order to source raw materials and labour for capitalist markets.

The infrastructure facilities, geared overwhelmingly to the needs of the export sector not merely failed to benefit village interests, but involved a repudiation of these interests. (de Silva, 1980, p. 27)

In the modernisation of Uran, it was seen that infrastructure has been developed purely with business interests in mind as they are made to promote industrial and port facilities established in Mumbai. Any benefits accruing to local communities occurred if they chanced to be located along the newly created route ways, leading to highly uneven distributional patterns of social goods such as water, transport and electricity. In more than a century of its existence as a tool of eminent domain, State use of LAA in various parts of the country had led to mass displacement, indiscriminate use of the emergency clause, overt and covert transfer of acquired lands to private companies (Ramanathan, 2011; Singh, 2011). These realities gradually led to LAA coming under severe criticism and being the subject of much debate in the country. However, for decades no intervention was seen in this regard. With the current strategy of global capital to hasten the process of land accumulation, growing resistance to land acquisition, particularly after 2005, assumed vital proportion. The State was therefore compelled to modify the LAA.

The first modified version was the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill (LARR) 2011. Far from addressing the problems and consequences of forced land acquisition the LARR revealed the State’s corporate bias and lack of priority for any “public” purpose. The foreword contained a Freudian slip (surely not an honest declaration?) where it was stated that the ‘Government also needs to acquire land for a
variety of purposes’ (GoI, 2011). The ‘also’ in this statement was aptly pointed out by Sampat (2013) who discussed the dual nature of a State that simultaneously speaks of redistributive justice and dispossession of an already marginalised peasantry. The LARR highlighted industrialisation (especially based on manufacturing), rapid expansion of infrastructure across the country and urbanisation as essential and inevitable reason for land acquisition through eminent domain (GoI, 2011). This is in keeping with state policy in India since globalisation of the economy that prioritises building of gigantic infrastructures in and close to important urban centres in the name of modernisation (Banerjee-Guha, 2013). It is significant that such emphasis on the ‘urban’ in development policies had been endorsed by international aid donors and various global economic institutions such as OECD, Global Strategy 2000, UNDP and the World Bank between 1988 and 1995.

LARR was based on market logic (Sarkar, 2011) where it was assumed that people would be willing to sell their land in exchange for the price of an attractive compensation and rehabilitation package. However, sentiments expressed by PAPs in the present study region indicate that such a market does not exist. This perspective has also been put forward by others (Sarkar, 2011) who point out that in reality, resistance served as indication of an ‘absent market’ with no potential sellers. This is contrary to the State’s presumption of the existence of an ‘imperfect’ land market that could be corrected through negotiations between the buyers (corporate state) and sellers (existing land owners). Many officials interviewed by this researcher held a cynical view that resistance occurred due to people’s greed for higher compensation rates. Such sentiments reek of hypocrisy coming as they do from members of institutions that are manipulated at will by vested interests that siphon crores of public money into private accounts or enterprises. With no romantic illusions about an innocent or unselfish urban or rural poor, it has been found (Levien, 2012) that people’s resistance intensifies due to lack of viable alternatives for survival after land acquisition takes place. The same is true for the present study region too. Contrary to the romantic view of tradition and community (Agarwal, 1986; Kothari and Parajuli, 1993; Gadgil and Guha, 1995; Guha and Martinez-Alier, 1997), multiple ideas of development and people-nature relationships have existed since long in several locales. It was definitely demonstrated in the previously mentioned Raigad struggle where two resistance movements with completely different development orientations emerged. According to some researchers (Shields, 1995), for a more realistic understanding, it is important that parallel and conflicting representations be allowed to
coexist in one’s analysis. Some studies point out that ‘pro-development actors’ among indigenous communities who support state-led projects such as dams (McDuie-Ra, 2011) should not be dismissed as co-opted, manipulated, elite-driven or inauthentic. Rather, these could provide critical insights that contribute to knowledge of evolving intra-ethnic and state-ethnic relations. However, the dilemma of ‘pro-development’ actors deepens in a context where development is driven by market forces that lead to ecological ‘sacrifices’ (Ramanathan, 2011), marginalisation and exclusion. Despite the complexities, the challenge to compulsory land acquisition and dispossession has grown inexorably stronger and louder, particularly since the 1980s as the number and scale of acquisitions saw a drastic increase.

Intense debate and discussion took place on various issues relating to LARR such as modification of the emergency clause, power to change purpose after acquisition, inclusion of private sector property deals within the ambit of compulsory acquisition, compensation for affected livelihoods not just of land owners, onus of rehabilitation and resettlement on private developers in large-scale acquisitions, dilution of Forest Rights Act 2006 with inclusion of forest areas in LARR, and expansion in the scope for use of eminent domain (Sarkar, 2011) (Singh, 2011) (Hindu, 2011) (Ramanathan, 2011). The LARR was modified and reformulated with the new title ‘Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill 2012’. The changed title indicated a prioritisation of displaced populations and livelihood dislocation as a matter of concern. However this Bill, as also the LARR, essentially retained the basic structure of the original Act, while expanding the definition of “public purpose” to include private and public-private projects within it. The second Bill was approved and came into force in September 2013 as the ‘Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013’. Corporate reaction to the Act is seen in the choice of aspects that were highlighted by the media that serves corporate interest to a considerable extent. The Hindustan Times (HT, 2013) highlighted the fact that provisions were made against the land mafia (highlighted in red in the original title), by keeping a clause that the original land owner will get 40 percent of the compensation in case of land deals that took place after tabling of the Bill in the Lok Sabha. Of concern to the corporate sector was the proviso that land acquisition for private and public-private projects would require the consent of eighty and seventy percent respectively and that compensation would be determined at four times the market

---

3 Here ‘large-scale’ refers to acquisition of more than 100 acres of land (Hindu, 2011).
cost. The news report also highlighted the possibility of retrospective application of the Act, and perhaps most importantly, that ‘real estate projects in the city and suburbs will not be affected’. The report also highlighted the fact that Gujarat was well ahead of all other states in the modernisation (computerisation) of land records. It is significant that easing obstacles to land acquisition was in the forefront of a document to be presented to the newly elected Prime Minister, whose previous position was that of Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Development planners feel that a group of people with property rights always oppose acquisition of land and thereby prevent interventions made for the larger social good. What exactly constitutes a social good or public purpose however, has been a matter of debate. In some situations as was the case recently in the United States of America, public good was considered to be different from ‘economic development’ and debate centred on whether eminent domain should be used for economic development (Lehavi & Licht, 2007). It is unclear how these can be separated unless the debate is based on a fundamental belief that economic development refers to corporate accumulation. In India, on the other hand, public purpose has been redefined to include economic development of all sorts including the creation of special enclaves for industry. Thus SEZs and all forms of private enterprises are included. All conditions with respect to number of workers employed etc. have been removed from the earlier provision in the LAA regarding land acquisition for companies.

The process of land acquisition in the study region was spread over a period of forty years and is still not complete. This is contrary to the statement put up on the CIDO website which claims that in spite of ‘some challenges, CIDCO acquired all the land after settling disputes about compensation’ (CIDCO, 2012). In reality, a little less than 70 percent of land had been acquired by the year 2010. The first decade after notifications had been issued in February 1970 found only a few individual farmers surrendering their lands due to misinformation or conditions of extreme poverty that made even the meagre compensation of Rs. 1.75 per square metre (Hamid Mulla et al vs SLO, 2012) an incentive. By 1980, about 200 hectares, constituting about four percent of the total notified area in the study region (Verma, 1985), were acquired for establishment of an Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) plant, along with associated electricity generation and gas bottling plants. Acquisition was undertaken in a highly sporadic and uneven manner. Bulk of the acquisition took place after 1985 when violent repression of
people’s struggles was used to acquire land from twelve villages for the international port at Nhava-Sheva.

The people’s resistance to dispossession, their struggles and loss of life have all been subsumed by the innocuous phrase of ‘some challenges’. The statement above also indicates that the only conflict with communities in the region were with regard to compensation. This is in keeping with the general perspective of development planners that peasants unfairly hold the government to ransom in a bid to raise the amount of compensation. In reality it is the planners’ discourse of compensation that has been thrust on the people. It has been done over a period of time and gradually land acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation have become a part of the discourse of economic development. The 1894 Land Acquisition Act mentioned award of compensation to ‘all persons claiming an interest in compensation’ where ‘interest’ referred to any easement (right to cross or use land for a specific purpose) affecting the land. Despite this, the only affected families who received compensation were those who had legal title to land in the acquired area and the salt producers who were erroneously considered as leaseholders.

As already seen in the case of western Uran, those impacted by acquisition included cultivators, agricultural labourers, salt producers, salt pan labourers, tenants, sharecroppers, artisans, fisher folk, and boatmen. Apart from permanently resident landless villagers, large numbers of migrant salt pan labourers who spent eight months of the year earning their livelihood in the region received no consideration at all.

The recently passed Act, on the other hand, identifies those affected by land acquisition in relatively more detail, including families displaced from land owned by or assigned to them, as well as those whose legally recognised rights and primary source(s) of livelihood were based on the land (including forests and water bodies) acquired. The caveat introduced with respect to livelihood is that it should have been consistent for a period of three years prior to acquisition of the land (GoI, 2013, p. 3). Actually, the determination of what period should be considered for consistency in livelihood should be based on the history and wider political economy of the region or area to be acquired.

In case of Uran it was seen that several turning points emerged due to technology advances (particularly in transport and communication), infrastructure development, shifts in land-use policy, change in broader economic structure, environmental pollution and degradation. For example, in the case of Nhavakhadi, a breach in one of the main embankments led to loss of livelihood for the entire village. In a wetland region like
Uran, once land is flooded by sea water, it could take up to five or six years before the land can be made cultivable again. Many of the families of this village received no compensation as acquisition for development of New Mumbai was done shortly after their embankment was breached. In another context, sand mining was not officially recognised as a primary occupation of villagers of eastern Uran. The specified time period fails to take into account the adaptations and innovations over time arising from location-specific ecological conditions, seasonality and changes. For example, in Rajasthan several years of lack of rainfall may be followed by one year of good rainfall. Land use follows common property access norms during the years when there is no rainfall but private property norms are followed in the year of rain (Kavoori, 1994).

The post-acquisition scenario is one in which land, labour and even subsistence needs are commodified. Disparity in income accordingly leads to exponential differences in purchasing power and the capacity to survive among different socio-economic groups. Thus difficulties of survival after displacement and/or dispossession are seen to be considerably larger at the bottom end of the spectrum where social capital, in the ‘Bourdeiusian sense’ (Levien, 2011), is often least visible. By making compensation correspond directly with existing inequalities that are a product of wider structural features and processes, the policy guarantees widening disparity within the populace. The law is however based on a neoliberal ideal of meritocracy that pretends that the affected population are socially equal and/or with absence of any responsibility for the existence of pre-acquisition inequality. It would appear that ‘fairness’ is to be decided in terms of what would be fair for the concerned government with respect to resources considered available to pay PAPs.

In the case of land owners, eligibility for compensation depends on inclusion in the record of rights (see Second Schedule, GoI 2013). Given ground realities of everyday governance it is absurd to expect meticulous and updated maintenance of records in most government departments. Several interactions of this researcher with PAPs and government officials attested to this fact. Yet, chances of all eligible members being registered in land revenue records are perhaps higher in contemporary times as narratives of dispossession are shared across regions and greater efforts are taken to guard against exclusion from post-acquisition compensation. Additionally, in many places, as was the case in Uran taluka, non-capitalist family-based/community arrangements for cultivation of land persist. Land is often registered only in the name of the patriarch of the family.
although it is jointly cultivated. Insistence on official registration of relations perceived as internal to the family are also treated as a breach of trust. Many individuals in Uran find themselves unable to claim compensation benefits due to such cultural factors. The researcher’s personal experience has shown that gaps also exist between official records and actual practice particularly in the case of community property such as *vatan*\(^4\) lands belonging to *dalit* families in the Marathwada Region of Maharashtra. These *vatan* lands are still cultivated or managed through complex sharing arrangements and allocations, usually between more than 40 families, based on the concerned community’s history. However, officially *vatan* lands no longer exist and revenue records show no more than two or three individual holdings.

Although the new Act redefines ‘agricultural land’ to include grazing and grasslands, it is unclear how use of community lands will be calculated in terms of individual entitlements. In Uran it was seen that forests, grasslands and other community lands provided the base for livelihood diversification as well as critical non-monetised inputs for farming and daily survival. Common property resources (CPRs) also constituted an essential component of interdependent ecosystem based economic activities (livestock, cultivation, horticulture, fishing and salt production), subsistence and shelter needs. Complexities also arise due to spatio-temporal fluidity and ‘intertwining of private and common’ (Kavoori, 1994) seen in several regions as control over and access to land varies across different seasons and with variations in ecology. Such fluidity in notions of ‘private’ and ‘common’ rights to land were seen in the case of *varkas* lands in Uran that were given to *adivasis* for cultivation during the monsoons.

Difficulties in making distributional choices about land are generally overlooked as the entire focus in the current development trajectory rests on the formalisation of land relations (Kennedy, 2003). Within this discourse, normative orderings other than that of the State are negated or at best assume a hierarchically subordinate position (Griffiths, 1986) as legal centralism is emphasised at the expense of the history of property relations (Manji, 2006). A central role for law is advocated in De Soto’s view (De Soto, 2000) stating that underdevelopment is the result of non-formalised property rights. The same is currently quite popular with international development aid agencies such as the UNDP and the World Bank. This view is believed (Levien, 2012) to have informed the formulation of land for land compensation packages in the case of land acquisition for an

---

\(^4\) The term ‘*vatan*’ means gift and has come to be associated with lands gifted by the Nizam to these communities.
SEZ in Rajasthan. While this may be so, it is equally possible that such compensation packages have been negotiated for by PAPs with knowledge of a similar policy in the case of land acquisition for New Mumbai. Allotment to all landowning PAPs of developed plots in proportion to earlier holdings in the New Mumbai context was included as part of the compensation package as early as 1986. Such land-for-land compensation packages were found in the present study to cause astronomical disparities within and across PAP families. PAPs in the New Mumbai area have for long been pressing for such plots to be given to landless households as well. With majority of PAPs consisting of the landed section, albeit having extremely small holdings of less than one hectare, the landless households constitute a fragmented minority with very little political clout.

Compensation is found to be entirely based on the ‘Social Impact Assessment’. It is surprising that satisfaction with this method continues even after it has been shown (Sandbach, 1980) that such studies are part of functionalist research that serves to legitimate certain political, administrative and economic practices while ‘carefully avoiding examination of the material causes’ of exploitative and destructive processes. Even without such dubious methods, the question of how one defines what is “fair” remains to be answered. Evidence from spaces of dislocation and dispossession indicates that it is perhaps not possible to arrive at any satisfactory answer to such a question.

"Dinah'll miss me very much tonight, I should think." (Dinah was the cat.) .... "Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes, "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. (Carroll, 1976, p. 20)

Further, fair compensation is understood as being less demanding than ‘just’ compensation (Costonis, 1975) as the former can be secured by money or a non-cash ‘market-worthy alternative’ that does not follow the best-use standard. In keeping with this, the new Act empowers the Collector to determine whether ‘the obligations of the Requiring Body with regard to rehabilitation and resettlement can be quantified into monetary amount’ (GoI, 2013, p. Clause 47). The Collector is also empowered to take possession of the land to be acquired once all the entitlements are paid to the people whose lands are to be taken. There is no space for people to object to land acquisition per se. Objections may be made on grounds of area, suitability, definition of public purpose, and the findings of the Social Impact assessment.
It is not clear to what extent dislocated and dispossessed peoples can expect any form of justice when the legal discourse on right to compensation has led to a situation where there is no constitutional obligation to compensate those deprived of property under Article 300A (Basu, 2008), unless they are cultivators. By and large the judiciary is an arm of the State and in most cases manipulated by the power structures aligned with the State. This continues to be the situation despite some degree of judicial activism by the Supreme Court in recent decades. Judicial injustice was seen in the instances of the JNPT PAPs and salt producers of Uran taluka who till date have received no relief despite seeking legal redress since almost three decades ago. These dispossessed groups have now expanded to include another generation who now face the consequences of their parents’ dislocation from land and livelihood. An exception to this trend was found in the anti-Maha Mumbai SEZ struggle where there was a massive coalition of villagers and civil society groups. The sheer scale of displacement created scope for high visibility to the struggle in addition to the convergence of legal and mobilisation expertise to aid it.

Historical analysis of land rights necessitates the reconceptualisation of land as a set of social relations of production, embedded within a cultural and moral framework. Questions of access to resources at the local level are significantly determined by images of the community (Li, 1986) that define culturally available points of leverage in ongoing processes of negotiation. Therefore it is important to articulate opposition to the process of commodification in terms of community rather than individual human rights. Land rights also cannot be reduced to private property rights. A fundamental problem with the notion of compensation comes from the artificial separation of the economic function of land from the complex bundle of related rights that includes stability of life, space for habitation, circumstance for physical safety, and the fact that ‘it is the landscape and the seasons’ (Polanyi, 1944/2001).

The case of Nagothane was cited by New Mumbai PAPs as one where compensation and rehabilitation had been accomplished in a far better manner. That this was held up as a possible ideal by members of the koli community, who are among the most poorly compensated in the study region, makes the case important for further study. However, while ‘fair’ compensation may be a matter of debate, the underlying assumption is that the current path of development is inevitable. Are there really no alternatives? The following section looks at various options for regional development that have been thrown up by experiments in various places.
6.3 The Way Forward

This decade will be a decisive one for the country at large as redistribution of access to and control over land and associated resources shift in favour of global capital at an unprecedented pace. The pattern of control is being structured by the hierarchy of central places as they emerged by the end of the 20th century, ‘the century of urbanisation’ (Harvey, 1996, p. 403 emphasis in original text). Many peripheral regions including Uran, provided labour and commodities that contributed to the circulation of capital during this period. Such an association was seen from early times, during the mercantilist period, followed by colonial and post-colonial times until the 1970s and 1980s. Through these phases communities of such regions in several countries have been increasingly exploited leading to bare subsistence and even below subsistence-level existence for a large number as was the situation in Uran. This region too, like many other regions in the near and distant periphery of central nodes of capital accumulation, remained outside the ‘sphere of production’ (Meillassoux, 1981), characterised by lack of capital investment and domestic, rather than capitalist relations of production.

The decisive entry of the study region into the sphere of global production-related activities occurred in the 1980s when capital required that the relationship between land and community be targeted. Beginning with select areas of the taluka in the 1980s, the process of dislocation of local communities received fresh impetus in the first decade of the 21st century. By the turn of the century, corporate/foreign investment constituted 87 percent (Chakravorty, 2000) of total investment in the country and had led to geographic concentration of all investment in mega cities, nearby districts and a few coastal areas. The situation was especially acute in the peripheries of globalising cities in the Global South. While a small proportion of displaced populations in these areas have been absorbed, albeit at a lower level, into the new economic activities of the globalised economy, the majority are on the edge of survival with very few options to sustain them in the long term. Already, many are being pushed out of their homelands to neighbouring towns and small cities. The social pattern of vulnerability is clear as ethnic minorities and landless populations are pushed out first. Paradoxically, in a framework that supposedly promotes the faceless meritorious individual, various identities are sharpened and identity politics actively facilitated.

The options that are opening up in peri-urban regions mostly relate to expansion of the
service sector and real estate markets. Survival depends on the capacity to actively contribute to the distorted production of nature as reimagined by global capital. Quarrying, land filling, construction and port or industry-related infrastructure development constitute some of the economic activities deriving from the new development plans. Those who accrued some gains from initial developments got engaged in land speculation to ensure their own private accumulation of wealth. Kinship ties are made use of to buy land in eastern Uran as also in other parts of Raigad District. Various sections of the population serve as gatekeepers, touts and real estate agents who assist in engineering the severance of society-nature relationships in neighbouring areas. Intra and inter-family and community conflicts and hostilities escalate as people compete for entry into the new power structure.

The roots of these debilitative processes lie in the development trajectory followed by the state at regional and national levels. The trajectory of development planning, policy and practice makes it evident that hardly any state came out with clearly worked out regional development policies (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) as the focus was on urban development that prioritised larger centres. From the First Five Year Plan to the current one, development has been the outcome of the tussle between the priorities of indigenous business elite who emerged during the colonial period, growing middle and upper class elite located in large cities (Bardhan, 1991) and competing regional forces. This led to the contradiction of supporting metropolitan centres while simultaneously advocating urban dispersal and regional development. Evidence (Myrdal, 1957) of the need for an appropriate planning perspective to address processes of cumulative causation and backwash effects leading to worsening regional disparities has existed since the 1950s, but it failed to inform planning efforts in India. Policies at the state or regional level generally followed the direction set by national policy thereby deepening the rift between city and regional hinterlands.

Post-Independence India inherited the polarised growth of select centres such as Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai with associated bias in the development of infrastructure. In the absence of remedial measures, these areas continued to attract investments and industry thereby creating islands of wealth surrounded by impoverished peripheries. The skew towards mega-cities was seen to gradually increase over the decades in post-Independence India despite the need for corrective redistribution of resources and assistance to different regions, other urban centres, and to pro-poor projects (Kundu,
1993; Banerjee-Guha, 2009). The first three Plan periods saw the creation of expert groups, town and country legislation, allocation of resources, and the introduction of policies for urban planning and land development, formulated within a broader framework of balanced development. Emphasis on dispersal of economic activities, decentralisation and regional development in the Third Plan remained on paper as programmes implemented on the ground retained large city bias in practice (Banerjee-Guha, 2002). The Fourth Plan strengthened this bias with the creation of large planning regions around metropolitan cities and a shift in the role of the government from provider to facilitator (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) with introduction of self-financed urban development. This was the period when the New Mumbai plan was formulated and approved. CIDCO was established as the planning authority and it was decided that it would finance development of the selected area through sale of developed plots of land. This created a government sponsored dynamic for land speculation and development of land markets. The implications for the people were far-reaching as the land appropriated for modernisation constituted the livelihood support-base of 95 village communities, as well as a space that carried a deep sense of attachment and a source of identity and cultural life. Customary rights of indigenous communities and people-nature relationships were rarely recognised (Aiken & Leigh, 2011) and lands they inhabited were often appropriated for other purposes.

This was apparent in the lack of a comprehensive perspective for development located within a grounded, larger regional perspective as urban planning was typically undertaken by special planning bodies with a limited focus (Banerjee-Guha, 2013). This lacuna was furthered during the Fifth Plan period and thereafter through provision of special assistance to projects of national importance in the largest cities and translation of small town development in terms of devolution of power but withdrawal of state financial support. This went hand in hand with the opening up and centralisation of the economy in 1991 (Banerjee-Guha, 2013). Neoliberal globalisation created the impetus for drastic revision of metropolitan regional development plans and the currently studied region was revisioned as part of Mumbai’s aspiration to become a global city. The economic activities promoted in this period bore no connection to the erstwhile livelihoods, skills and capacities of communities in the region. Between 2000 and 2010, metropolitan peri-urban spaces also had to absorb those displaced from the city as space was increasingly appropriated for elitist consumption (Banerjee-Guha, 2009). Peri-urban spaces increasingly constitute a space of annexation and heightened exploitation. The
current planning discourse has no role for regional developments and histories. Urban-rural disparities have thereby only continued to widen at regional and inter-regional levels as the bias in planning and investment (domestic and international) enhances the already established patterns of uneven development. The present trend is to outsource development planning of metropolitan regions to international consultants in tune with the global markets and global cities, thereby deepening the process of deprioritisation of peri-urban and other peripheral regions.

An historical and apolitical face of global capital needs to be challenged on many fronts. This includes its role in erasing and rewriting history as well as that of fostering a political economy that widens inequalities in society and dislocates society-nature relationships. For this purpose the dualist ontologies that actively support these processes need to be contested. Significant works have already been done (Castree & Braun, 1998) beginning with political economy, history of science studies that reveal the ideological bases of science, and political ecologies that integrate a dialectical view of society-nature relationships. There needs to be continued exposure of development ‘truths’ (Bryant, 2001) relating to practices such as those undertaken in the name of ‘sustainable development’ and ‘environment management’. Researches informed by interdisciplinary perspectives and with the capacity to construct multi-dimensional analyses (Shields, 1995) that incorporate complex and varied representations are the need of the hour. In the context of alternatives for larger regional development in India, Banerjee-Guha (2013) states that there must be an understanding of place-based and wider relational webs (Amin & Graham, 1997), taking into account the diverse spatio-temporalities of the region at large (Harvey, 1996). Thus, for Uran, alternatives must be developed that integrate the spatio-economic linkages that have evolved between people and nature, with an understanding of the socio-political relations that have created them. Here the dominant positivist paradigm that artificially separates field, forest, land and water for planning and governance needs to be replaced with an understanding of ecological flows and socio-natures that are an integral part of the relational webs.

The current development paradigm also conceptualises urban-rural spaces as dichotomous. This in turn leads to perception of livelihoods also in a dichotomous manner. Evidence from the present research indicates that formal employment in the secondary and tertiary sector does not need to be seen as dichotomous from engagement in the primary sector. With suitable infrastructure and linkages, villagers in almost all
cases are able to integrate the two sectors in their lives. The pattern of integration seen among migrant and relocated permanent workers, who work in and around cities but contribute to family labour at peak phases of the agricultural production cycle, implies that an evenly distributed regional development would create a more viable alternative in which people-nature relationships and the productive base of the region are truly sustained.

While there is logic in the call for reduction of wasteful consumption and pollution, some environmentalists’ promotion of a ‘back to nature’ existence may be unrealistic, even if one could actually ‘go back’ by somehow reversing the processes of nature’s production. Similarly, conceptualisation of people-nature relationships in oppositional terms where ‘environmental degradation’ requires the removal of human beings from the earth does not provide useful solutions. Rather, symbiotic relationships between cities and their hinterlands need to be recreated. Such a reciprocal relational framework had been proposed in the early 1960s itself (Dickinson, 1964) but was paid little heed in this country. Evidence of the consequences of neoliberal globalisation for regional development, and the importance of harmonious rather than ‘imperial ecologies’ (Sullivan, 2010), point to the need for reviving such frameworks in current times. The survival of marginalised and peripheral regions in the globalised neoliberal economy has been of some concern. In considering the functional relationships between differently sized settlements within larger regional development it has been suggested that efforts to establish reciprocal relationships between centres and regional economies (Banerjee-Guha, 2013), with the support of evenly distributed communication networks (Amin, 1994) would be of importance. This has relevance for regions such as Uran that constitute smaller centres that are currently dominated by the metropolis.

Active implementation of the Teiyu-Kan (Integrated Local Settlement Policy) and multinodal system in Japan (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) in the 1980s and 1990s respectively, is one example of moderate success in offsetting the dominant trend of metropolitanisation. Policies were based on the local and regional resource potential of smaller urban centres located in interior parts of Japan. The more recent, ‘Obidos Charter and Pact for Creativity’ project that was launched in 2009 from Portugal (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) can be discussed as an alternative that goes beyond settlement size in developing linkages for a more viable sustainable development path. The Obidos project aims to bring together the creativity of citizens by connecting small and medium cities in Europe (URBACT,
The creative clusters seek to build economy-based cultural events by diversifying their economy in such manner that it is linked to the local or regional resource base. Given the diversity of resources in Uran, such projects could provide ideas for alternative foundations for the creation of more equal inter-relationships between the metropolis and variously sized centres in the region. Along these lines, the proposed (Clayton & Morris, 2010) revival of medium cities with competing features for a good quality of life, using benefits of co-location (Banerjee-Guha, 2013) can also be another alternative.

Serious, studied efforts on the part of a range of actors from various levels and walks of life need to be brought together to negotiate or develop the power to make space for ‘a more socially just and politically emancipatory mix of spatio-temporal processes rather than acquiesce to those imposed by finance-capital’ (Harvey, 1996, p. 429). Rather than imposition it is necessary to connect currently marginalised spaces to strengthen backward and forward linkages that produce more balanced regional development (Banerjee-Guha, 2011). Peri-urban spaces constitute a frontier that is the site of contestation and rival imaginaries. Rather than destroying or/and erasing nature historically produced in these spaces, it is important that they be built upon. Alternatives must coexist if creative solutions to social and ecological crises are to be found and it is often necessary to understand the past in order to illuminate the present. There is no linear path to development and no clearly known future. Society-nature relationships constantly develop and new natures are produced. The only thing known is that more equitable forms of existence cannot be created without concerted and collective struggle for social justice.

…every city is nature's metropolis, and every piece of countryside its rural hinterland. We fool ourselves if we think we can choose between them, for the green lake and the orange cloud are creatures of the same landscape. Each is our responsibility. We can only take them together and, in making the journey between them, find a way of life that does justice to them both. (Cronon, 1991, p. 385)
References


5. **Heitzman,** Op cit.


7. *Urbanisation in India During colonial rule and Historiography: Prospectives and Problems.*
    


14. **Ibid.**

15. **Chandavarkar,** Op cit.

16. **Ibid.**


18. *Internationalisation of Capital and Mode of Production in Agriculture.** Cleaver, Harry.*


20. **Chandavarkar,** Op cit.


25. Ibid.


34. Surbana, Op cit.

35. Ibid.


37. Ibid.


42. *Ibid.*


47. Patnaik, Op cit.


55. Thapar, Op cit.


60. *John Locke and the Governance of India's Landscape: The Category of Wasteland in Colonial Revenue and Forest Legislation*. Whitehead, Judy. 2010, Economic and Political
64. Property rights, ecosystem management, and *John Locke's labor theory of ownership.*
68. Ibid.
77. Prudham, Op cit.
81. Ibid.
84. Prudham, Op cit.
86. Herring, Ronald J. Contesting the “Great Transformation”: Local Struggles with the Market


106. Ibid.


358


112. **Sampat,** Op cit.

113. **GoI,** Op cit.


115. **Sarkar,** Op cit.


121. The dilemmas of pro-development actors: viewing state–ethnic minority relations and intra-ethnic dynamics through contentious development projects. McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 1, 2011, Asian Ethnicity, Vol. 12, pp. 77-100.

122. **Ramanathan,** Op cit.

123. **Sarkar,** Op cit.

124. **Singh,** Op cit.


126. **Ramanathan,** Op cit.


129. **CIDCO,** Op cit.

130. **Hamid Mulla et al vs SLO.** Civil Appeal No. 3590 of 2012, s.l.: The Supreme Court of India, July 02, 2012.


153. Bardhan, Pranab. The Macro-economic Performance of India in a Comparative

360


158. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**


160. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**

161. **Ibid.**


165. **Shields, Op cit.**

166. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**


168. **Harvey, Op cit.**


170. **Sullivan, Op cit.**

171. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**


173. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**

174. **Banerjee-Guha, Op cit 2013.**

175. **URBACT.** *Small and Medium Sized Cities Enter the Stage of the Creative Economy*. Obidos, Portugal : URBACT, 2009.


