# Eviction or Inclusion? The Politics of Resettlement in Calcutta's Squatter Settlements

By

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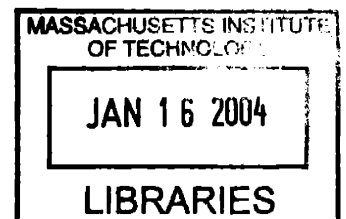
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABC	Association for a Better Calcutta
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASHA	Association for Social and Health Action
BIP	Bustee Improvement Programme
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEMSAP	Community-based Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan
CIEP/KIEP	Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project/ Kolkata Environment Improvement Project
CIT	Calcutta Improvement Trust
CMA/KMA	Calcutta Metropolitan Area
CMC/KMC	Calcutta Municipal Corporation/ Kolkata Municipal Corporation
CMDA/KMDA	Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority/ Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority
CMPO	Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPM or CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CUDP	Calcutta Urban Development Project
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EWS	Economically Weaker Sections
GoWB	Government of West Bengal
HUDCO	Housing and Urban Development Corporation
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress
IWD	Irrigation and Waterways Department
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NCHR	National Campaign on Housing Rights
PCED	People's Commission of Eviction and Displacement
SPARC	Society for Promotion of Area Resources
TMC	Trinamool Congress Party
WHO	World Health Organisation
WB	World Bank

Notes:

Kolkata is the new name for the city of Calcutta, recently adopted by the West Bengal government. In this thesis, I have referred to the city as Calcutta, and to institutions such as the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC) and the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) by their former names and abbreviations, which continue to be widely used. In quoting from recent newspaper articles and reports, I have substituted Kolkata with Calcutta wherever necessary to avoid confusion.

The term "Squatter" settlement in this thesis refers to "unauthorized", "illegal" and "unrecognized" informal settlements. The vernacular term for these settlements "jhupdis" has also been used. Conversely, "Slums", "Slum Settlements" and Bustees refer to officially "recognized", "legal" or "authorized" informal settlements.

"Since last 40-50 years, thousands of families, including us, are living in Bagbazar, Beliaghata Canal, Tolly Nullah and other places beside Railway Tracks and different canals. In one hand, there is no job in the villages and on the other side the prices are increasing day by day. So we had no option than coming to the city and taking shelter in these areas. We work as rickshaw pullers, handcart-drivers or maid-servants to earn our living. Any person who comes here and see us will realize that no one will come to stay in these areas until and unless they had no other option open to them. Presently in the name of clarifying the canals and beautifying the city, we are being thrown out of our shelter and our livelihood also. A lot of families are without any income now. But why?

The political parties which are ruling us were on our side in the 60s, showing humanitarian grounds. In India, every citizen has right to live, which is also our basic right."

From a statement by the "JANA BASATI UCCHED PRATIRODH COMMITTEE", presented to the People's Commission on Eviction and Displacement, September, 20, 2002.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

This thesis explores the relationship between politics, urban governance and tenure security in informal settlements in the city of Calcutta. A secure place of living for the urban poor is critically important both from a human rights perspective, as well as an economic development perspective. Planners concerned with both human rights and economic welfare require an understanding of the policies, strategies, and actions leading to tenure security.

In this thesis I demonstrate how tenure security in post-independence Calcutta has functioned along a two-pronged model, where some slums have been legalized due to historical and political reasons, whereas others with equally strong claims to official recognition (as per the legal definition of slums[1]) have been denied their existence and basic rights. Residents of the non-recognized slums have managed, through political contacts and with the help of non-governmental organizations, to ease a measure of services, as well as government-issued documents that testify to their residence in the unrecognized slums. But these measures provide a perception of security that is very precarious. Calcutta is on the threshold of a number of environmental and infrastructure improvement projects, as well as unprecedented private housing and commercial developments. Many of these projects will require the eviction of vast numbers of already impoverished squatters living in unrecognized slums. In this milieu, residents of unrecognized areas face the very urgent and real threat of eviction without any form of rehabilitation, due to their "illegal" status. At this juncture, it is critically important to make a case for their legality and inclusion, based on the West Bengal government's own history of progressive slum regularization, so that "illegal" residents may be adequately and fairly compensated for any relocation, rather than forcibly and brutally removed[2]. In this thesis I make such a case.

Further, my analysis highlights the need to consider the role of political parties, their ideology and the competition between them within the discussions on tenure security.

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[1] Under the Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation Act of 1958, the Government can declare an area a slum "if it is satisfied that the huts or other structures used for human habitation are unfit for such purposes, or that the unhealthy or unhygienic conditions thereof of the huts and other structures is dangerous or injurious to public health or to the health of the area's inhabitants, and after giving the affected persons an opportunity to be heard"(GoWB, 1958)

Unlike upgrading, environmental improvement and even service provision, urban land reform requires political motivation, without which international policy recommendations, donor guidelines and human rights norms cannot ensure shelter security for the vast majority of the urban poor. Thus, for squatters and their advocates in the non-governmental sector to be successful in achieving tenure rights, their efforts should be geared towards influencing political motivation. This would require them to work within the framework of electoral politics, either with the government, or with opposition parties to make their demands heard. The mistrust of political opportunism in non-governmental circles and amongst donors, planners and bureaucrats might result in missed opportunities for gaining public support, building effective alliances and using political competition as a means for furthering the cause of the urban poor.

Access to land can be a tool for both inclusion and exclusion from urban political and social processes, as is demonstrated by the history of Calcutta's land tenure policies. While the "politics of stealth" through which squatters gradually acquire rights is a commendable survival tactic, the continuing lack of official recognition is a powerful indication that illegal slum dwellers are not considered equal residents of the city, nor entitled to official service provisions. Their continued safety depends on lower-level political connections, some NGO advocacy and administrative inertia. Despite providing perceptions of security, these supports can be withdrawn at any time.

1.2   A Note on Tenure Security in Calcutta

The discussion on urban tenure options for the poor is still unresolved, and is moving away from blanket solutions towards more innovative and context-specific approaches to urban land tenure (Payne, 2002. Baharoglu, 2002). The situation in Calcutta reflects the evolution of diverse tenure options depending on location, building and environmental conditions, and ownership patterns. Informal settlements that are legalized in Calcutta have a range of tenure options ranging from freehold title as well as occupancy rights and communal leases (Racine, 1990, Dasgupta, 1990, Ramaswamy 1995). Since the majority of the urban population consists of renters, there are various policies in place to protect renters (Racine, 1990). Thus, when I speak of security of tenure, I include all provisions undertaken by the government to ensure that impoverished people have a legitimate right to a place in the

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[2] About 4000 families were evicted without resettlement in September of 2002 and another 5000 in December 2002, for canal improvement projects. (*The Statesman, Dec 11, 2002 and September 22, 2002*)

city, and are thereby secure in their homes, protected from being forcibly evicted and guaranteed rehabilitation if displacement is required. In Calcutta, as in other cities, "illegal" settlements do not have these rights.

Calcutta presents an interesting case because it emphasizes the dichotomy between settlements that have been legally recognized and those that remain outside the realm of legality. In Calcutta, the local terminology for these two types of settlements is different. The legally recognized slums are called "bustees", and unrecognized squatter settlements are called "jhupdis". While it is to be expected that illegal squatter settlements house the poorest rung of the urban poor, and include a significant migrant and lower-caste population, as well as a high percentage of women-headed households[3], what is surprising is that bustees and refugee squatter settlements that were legalized in the past had a very similar income and social structure.[4] This indicates that in Calcutta, bustee legalization was not simply a matter of handing out favors to a particular group, or to a relatively well-entrenched 'elite' among the urban poor.

1.3   Theoretical Framework

This thesis draws on literature relating to tenure security in urban informal settlements, human rights frameworks, particularly those relating to housing rights and forced evictions, and political economy research on politics and reform under the Left parties in West Bengal.

Current Approaches on Tenure Security: This thesis places itself within the tradition of critical urban studies and draws on the arguments of Payne, Fernandes, and Durand-Lasserve on tenure issues for the urban poor. Their work complicates the standard perspectives on tenure security, which derives from a human rights perspective or an economistic perspective (Payne, 2002. Fernandes, 1998, Durand-Lasserve 2002).
From a human rights perspective, all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure, regardless of the type of tenure that guarantees legal protection against eviction, harassment and other threats. This perspective advocates that states should take immediate measures aimed at conferring legal security of tenure upon those persons and households currently lacking such protection, in genuine consultation with affected persons and groups (Leckie, 2000, pp44).

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[3] From surveys of canal bank settlement conducted by Unnayan in 1984, and by ASHA in 2000.
[4] After extensive upgrading, and an increase in rents, bustees are no longer a source of housing for the poorest. However, most of them still have their original residents. These include a large proportion of Muslim, and lower-caste residents, though the bustees had far fewer women headed-households, and a less-balanced sex-ratio, as migrants in the 40's and 50's left their families in villages (personal interview, Ramaswamy, January 2003).

I am in agreement with the principles of a rights based framework to housing and tenure security as expressed by Leckie but critical of its effectiveness as an effective policy instrument. When tenure security is placed within a human rights framework, it implies a systematic, enforceable and universally applicable[5] framework for developing appropriate legal and other measures leading to the realization of housing rights that is presently not in place. However, a rights-based framework also provides clear criteria against which actions, policies, practices and legislation can be judged (Leckie, 2000). Certain aspects of the rights based framework, related to women's and children's rights are particularly relevant to the case of illegal slums, which have a significant number of women-headed households and young children.

Econonomistic recommendations for tenure legalization on the other hand focus on the economic benefits of tenure legalization, through added investment in housing by the poor, and increased access to credit.

Payne , on the other hand, argues that tenure legalization is not a pre-requisite for investment in upgrading, for community action or for access to informal credit.

Also, research has also shown that providing legal papers rarely enables slum dwellers to seek access to formal credit institutions. As research exposes some of the flaws in the economist/free-market models of security of tenure through freehold title, Payne's work seeks to include de-facto or extra-legal provisions for tenure security within the range of tenure options for the poor (Payne 2000, pps 4-5).

While I engage with Payne's picture of a continuum of tenure status in urban informal settlements, and attempt to place Calcutta's informal settlements within such a continuum, I believe that my research shows a distinct break or dichotomy, not between freehold titles and leasehold or communal rights (this thesis makes no attempt to answer questions about the relative economic benefits of freehold or leasehold titles), but between "recognized" and "non-recognized" slums. This break in the continuum would have been far less apparent if examined five years ago, before the widespread project-based evictions took place.

In my thesis, I seek to center issues of urban land tenure within the process of political , legal and social inclusion. In this endeavor, Fernandes' and Varley's writings on politics, law and urban change has provided a strong base. In particular, concepts of rights to the city,

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[5] These provisions are found in Article 11 (1) of the ICESCR, and elaborated in General Comment (4) of the CESCR. General Comments by the CESCR provide authoritative legal interpretations of the rights contained in the ICESCR and other Covenants.

relating the phenomena of illegality with the notion of citizenship, have informed my research (Fernandes and Varley, 1998,pps 7-8). The right to the city is a political right, rather than one with a clear legal basis, and legalization of illegal and marginal squatter settlements constitutes an explicit recognition of that right. This indicates that regularization or legalization can be employed by the state as a strategy to bring about the 'social' integration of the poor. When used as a strategy to achieve social and political inclusion, Varley points out the importance of the periods in history when particular governments undertake legalization programmes, as well the particular cities, or settlements within these cities that are targeted for legalization (Fernandes and Varley, 1998, pps 173-179). Both these factors are addressed in my analysis of the regularization process of certain settlements, and the continued exclusion of others, in Calcutta's urban development.

My thesis is also based in the traditions of political economy, drawing on the work of Kohli and Bardhan. Their work articulates the relation of poverty alleviation, rural land reform and decentralization policies to political ideology and competition. Kohli's argument is that "pro-poor redistribution will be accomplished by well-organised left-of-centre regimes, exactly like the one which has held power in West Bengal since 1977." (Kohli, 1987 and 1990). From their standpoint political will is the fundamental criteria that explains differences in land reforms carried out across countries, states or over time. If so, it is important to understand the sources of political will of governments to carry out land reform. These sources include the role of political parties and their ideology, and electoral competition. Whether a given party or candidate implements reforms may be the result of competition for political office (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003). In addition, the influence of special interest groups and asymmetric patterns of literacy or political participation between different classes can create policy biases. In particular anti-poor biases may result from low literacy and political participation rates among the poor (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003).

In my thesis, I attempt to apply, in a qualitative manner, some of their findings to an urban context. Political will is an important factor in the urban land reform process as in the rural. From a planning perspective, identifying the role of these different factors in the urban process has implications for strategies towards land reform, such as alliances between advocacy groups and parties that may challenge long-established incumbents, identifying and combating possible biases based on either literacy and other factors such as ethnicity, and increasing political participation rates among the poor.

1.4   Research Questions

This study asks three main questions. Firstly, how did the uncertain tenure status of bustee residents and refugee squatters become a legally recognized entitlement, despite opposition from landowners, the city authorities, and government planners?
Secondly, why, despite a 'pro-poor' government that has made its reputation in democratizing access to land, have subsequent squatter settlements remained "unrecognized" and therefore "illegal", despite having occupied their homes for over 30 years? Finally, what are the consequences of legalization as opposed to illegality? In what ways do these illegal settlements, which can be said to enjoy all the conditions of de-facto security, differ from those that have been legally recognized?

These questions suggest a gap in literature on urban land tenure, which tends to neglect the historical and political underpinnings of urban land policies. A comprehensive answer to these questions requires a historical analysis of the evolution of tenure security in Calcutta slums. My thesis presents four main arguments that follow from this investigation which are relevant to thinking on tenure security for the urban poor.

(i) The first is that political mobilization by the Left-parties and their affiliated community organizations played a significant role in achieving legal status and security for the two largest sources of housing for Calcutta's poor, the bustees and the refugee resettlement colonies, in the post-independence decades. Advocating tenure security for the poor and displaced fit the Communist Party's ideological framework of redistribution of resources to the poor, as well as provided them a political platform. Subsequently, bustees and refugee colonies acquired legal rights through the design of legislative mechanisms that recognized their unique tenure structure.

(ii) Secondly, in Calcutta, slum upgradation and municipal services were implemented only in those settlements that that had been "recognized" and thus given legal status. Thus, security of tenure in this case was a precursor to public intervention, rather than an outcome. Assumptions that the transition to legality is affected as a by-product of slum improvement programs and government interventions ignore the underlying causes and consequences of urban illegality.

(iii) Thirdly, the Calcutta case suggests that the blind eye turned towards the growth of illegal settlements, through their acquisition of some political support, creates a generalized perception of security of tenure that is precarious. While the "politics of stealth[6]" through which squatters gradually acquire rights is a commendable survival tactic, their lack of recognition is a powerful indication that they are not deemed equal residents of the city entitled to government services and legal protections. Despite the perceptions of security, these patronage networks often fail to support them, particularly at the time of eviction for development and infrastructure projects.

(iv) Finally, a piece-by-piece or project based approach to tenure security in specific slum areas- such as those displaced by donor-funded projects, may exacerbate the problems of urban illegality. Thus, the ADB's resettlement guidelines for illegal settlements displaced by canal rehabilitation projects have been strongly resisted by the government, and may have spurred a widespread program of slum clearance and demolitions in areas outside the donor project boundaries. Solutions to urban illegality should addresses all the long-term settlements that are at risk, on the basis of defined and collectively applicable norms for "recognition" as slums, rather than provide special benefits to a particular set of "illegal" residents merely by virtue of their living in areas within the project boundaries of donor institutions.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The first chapter introduces the subject area, its relevance to planning and policy, and presents a summary of the main arguments, findings and recommendations. It also outlines the theoretical framework for this study, and its methodology and limitations.

The next two chapters set the context for this study. Chapter Two examines the specific features of Calcutta that have influenced its urban growth. It focuses on the city's history, its demographic structure, political geography and the housing, tenure and employment conditions of the urban poor. Chapter Three delves more thoroughly into the politics governing the city. It focuses on the political parties, the role of state and city government in Calcutta's development, and the role of planning institutions. It also provides a brief overview of the slum improvement programmes that were implemented in the "recognized"

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[6] A term used by Solomon Benjamin, in a personal interview on March 2003, to describe day-to-day politicking in squatter settlements to obtain measures of security and improve their living conditions by obtaining water connections, electricity etc.

slums that have been the municipal government's and planning authority's important claim to fame.

The fourth and fifth chapters present the main arguments of the thesis. This thesis is built around a historical analysis of the evolution of slum settlements, and their transition to legally recognized slums. The analysis includes two main parts. The first is concerned with "recognized slums" and their transition from transitory shantytowns to the well-established bustees[7], while the second follows the development of illegal squatter settlements.

Chapter Four deals with the first phase, in the 1950's and 60's, when a public health crisis and the widespread immigration of refugees made housing conditions of the poor an immediate concern. The escalating threat of slum clearance and eviction led to movement for tenure security for bustee residents and refugee squatters that was mobilized by the Leftist opposition parties and their affiliated community organizations. These movements achieved significant legislative protections for bustees and refugee settlements, and provide a legal basis to their tenure.

Chapter Five follows the development of later slum settlements that grew to achieve a form of de-facto security, but were unable to convince the government to legalize them. Focusing on the last two decades of the eighties and nineties, it introduces two new and influential actors, the NGO and donor organizations. Previously, donor organizations had funded slum improvement but had not addressed the problem of "illegal" slums. However, now that donor organizations have reformed their resettlement policies, they have strict resettlement guidelines that require them to compensate displaced persons irrespective of whether have legal rights over the land they occupy. The ADB is funding projects in Calcutta that require large-scale evictions of illegal squatters, thus it plays a landmark role that requires the government to address "illegal" squatter settlements. This chapter concludes with an argument for legalizing these long-established squatter settlements so as to afford them the same rights as bustees.

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[7] The Calcutta "bustees" occupy a prominent place in the city, both literally and figuratively. They form the Left parties largest vote-bank in the city and most of them are at least 50 years old.

1.6   Methodology and Limitations

Methodology: To obtain a conceptual framework within which to approach Calcutta's development, I reviewed literature and materials pertaining to:
(i) urban tenure security, urban illegality , the dynamics of land invasions, municipal and local government, poverty alleviation, participation and community organizing.
(iii) legal sources of housing rights, internationally and in India.
(ii) local politics, land reform, decentralization and poverty alleviation in West Bengal.
(iv) government policies and plans regarding slums, housing and informal settlements at the national and state level. Legal provisions for land acquisition, slum clearance, and tenancy rights, municipal acts and town planning acts.

The data for this thesis was collected over a six-month period, beginning in January 2003. It relies on a synthesis of materials from a wide range of different sources.

(i) These include qualitative, semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the housing rights movement and in the present anti-eviction struggle. Also, I conducted interviews with officials from the CMC, the former municipal commissioner of Calcutta, ADB and DFID project officials, and academic experts from Calcutta.

(ii) The historical section is pieced together from a wide variety of sources- legislative debates over the issue of slum clearance and improvement, Unnayan's [8] investigations and interviews with Left party leaders, personal interviews with activists involved in the housing struggle, newspaper accounts, communist party statements and newspapers, government documents and unpublished reports and notes on the role of planning and development bodies in the city.

(iii) The information on the residents of illegal slums is based on surveys carried out by Unnayan in the 1980's, and surveys of illegal slums carried out in preparation for the resettlement of illegal squatters displaced by ADB funded project in 2000. In addition, minutes of meetings on the resettlement plan, an Interim Report on evictions carried out by the "People's Commission on Eviction and Displacement", project documents, newspaper reports and commentaries provide sources. Newspaper articles, letters and commentaries are particularly useful in gauging public perceptions on illegal residents.

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[8] Unnayan, a Calcutta-based NGO that championed housing rights, will be described in subsequent chapters.

Limitations: A major limitation of the thesis lies in my inability to speak with the residents of the slum and squatter settlements themselves in any great detail, due to time and other constraints. Surveys of the slum dwellers in specific areas are assumed to reflect the demographic and social character of the "illegal" slums in general.

A second limitation is that the information for this thesis is heavily skewed towards NGO sources, particularly for the recent data. This is unavoidable given the reluctance of government sources to discuss the controversial issue of urban illegality, and my lack of access to key political figures. Their views and opinions are garnered entirely from newspaper reports, interviews, and party newsletters.

The historical nature of this thesis is both its uniqueness and its limitation. Planning research on tenure and land management is rarely historical, despite the fact that both tenure security and land management policies are often the result of history. The dearth of research in this area might be because history, being context and time specific, does not offer easily replicable solutions. However, this thesis seeks to engage history with the present and identify trends, patterns and precedents that explain the current situation, as well as provide a basis for policy arguments. The Calcutta case is not a best practice case. Rather, its relevance to planning and policy lies in the insight it offers into the land tenure processes, the impacts of political action on urban illegality and the ways in which such categorizations define social inclusion or exclusion. It also underscores the lack of research that ties history, politics and land reform in urban areas, unlike in rural areas, so that more comparative studies may be undertaken.

1.6   Summary of Conclusions

This thesis concludes that a clear, long term-oriented policy in support of the impoverished residents of in unrecognised settlements is now imperative. This would carry forward the consistent focus on the habitat of the urban poor that has been a feature of West Bengal government's urban policy, and through which bustee improvement and refugee resettlement was undertaken. In Calcutta, the difficult question of providing land for housing the urban poor is significantly eased by virtue of the fact that the majority of such households live in legal bustees, which, through political and legislative action have attained protection. A similar entitlement has now to be extended to the unrecognised dwellers; based on the ruling Left Front Government's historical support for the poor of the city.

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CHAPTER TWO: CALCUTTA: HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHY AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The City and its Hinterland

This chapter provides an overview of Calcutta's history, demographic make-up and growth patterns, setting the stage for the discussion on housing and tenure for the poor.

Calcutta is the capital city of the state of West Bengal, and eastern India's largest metropolis. Its population is just over 13 million, according to 2001 census figures, making it India's second largest urban agglomeration after Greater Mumbai.[1] Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, the seven North Eastern States, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, as well as neighboring Nepal and Bangladesh make up its hinterland. Excluding Nepal and Bangladesh, this covers an area of about 9,00,000 square kilometers and a population that oscillates between 175 and 254 million (Racine 1990). This region includes the most densely populated rural regions of India, and the states of Bengal and Bihar have the second and third highest population densities of all the Indian states (GoI Census, 1991). The contrast with Mumbai's less crowded hinterland is striking.

The city grew most rapidly in the first half of the twentieth century, a classic tale of third-world urban growth fueled largely by rural impoverishment. Racine describes Calcutta's hinterland as being the "weakest" of India's metropolises. The broader hinterland region as a whole is characterized by small land holdings, poor agricultural productivity and poor consumption (Racine, 1990). Other than Bengal, the three large eastern states of Assam, Bihar and Orissa have per capita net state domestic product considerably below the national average (UNDP, 1998). In Bihar, the country's lowest average incomes and high rates of landlessness are exacerbated by deep-rooted social inequalities. Not surprisingly, Bihar sends the highest number of immigrants to Calcutta from outside the state, closely followed by Orissa and Uttar Pradesh (Racine 1990, Mitra 1990, Ghosh 1991).

The second half of the twentieth century saw the city's growth stabilize and migration fall, due to a combination of factors that include a decrease in rural poverty rates and land reforms in West Bengal (Kohli 1987, Harris 2000, Bardhan and Mookherjee 2003), the growth of new industrial towns and urban 'growth' centers (Chakravorty, 1996, CMDA), and

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[1] Greater Mumbai overtook Calcutta as the largest city in the 1991 census. Form the very first Indian census to the census of 1981, the Calcutta Urban Agglomeration was the largest in India.

Calcutta's gradual economic decline (Goswami, 1999). These changing demographic trends will be discussed in detail in later sections.

Despite these trends, Calcutta remains the dominant urban agglomeration in a predominantly rural landscape. Forty-six percent of West Bengal's urban population lives within Calcutta's extended metropolitan area (Racine, 1990). Eastern India, as a whole is India's least urbanized region, and nearly all the states in this region fall much below the national proportion of urban to rural population (GoI, Census 2001). West Bengal, which is 28 percent urbanized, is close to the national figure of 27.8 percent, but the surrounding states of Bihar, Assam and Orissa have amongst the lowest levels of urbanization amongst Indian states[2]. Patna, the second city in the region, is about one-eight of Calcutta's size, although it is growing much faster, as are Bengal's other urban centers, Asansol and Durgapur (GoI, Census 2001).

2.2 A Brief History of the City: 1773 to 1947

From 1773 to 1912, Calcutta was the capital city of the British Empire in India, and during these years it received the attention that befitted the seat of Government of a large and powerful colonial empire. Calcutta had the first modern sewerage system in India, the first filtered water supply, the earliest institutions for Western learning, and the first civil court and one of earliest civic corporation of any Indian city[3] (Chakraborty, 1999, Das Gupta, 1999).

The city commenced its history as an English factory town in the seventeen hundreds, and grew around the three village settlements of Sutanuti, Kalikata and Gobindapur, on the eastern banks of the Hooghly river (Munsi, Racine, 1990, Das Gupta, Chatterji 1999)[4]. The site was chosen due to the existence of a network of trading and industrial towns, mostly in textiles and jute, along the Hooghly river. Through conquest, administrative control, the establishment of an extensive rail transportation network, and the creation of the Calcutta Port, the English transformed Calcutta from a factory town to the country's largest metropolis. Some of the older towns, such as Howrah and Hooghly were absorbed into the growing city, while others withered away as financial, industrial, political and administrative functions became increasingly concentrated in the region of the capital city. According to

[2] From the 2001 Census tables, Bihar is 10.47 percent urbanized, Assam 12.72, Orissa 14.97.
[3] Municipal Administration in Calcutta dates back to 1727 (CMDA), and the Municipal Corporation was set up in 1876, with the passing of the Corporation Act (CMC).
[4] It is not easy to compress the City's three hundred years of history into a single paragraph. Calcutta: The Living City, Volume I, edited by Sukanta Choudhury provides an interesting and informative account of the city's history.

Racine, Calcutta "crushed by its weight the entire urban network of its hinterland," to become, within a few decades of its formation, the political, economic and commercial hub of the British Empire in India. With the emergence of a western educated Bengali "bhadralok[5]" class, the city became the center of the reformist movement in India, and was considered the intellectual and cultural capital of India long after it lost its dominance in other areas (Roberge, 1999).

After two centuries of political and economic pre-eminence, Calcutta's story is largely one of decline. In 1912, New Delhi became the new imperial capital, and Bombay gradually took over as India's commercial and trade center. The global demand for jute, the mainstay of the city's industrial economy, decreased drastically. Many administrative and later financial services moved out of the city and the volume of trade that flowed through Calcutta's port progressively decreased.

Calcutta played an important role in India's independence movement, and the beginnings of the politics of agitation and protest that the city is known for were rooted in the struggle against colonial rule. The 1905 partition of Bengal into East and West Bengal, the growth of 'radical' nationalism, subaltern militancy and increasing religious and linguistic polarization produced a politically volatile city (Chatterjee, 1999, Chaube 1999). The Partition of India in 1947 was traumatic for Calcutta, preceded as it was by 1943's dehumanizing famine and by frequent religious riots that culminated in widespread communal[6] carnage in 1946. After the division, Hindu refugees from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) arrived in the city in huge numbers. With few resources to manage and rehabilitate the displaced, the government allowed resettlement to be a largely self- managed process (Chatterjee, 1991).

Even during its better days, the extreme poverty and degradation that characterizes Calcutta's popular imagery today was evident. Mackintosh, writing in the mid-eighteen hundreds, writes that, " there is not a spot where decency and convenience are so grossly insulted as in the scattered confused houses, huts, sheds, streets, lanes, alleys, windings, gutters, sinks and tanks, which jumbled into an undistinguished mass of filth and corruption, equally offensive, to human sense and health, compose the capital of the English Company's government in India." (quoted in Racine, 1990, pps 45).

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[5] Bengal's educated, westernized elite is referred to as "Bhadrolok", which literally translates as "gentle people".
[6]"Communalism" in the Indian context is understood very differently from the meaning more prevalent in western usage, of pertaining to a commune. The term was used first by India's British rulers, and refers to collective identity defined by religious identification and expressed in chauvinist, and oppositional terms. Communal violence thus typically refers to violence between any two communities. In India, its most common expression is violence between the Hindu and Muslim community.

Mackintosh writes of the city slums with indignation, while later western writers and filmmakers describe the city with an appalled fascination. The chief Bengali works on the city avoid such a concentrated gaze on the city's poverty, but do not ignore it. The works of Levi-Strauss, Louis Malle, Ginsberg, Gunter Grass, Moorhouse, Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen, to name a few [7] have built up what Hutnyk calls the "Rumor of Calcutta," (Hutnyk, 1996), which has seeped into the city's fabric and influences its perception even in the eyes of insiders. Given the prevalence of this imagery of Calcutta's appalling poverty and degradation, I will avoid any more descriptive detail, and proceed with the story of Calcutta's more recent history, through an examination of demographic and spatial trends in the city's more recent growth.

2.3 Demography

After losing its political and economic pre-eminence in India to Delhi and Mumbai, the past two decades saw Calcutta loose its ranking as the most populous urban agglomeration in India (GoI, Census 1991).

Table 1. Population in the Four Largest Metropolitan Cities 1911-1981

City	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981
Bombay/ Mumbai	1.02	1.25	1.27	1.69	2.97	4.15	5.97	8.23
Calcutta [A]	1.75	1.89	2.14	3.62	4.67	5.98	7.42	9.19
Delhi	0.24	0.30	0.45	0.70	1.43	2.36	3.65	5.71
Madras/Chennai	0.60	0.63	0.78	0.93	1.54	1.95	3.17	4.28

Notes: All population figures are in millions.
Calcutta [A] refers here to the Calcutta Urbanized Area (CUA).

Sources: Census of India, Chakraborty 1995.

Calcutta has the lowest growth rate of all the Indian megacities, and while all of them have falling growth rates, Calcutta's has been in steady decline since the 1951. It showed this trend long before India's other major cities - Mumbai, Delhi, Madras, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. All these cities with over a million residents in 1961, grew at annual rates varying from 3.3% to 4.4% till 1971, while Calcutta's growth rate during these years had already dropped to 2.1% (Sinha, 1991, Ghosh 1999, GoI Census).

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[7] The CMC website provides a comprehensive list of literature, academic works and films centered around Calcutta.

Despite the low growth rate, the city's population of 13 million people, spread over an area of roughly 1,350 square kilometers (CMC figures for the Calcutta Metropolitan Area) makes it the seventh largest city in the world. Its average urban density of 10,791 persons per square kilometer over the entire metropolitan area is lower than Greater Mumbai's average of 23,086 persons per square kilometer, but is very unevenly distributed (CMC, CMDA). The inner core accounts for about 10 percent of the state's urban area, but nearly 41 percent of its urban population. The density in this part of the city is an immense 31,779 [8] persons per square kilometer, comparable to New York's (Manhattan) 32,157 and extremely high for a predominantly low-rise city (www.demographia.com).

Like other Indian cities, the city limits have grown and changed many times over the years, for political and administrative reasons as well as to accommodate the sprawling progress of urbanization. Before an analysis of demographic data, it is important to understand the spatial boundaries that we are referring to when we speak of the city and the metropolitan area[9].

The Hoohgly River on the west, the Bagbazar Canal and Circular Road to the east and South, formed the original boundaries of the city. [10] The city limits were redrawn a number of times, both during colonial times and later as the capital of West Bengal. In 1876, the state government brought the urban areas surrounding Calcutta under the umbrella of a single Suburban Municipality (Chakraborty, 1991), distinct from the Corporation of Calcutta. In 1931, three of the suburbs merged with the city of Calcutta, and fifty years later, in 1984, the remaining three suburbs merged as well to bring the total area under the Corporation to 187.33 from 104 square kilometers, from 100 municipal wards to 141. This is the "inner city area" that is governed by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, and that I refer to as the "core city" in this chapter (Chakraborty, 1991).

Inner Calcutta, though, accounts for less than 15% of the extended urban region that is known as the Calcutta Urban Agglomeration. The CUA was identified as a census tract in 1961, and formed a conurbation or continuous expanse of built-up area where several nodal

(www.calmanac.org)
[8] This figure is based on the extended Municipal corporation boundaries which increased the inner-city area from 104 sq.km to 187 sq.km.(CMC)
[9] Maps showing densities and spatial distribution are available in Appendix 1.
[10] The city's first official boundaries were established by a Supreme Court ruling in 1739, and were reaffirmed by an imperial proclamation by the then Governor-General Cornwallis 15 years later. Till the transfer of the capital to Delhi in 1912, the Imperial Government played the most authoritative role in constructing the city's shape. See Chakraborty, S. 1990. "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta" in S. Chaudhuri (ed), Calcutta: The Living City, Vol I.

towns clustered around a core city. This sort of extended metropolitan area is the prevalent spatial pattern in nearly all Indian cities, and the 1971 census identified 339 such urban agglomerations in India. Calcutta was the first city in India to attain this status, when the urban agglomeration growing around the core city was identified during a WHO study to modernize water supply and sewage disposal systems for the growing city in 1960.

The state government was concerned about planning for future urban growth, and identified in 1964 a region larger than the already built-up conurbation, which the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO)[11] identified to include non-urban or non-municipal areas that had acquired urban characteristics. This area was named the Calcutta Metropolitan District, and was adopted in 1971 as the area of jurisdiction for the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority, formed to implement the CMPO's 1966 planning document, the Basic Development Plan. The present area of CMD has been calculated to be around 1785 sq km and includes 3 Municipal Corporations [12], 38 Municipalities, 72 Non-municipal urban areas and 340 rural villages governed by 165 Panchayats and 22 Panchayat Samities[13].

It is useful to think of the conurbation in terms of three roughly concentric geographic areas, Calcutta City proper, the Calcutta Urban Agglomeration (CUA) and the Calcutta Metropolitan District. An examination of growth rates within the CMD shows significant variations between the inner city and the larger metropolitan area.

Population growth Pre-1951: The city's population increases rapidly relative to that of the State of West Bengal until 1951, with the largest increase in population occurring in the years from 1931-40, where the city (the CMC area) grew by 86 percent and outlying areas by 69 percent. (Ghosh 1991, Chakraborty 1991, Mitra 1990). A majority of the migrants during this period were adult male workers from rural Bengal, Bihar and Orissa who left their families behind in the villages, and the city was characterized by a severely imbalanced sex and age ratio.[14] The partition of Bengal in 1947 saw an influx of refugees from East Pakistan into West Bengal, and official surveys state that a third of the refugees

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[11] The CMPO, aided by WHO, and the Ford Foundation produced the Calcutta Basic Development Plan, urban India's first detailed planning document. The CMDA is the executing agency for the CMPO.

[12] Calcutta, Howrah and Chandannagar each are administered by a Municipal Corporation.

[13] www.CMDAonline.com/evolution.html

[14] According to Mitra's statistics based on a study conducted in 1958, the average number of males per 1000 females was 2360 in the city as a whole. For 'displaced' migrants from East Bengal, it was 1030 while for 'ordinary' migrants it was as high as 4560 males per 1000 females. This can be compared to 1961 census figures which show 860 females per 1000 males in Urban India, and 965 females to a 1000 males in rural India (Mitra, 1990).

settled in Calcutta and its immediate region (Mitra, 1990). Unlike the single workers who formed the majority of migrants from the north, East Bengal refugees settled in the city with their families, and in 1961, they constituted over 18% of the city's population (Mitra, 1990).

Table 2. Population Growth in Calcutta, West Bengal and India 1951-91

Notes:
All population figures are in millions. The figures in parenthesis indicate decadal percentage increases. Calcutta City [A] refers to the pre-1981 boundary, with 100 wards. Calcutta City [B] The 1991 population figure of 4.49 million is based on significant additions made to the city boundaries to include 141 wards.

Sources: Bose, 1994, Government of West Bengal 1994, Chakravorty and Gupta, 1996.

Population Unit	*1951*	*1961*	*1971*	*1981*	*1991*
Calcutta City [A]	2.70	2.93 (8.5%)	3.15 (10.1%)	3.31 (5.1%)	3.38 (2.1%) 4.49 [B]
Calcutta Urbanized Area (CUA)	4.67	5.98 (28.1%)	7.42 (24.1%)	9.19 (23.9%)	10.92 (18.8%)
Calcutta Metropolitan Area (CMA)	5.14	6.83 (32.9%)	8.22 (20.4%)	9.98 (21.4%)	11.86 (18.8%)
West Bengal Urban Population	6.28	8.54 (36.0%)	10.97 (28.5%)	14.45(31.8%)	18.62 (28.9%)
West Bengal Total Population	26.30	34.93(32.8%)	44.31 (26.9%)	54.58 (23.2%)	68.08 (24.7%)
India (urban population)	62.44	78.94 (26.4%)	109.11 (38.2%)	159.46(46.2%)	217.61 (36.5%)
India (total population)	361.09	439.24 (21.6%)	548.16 (24.8%)	683.32 (24.7%)	846.80 (23.9%)

From the next decade onwards there has been a steady decline in the population growth rate, and from 1971, the city's growth rate fell below than that of West Bengal, and indeed was less than India's growth rate as a whole. West Bengal's rural population meanwhile, continues to grow faster than the national average, and its population density is approximately three times the national average. Census data on immigration indicates that net immigration slowed significantly from the sixties onward, and urban growth in Calcutta was largely a result of natural growth [15](Ghosh, 1991, World Bank Background Studies on Calcutta, 1973 [16]). Census data shows that the percentage of migrants within the CMD has been steadily declining since 1951. In 1951, migrants made up 56.2 % of the city population, while in 1981 their percentage was 31.3%. The number of migrants coming in

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[15] Empirical evidence for this statement is supported by Census Data on births and deaths in West Bengal
[16], From Background Studies of the Calcutta Metropolitan District, prepared by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in 1972.

has declined in absolute terms as well- the decade from 1951-1961 saw 34.39 million new migrants and 1971- 1981 saw 30.04 million.

To sum up, though a sizeable percent of the city's population is comprised of new migrants, the explosive growth of the city has slowed down, and, since 1961, the population of the CUA is increasing more and more through its own momentum (Ghosh 1991, Sinha 1986) Ghosh sees the population decline as a sign of maturity rather than decay, and believes it indicates a more even pattern of urban and industrial growth in the region. His thinking is supported by the fast growth of smaller cities in Bengal, like Asansol and Dhanbad, both of which have a population over a million and continue to grow fast. The natural growth rate of the city is substantial, and its population will be growing steadily, but in a more balanced manner than it did in the 1930's and 1940's. The stabilization of population is indicated by the narrowing sex gap, as more people live and work in the city, rather than work in the city to maintain a family in the village. In 1931, for instance, there were 456 females per 1000 males, while in 1981, there were 712. This is a healthy trend, as more complete family units lead to a more balanced social and economic life within the city (Ghosh, 1991). It also underlines the fact that a larger percentage of Calcutta's laboring poor are likely to be women and children than before, and this percentage will increase in the future. The challenges of providing access to basic services for family units is far greater than providing for the largely adult male population that made up the largest proportion of the city's poorest in the past.

Why has migration to the city dropped? The rate of permanent migration is a function of the health of the urban economy, and Calcutta, a city that has long been in economic decline, no longer affords the employment prospects it did in the past. Calcutta's long established economic infrastructure and manufacturing industry made it the most attractive urban centre in the region, but post-independence developmental policies like the Freight Equalization Policy of 1956, which equalized prices of essential items like steel and coal nationwide, hit the region's coal and steel producing centers (Chakraborty, 2000). In the then dominant development paradigm of centrally planned industrial growth, new industry was located not in existing industrial cities like Calcutta but in smaller urban areas, lower in the urban hierarchy and in newly created potential "growth centers" like Durgapur and Jamshedpur.

Table 3. Population Growth and Concentrations within the CUA Tracts

Tract	Census Years			
	1951	1961	1971	1981
Calcutta City	2.7 (57.8%)	2.93 (48.9%)	3.15 (42.8%)	3.31 (35.9%)
Other Municipal Urban Areas [B] within CUA	0.86 (18.4%)	1.21 (20.2%)	1.54 (20.8%)	1.81 (19.7%)
Calcutta Non-municipal Urban Area [C]	1.11 (23.8%)	1.85 (30.9%)	2.73 (36.8%)	4.08 (44.4%)
Calcutta Urban Area (CUA)	4.67 (100%)	5.98 (100%)	7.42 (100%)	9.19 (100%)

Notes: All population figures are in millions. The figures in parenthesis indicate the share of the tract in the CUA population.

Calcutta City [A] : The census figures till 1991 refer to 100 wards within the old municipal boundaries, while the 1991 census data refers to larger area of 141 wards now under the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.
Calcutta Municipal Urban Area [B] includes the six surrounding municipal towns of Hoara, South Suburban, Garden Reach, Baranagar, South Dumdum and North Dumdum.
Calcutta Non-municipal Urban Area [C] fall within the Calcutta Metropolitan District.

Sources: Census of India, Chakraborty, 1990.

Within the Calcutta agglomeration, the suburbs are growing much faster than the center, both in absolute numbers and in terms of their proportion of the city's population. In 1981, for the first time a larger portion of Calcutta's population lived outside the center city, and even after it expanded it's boundaries in 1984, this observation remains true.

From the most recent census data, in Calcutta city population grew from 4.3 million in 1991 to 4.5 million in 2001, an increase of less than 5% over the decade. This can be compared with growth statistics for figures for the entire agglomeration, which is 11.5 %, and for West Bengal as a whole, which recorded a 17.84% increase. The growth rate within the city limits is lower than West Bengal's average natural urban growth rate of 7.3%, obtained from the Census of India's sample registration system statistics. This indicates that the city is experiencing net emigration rather than net migration into the city. In addition, new migrants coming into the city are increasingly settling outside the inner city area.

A more in-depth understanding of the city's migration pattern is found in Sinha's analysis of migration patterns within the city. Sinha's 1990 study, based on data from 1971-78 shows that the annual migration rate to the city dropped in each of these years, except for 1971 where some of the outer areas of the present corporation boundaries received a large influx

of migrants[17]. High immigration rates in the previous decades and until 1971 can be explained by partition, war and post-independence industrial expansion. Post 1970, Sinha concludes that net growth within the city limits is largely due to natural growth, and indeed natural growth outstrips net growth in the later part of the decade due to increasing emigration. Again, census figures provide evidence to support his conclusion, with the number of migrants from outside the state falling from roughly 1.2 million in 1961 to 0.8 million in 1971. Migration from other districts within the state has fallen as well, from around 0.3 million in 1961 to 0.19 million in 1971 (Sinha, 1990).

In addition to the overall decrease in migration, there has been a significant change in the nature and quality of migration to the city over the period discussed according to Sinha. Rural poverty and periodic natural disasters still drive large numbers of migrants to the city, but many of them are seasonal migrants who return to their villages after a time. In addition, there is a rise in migration of females from neighboring rural districts who find employment as domestic servants (Sinha, 1991, Goswami, 1991).

Sinha explains the stagnation of the core city and the growth of the suburbs by an exodus of middle-class and lower middle class residents to outer areas within the urban agglomeration. Emigration from within Calcutta proper helped create 21 new "census towns"[18] in 1971, within the metropolitan area. The movement out is driven by the acute housing problem of the city proper, better transport and communication facilities into the city, and according to Sinha leaves a core city that is losing its middle class. Sinha bases his argument on the rapid growth rate of outer towns and suburbs and in particular, on the increasing numbers of formal sector male workers. However, the economic life of the city is inseparable from that of the CUA and indeed the entire metropolitan area. The volume of daily commuters into the city is huge, as jobs are still concentrated within the CMC area. Within the city proper, trade and commerce, construction, transport, communications and storage, and all other services together employed over 71 % of the worker population in 1971. In the neighboring Howrah and Hooghly areas, now part of the municipal area, manufacturing and processing employed roughly half the worker population.

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[17] Sinha's source is the Sample Registration Scheme implemented in 30 sample census blocks in Calcutta and the surrounding municipalities by the Directorate of Census Operations in the decade from 1970-1978. H
18   A census town is defined as :
 All places with a Municipal Corporation, Municipality, Cantonment Board or Notified Town Area Committee, etc.
or, All other places that satisfied the following criteria:
a) A minimum population of 5000,

To conclude this section, there are four important demographic trends that are important to keep in mind over the following chapters.

(i) The first is that overall migration to Calcutta is decreasing both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of its size. (ii) Secondly, the suburbs are growing much faster than the centre and already house more than half the urban population. (iii) Thirdly, most inner city population growth is due to natural increase rather than migration, and the inner city is experiencing considerable emigration. (iv) Fourthly, the sex and age ratio in the city is gradually becoming more balanced. In addition, the nature and quality of migration is changing, with more women and families, and fewer Hindi-speaking migrants from outside the state.

2.4   Employment in the Informal Sector

Calcutta's urban agglomeration houses a significant portion of eastern India's modern economic concerns—in commerce, trade and manufacturing.   Yet registered workers in the formal sector made up about less than a third of the employed population in the 1981 census [19], with about one-third of the male labor force and nearly two-thirds of the female labor force employed in the informal sector. Employment growth in Calcutta's organized or formal industries has been extremely slow in West Bengal compared to the all-India rate (Banerjee 1990) [20]. This leads us to expect the gap between the number of people in the labour force and those employed in the organized sector to increase, even given the slow growth of urban population (Ghosh, 1999, Racine 1990).

By most estimates, informal sector urban workers form at least 40 percent of the Calcutta labor force (Banerjee, 1990). Within the manufacturing and industrial sector, these unregistered workers are employed in small-scale, labor intensive household units. These household units are located in the city's bustees, particularly the ones that are located in the city's old industrial districts like Howrah (Romatet, 1990). They include light engineering and light chemical factories, textiles, woodcraft, and ceramics. In a survey of one industrial slum cluster, Romatet found that a majority were owned by a single-individual and employed   5 to 10 workers, while others used unpaid family labor or paid on

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b) At least 75% of the male working population should be engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and
c) A density of population of at least 400 per sq. km. (1000 per sq. mile).
[19] From 1981 census figures, 37.2 % of industrial and manufacturing workers were registered, but there were a mere 1.75% registered workers in transport, storage and communication and 4.37 % in other services.
[20] Racine sources are " Employment Trends in the Organized Sector", Reserve Bank of India's Bulletin, 1978.

a piece-rate basis. Recognizing the importance of the informal economy, the CMDA arranges loans for these small industries, though most of them are set up through family savings and borrowings.

In the squatter settlements and bustees that border the canals, residents work in the leather tanning industry, in prawn factories and as scavengers. Children form a large part of the work force in these industries (Dewanji, 2002, CMC 2002). In the peri-urban wetland areas, many engage in urban agriculture and aquaculture, using waste-water, and sell their products in the poorer areas of the city (Bunting, Kundu and Mukherjee, 2002).[21]

The informal sector also includes manually–operated transport services like rickshaws, petty trade and commerce, street-hawkers, domestic service and porterage. The informal sector absorbs surplus labor and keeps the poor in Calcutta 'gainfully employed,' but with extremely low pay and appalling living and working conditions. The average income of workers in the formal and informal sectors differs widely (Banerjee, 1990). Whether or not the wage differences are justified by differences in the productivity of workers or not, wage determination, in the formal sector, is influenced by the bargaining power of industry-wide unions.   Workers in the informal sector are often paid far below officially fixed wage rates. Adjusting the wage downwards does create a further demand for labor, but it also means that a poor family will have to send out more workers to ensure a minimal income. Banerjee quotes a Calcutta University survey which found that in families where all members worked in the informal sector, only those that with at least three earners could ensure a per capita income above the officially defined poverty line. The same survey identified 20,500 working children in Calcutta city alone in 1971. LAMP, a non-governmental organization, estimates that there are 100,000 working children in Calcutta currently, over the entire metropolitan district (Dewanji, 2002).

Both scholars and activists stress the importance of the informal sector in Calcutta's economy. The informal sector in Calcutta utilizes an underutilized economic good, mainly labor, to add to the range and quantity of goods, services, techniques and processes available to society. In the process, the poor make a living, however meager (Banerjee, 1990, Sen 1975).

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[21] Peri-urban agriculture in Calcutta has been extensively studied as a sustainable development and environmental management strategy that re-uses and manages waste-water and provides livelihoods and nutrition for many of the urban poor. See Bunting, Kundu and Mukherjee, 2002.

2.5   Housing Typologies for the Poor

Based on data from the 1981 Census, the CMDA estimates that about 44 % of the CMA population lives in very poor quality houses under extreme deprivation of basic services. Given below is a summary of the typology of settlements within which the urban poor live.

Table 4. Low-Income Housing Typologies, Calcutta

Settlement Type	Estimated CMA Population (1990)
Bustees	3 million
Refugee colonies	1 million
Derelict buildings	1 million
Self-help housing in fringe areas	200,000
Jute workers' colonies	40,000
Unrecognised(squatter) settlements	unsurveyed; (CMDA) estimate 200,000
Pavements	60,000

Sources: Project Report for the Calcutta Environmental Management and Strategy Action Plan, 1995 and CMDA Plan for Metropolitan Development in Calcutta, 1990.

The **derelict buildings** which house about a million lower-middle class residents are located in the central part of the city, where rent controls have resulted in the extreme dilapidation of old buildings. Landlords do not maintain the buildings, and eviction of tenants is difficult. This puts a large part of the land area out of the market, and drives up the prices of whatever properties come up for sale (Kapoor, 1982).

Bustees have been the primary housing source for the city's laboring poor for much of its history, and are distributed all over the city. Bustees developed on private lands, when landowners leased their properties to developers, known as Thika tenants, who constructed basic hutments that they rented out to incoming migrant workers. The second-level renter was called a "bharatiya". Living conditions in the bustees were appalling, with no sanitation facilities, no piped water, and 10 or more people sharing a room.

The Thika Tenancy Act of 1949 recognized the three-tier tenurial structure in bustees, and made it difficult for landowners to evict residents when the city's property values rose. Municipal interventions in the bustees have a long history, and have often been driven by public health concerns (Racine, 1990, CMDA). After a brief period of clearance and rehousing in the 1960's that was found to be politically and financially unsustainable, the approach has largely been to undertake in-situ upgradation. The CMDA has implemented an extensive bustee improvement programme that began in the seventies and includes a number of different schemes.[22] While these programs and interventions will be discussed in the next chapter, what is important here is to note that bustee settlements have a definite legal status and their residents have recognized tenure rights over them. According to the CMDA, as of March 1990, about 2 million of the three million bustee residents had been covered under the various programmes, making it one of the largest urban environmental improvement programmes in history.

After about a decade of extensive slum improvement programs, it was noticed that the original owners of the land had lost interest in developing the properties because of the unfavorable long-term leases they had with the Thika tenants, while the Thika Tenants had appropriated much of the benefits of the BIP schemes through increased rentals[23] (Racine, 1990). The landlord however, was responsible for the payment of property tax to the municipal authorities, and for obvious reasons, defaulted on their tax payments.

The Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act was passed in 1981 to correct this situation. Under this Act, all lands comprised in Thika Tenancies in Calcutta and Howrah Municipality areas, with rights, titles and interests thereof, have been vested with the Government of West Bengal. Thika tenants now pay their rental dues to state-appointed Thika controllers. Under the act, land can be inherited but not alienated. Thika tenants can make alterations or improvements to the building structures with the approval of the municipal authority. The 1981 act created a significant change in the tenure structure of the bustees, and incorporated additional protections against the eviction of the 'bharatiyas[24]'. In addition, under the Premises Tenancy Act, bharatiyas in bustees are assured of receiving water supply and metered electricity connections (Banerjee, 2002).

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[22] These include the Bustee Improvement Programme, implemented in phases under the World Bank Calcutta Urban Development Projects in the 1970's, the centrally funded Urban Basic Services Program in the 80's, and the Calcutta Slum Improvement Program in the 1990's. (www.cmdaonline.com)

[23] According to a CMDA survey, the rent charged by Thika Tenants on slum dwellers increased between 1974-75 and 1979-80, by 16 percent in the unimproved bustees and by 43 percent in the improved bustees. This increase compelled a number of the poorest residents to leave their improved bustees for unimproved ones(see Bustee Improvement Programme of the CMDA: An Evaluative Study, CMDA 1981).

[24] Bharatiya's are second level-renters, who rent a room or hut from Thika tenants.

Calcutta's original bustees were all formed within the core city, and in the neighbouring industrial city of Howrah, on the western banks of the Hooghly river, where industrial and transport and other service sector employment was concentrated. Within the core city, the slum population grew faster than the overall population, and the percentage of slum residents in the city increased from 22% in 1961 to 41% in 1981. According to the Corporation statistics, there are presently 5500 slums within city limits.

Also in Howrah are the **jute-workers housing quarters**. These constitute the few low-income worker housing provisions in Calcutta, and offer wretched living conditions and minimal services. The jute industry is facing a severe downturn and with the responsibility for worker housing maintenance lying with mill-owners, few improvements have been made.

Table 5. Slum Population as a Percentage of Total Population in CMC Area

Population	Census Years		
	1961	**1971**	**1981**
Total Population	2.9 million	3.1 million	3.3 million
Slum Population	0.64 million	0.77 million	1.3 million
Slum Population as a percentage of total population	22%	22%	41%

Sources: Census of India and Ghosh, 1990.

The Refugee colonies, like the bustees, are served by various municipal and CMDA programmes to provide basic services and infrastructure. Refugee colonies were formed by East Bengal refugees after partition, who settled on private and government land on the edge of the city. The city authorities later recognized these 'squatter' colonies, acknowledging their success as a self-help housing solution in the face of the government's inadequate resettlement and rehabilitation arrangements (Chatterjee, 1989, Banerjee 2002).

The "unrecognized" squatter settlements began developing in the late 1960's and 1970's, by which time the bustees, already extremely congested, no longer afforded a housing option for incoming migrants. In addition, the rents in many of the improved bustees had increased after they were improved, making even bustee shelter beyond the

migrant's means [25] . These migrants squatted on marginal land along rail tracks, canals, highways, under bridges and flyovers and on vacant public and private land. Broad brush surveys undertaken in the mid-1980s by Unnayun, a Calcutta NGO, estimated the number of unrecognised dwelling, of all types, at between 5 –10 percent of the CMA population. Unlike the refugee settlements, these squatter colonies have no legal status, nor are they entitled to receive municipal services.

In the absence of government intervention, several non-governmental and charitable organizations have been working with these communities to help the communities obtain ration cards, recognised addresses, health and education facilities, and most importantly, water.

The **pavement dwellers**, like the "unrecognized" settlements have no legal rights over their space. They have a much longer history in the city, and are distinct from the squatter settlements described before, in their spatial location and their demographic profile. A majority of the pavement dwellers are single male workers, of whom about two-thirds are permanent migrants from the poorest rural districts in Bengal and the surrounding states (Ghosh, 1991, Sen 1975). The CMDA estimated the number of pavement dwellers in Calcutta city at just over 55,000 in 1987.

The largest concentration of pavement dwellers is in the city's commercial center, where they work as daily-wage labor, or in transport and porterage, as rickshaw and handcart pullers and coolies. Shelter provisions range from makeshift shanties where whole families live, to people who lack even a tarpaulin over their heads.

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[25] Based on personal interviews with Ramaswamy, Mallick, Burman.

CHAPTER THREE: POLITICS, PLANNING AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

3.1   Party Politics in West Bengal

This chapter lays out the political influences that shaped Calcutta's development. Focusing on the policies and achievements of the ruling Left front government, it lays the groundwork for the subsequent investigation of how political action, ideology and competition combined to provide a formal basis for the housing strategies of the poor in the 1950s and 1960s, during an era when slum clearance and re-housing was conventional wisdom.

The state of West Bengal has had a democratically elected Left government in power since 1977. The Communist Party of India's (Marxist) (CPM) twenty-five year rule makes it the longest running incumbency in any Indian state. The CPM came to power in the 1977 elections, when an anti-Congress wave brought opposition parties to power at the center and in most Indian states [1]. In June 2001, when the party won the state elections for the sixth time, Jyoti Basu, chief minister for a record 23 years, handed over the reigns to Buddhadeb Bhattarcharya [2] (*Frontline,* Jun 9-22).

The Congress Party had won the first West Bengal state elections in Independent India, and established an elaborate patronage network that originated in Calcutta and spread outward through the smaller towns and rural areas (Kohli, 1987). Throughout the years of Congress rule, the Left parties, headed by the Communist Party of India (CPI), provided significant opposition to the Congress. They campaigned on a pro-poor and pro-labor platform, and had their strongest support amongst industrial towns and urban areas, during a time of escalating political unrest (Chatterjee, 1997, Chaube, 1991). In 1967, the Congress lost power to the United Front, a coalition of 14 Left-leaning opposition parties (Kohli, 1987).

The United Front that came to power in 1967 was a factionalized coalition that did little to control disorder and violence within the state, and was dismissed by the Central government and presidential rule established after less than a year. The Left was voted into power again when elections were held in 1969, but political violence, labor militancy,

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[1] The anti-Congress wave was a result of Indira Gandhi's repressions during the emergency. In 1975, Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, declared a state of "Internal Emergency" under article 352 of the Constitution of India. The Emergency lasted 19 months and restricted the political and civil freedoms of Indian citizens.
[2] Menon, Parvathi " Behind a Famous Victory", *Frontline* June 2001. Vol 18-Issue 12, Jun 9-22

gheraos[3], naxalite extremism, strikes and lockouts caused the center to dismiss the coalition government once more and re-impose presidential rule (Chatterjee, 1997).

In 1971, the war between India and Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh made Indira Gandhi enormously popular, and resulted in a huge Congress victory in the 1972 elections. The Congress ruled West Bengal from 1972-77, but as a consequence of Indira Gandhi's imposition of Emergency rule, they lost heavily in the 1977 elections. Within the Left coalition[4] that won, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) better known as the CPM emerged as the single most important party in West Bengal.

The CPM has ruled the state with relative success over the past 25 years (Kohli, 1987). Kohli attributes their continued electoral success to a "social-democratic" ruling strategy, which eschewed "revolutionary mobilization" for a more gradual reform process. Unlike the extreme left, their mandate has been to improve the conditions of the poor peasantry without alienating the wealthier sections. Additionally, they have sought to discourage the labor militancy that characterized Left rule in the sixties (Kohli, 1987 pps 3-12).

Kohli describes the CPM's move from a revolutionary ideology to a reformist one as the outcome of three factors:
(1) The lessons learned during the chaos that resulted from the pursuit of militant strategies under the UF government, (2) the need to broaden the party's electoral base and (3) the need to attract investment and facilitate growth in a largely private economy (Kohli, 1990, pp 137).

Their most notable success has been rural land reform and democratic decentralization of governance, both in rural and urban areas. Though land redistribution was an important concern for the central and state governments after Independence, few state governments, including West Bengal under the Congress, undertook the implementation of land reform through concrete measures. The Congress in West Bengal had built its support through rural elites, while the Communist Party came to power on a pro-poor platform. The CPM's commitment to ensuring that pro-poor land redistribution measures were implemented was

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[3] "Gherao" is a term used to describe a blockade or encirclement, a term that became popular in the 1960s when activists in West Bengal began to surround politicians for hours with huge numbers of people. Police stations, factories, and government buildings were "gheraoed" during political agitations.
[4] The Left front is a combination of the CPM, CPI, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Forward Bloc. I use Left front and CPM interchangeably in this chapter, since the CPM is by far the most dominant Left party in Bengal.

largely a matter of communist ideology and political will, achieved through a mass-mobilization campaign that involved party leaders, local activists and administrators (Kohli, 1990; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003). Once in power, the CPM abolished intermediary landlords or zamindars, imposed land ceilings, redistributed lands above mandated ceilings, and regulated the tenancy rights of sharecroppers.

The Left Front's most significant achievement was the distribution of vested lands in the form of pattas[5] to poor households, and the tenancy registration program of landless sharecroppers[6]. Their land reforms made sharecropping hereditary and arbitrary eviction by landlords a punishable offense (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003).

Extensive land reforms and other rural development measures produced a marked decrease in rural poverty levels during the past three decades. Harriss concludes after a cross-country study of poverty reduction in rural areas that:

"the activities of a left-of-centre party (the CPM) that has combined coherent leadership, pragmatism towards the propertied classes, and ideological and organisational commitment, which has successfully challenged local landed power-holders has played a significant role in explaining poverty reduction in rural Bengal" (Harriss, 2000, pp 24).

He also notes that Kerala, another well-performing state, has the added benefit of a strong civil society outside the political parties as well as more political competition while in West Bengal the CPM has become something of a "monolithic machine" (Harriss, 2000, pp 19).

In urban areas, poverty reduction has also been significant, though less significant in terms of the absolute numbers of people living under the poverty line in urban areas.

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[5] "Patta" is a common vernacular terminology for title to land.

[6] V.K. Ramachandran, in an opinion piece in Frontline, claims that in total, more than half of all rural households were the direct beneficiaries of land reform after 1977 in West Bengal. He quotes the following figures:
More than 1.4 million sharecroppers were registered with the public authority, earning them security of tenure and a series of new rights in the land and credit markets, Ceiling surplus land was distributed to 2.5 million households, Title deeds to house-site lands were given to 500,000 households, Title deeds to agricultural land were issued in the names of 400,000 women. In total, more than half of all rural households were the direct beneficiaries of land reform after 1977. (Ramachandran, V.K " So why did the Left Front Win?", in *Frontline*, Vol 18-Issue 12, June 8, 2001)

Table 6. Urban and Rural Poverty Ratios in West Bengal and India

	Urban			Rural			Combined		
	1973-74	1993-94	1999-00	1973-74	1993-94	1999-00	1973-74	1993-94	1999-00
West Bengal	34.67	22.41	14.86	73.16	40.80	31.85	63.43	35.66	27.02
India	49	32.4	23.6	56.4	37.3	27.1	54.9	36	26.1

Notes: Poverty at the national level is measured as the weighted average of state-wide poverty levels.
The Poverty ratio at state level is measured from state-specific poverty lines and the distribution of persons by expenditure group obtained from the national sample survey data on consumption expenditure.

Sources: Economic Survey 2001-2002, Ministry of Finance, GoI.

The CPM's other significant achievement is empowering local governments through democratic decentralization. West Bengal was the first state in India to implement the recommendations of the Ashok Mehta[7] committee, formed in 1977 to review the nature of local government institutions across different states. The committee envisioned a stronger role for local government institutions than as implementing agencies for centrally planned programs, and to that effect recommended that regular elections be held at the local level, and that political parties compete in them. The Left Front implemented these recommendations, and was able to utilize local self-government institutions to consolidate their hold on the countryside (Lama-Rewal, 2002).

The CPM's success in using the decentralization of power to local government to strengthen its position is based on the CPM's own organizational structure, principled on "democratic centralism" and a disciplined and well-organized party cadre. The Left Front's campaign to mobilize votes in Bengal is characterized by an elaborateness, intricacy and discipline that are "quite unique in India, and probably unmatched in any electoral democracy in the world." (Chatterjee, 1997, pp 142). At the state level, the Left Front committee includes senior representatives of all constituent parties. In each of the 17 districts are district committees and within each district, election committees are set up, one for each parliamentary constituency in the district. In the more densely populated urban constituencies, the next level of organization is the ward committee that oversees electioneering within the ward (Chatterjee, 1997). A result of the Left parties' organizational structure is that the general population, particularly the working poor, in Calcutta is strongly politicized compared to other cities in India. Bustees house party organizations, and nearly every settlement has some form of political unit, most often in the form of a

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[7] See Bhargava , Panchayati Raj institutions: an analysis of issues, problems and recommendations of Ashoka Mehta Committee ,1979

"sports club" where party affiliated youth gather (Roy, 2003, personal interview Ramaswamy, 2003).

3.2   Competition and Ideology: The New Left and the Opposition

Bardhan and Mookherjee examined the momentum of land reforms from 1978-98 in the state, and noted that as "shifting voter loyalties strengthened the competitive position of the Left it slackened its land reform effort relative to the Congress" (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2003, pp1). Their findings indicate that interactions between political competition and ideology influenced the determinants of reform implementation.

Both political competition from the Congress and other non-left parties as well as the CPM's leftist ideology appear to have become diluted during their long years in power. The Congress party is no longer a major force in West Bengal politics, and the CPM's main opposition party is the Trinamool Congress, headed by former Congress party leader Mamta Banerjee. The Trinamool Congress appears to have inherited many of the characteristics that Kohli associated with the Congress in Bengal—factionalism, in-fighting and lack of discipline[8]. Critics of Mamta Banerjee most often charge her with political opportunism. In the run up to the elections of 2001, the Trinamool Congress made and unmade alliances with the other principal Opposition parties, the Congress(I), and the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). These hastily made alliances exposed the weakness of the opposition, and but did little to lessen the CPM's support.

In the most recent elections in 2001, the Left Front was voted into power with a two-thirds majority. It won 199 out of 294 Assembly seats, with a vote-share of 49 per cent[9]. Its best showing was in rural and peri-urban areas and it won 14 out of 18 districts in the State. The Left won most of the reserved seats for candidates from Scheduled castes and tribes as well, and nineteen of the 28 women legislators are from left parties[10]. An op-ed in the *Frontline* journal summed up the CPM's sixth consecutive victory in the state elections: "The vote in West Bengal is not a vote for no change. It is a vote for change, but change that is founded on the strengths of a progressive legacy" (Frontline, June 8, 2001).

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[8] Allegations of criminality and vote-rigging are traded between the Left parties and the opposition constantly, and elections in Bengal, particularly the recent Panchayat elections, are often marred by violence and political killings.
[9] Frontline Magazine, "Behind a Famous victory", Volume 18 - Issue 12, Jun. 09 - 22, 2001.
[10] The Left won 15 out of 16 seats reserved for candidates of the Scheduled Tribes, and 47 out 58 seats reserved for candidates from the Scheduled Castes. See Frontline Magazine, "Behind a Famous victory", Volume 18 - Issue 12, Jun. 09 - 22, 2001.

As far as their commitment to communist ideology is concerned, the CPM's pragmatic brand of pro-poor development has long been the target of criticism by more radical left parties such as the CPI (ML)[11]. However, in the past decade, their ideological base in India has come under attack from two sides: first, the rising popularity of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and secondly, the process of economic liberalization in India that began with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's government's New Economic Policy in 1991, which no subsequent national government has sought to reverse (Chakraborty, 1995).

The CPM was initially opposed to the New Economic Policy of the Centre, but the pragmatic former chief minister Jyoti Basu, who had in the past made consistent effort to attract foreign and national capital into the state, declared that 'We will have to plan within the existing capitalist system of our country[12]" and announced a new industrial policy for West Bengal that deregulates certain licensing, manufacturing and equity participation controls, and provides incentives for new industries[13] (GoWB).

West Bengal has clearly benefited from the liberalization process, as Chakraborty's statistics from Secretariat of Industry Approvals indicate. Of all the new investment after the beginning of the structural reform process, almost fifty-nine percent is concentrated in five states (Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal), all leading urban states with large cities (Chakraborty, 2000). West Bengal was second to Maharashtra in its share of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with fourteen percent of FDI in 1995-1996. In terms of overall investment, West Bengal took second place after Gujarat. The spatial distribution of this new investment in West Bengal is revealing. According to Chakraborty, about 35% of the small scale investment (up to $150 million each) is in the Calcutta metropolitan area and a substantial proportion of this investment in the city is for office complexes, theme parks, transportation, and luxury housing. Most manufacturing investment is concentrated in the city's industrial suburbs, and in the two ports-cum-industrial complexes of Kulpi and Haldia to the south of the city (Chakravorty, 1996).

Under new chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, reforms have accelerated, and there is increasing talk in the local newspapers of a "New Left" taking charge of West Bengal.

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[11] CPI(ML) is the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).
[12] Rajat Ray, editor of Calcutta Daily the Ananda Bazaar Patrika, reflects on two decades of Left Rule in India Seminar:2000, (http://www.india-seminar.com/2001/497.htm)
[13] See Government of West Bengal, Commerce and Industries Department "The West Bengal Incentive Scheme, 2000", in The Calcutta Gazette, February 14 2001

The Financial Times quotes Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee as saying, "The new leadership is not carrying any ideological baggage." [14], indicating a distinct shift in the government's rhetoric, as well as its support. Mr Bhattacharjee began courting local business leaders soon after he took over as chief minister, and appears to have made a considerable impact. The president of the Confederation of Indian Industries, an industrial lobby group is quoted in *The Financial Times*, as saying "As recently as a year ago the perception of West Bengal was negative: now the state is back in orbit." (*The Financial Times,* June 28, 2001) [15].

The declared goals of the state's leaders are fairly modest - to become a center of large scale production of petrochemicals, leather, pharmaceutical, metallurgical, and engineering items within the Southeast Asia region, and to compete globally in the electronics field, focusing on mainly computer software and hardware. The state wants to evenly distribute the location of production facilities, but clearly expects such units to converge around the infrastructure advantages in and around Calcutta (Chakraborty and Gupta, 1996). The government's divestment and privatization plans have however, attracted broad criticism from union leaders, opposition and other Left parties, a section of the media and academics, and industrial workers who fear massive retrenchments.

As the CPM reinvents itself as the "New Left", Trinamool leader Mamta Banerjee is projecting herself as the voice of the poor. Her support base includes the deprived poor and unemployed youth (Ray, 2001) and "sections from the newspapers, the bureaucracy, police, slum dwellers, and the underworld"[16]. It is concentrated in Calcutta and its surrounding urbanized districts, Howrah, Midnapore, Hoogly, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Nadia (*Frontline*, June 22, 2001).

3.3   Calcutta's Politics: How the City Votes

Calcutta has always been the Left Front's weakest constituency. Even in the 1977 elections, when it swept to power with a huge majority, its poorest showing was in the city of Calcutta. It campaigned for bustee tenancy regulations and refugee rehabilitation when it was in the opposition, but once it came into power, it concentrated its resources and

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[14] See "Bengal Marxists Look to the Market", By Khozem Merchant and Kunal Bose in The Financial Times, June 28, 2001
[15] ibid
[16] Former CPM finance minister and economist Ashok Mitra, in an interview with *Frontline Magazine*, Volume 18 - Issue 12, Jun. 09 - 22, 2001. Both the Left parties and the Opposition trade accusations of underworld support and connections, and given the violent nature of West Bengal politics, it is likely that both parties are as criminalized. (Ramaswamy 2003, Chatterjee 1997)

activities towards rural development, largely neglecting the city's structural, social and economic problems (Kohli, 1990).

"Although several important reasons underlie that order of priorities, the most obvious and most important is that elections are won or lost in the countryside. Because the CPM's hold on power has depended on concentrating its resources in the villages, Calcutta has been ignored. [17]" (Kohli, 1990, Pg. 151).

In Calcutta, the CPM's most significant achievements are related to restoring law and order after the insurgency of the late sixties and seventies, reigning in labor militancy and avoiding the sectarian violence that has plagued most large cities in India with terrible frequency. When riots broke out across the country in 1984 after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and in 1992, after the demolition of Babri Masjid, Calcutta was largely peaceful, despite its large minority population (Kohli, 1990, Chatterjee, 1997).

In the first few years of Left rule, from 1977-1985, municipal elections were not held and the city was governed directly by the state government. Kohli attributes their decision not to hold municipal elections to a fear of loosing the corporation to the Congress and other non-left parties. Before holding elections, the CPM did a bit of gerrymandering to increase its chances of winning by democratic means by expanding the city limits to include several peripheral areas around the city, including places like Jadavpur where a large number of East Bengal refugees had settled[18] (Kohli, 1990). The East Bengal refugees blamed the Congress for partition, and the Congress government's failure to provide them with resettlement options forced them to invade vacant lands bordering the then city limits. The Left parties played a prominent role in vocalizing the rights of the refugees to rehabilitation. Their subsequent regularization process and tenancy reform followed the success of the Left's rural land redistribution program, and provided them with an assured political constituency (Chatterjee 1997, Kohli, 1990).

The CPM won the first municipal election with a thin majority in 1985. As part of their program of decentralization, the CPM restructured the powers and role of municipal government. These changes were introduced in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act of 1980. The CPM managed to win the corporation elections twice more, in 1990 and 1995, but always with a very narrow majority. The 2000 elections resulted in the first change of government at the city level in 15 years, and the city corporation is now run by the Trinamool Congress in alliance with the BJP. As before, the election was closely contested

and of the 141 wards in Calcutta Municipality, the Left Front won 62 seats and the Trinamool 64 (The TMC-BJP combine won 67), while the Congress won in 12 wards (*Frontline*, June 2001).

Though there have been considerable changes since Kohli's analysis of the city's voting patterns in 1990, in terms of the both the parties and their platforms, the continuity in electoral patterns within the city still holds.

In the city, the CPM's core support is still the 3-million bustee dwellers and the East Bengal refugees and their descendants. Together these groups constitute almost half of Calcutta's population[19]. The bustees are spread all over Calcutta and show a strong support for the Left parties because of their contribution to tenancy reform, and to a sustained programme of physical infrastructure improvements and upgradation. The residents of the bustees range from the lower-middle class to the very poor, however they are far better off than the city's 250,000 strong population of pavement-dwellers and illegal squatters.

These pavement dwellers are largely Hindi-speaking migrants and form part of the Congress' core electoral support. The Congress' traditional support group is now divided up amongst the Trinamool Congress, the Congress and to a small part, the BJP. Non-Bengali migrants tend to vote for non-Left parties because the Congress has been a powerful force in the Hindi heartland and because the CPM has often used anti-centre and pro-Bengali rhetoric that reinforced existing divisions (Kohli 1990).

Kohli used sex ratio as a proxy for linguistic data to identify areas with a concentration of migrant labor and found that Congress wins in most of these wards. These areas are concentrated in the old, congested central part of Calcutta.

However, class and ethnic identities influence voting patterns in different ways. Calcutta has a considerable Muslim population,[20] they constitute a little under 20% of the population of Calcutta city and are the city's largest minority group. The city's Muslim population is overwhelmingly poor, and over three fourths of the city's Muslim population may be living in slum and squatter neighborhoods [21]. Amongst the Muslims, Kohli describes a change in voting patterns in the state. Traditionally, Muslims tended to vote for the secular Congress, though there has been a considerable swing to the left (Kohli, 1990). The shift towards the

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[18] This increased the number of electoral wards from 100 to 141 (CMC)
[19] See Table 4, Chapter Two page
[20] Personal interview with V.Ramaswamy, January 2003.

left can be explained by the fact that the CPM is not only avowedly secular, but has scrupulously avoided entering into electoral coalitions with the BJP. The Muslim vote appears to be divided along linguistic lines as well, as a quote in a daily newspaper from Trinamool leader Mamta Banerjee shows, "Congress has won 14 wards because of Urdu speaking minority votes. But then minorities (Bengali muslims) are with us and they voted for us in Panskura.[22]" The TMC has considerable minority support despite its alliance with the BJP[23] possibly because Mamta Banerjee champions the cause of the poor and vulnerable in the city[24], and a large part of minority population are both poor and vulnerable. CPM has a considerable number of women, scheduled caste and tribe and minority legislators.

Electoral support is fluid amongst the socio-economic groups— organized labor and the middle class (Kohli, 1990). Surprisingly, organized labor is not entirely pro-left. INTUC[25], one of the largest labor unions, was largely Congress dominated, and is now headed by Calcutta mayor and TMC leader Subrata Mukherjee. Additionally, following the CPMs quelling of labor strikes and its move to privatize key industries, left-leaning labor may tend to support the more radical leftist parties.

In recent years, the CPM has lost support amongst the Bengali middle class. Though the CPM leadership is primarily composed of upper–caste, well-educated Bengali men who have been active in the Left coalition for several decades (Kohli, 1990), the average middle-class and   Bengali family in Calcutta is dissatisfied with what years of Left-rule have accomplished for the city and the state. Kohli explains this dissatisfaction by the fact the aspects of life that daily affect middle-class urban voters such as infrastructure and social services have been severely neglected by the government. In addition, unemployment is high amongst the educated middle-class youth. Middle-class voters are spread all over the city, and particularly in the new townships like Salt Lake (officially known as Bidhannagar), developed as middle-class residential enclaves. New chief minister Bhattacharya with his focus on economic development may be winning back the middle class vote just as he has won the support of local industrial groups[26]. An indication of this is the Bidhannagar elections, where the vote was equally divided between the TMC and the CPM.

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[21] Personal interview with V. Ramaswamy, January 2003.
[22] "Left Front suffers setback" in The Tribune, June 8, 2000
[23] The BJP is a minor influence in West Bengal politics and uses less explicitly Hindu-chauvinistic rhetoric here.
[24] Mamta Bannerjee supported hawkers and displaced squatters evicted by the city government, publicly criticizing the Mayor's actions and causing a rift within her own party. (The Statesman, September 22, 2003)
[25] The Indian National Trade Union Congress
[26] The new chief minister is described often in the local press as being 'urbane, charming and cultured' , an image that would appeal to a middle-class electorate, rather than Mamta Banerjee's more down-to-earth, "streetfighter-in-crumpled-sari" persona (see Indian Express. "For Minister Mamta, Nothing Changes", Oct 23, 1999).

3.4   The Role of The Calcutta Municipal Corporation

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation is made up of 150 members, comprising 141 elected councilors, 7 Aldermen   elected by the councilors and two ex-officio members, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Improvement of Calcutta (C.I.T) and the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA).

The apex body of the CMC is the Mayor-in-Council (MIC), consisting of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and 10 other elected members of the CMC. The mayor is elected by the councilors, and then nominates the deputy mayor and a 10-member MIC, and distributes the various portfolios, which include health, drainage and sewerage, bustee improvement and roads and engineering. The Mayor-in-Council is collectively responsible to the CMC. Calcutta adopted the cabinet system of government at the local level in 1984, where the mayor allocates powers   "in the same way as the Chief Minister of the State Government allocates different portfolios to the Ministers of his Cabinet" (CMC). In this regard, the CMC is distinct from most urban local bodies in India, where the state government vests executive power in state-appointed Municipal Commissioner and the mayor has an honorific role (Lama-Rewal 2000, CMC, Kohli 1990). In the Calcutta Corporation, the mayor is the executive head and the municipal commissioner merely in charge of municipal administration. The members of MIC have the power to submit development plans and proposals to the Mayor as well as to sanction money for various projects. The mayor can also submit proposals to the municipal affairs department of the state government regarding legislation on urban affairs (CMC). In the past, important Bengali leaders like CR Das and Subhas Chandra Bose have been Calcutta mayors. The current mayor, Subrata Mukherjee is a veteran politician and trade-unionist and the TMC's second most prominent leader after Mamta Banerjee.

The corporation is further decentralized to the borough and ward level. Calcutta has fifteen boroughs and each one forms a borough committee composed of the ward councilors of the wards in the borough and elects a borough chairperson. The responsibility of the borough chairperson is to prepare a budget for the borough, submit it to the CMC and distribute resources amongst the wards [27] (CMC, Lama-Rewal, 2001).

The local government representative closest to the citizens is the ward councilor. As directly elected representatives of their ward members, councilors have an obligation to the voters of their ward. Their duties involve assessing the needs of their ward and representing them to the CMC. They convey the demands and problems of their constituents to the Mayor-in-

Council. Each councilor can sanction upto Rs. 120,000 per year in discretionary development expenditures. They can also appeal to the MP of their constituency for project funding[28]. They are required to keep their constituents informed about corporation activities and programs and provide them with official documents such as identity cards, ration cards and the like. They also have an honorific role and attend events within their wards (Lama-Rewal, 2002). Councilors have duties towards the corporation and their party and must attend borough and house meetings, as well as meetings of the political party that they represent. The Calcutta Municipal Corporation is one of the few urban local bodies to have implemented the 74th CA provisions with regard to reservations for women in municipal elections[29]. The 2000 municipal elections resulted in 60 women councilors in the corporation out of 141 wards, up from 6 in 1990 before reservations were implemented.

3.5   Trends in Urban Governance

Given West Bengal's strong tradition of local self-government, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation has a more powerful role in urban governance than city governments in India's other large cities. The State Legislature has endowed the CMC with the responsibility of planning for economic development and for "the improvement, upgradation and promotion of the social, cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects of life for the citizens of Calcutta" (CMC, 2003). The corporation is thus envisaged as being both a deliberative and policy making body as well as executive one (CMC, 2003).

However, the distribution of power between the state and the municipal government is not entirely clear, and they have many overlapping jurisdictions. Within the state government, different departments have control over different areas of policy as well as parcels of land in the city. According to Kumar, the diffusion of authority results in conflicts due to institutional overlaps and leads to a subsequent dilution of responsibilities (Kumar, 1986).

In general, the city government is in charge of service delivery and also has some developmental functions. The state government is responsible for law and order, industrial policy and development, as well as the maintenance of certain infrastructure - like the waterways. Calcutta port is under the jurisdiction of the central government. The government at the center also plays a role in the city's development through the leverage it

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[27] Each ward has a population of 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants (CMC, Census of India).
[28] The Local Area Development Scheme allows each MP Rs 2 crore per year for the development of his or her constituency (Lama-Rewal , 2001).
[29] These quotas were implemented earlier in the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1992. For an examination of the role of women councilors in the CMC, see Lama-Rewal, Stephanie, "Women in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation: A study in the context of the Debate on the Women's Reservation Bill". CSH Occasional Paper, 2002. Reservations

has in providing development grants. Funds for projects aided by the major multilateral donor institutions are channeled through the Government of India.

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation in its present form was the result of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act 1980 that came into effect in 1984, though the city corporation has existed in some form or the other since 1726. The first elected corporation was established in 1847. The corporation board members were required to see that roads and drains were maintained in proper state of repair, and could hold property for the civic purposes. They levied taxes on housing, lighting, horses and vehicular traffic. In 1980, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act was amended to include the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment. The 74th Amendment bestows a constitutional status to urban local bodies in India and transfers certain administrate, legislative and financial powers and responsibilities from the state to the municipality (www.calmanac.org).

The 74th Constitutional amendment mandated that urban local bodies[30] would have a term of five years, and their elections would be supervised by an independent State Election Commission, created to organize and manage local government elections. In the event of their dissolution by the State before the completion of their full tenure, for reasons out of the ordinary, they would be reconstituted within a period of six moths. A third of the seats within the local government body were to be reserved for women candidates, and seats were reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their population in the municipal area (Mathur, 2002). With a view to ensuring the financial sustainability of municipal institutions, the Act mandated the formation of State Finance Commissions, constituted every five years, and charged them with reviewing the financial requirements of municipal governments, designing a package of taxes, duties and fees, and allocating grants-in-aid from the state and recommending measures to improve their financial resources (Mathur, 2002).

Cities and states in India have begun to experiment with different fiscal arrangements, and with attempts to raise additional resources and to involve private and community partners in the provision of what have traditionally been labeled as municipal infrastructure and

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for women in village panchayats, and other rural institutions are more widespread across different states and have a much longer history of implementation (Lama-Rewal, 2001).

[30] The amendment defines three types of urban local government bodies, a "municipal corporation" for a city, a "municipal council" for town, and "nagar panchayats" for transitional areas. The CMD includes two corporations, Calcutta and Howrah, several municipal councils and nagar panchayats (CMDA)

services. In several parts of the country, the basis of property taxation has come under major review and restructuring. In Calcutta, DFID is working with the CMC and with suburban municipalities on financial reform and capacity building for urban management[31]. The goals of cost recovery for water services, property tax valuation reform, and asset management are some of the objectives of the capacity building program, in addition to improving the efficiency and accountability of municipal government and integrating consultative and participatory approaches to urban development and poverty reduction. This marks a considerable paradigm shift towards municipal finances, marked by a tendency to apply the principles of cost recovery for pricing municipal infrastructure and services, to use assets such as property and land-use rights as a lever to mobilize resources, to incorporate public-private partnership in the provision of municipal services and infrastructure and to reform the basis for taxation (Mathur, 2002).

In Calcutta, the formerly populist municipal authorities themselves appear to be warming towards the set of policy objectives that this paradigm shift exemplifies. Calcutta mayor and INTUC union leader, Subrata Mukherjee was quoted in a daily newspaper as saying that legislation is on the anvil to make tenants and slum-dwellers pay for the civic amenities they enjoy (*The Telegraph* , June 13, 2003) .

"It is necessary for the survival and rejuvenation of the city and it will act as a deterrent to the drift of have-nots from the districts and from Bihar, Orissa and Bangladesh."
"The recent imposition of water tax can be an eye-opener," the Mayor said. "Earlier, the state government, the civic authorities and the political parties had always unanimously opposed the imposition of a tax on filtered water. But the deplorable financial condition of the civic body had made the levy inevitable," he added.
Hence, users of civic amenities should have to pay for them, now that the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC) coffers are empty. According to Mayor Mukherjee, it was "magnanimity" on the part of the tax-payers that they had allowed the CMC to provide services to those with little stake in the city (*The Telegraph*, June 13, 2003).

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[31]   From the ADB's "Report And Recommendation Of The President To The Board Of Directors On A Proposed Loan To India For The Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project", page 27. " A comprehensive capacity building program (CBP) to strengthen all aspects of CMC will be funded through a parallel financing arrangement between DFID and CMC. The CBP will be an integral part of the Project, and will come within the operational responsibility of the PMU" The capacity building program aims to " develop and implement an institutional and organizational plan", "develop and implement an integrated asset management system"," develop and implement a composite area-linked system for the levy of property taxes," "develop and adopt urban poverty reduction approaches within the Bustee Services Cell" and "develop and implement a human resources development program".

The mayor's words highlight the disconnect that state and city government officials see between an efficient and well-managed city, and a "magnanimous" one providing for its poor. Quoting Mukherjee again,

"The civic body has a full-fledged department and a mayor-in-council member to look after the welfare of the slums, though they contribute nothing to the CMC coffers." Mukherjee said this "unfair practice" should have been stopped a long time ago. "It should have struck some predecessor of mine that even the slum-dwellers should be made to pay for something that they use. They cannot expect others to foot the bill. The time has come to get matters rectified. [32]" (*The Telegraph* , June 13, 2003) .

The disconnect between the donor agencies' pro-poor language and the mayor and municipal corporation's own rhetoric on a similar set of policy objectives is striking.

3.6   Metropolitan Development and Planning Institutions.

This final section gives a brief introduction to the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Agency (CMDA), the planning and implementation agency that manages the larger Calcutta Metropolitan district and the third important governmental agent in the city's development, after the municipal and state government.

A short note first on the CMDA's predecessor, the Calcutta Improvement Trust, that came into being in 1911, through the Calcutta Improvement Act, and initiated the era of planned development in the city. CIT produced and published the first planning document of the city in 1914 (Gupta, 2000). In the first half of the twentieth century, the CIT was the primary non-political agent of the city's development and was entrusted to develop and improve urban   infrastructure, transportation and residential facilities (Gupta 2000, Kumar 1986). The CIT undertook the first attempts at slum upgradation, though with little success as it was operating at a time when the legislative recognition of occupancy rights, and frameworks for intervention in privately owned bustees had not been established. The CIT remained a significant actor in urban development till the 1960's, when a new city planning organization and a new implementation agency, the CMPO and the CMDA were created[33].

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[32] The bustee tenants are required to pay property tax after an amendment of the Thika Tenants Act , though they do not pay fees for water.
[33] According to Kumar, the CIT is now little more than an implementation agency of CMC and the CMDA, "Despite its long record in urban renewal and its legal and engineering expertise, as well as its financial assets (around 10

It was a massive public health crisis that forced the state government to think about devising planning strategies to ensure that the city's services, particularly water and sewerage, kept pace with urban population growth. In 1958, a terrible cholera epidemic broke out in the city (CMDA, NIUA, 1986), and Dr. B.C Roy, the Chief Minister, invited an expert team from World Health Organization, to study its problems and devise solutions. As part of this initiative, with help from the Ford Foundation, the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization was set up in 1961 (CMDA, GoWB). Recognizing that the city was growing at a much faster rate outside the corporation boundaries, the WHO and Ford Foundation team identified a larger area called the Calcutta Metropolitan Area, to be covered in their recommendations for water supply, sanitation and drainage infrastructure. Based on their recommendations, the CMPO came up with a pioneering planning document called the Basic Development Plan for the CMD: 1966-86 (BDP) in 1966. Unlike a traditionally prescriptive master plan, the BDP acknowledged the City's existing growth trends and urban functions, and was conceived as a method to keep up with and manage urban development within this context. It was kept deliberately open-ended and dynamic, and spatially expansive- its principal aim was to decongest the city (Kumar, 1986, CMDA 1966). The BDP was followed by a Traffic and Transportation Plan for the CMD: 1966-86 and a Master Plan for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage. The CMPO was a planning organization and not geared towards implementing plans, and the CMDA was set up for this purpose. Calcutta's urban crisis had by this time attracted the national government's attention, and the Government of India was instrumental in setting up the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) in 1970 through a plan grant (CMDA, Sanyal and Tewari, 1991)

There was much debate around the role of the new agencies, and the effect they would have on the municipal corporation and the municipalities (Sanyal and Tewari, 1991). The criticism of the CMC centered around the fact that as an elected body, its local councilors extended patronage to their own clients while ignoring the broader developmental plans of the city as a whole. The CMDA's primarily apolitical nature gave it a credibility that the corporation, perceived to be inefficient and corrupt, lacked. Looking at the broader political picture at the time, the CMDA was formed during a year when the state was under president's rule after the failure of the 1969 Left coalition government to take control of the city (Sanyal and Tewari, 1991).

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crore in fixed assets), and ownership of large land parcels in key locations, CIT is now little more than a contractor for CMDA projects." (Kumar, 1986).

The CMDA embarked upon a massive investment program involving schemes for development of infrastructure in parts of the CMD. The schemes, largely drawn from the BDP and Master Plans, were considered to be of immediate necessity. In its early days, the CMDA was an agency responsible for the selection of projects, for channeling funds to the various state executing agencies, and the supervision and monitoring of the implementation process (CMDA). Later, a number of directorates were set up within CMDA to execute urban infrastructure projects, particularly housing development and slum improvement. As the CMDA grew in experience and size, it absorbed more functions and a Directorate of Planning was set up within CMDA. After the CPM government came into power in 1977, the CMDA Act of 1970 was repealed by the state government , and the Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act of 1979 was enacted. This Act designated the CMDA as the statutory planning and development authority for Calcutta Metropolitan Area (CMA). In the early 1990's, an attempt was made to decentralize the implementation of some projects to the municipalities. The CMDA still sanctions all local development requests, and they must adhere to the agency's larger planning perspectives.

Presently, the Chairman of the CMDA is the Minister-in-Charge, Municipal Affairs and Urban Development of the Government of West Bengal. Other members of governing body are the vice-chairman, a career bureaucrat, and the mayors of the Calcutta and Howrah Municipal Corporations and the heads of the other municipalities.

A History of Planned Development in The Calcutta Metropolitan District

1. Basic Development Plan: 1966-86 (BDP) -This was the first Perspective Plan document prepared by CMPO between 1960-61 to 1965-66, with Ford Foundation assistance. The plan proposed alternate growth centers north of the urban core in Kalyani to cope with increasing congestion, and identified 160 projects focusing on water supply, sanitation and transportation that were of immediate priority.

2. Calcutta Urban Development Project (CUDP I) 1970-71 and 1977-78 – This project was supported by the World Bank and concentrated on implementing another 130 BDP projects, again focusing on basic services.

3. Calcutta Urban Development Project (CUDP II) 1978-79 and 1982-83 – Again funded by the World Bank and DFID, this project saw the CMDA step into social and economic development activities.

4. Calcutta Urban Development Project (CUDP III) 1983-84 and 1992-1994- The final phase of the CUDP programme, a significant change in CUDP-III was decentralization of implementation of some projects to municipalities. The CMDA assessed after its completion, "substantial improvement in water supply, environmental hygiene, traffic and transport and slums. The impact on drainage and sanitation has been less than expected." (CMDA, 1990).

5. A Perspective Plan for CMA: 2011- (Prepared in 1990) –The most comprehensive planning document since the BDP, the CMDA worked with experts from the University of Calcutta , to delineate a wider definition of the metropolitan area, and propose the development of two million-plus cities at the CMD edges, at Uluberia–Bagnan (south –west) and Barasat-Barrackpur (north-east).

6. Calcutta 300: Plan for Metropolitan Development: 1990-2015
Prepared by the CMDA during the tercentenary celebration of the city of Calcutta, this plan projected a total investment requirement of around Rs. 45 billion over the next 25 years, and formed the basis for the mega city programme.

7. Calcutta Mega-City Programme: Project Profile and Investment Plan-1994.
This plan was prepared by the CMDA and accepted in principle by the planning commission. The GoWB prepared the state's Urban Development Strategy and announced its New Industrial strategy as well in 1994. This was a project specific plan, with a concentration of investment in or very close to the Calcutta city limits.

8.VISION-2025
CMDA has recently prepared the draft perspective plan titled **"VISION-2025"**. The plan visualizes the city's future urban structure and also lists out the development strategies to be adopted for the purpose.

Source: compiled from Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority, World Bank, NIUA
http://www.cmdaonline.com/persplan.html

Two recent developments in the city's planning strategy are noteworthy. The first is the Government of India's Megacity Programme, under which five urban agglomerations are receiving special funding from the center for infrastructure improvements. Calcutta, along with Mumbai, Madras, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, is a beneficiary of this programme. The Megacity project is based on the expectations that these urban regions are on the threshold of an economic boom similar to those that transformed Kuala Lampur and Jakarta in recent years (Chakravorty and Gupta, 1996). In keeping with the new liberalization philosophy, new projects under the Megacity scheme are to have significant cost recovery or surplus generation components. The CMDA, in response, has moved away from its acknowledged expertise in slum improvement to housing, new area development, and building commercial facilities. Most of these new investments are targeted to the city and its immediate surroundings. The prospect of economic expansion in India's urban centers has also resulted in an unprecedented competition among cities (rather than states) for foreign investment, particularly in the information technology and software sector, and a new desire for the cosmetic change and city beautification plans that would signal urban revival.

Table 7. Development Expenditures for Calcutta Metropolis (planned and actual)

| Sector | CUDP-II 1978-82 | CUDP-III 1983-92 | Calcutta 300 1990-2015 | Megacity Plan Investments | |
				8th Plan 1992-97	8th and 9th Plan 1992-2002
Water Supply	113(10%)	589(24.3%)	6200 (13.7%)	1210 (19.9%)	2650 (16.6%)
Drainage and Sanitation	214 (19.9%)	760 (31.4%)	9900 (19.9%)	810 (13.3%)	2480 (15.5%)
Solid Waste Management	96 (8.5%)		2200 (4.9%)	110 (1.8%)	380 (2.4%)
Transport	280 (24.9%)	432(17.8%)	13,850(30.7%)	1080 (17.7%)	2340 (14.6%)
Housing and New Area Development	151 (13.4%)	321 (13.2%)	4300 (9.5%)	1700(28.0%)	5800(36.3%)
Slum Improvement (including social services)	271 (24.1%)	294(12.1%)	2700 (6.0%)	110 (1.8%)	270 (1.7%)
Commercial Facilities (including cultural and recreational)		28 (1.2%)	5200(11.5%)	990 (16.3%)	1779 (11.0%)
Environment			800(1.8%)	70(1.1%)	310 (1.9%)
TOTAL	1125(100%)	2423 (100%)	45,150 (100%)	6080(100%)	16.000(100%)

Notes: All figures are in Rupees Million. The figures in parentheses indicate the proportion of total expenditure for the given sector. The figures for the CUDP-II and CUDP-III are actual spending and do not include spending on municipal development, technical assistance and training, supervision and contingencies. The Calcutta 300 plan indicates the city's projected expenditure needs for the next 25 years on urban infrastructure and services.

Sources: Chakraborty and Gupta, GoWB, CMDA

The second notable change is the composition of development spending in the city under the various urban planning projects through the years. Table 7 (see previous page), lists the expenditure outlays of the major urban development projects in the past 30 years.

The proportion of spending on housing and new area development has clearly been inflated from 13% in the Calcutta Urban Development Projects; to 9.5 percent in Calcutta 300 to 36.3% in the Megacity plan outlay. There is a contradiction in the CMDA's own assessment of its expenditure needs in the Calcutta 300 plan and the new thrust on housing and commercial development envisaged in the Megacity plan. During CUDP II and CUDP III, the new area developments were primarily sites and services for the economically weaker sections (EWS). Under the Megacity outlay, a significant portion is likely to be middle income and luxury housing (Chakraborty and Gupta, 2000).

The private sector already plays a large role in housing medium and high-income urban communities, and there appears to be little rationale behind the CMDA's adopting these activities beyond the need to not only recover costs but generate income. The losers when the cost recovery mantra is adopted so enthusiastically are water supply, drainage and sanitation and slum improvement, the CMDA's most recognized area of expertise. Despite the successes and the reach of the slum improvement program, there remains a severe inadequacy of basic urban services, both infrastructural and social for a large proportion of the poor (CMDA). In particular, there are a large number of very poor people, who because they are "unrecognized" or illegal squatters, have remained outside the scope of public services [34]. Thus, the CMDA's work in slum improvement and upgrading is by no means finished, and needs to be extended rather than curtailed.

To sum up, in Calcutta's planned urban future, a smaller percentage of public funds will be spent on public goods like drainage, sanitation and transportation. Significantly more will be spent on housing and recreational, cultural and commercial facilities for the city's wealthier residents. Finally, resources towards slum improvement, the single most important redistributive measure in Calcutta's planning history, will be drastically reduced (Chakraborty and Gupta, 1996).

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[34] The "unrecognized" settlements will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR: BUSTEES, REFUGEE COLONIES AND THE LEGALIZATION PROCESS

4.1   Introduction

I ended the last chapter with a survey of the directions that urban policies have taken following the process of liberalization. Some of these policies and projects that arise from them have had an adverse effect on the city's poor. In the campaign for city beautification, roughly 50,000 squatters have been evicted from areas along the canals within the city in the past two years[1], and more evictions are in the offing. Street hawkers have been removed from central city areas in a campaign paradoxically called "Operation Sunshine," without resettlement and minimal if any compensation. More large-scale displacements are planned for new township and housing schemes, and the mayor of Calcutta has called for controls on the migration of the unskilled and "illegal" migrants to Calcutta[2]. Most striking is the fact that a government that has made a noteworthy contribution to poverty reduction through its efforts at reforming land tenure and providing basic services for the city's poor for over 30 years, is now adopting a markedly anti-poor image, both through its actions and words.

These contradictions led me to explore the conditions under which the residents of bustees and refugee squatter colonies were legalized and granted tenancy rights in the 1950s and 1960s, during an era when slum clearance and re-housing was conventional wisdom. In the previous chapter I introduced the political parties, the levels of government and the bureaucratic and institutional actors, relevant to an understanding of   urban development in Calcutta. Building upon this background, this chapter delves deeper into the roles these actors played in generating the political and legislative process that led to security of tenure for a majority of the urban poor in Calcutta. Specifically, it examines the political mobilization that established tenurial rights for bustee tenants and renters, and residents of refugee squatter settlements, and the public discourse surrounding these   movements. Through examining the history and politics of previous bustee and refugee colony legalization drives, in this chapter I lay the groundwork for the case I make in my next chapter for legalization/rehabilitation, squarely locating current struggles in their political precedents.

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[1] Estimated figure from newspaper reports and interviews (See Chapter Five for details).

In this chapter I focus on the role of the Left-parties and their affiliated community organizations in achieving legal status and security for two of the largest sources of housing for Calcutta's poor—the bustees and the refugee resettlement colonies. Together, the bustees and the refugee colonies account for nearly half the population of inner city Calcutta[3] and are well established in Calcutta's political, social and cultural landscape. As illustrated in chapter three, these areas form the Left Front's strongest busteeon in Calcutta. At first telling, the story appears to be a simple one of political patronage, but when examining the historical conditions, the actors involved, and the debates and the outcomes generated by the movements, a different picture emerges.

The change in status of certain bustees and settlements from illegal to legal was not a straightforward one. In both cases, the movement to achieve legal recognition was driven by the imminent threat of eviction. Residents under threat of losing their homes and their place in the city, in the 1950s and 1960s, organized to protest the evictions, and the Left-parties, then in the Opposition, provided political support, organization and voice to community organizations that were affiliated with them. The Left parties championed the legalization drive which fit into their larger ideological goals of establishing a people's democracy and overturning the old order[4]. For these communities, the involvement of the Left parties helped to make the eviction of slum residents and refugees a mass-based, citywide political issue. Parliamentarians from the Left argued for land redistribution to slum dwellers and refugees in the assembly and achieved important legislative changes that protected refugee squatters and bustee tenants against arbitrary eviction, and ensured their rehabilitation if they were displaced. The legislations required an intricate maneuvering around complex tenure issues, and were the subject of intense debates both in the assembly and in public discourse.

Both the affected groups and their champions in the Left parties used the language of rights and entitlements to articulate demands. Protests, demonstrations and public meetings took the issue to the streets, and the media played an important role in determining public opinion.

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[2] *The Statesman*, June 23, 2003.

[3] About 1/3 of the total population of the city of Calcutta live in Bustees or Slums. There are about 5500 bustees within the CMC limits(www.calmanac.org).

[4] From the CPM's Constitution, adopted in 1968 : "The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is the revolutionary vanguard of the working class of India. Its aim is socialism and communism through the establishment of the state of dictatorship of the proletariat. In all its activities the Party is guided by the philosophy and principles of Marxism-Leninism which shows to the toiling masses the correct way to the ending of exploitation of man by man, their complete emancipation."(www.cpm.org).

Another important consideration, particularly regarding the refugee movement, was the role the Left parties played in deflecting communal tensions and in arguing the case for land redistribution in terms of class (the dispossessed and landless against the zamindar or landed class), rather than religion or caste.[5]

The achievement of legal recognition legitimized marginal groups— the refugees and urban poor— and gave them an unassailable place in the city, as a well as a voice in decision-making. In time, legal recognition became the basis for government intervention and assistance in both the refugee colonies and the bustees. The achievements of Calcutta's long-term slum improvement program are widely documented and were described briefly in previous chapters. Though the policies and approaches have been changing with popular thinking, one consistent feature of all the various slum improvement programmes is that they are undertaken in those slums that are officially 'recognized.'[6]

4.2   The East Bengal Refugees

The first section of this chapter chronicles the resettlement of East Bengali refugees in Calcutta immediately after the partition of India in 1947. Though refugee migration to Calcutta continued in large numbers until the 1971 war between East Pakistan and Pakistan (which led to the formation of Bangladesh), I focus on the decade immediately after Partition, when the inadequacy of government relief and rehabilitation methods led to groups of refugees invading private and public lands in and around the city. This account is based primarily on secondary sources such as academic literature and narratives, and supported by Government of India (GoI) and Government of West Bengal (GoWB) sources.

The years following the partition of India based on religious lines in 1947 saw a continuous influx of Hindus from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) into West Bengal and neighboring states.   Unlike the more or less one-time mass migration of people who crossed the boundaries of India and Pakistan as a direct consequence of country's Partition, migration into Eastern India occurred over a longer time period, with significant numbers of refugees

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[5] The Hindu Mahasabha and some other refugee organizations based themselves on an overtly anti-Muslim agenda, describing the Hindu east Bengal refugees both as victims of Muslim violence, and people who had sacrificed their homelands for the good of the nation and deserved a home and relief in their new homeland (Chatterjee, 1994).
[6] In illegal settlements in the outer areas of the city, sporadic attempts at upgradation and provision of basic services are made through local action and through the efforts of local leaders. However, no government sanctioned programmes have benefited these settlements.

entering the country until the 1971 war[7], when Bangladesh came into existence. In the west, an elemental violence bordering on genocide impelled and accompanied the exodus on both sides of the border. The causes of the much larger migration out of East Bengal over a longer time-span are quite different. Minorities in East Pakistan found their fortunes rapidly declining and perceived that avenues of advancement and livelihood in a Muslim-dominated state were foreclosed; they also experienced social hostility, occasionally open and fierce, but more often covert and subtle (Chatterjee, 2002)[8]. However, violence in Bengal did not particularly escalate during the partition - the worst communal riots in the state had occurred in Calcutta in 1946, and attempts to heal communal tensions in Bengal were being carried out by political and social organizations immediately after the killings. Mahatma Gandhi remained in Calcutta on 15th August, 1947, requested by the mayor of the City, Syed Mohammed Usman (GoWB, CMC), to ensure that the riots which broke out in 1946 were not repeated. The relatively peaceful transition to independence in the city indicated that migration was more one-sided compared to Western India. The migration was mostly the crossing of Hindus from East Pakistan into West Bengal, with fewer Muslim Bengalis crossing into East Pakistan. In later years, events such as riots and wars caused surges in Hindu migration, but economic deprivation rather than religious persecution ensured a continuous trickle of migrants from both communities over the five decades of since India's Independence (Chatterjee, 1991, 2002).

Given the striking contrast between the nature of migration in Eastern and Western India, the differences in the Indian government's handling of refugee concerns in the East and West is not entirely surprising. The Indian government accepted that the transfer of population with West Pakistan was inevitable and irreversible, and the crisis in Punjab was viewed as a national emergency (Chatterji, 2001). In Western India, a commitment to fully and permanently rehabilitate the victims of partition was made, and resources were allocated and strategies devised to achieve this end. Properties evacuated by Muslims who had fled to Pakistan were acquired and distributed to the refugees, and land-holdings in northern cities were set aside as refugee resettlement areas.

The influx of refugees into Bengal, on the other hand, was seen in a very different light. Well after it had begun, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru continued to believe that the

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[7] The official definition of a "refugee" entitled to relief and rehabilitation support from the government of India is a person who migrated from East Pakistan before the creation of Bangladesh, that is before 25th March 1971(GoWB)
[8] Though refugee narratives focus on killings, brutal violence and loss of property, these were specific and separate instances of violence rather than a widespread anti-minority campaign (Chatterjee, 2001).

exodus could be halted, even reversed, provided the government in Dacca could be persuaded to deploy 'psychological measures' to restore confidence among the Hindu minorities (Chatterji, 2000). In 1950, a pact was signed by the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan[9], to ensure that the security and rights of the minorities living in India and Pakistan were protected. The pact was designed in part as a measure to stem the continuing influx of Hindu migrants into Bengal.

Relief measures for East Bengali refugees were conceived as a temporary measure, since permanent rehabilitation was thought unnecessary; indeed it was to be discouraged. Thus relief efforts took the form of temporary relief camps, and were based on the expectation that Bengali refugees crossing the border in either direction would be persuaded to return home. To that effect, the property of Muslim evacuees was to be held in trust for the Muslims until they too returned home, and was not redistributed to incoming Hindu refugees. In addition, the definition of those entitled to relief and rehabilitation support was based on their date of arrival, their reasons for migration and their mandatory registration in refugee camps, so that the numbers were whittled down to a more manageable scale. With little support and resources from the central government, in West Bengal the ruling Congress government's chief concern was not only to limit the migration, but also to limit the numbers of people entitled to state relief and rehabilitation.

In 1948, the West Bengal government declared that only persons ordinarily resident in East Bengal who entered West Bengal between 1 June 1947 and 25 June 1948, "on account of civil disturbances or fear of such disturbances or the partition of India," would be entitled to relief and rehabilitation. Furthermore, they set a deadline of 15 January 1949, by which these "legitimate" refugees would have to be registered, further reducing the number of people eligible for support. A branch Secretariat of the Central Ministry of Rehabilitation was set up in Calcutta in 1950, and the "registered" refugees were housed in relief camps and temporary shelters (Chatterji, 2001). While later migrants settled in districts neighboring Calcutta and in rural areas, as well as neighboring states[10], the first influx of migrants arrived in Calcutta (Mitra, 1990). Conditions in the city's overcrowded refugee camps were reported to be abysmal. Already facing severe pressures on urban land, the ruling

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[9] A peace treaty, named the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement, was signed by the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan. This agreement, between the governments of India and Pakistan, was regarding the security and rights of the minorities living in their respective countries in April 1950.

[10] Though a few migrants settled in Assam and Tripura, more than 80% of the refugees remained in Bengal.

Congress government attempted to persuade more of the incoming population to settle in the districts, seeking to combine the development of the rural hinterland with refugee rehabilitation schemes.

Camps were thus set up outside the city and its suburbs, and plans were made to accommodate the refugee population on the less-densely populated tribal lands of Tripura and Madhya Pradesh (Bouqerat, 2001). These resettlement plans completely failed to materialize, given the lack of infrastructure or employment opportunities in these areas. The 'success' of limiting the numbers of refugees in the government relief camps is reflected in the fact that less than 10 percent of the incoming refugees sought admission to the state-run relief camps (Chatterji, 2001).

Also in 1948, the Government of West Bengal had declared that no "able-bodied male immigrant" capable of earning a living would be given gratuitous relief for himself or his family for more than one week. After that, relief would be conditional only against works (Chatterji, 2001). The government did not start any large-scale "works" projects to employ the migrants, declaring that the migrant must, through his own effort, find suitable work. As a consequence, most migrants tended to move into informal employment and self-employed casual labor. With few jobs and little economic infrastructure outside the city, the Calcutta metropolitan area was where casual employment was most easily found. A considerable number of the early refugees had pre-partition ties with West Bengal and specifically Calcutta, through family, occupation and trade or government service. Thus, despite government directives to disperse into the smaller towns and rural areas, the refugees for obvious livelihood reasons remained concentrated in Calcutta. The need to set up homes close to the city drove the refugee land invasion movement, once the supply of land available in the city became scarce or beyond their means.

The central issue that both Chatterji and Chatterjee discuss is the debate over whether the legitimacy of refugees' claims to resettlement centered on rights or charity. Under the government construct of relief as charity, the state was entitled to define groups of refugees as deserving or legitimate receivers of help, while the East Bengal Hindus saw themselves as having sacrificed their homeland for Independence, and thus felt entitled to a new life

and livelihood in their new country. Thus, they demanded land and employment opportunities as a means to restore their previous status[11].

The refugees' refusal to thankfully accept the temporary relief measures provided for them caused the government to take an increasingly hard line towards their problems. The state government even accused the migrants of arriving in order to acquire government doles and charity. East Bengali refugees acquired a reputation of being obstructive, uncompromising and ungrateful, and were blamed for Calcutta's ills of overcrowding, congestion, and unemployment. They were commonly accused in public discourse of fueling religious tensions, ignoring government policies and disrupting the city's order (Chatterjee, 2002, www.bengalonthenet.com,www.catchcal.com).

4.3   Refugee Self-Settlement: The "Jabardakhal Andolan"

Of most relevance to this thesis is the fact that the refugees, with the support of the communist parties in opposition, used the debate around their rights and entitlements to acquire control of land in the city and its outskirts.

The first section of migrants, who arrived in Calcutta even before the actual partition, were educated, middle class and typically upper-caste, a 'bhadralok' fragment consisting of landlords, businessmen, civil servants and career professionals. The Bengali bhadralok had a strong sense of their social status and their entitlements, and did not take kindly to being supplicants for meager government relief efforts. The next wave of Hindu migrants saw a larger percentage of the working class as well as non-skilled labor and peasants. The 1951 census records show that   26.9 percent of the city's populations at the time was comprised of refugees from East Pakistan. As the poorer migrants arrived in larger numbers, there were increasing questions about whether these were political or economic refugees, and whether they were "legitimate" partition refugees. As the government debated over who was entitled to refugee status, and made little headway in where and how to resettle them, the migrants decided to take matters into their own hands and began what was popularly know as "jabardakhal" or the forcible occupation of property. By the end of 1950, they had established around 150 squatter colonies in Calcutta's industrial belt (Chatterjee 1991, GoWB 1951).

Chatterjee reconstructs the incidents of squatting from the first recorded case, that of Bijoygarh colony in South Calcutta in 1948, through oral and documentary evidence from

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[11] Many of the early refugees were willing and able to pay for land in the city. In fact, their demand for land led bustee landlords to demolish bustees and sell the land. However, the thika Tenancy Act of 1949 reduced the

the period. He identifies a leadership provided by middle-class and lower middle class men who had worked in Calcutta and Dhaka government offices or those who had been active in the civil disobedience movement before independence. The process of squatting was well organized, and these individuals reconnoitered land and oversaw the actual takeover. The land they choose ranged from abandoned military barracks and vacant country houses in the suburbs of Calcutta to undeveloped private and government land. The occupation occurred swiftly, usually under the cover of night. The site was divided into house plots that were usually equal in size, and each family erected a temporary shelter consisting of four bamboo posts, walls of hogla leaf matting and a thatched roof (Chatterjee, 1991). Women participated in the "jabardakhal", though they did not typically spend the first few nights in the colonies, and their presence was seen as a symbol of an inhabited homestead and respectability, balancing the aggressive takeover with a more peaceable claim to possession. The presence of women also served to forestall eviction until the squatters were well entrenched (Chatterjee, 1991).

Once fairly settled, the squatters organized colony committees, both elected and self-appointed, who collected subscriptions from residents and built voluntary labor groups to clear and level the land, lay out drains, roads and latrines. The huts were gradually converted to more permanent structures of mud, brick and tin. In many of these colonies, the squatters set up shops, markets, schools and dispensaries, as well as cultural and social clubs. An admiring reporter from the Amrita Bazaar Patrika [12] described the Bijoygarh colony as a "modern version of a self-supporting village republic" (Dastidar, 1991). The names given to these squatter colonies – Sahid Nagar- Town of Matyrs, Gandhi Colony – named after the father of the nation, could be seen as an attempt to legitimize their "illegal" actions through association with popular nationalism and self-help. These colonies tended to be politically active and traditionally leftist (Dastidar, 1991).

From Dastidar's description of a typical refugee colony, Barisal-Bikrampur-Bidyasagar-Bastuhara Upanibesh, named after the two towns in East Bengal that most of the residents were from, Barisal and Bikrampur, as well as Bengali social reformer Bidyasagar, emerges as a text-book case of urban upgrading, investment and improvement carried out through the years.

Landowners ability to evict tenants and sell their properties.
[12] The Amrita Bazaar Patrika and the Ananda Bazaar Patrika were two prominent and influential regional newspapers that espoused the refugees' cause.

" In one generation, through sheer hard work, these colonies have become more prosperous areas, with one-to three story brick and concrete structures neatly maintained, despite the high density due to the small plots" (Dastidar, 1991, pg 61).

4.4   Institutional Reactions to Squatting

Initially, when land invasion was confined to waste or government land, reactions from both the government and public were sympathetic. Chatterjee believes that the squatter colonies often obtained at least a verbal approval from the provincial government and the police in general turned a blind eye. *The Statesman* newspaper quotes Nehru, then Prime Minister of India as saying, "it is better if the refugees begin to do something on a cooperative basis. I have heard with satisfaction that refugees have done good work by themselves at Jadavpur and Saktinagar in Nadia district. [13]" (Chatterjee, 1991).

The educated Bengali 'bhadralok' class had a strong tradition of social and political activism, and the core of refugees from this class was quick to organize themselves into pressure groups. Influential Bengali newspapers like the Amrita Bazaar Patrika supported their efforts, and they made alliances with non-Congress political parties[14]. In the initial years, the squatters were reluctant to take political sides and the membership of refugee coalitions formed to mediate between the refugees and the state such as the South Calcutta Suburban Refugee Union, reflected a range of political affiliations.   Also, within the left-front, a tendency to view the largely middle class refugees as a conservative group slowed down party work amongst them (Chatterjee, 1991). Gradually, however, the demands of the squatters began to be integrated into the Left's goal of constructive opposition to the government. In 1950, after the CPI was legalized [15], it formed the United Central Refugee Council, the most powerful champion of the "Jabardakhal Andolan" or squatter movement.

As squatting spread rapidly, it came to be perceived as a politically motivated disruption of law and order rather than a spontaneous and constructive intervention by people in desperate straits. Activists from the CPI were suspected of instigating and participating in land invasion, and the West Bengal Congress Committee declared that self-settlement was

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[13] The *Statesman*, 15 July, 1949
[14] The refugees blamed the Congress for the Partition of India, and for their homeless state(Kohli, 1990, Chatterjee,1991, Chatterji 2000)
[15] The Government of West Bengal had banned the CPI from 1948 – 1950, on the grounds of posing a threat to internal security in the province through its advocacy of revolutionary violence.

an "attempt on the part of some political parties to utilize these helpless refugees for the purpose of playing political games with them" [16] (Chatterjee, 1991).

As early as 1948, the Government of West Bengal warned trespassers that they were liable to eviction by legal or police action. Owners of private land began civil suits against the squatters, but they proved to be slow, expensive and ineffective. Squatters on government land refused to be driven out by the suspension of services, and colony committees refused attempts to buy-out land or negotiate sales. When the state brought in the police to forcibly evict them, the squatters took to the streets. As the situation worsened, the government used force or the threat of force to disperse street protesters; and the Leftist opposition compared the Congress government's policies to the worst of colonial oppression.

There was pressure from the Centre to clear government land of encroachers, as the "Government Premises Eviction Act" was passed in 1950 in the national parliament to deal with the problem of refugee squatters swiftly and under legislative authority.   Much of the land occupied by refugees had been owned by Muslim families who had left for Pakistan, and under the Nehru-Liaquat Ali pact, returnees were entitled to regain possession of their property. Also, local land owning interests demanded that the government protect their rights to property.

The eviction bill provided for eviction of people illegally occupying state or private land. Those found to be "bona fide" refugees would not be required to relocate till the government found alternative accommodation for them, but they were required to pay compensation to those trespassed against. The legislation defined "bona fide" refugees as those who had left East Bengal between 1947 and 1950. The West Bengal government drafted a West Bengal Eviction bill in 1951, entitled "Eviction of Persons in Unauthorized Occupation of Property", mirroring the central government's provisions. The Bill, as the Chief Minister admitted, was essential if his government was to have the power to deal with squatter colonies, which violated the right to private property enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

In West Bengal, squatter organizations reacted strongly to the proposed legislation in Bengal. The UCRC passed out pamphlets such as "*Punarbashan na ucched* (Resettlement or Evcition)" to keep squatters informed about the eviction debate and the fate of their colonies. Faced with a sustained campaign against the Eviction Bill, the Government of West

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[16] *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 19 December,1949

Bengal was forced to retreat. The opposition parties debated the legislation in parliament, and formed an "Eviction Resistance Committee" of legislators, under the leadership of Dr. Suresh Chandra Bannerjee, a former Congress dissident who headed the Praja Socialist Party[17]. The opposition charged the government with failing in their duty to rehabilitate the refugees, and claimed that squatting was a "pragmatic and collective form of collective self-settlement" (Chatterjee, 1991, pp 63). The plight of the refugees was described in great detail, and their "jabardakhal" as an act of desperation. Indeed, their champions said that the government should be grateful to refugees rather than condemn them, since they had shouldered responsibility for their own welfare rather than relying on handouts. They pointed out that the land they had occupied was lying fallow or vacant, and belonged to already wealthy landowners. Finally, they accused the state of using the excuse of protecting law and order to safeguard the interests of the landowning class that dominated the Congress government's support; and of valuing private property over human life and livelihood[18]. Under the weight of these arguments, the bill was re-drafted to include a pledge that a "displaced person" in unauthorized occupation of land would not be disturbed "until the Government provides for him other land or house... in an area which... enables the person to carry on such occupation as he may be engaged in for earning his livelihood at the time of the order". The name of the Act was changed to reflect the bill's new priorities and it was now called the West Bengal Act XVI of 1951 -The Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and Eviction of Persons in Unauthorized Occupation of Land Act. 1951.

The modification of the Act represented a major victory for the refugee movement, because it acknowledged that refugees had a right to shelter and that the right was connected to their right to livelihood. Also, it explicitly stated that the government had a duty to protect these rights. Finally, the statute was an admission that there were circumstances in which the right to private property could not be enforced. The changed ruling was a significant victory for the communist led opposition. The Left parties, particularly the CPI, used refugee demands as the thin end of the wedge in their wider struggles. From pressing the case for the rights of refugees, whether to land, shelter or employment, they embarked on a wider movement to compel the government to accede to these same rights for all people. This is because the notion of rights is inherently universalistic, and was used by the communists to demand an even more inclusive set of claims, not only for refugees but also for other

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[17] The PSP Party, no longer in existence, was one of the smaller radical-left parties instrumental in fighting refugee and slum dwellers evictions.
[18] Opposition arguments were laid out in the "*Punarbashan na ucched*" pamphlets and are paraphrased by Chatterjee, 1991.

landless people, migrant workers, and the rest of the marginalized poor. Thus, viewing the relationship between political parties and the East Bengal refugees in purely instrumentalist terms, where the refugee's cause was "captured" for electoral reasons is at best a very incomplete picture.

Once the obligation to resettle and rehouse the squatters if they were removed was established, the state government made little effort to displace the existing settlements. Subsequently, these colonies were recognized by the government, through a complex system of approval that categorized the different colonies according to whether they were recognized by the state or the central government[19]. West Bengal's Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department provided free hold title to a large number of these colonies, through an application process, where the applicants were required to show "a refugee certificate and an affidavit in the prescribed format"[20]. The refugee certificate is a document that was provided to 'registered' refugees who migrated only from erstwhile East Pakistan, before 3rd march 1971[21]. Some of the colonies were authorized in land vested in the state, and acquired by the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation department. Once the settlements were recognized, they became eligible for government provisions of infrastructure and state and central government funds for refugee rehabilitation[22] (GoWB).

4.5   Tenure Security for Bustee Tenants

The movement to secure tenure rights for tenants and renters in bustees brought about a re-orientation in the approach of policy makers to housing issues of the poor, but has

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[19] The categorizations were based on whether the land taken over was private or government owned lands, as well as where the resources and responsibility for relief measures would be coming from, the central government or the West Bengal government.

[20] GoWB, Department of Refugee Rehabilitation and Resettlement, GoI Planning Commission.

[21] The refugees were categorized as 'old' or 'new' migrants. The 41.17 lakh odd people who migrated to India from 1946-1958 were the 'old' refugees, whereas, 11.14 lakh people, who came here from 1964-1971 have been termed as 'new' migrants. Finally, during the Bangladesh war of 1971, approximately 2/3 lakh refugees fled from their homeland and came to Calcutta only to get dissolved with the city's mainstream population. The later migrants are economic migrants rather than political, and as likely to be Muslims as Hindus. Under the hardline BJP government at the centre, they are more commonly termed "infiltrators" than migrants, and are not accepted as refugees.

[22] More than 30 years after the last "recognized" refugees colony was established, the central government and the West Bengal government continues to provide free services and infrastructure upgradation in these colonies, both in Calcutta and rural areas. The refugee colonies remain a reliable vote bank for the Left parties now in power. Thus, cutting off funds and programs to the established colonies would be politically dangerous, and they continue to benefit from special programs and relief measures. Recently, a central government mission was sent to examine the West Bengal governments claim that there are 8 million refugees in the state that are entitled to central government funds (*The Statesman*, 2003).

largely been ignored in academic literature and appears to be, given their present rhetoric, forgotten even by it's principal mobilizers—West Bengal's communist parties.

This account of the bustee movement is pieced together from a wide variety of sources-legislative debates over the issue of slum clearance and improvement, Unnayan's[23] investigations, and interviews with leaders in the movement, personal interviews with activists involved in the housing struggle, newspaper accounts, communist party statements and newspapers, government documents and unpublished reports and notes on the role of planning and development bodies in the city.

Two important urban legislations, the Calcutta Thika[24] Tenancy Act and the Calcutta Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act, 1959, grew out of the role if the Left Parties in the bustee movement. Later, at a state-wide level, the West Bengal Slum Areas Act was amended to be upgradation-oriented rather than clearance-oriented, and thus enabled the implementation of extensive slum upgrading programs in Calcutta and other cities. Though housing conditions in the bustees are still much less than satisfactory, residents are safe and secure in their tenure status, eligible for government services, and many of them have been the beneficiaries of various bustee improvement programs described briefly in the first few sections.

The 1950's saw for the first time housing and shelter issues for the poor rise to the forefront of political attention. This was a time when insecurity of shelter became a crucial issue for a majority of Calcutta's population, and when their struggle became a significant factor in the city's political and social life. At the same time that the refugees were fighting to establish their rights on lands they had overtaken, Bustee dwellers were organizing against the constant threat of eviction and displacement as a consequence of the 'urban development' process.

Bustees formed the main source of housing for Calcutta's laboring poor and working class population from the city's early days. The word "bustee" comes from basati, which means a home or habitation in Bengali, but has come to signify housing settlements for the poor: dense, unplanned and lacking adequate services. Calcutta was India's first modern manufacturing city and the early industrial concerns made no provisions for worker housing. Workers in the new jute and textiles mills lived in shantytowns close to the factories. Most

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[23] Unnayan, a Calcutta-based NGO that championed housing rights, will be described in the next chapter.
[24] "Thikadar" is a Bengali term meaning a person who has been given rights through a contract and is a commonly used word in Indian urban terminology.

workers came to the city leaving their families at home, and did not intend to stay permanently, so their shelter requirements were minimal. Often more than 10 people crowded together in one room. Another category of bustee residents were employed in the service sector as domestic help, washermen, petty traders, milkmen and coolies, who lived in bustees close to where the wealthy residents who used their services did, but under very different conditions. Bustees were thus scattered all over the old core city, and were frequently cleared for public health reasons, for new buildings, roads or parks as the city grew.

The land on which the bustees grew were owned either by prosperous land owning families called "Zamindars," who had inherited the land, or developers who bought well-situated tracts of land in the growing city to lease out to incoming workers. The municipal corporation had bye-laws that required landlords to provide services, but with which they rarely complied. In 1888, the Municipal Corporation provided a technical definition of the bustee, a "plot of land, not les than 10 cottahs in area, bearing one number in the assessment book, or a collection of such plots adjacent to one another, exceeding in the aggregate one bigha in area." Later Municipal Corporation Acts in 1951 shortened the definition to "An area containing land occupied by or for the purpose of any collection of huts[25] standing on a plot of land not less than ten cottahs in area". The technical definition of a bustee thus relied on two categorizations – the size of the plot and the quality of the housing structures on it. Under this definition, bustees were registered in the Corporation's assessment books. The registration of properties that adhered to the corporation's definition brought the bustee under a set of regulatory bye-laws and development guidelines that applied to both landlords and their thika tenants on one hand, and to the municipal corporation on the other.

Thika tenants were intermediary land developers who constructed huts for renting out on the land they leased from a landowner. The Thika tenant was defined in the Bengal Tenancy Act as someone "holding possession for a fixed period" [26]. The bharatiyas or

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[25] The Municipal Corporation Act of 1951 defined a hut as " any building, no substantial part of which, excluding the walls up to a height of 18 inches up to the floor or floor level is constructed of masonry, reinforced concrete, steel, iron or other metal."

[26] The Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act of 1949, which was the first act that defined the tenurial structure of bustees, defined Thika tenants as " any person who under the system commonly known as "Thika" or any other like system holds, whether a written lease or otherwise, or has been recorded in any record of rights as holding, under the title "dakhal basatkar" or any other like appellation land under another person and is, or but for a special contract would be liable to pay rent, at a monthly or at any other periodical rate, for the land to such other person and has erected any structure on such land for a residential, manufacturing or business purpose and includes the successors-in-interest of such persons".

renters were another category of tenants. They rented rooms in a hut from the Thika tenants [27]. Bharatiyas were typically migrant workers, and in some cases the Thika tenant as well lived within the bustee. The Thika Tenancy Act and recognized the distinctive three-tier rental arrangement within the bustee, and accorded a legal status to bharatiyas.

The somewhat arbitrary definition of the size of the bustee as not being under 10 cottahs[28] was probably based on density or public health concerns, but was not strictly adhered to in identifying bustees for improvement in slum improvement programmes. Bustee properties were occasionally subdivided into smaller plots when properties were divided up for amongst heirs on the demise of the landowner, but for practical purposes they remained bustees. The Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization, recognizing the arbitrariness of the plot size figure, stated in the Basic Development Plan it prepared for1966-86 that smaller bustees "face the same kinds of problems as the bustees that fit the legal definition and they call for the same kind of action".

4.6   Bustees in Policy and Planning

The bustee question has always been central to planning and urban development policies in Calcutta. On the one hand, they provided a cheap source of housing for the city's large migrant worker population, where options for affordable housing were unavailable, but on the other hand living conditions in the bustees were deplorable, with immense crowding, little light and ventilation, and an abysmally minimal supply of water and sanitation services. Interventions in the bustee had been based on public health issues rather than concern for the housing needs of the city's poor [29]. In the early part of the 19th century, thatched roofs were prohibited as they posed a fire hazard, and by mid-1800's they had given way to tiled roofs.   As the public health hazards of bustees increased, demolitions and clearances were routine, particularly for those slums that had grown close to wealthy neighborhoods. In fact, post-independence Calcutta's first planning initiative was born out of

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[27] The Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act, 1949, states " Bharatiya means any person by whom or on whose account rent is payable for any structure or part of a structure erected by a thika tenant in his locality".

[28] A cottah is a frequently used measure of property size all over India and is approximately 720 square feet in area(www. calmanac.org)

[29] In the early days of the Corporation, it was not empowered to undertake mandatory interventions on private property, which most bustees were. Legislative Acts in 1876 and 1888 laid the grounds for municipal regulation over landlords and tenants in the bustees, and also drafted the first legal definition of the term. The Corporation empowered the municipal commissioner to appoint two medical officers to inspect a bustee and draw up a plan to improve it (presumably its hygiene and sanitary conditions). If the landowner failed to carry out the improvements, they would be implemented by the corporation, but at the owners cost. The Act also set aside a

a public health crisis that began in the city's bustees – the cholera epidemic of 1958. According to the former deputy mayor of Calcutta, veteran bustee leader and long-term resident of the Chetla bustee [30], "If there was an epidemic in a bustee then water taps used to be fixed. The water taps in a bustee in that sense can be said to have been acquired through the loss of lives of bustee dwellers.... like a martyr's column."

In 1911, once the Calcutta Improvement Trust, the city's first urban development organization, was formed it sought to address the problems of slum housing. In the words of its first chairmen, Cecil Bompas: "The question of accommodation of the population now living in bustees is a crying one. Bustees are insanitary; and unless there is gross-over crowding they accommodate few persons per acre[31]. When land is valuable it is necessary to house a considerable number of persons per acre; and it is very important that the Trust should decide by experiment how this is can best be done. Private enterprise is not likely to take up this work till the trust demonstrates that it can be made to yield a fair return on capital expended [32]."(Gupta, 2000).

The Trust implemented a few rehousing schemes- " Workingmen's Dwellings" as they called them, but despite their initial enthusiasm, they met with little success and their efforts to address the slum's problems dwindled after 1919 (Gupta, 2000). As the Trust shifted its focus to more large scale urban improvement, the situation in the bustees if anything, worsened, as they became more and more crowded and congested in the 1930's and 40's as the city experienced its most explosive growth period.

It is interesting to note that the original mandate of the CIT was more in line with in-situ upgrading and provision of water and sanitation rather than clearance or rehousing, under the Calcutta Improvement Act of 1911[33]. A citywide concern for the lack of sanitary arrangements in the bustees   led to a demand to empower the CIT to undertake schemes with the narrow objective of making sanitary improvements in the bustees. To achieve this

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minimum sum of money that the corporation would spend for improvements in the sanitary facilities of the slums. A few wealthy landowners made improvements from humanitarian and philanthropic motives.
[30] Interview for Unnayan, August 1989
[31] Bustees are all single storeyed structures.
[32] From Gupta, Saibal Kumar, "Improving Calcutta: Notes and Essays on Urban Government"
[33] The Calcutta Improvement Act of 1911, defined a general improvement scheme as one :
"Which may provide for the laying out or construction or alteration of streets, the sewering and draining of such streets and the provision of water, lighting and other sanitary conveniences ordinarily provided in a municipality" The act was not "concerned with the construction of new housing accommodations or the rehousing of displaced persons".

goal, a clause[34] was included in the CIT Act, which was later removed as city officials realized that funds for undertaking improvements at this scale were unavailable.

However, the need to devise a legislative mechanism to enable the state to intervene in the Bustees was   pressing, as concerns over the outbreaks of epidemics increased. The matter was taken up by the provincial government, which enacted the Bengal Slum Improvement Act, 1945, which applied to Calcutta and every municipality under the Bengal municipal act, 1931. The statute authorized the provincial government to declare an area to be a slum area if it contained huts and was in an insanitary condition or in a condition subjecting its residents or neighbours to disease. The act authorized any local authority including the CIT to prepare an improvement scheme, the cost of which was to be apportioned by the local authority among the owners of the land the huts.   If the owner was too poor to pay the cost of the improvement, upto 50% of the cost of the scheme would be born by the local authority and provincial government jointly.

The official statement of the reasons for the act were as follows, " Though it was recognized that several slums notably in Howrah and Calcutta would have to be demolished eventually, this would take a considerable period of time and money and Government concluded that in the interim the conditions of the slum dwellers must be improved[35] (GoWB, 1945). "

In 1948, the Calcutta Corporation recorded 4371 bustees, generally inhabited by thika tenants and their bharatiyas[36]. In accordance with the usual pattern, the thika tenant leased land from the landlord, set up the structure and then let out rooms to renters. In the bustees, around 92.3% of the structures were one roomed, 5.8 % were two roomed and 1.91% had more than two rooms (Bhattacharya, 1996; Unnayun, 1984). These second-level tenants were called bharatiyas. In some cases the thika tenant reserved some land for himself. Since the bharatiyas were most likely to be single male workers, often a number of them shared a single room. The density was generally 2.5 per room where the thika tenant himself resided and 3.3 per room where bharatiyas resided (Bhattacharya, 1996; Unnayun, 1984).

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[34] The deleted clause read "whenever it appears to the board that the condition of a bustee is unsanitary or attended with the risk of disease to the persons residing within the area or in the neighbourhood of such bustees by reason of the manner in which such huts are crowded together or want of drainage, sewerage and water supply or of the impracticability of scavenging or from any other cause, they may depute officers to inspect or carry out a survey and to submit a report"

[35] West Bengal Gazette Extraordinary, GoWB, 1945, quoted in Kaplan, 1963

The 1945 Act was an utter failure, and was repealed in 1949. According to one authority, quoted in the Gazette, " In Calcutta, the high cost of development and the existence of three spheres of interest – the landowner, the lessee who erects the huts and the occupant who is the tenant of the lessee, complicated the problem and made the 1945 act entirely ineffective".

Realizing this situation, the "Thika Tenancy Act" 1949 was enacted the same year that the earlier slum improvement act was dropped. This Act recognized the complicated tenurial structure in the bustees of Calcutta, and gave legal recognition to the Thika tenants as well as the second-tier rentees or occupiers, the bharatiyas. This recognition was important because many of the leases were acquired through informal contracts, and the thika tenants had made an investment in building the huts that were occupied by bharatiyas.

This Act gave most thika tenants a measure of security, limiting the grounds on which bustee owners could evict them. In addition to the usual grounds of eviction for contractual violations, such as the failure to pay rent, the statute permits ejection on the ground that the land is required by the landlord for his own occupation or for the purpose of building on the land. The second principal change wrought by the act was the imposition of restrictions on the enhancement of rent payable by the thika tenant to the landowner. The statute permitted rent increases up to 12 percent on the grounds that either the value of the holding increased, or that the landlord had effected some improvement to the land at his own cost which had increased the value of the land holding.

The increases are only affected by the application to a controller appointed by the State govt. The controller has the authority to reduce the thika tenant's rent. In *The Calcutta Gazette*, the reasons for the act read as follows: "There has been a persistent demand for the protection of the thika tenants of Calcutta and the Howrah Municipal Area against arbitrary eviction and enhancement of rent.[37]"

The growing protests over eviction led the West Bengal Legislative Assembly to address issues of tenancy rights in the Bustees through the Calcutta Thika Tenancy Act. However, while the Act granted for the first time a legal recognition of the rights of Thika tenants as well as their renters, it also included provisions for evicting residents and clearing bustees

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[37] *The Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary*, 1949, GoWB

for the purpose of building "pucca" houses, or for land development. As incidents of eviction and demolitions continued even after the Act was passed, it generated strong criticism from the Left parties in the opposition.

Till 1947, independence from Colonial rule had been the driving political issue in India, and a goal that united all major political organizations in India. Post Independence, and Partition, local issues began to gain prominence, and with the beginnings of electoral democracy, different political parties sought to articulate the demands and needs of their constituencies. Under these conditions, the Bustee dweller's problems were becoming a strong political platform for the Left parties, and they helped to bring them into prominence in legislative debates.

4.7   The Bustee Movement

Despite the protections accorded in the Thika Tenancy Act, evictions and demolitions continued unabated, often through violent means. As the city grew, many of the slums were in centrally located areas, which were acquiring increasingly high real estate values. The demand for centrally located urban land was heightened when East Bengal refugees arrived in Calcutta. However, for slum dwellers the location of the bustee was crucial to their economic life. The bustee dwellers perceived threats to their shelter and livelihood from two sides-from the landowners seeking to sell their land, and from government concerns about the dangers of bustees to the health of the city. Faced with an increasingly tenuous hold on their space in the city, bustee organizations took up the cause of establishing tenure security.

Local associations existed in the bustees prior to the fifties, though there was no city wide association that addressed issues faced by slum residents. The Calcutta riots of 1946 affected the bustee residents most severely, and local organizations played a role in repairing communal rifts. Also, the bustee organizations were involved with various civic and health issues in the slums. The Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti and the Gandhi Seva Samiti were social service organizations that worked in the bustees at the time, addressing concerns like cleanliness and hygiene, drinking water, disease prevention and education. (Unnayan, 1989). The left parties began to be active in the slums around this time, particularly the Communist Party of India's women leaders. Haren Chatterjee, veteran CPI leader and one of the founding members of the All India Communist Party, helped found the

Bustee Federation in the early nineteen fifties, which organized bustee dwellers around a number of issues- the West Bengal Famine, communal violence, workers and women's rights, issues that were central concerns for the communist party leadership at the time. At the same time, local bustee organizations that were part of the bustee federation brought up their own specific concerns, such as the constant threat of eviction, often by violent means and the lack of water and sanitation services.

The early fifties saw the Communist Party being increasingly active in Calcutta bustees, through the Calcutta Bustee Federation. Communist party activists often stepped in during the eviction proceedings, and sometimes managed to drive away the landlord's hired men. They also helped the bustee residents take their case to local courts. They sought to incorporate local bustee organizations into a united front to deal with eviction, and to force landlords to improve the dismal conditions within the bustees. Left party MPs visited the bustees, "inspected the bustees and listened to the grievances of the inhabitants and explained to them how the Communist MP's fight for the people in the parliament[38]."

In 1951, Dr. Suresh Bannerjee of the PSP, a major voice in the refugee struggles, proposed an Amendment to the Thika Tenancy Act that sought to address conditions for eviction. His proposal was rejected, but nevertheless led to heated debate within the assembly as well as in newspapers. The Thika Tenancy Act continued to be legislation in contention for some time, as it had shown little effectiveness in safeguarding the interests and homes of tenants. In 1954, the Bustee Federation organized a signature campaign for a petition against inadequacies in the Act, which they presented to the Government. 1951 also saw the Calcutta Corporation Act Amendment passed, which led to the first civic elections in six years [39]. This act also ensured adult suffrage in Calcutta municipal elections for the first time, a provision championed by the CPI.

In 1952, the first parliamentary and legislative assembly elections were held, as well as municipal elections to the Calcutta Corporation. The ruling Congress won at all three levels, but the Left parties formed a fairly strong opposition, particularly in the municipal corporation (Unnayan, 1992). Recent accounts focus on the strength of the Left in rural Bengal, and forget that the Left parties began their political activism mobilizing the cause of the urban poor- slum dwellers and workers (Unnayan, 1992). As an opposition party, their early support was concentrated in the city, both among the slum dwellers and refugees, as

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[38] Sadhan Gupta, Member of Parliament quoted in *Swadhinata,* 1954

well as a section of reform-minded upper class intellectuals who formed the leadership of the Left in its early years.

A number of legislations were passed in these years, with progressive and redistributive goals, in keeping with independent India's socialist objectives. The Zamindari Abolition Act, for instance led to a radical alteration of the tenure structure in rural India. The urban centers of Calcutta and Howrah were exempt from the jurisdiction of this Act, and the CPI and other opposition members raised their omission in assembly.

The single event that can be thought to have sparked mass mobilization on the bustee issue was the proposal of a Calcutta Improvement (Amendment Bill) in 1954. The CIT wanted an amendment that would provide it statutory powers to clear bustees, in the face of rising protest and legal hurdles when it came to slum clearance. Until that time, bustee clearance and rehousing were looked on as incidental activities indulged in when some bustees had to be cleared to accommodate a general improvement plan. The bill was proposed by ID Jalan, the minister for Local Self Government, who explained that " the Government Amendment while providing such specific powers," (for clearance or improvement of bustees), " insisted that any scheme for bustee improvement must also include a scheme for the rehabilitation of bustee dwellers."[40]

Also, the act provided for the assessment of "betterment fees", by the CIT when "by the making of any improvement any land in the area comprised in the scheme ......be increased in value, the Board, in framing the scheme, may in lieu of providing for the acquisition of such land declare that a betterment fee be payable by the owner of the land or person having an interest therein in respect of the increase in value of the land resulting from the execution of the scheme" (Ford Foundation Legal Notes, 1965). In subsequent slum improvement programs in the city carried out after the CMDA was formed and took over CIT's role, the payment of fees for improvements were dropped. Of course, in current policies and programmes, the issue of community involvement through financial and other contribution is well accepted, in tune with moves to streamline government spending.

Despite the assurances of the Act's proponents that improving the state of services in the slums was the objective, rather than their clearance, and that protection of slums dwellers would be a priority if clearance was found to be necessary, the Opposition saw the bill as a

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[39] In 1946, the Municipal Corporation was superseded and placed under a state-appointed administrative officer.

means to provide the CIT authority to clear bustees whole scale. They presented three charges against the bill in a statement to the Statesman newspaper:[41]

"The bill sought to perpetuate control of the Improvement trust Board by vested interests, give power to the Trust to evict bustee dwellers without providing alternative accommodation for them, and ignore the claims of the suburban municipal areas to be included in its scope."

The various amendments proposed by the Opposition to the bill were rejected, though some concessions were made as public opinion grew around the opposition's fears. Interestingly, the left parties used regional rhetoric as well, saying the bill was "an inspired attempt to oust lower middle class Bengalis and substitute wealthy non-Bengalis in their place."[42] The Communist constituency in Calcutta was dominated by Bengalis (Kohli, 1987) and the fact that for most of the first half of the 20th century, less than half of Calcutta's population was Bengali-speaking, may have helped the bustee issue gain more widespread acceptance amongst Calcutta's public.

As debates within the assembly continued, bustee dwellers and their leaders were taking the protests to the streets. The 'Busteebasi Sammelan' (Bustee Dwellers Federation) made a representation to the chief minister. Their demands were summed in the Assembly Proceedings as:

"The demands of the Bustee dwellers communicated to us are as follows: Firstly, the bustee dwellers should be given alternative accommodation in a suitable place so that their means of livelihood are not interfered with. Secondly, residential quarters should be built on the bustee sites and bustee dwellers given priority of accommodation in those quarters at rents within their financial capacity. Thirdly, temporary shelters should be provided till alternative accommodation is made. Fourthly, sufficient compensation should be given to shopkeepers who will be deprived of their shops in the bustees. ..Sixthly and lastly, Sir, the right to develop bustees should be given to bustee dwellers by amending the Thika Tenancy Act."[43]

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[40] *The Statesman*, 5 April 1954, and Milton Kaplan, Law Notes: Ford Foundation, 1963
[41] From Unnayun documentation and interviews
[42] ibid
[43] Demads of the Bustee Basi Sammelan submitted to the WB Government, Proceedings of West Bengal Legislative Assembly, April 1955, in Unnayan, 1989

Considering that this deposition was made in the 1950's, I was surprised by the resonance of these demands with some now widely accepted policy prescriptions regarding slum housing. The last demand where residents expressed view that bustee development would be undertaken by the residents themselves once they were given greater security of tenure through legislation, echoes currently prevalent policy prescriptions of donor organizations (see www.unchs.org/tenure, www.worldbank.org/urban/poverty/policy.html).

It would be wrong to think that the CIT's concerns were motivated by cruelty or greed. Statements issued by CIT chairman Saibal Gupta[44], who had been a primary advocate of slum improvement, showed a genuine concern with improving the deplorable living conditions in the slums, and from Saibal's writings, it is clear that he believed the city could not sustain them as they were. Unlike the harsher allegations of opposition parties, it appears that the CIT did have intentions to provide housing for the slum residents and in the 1950's and 60's, the CIT's vision of "model" slum colonies seemed both desirable and appropriate. However, the bustee dwellers demands highlight their primary concern was to preserve their livelihoods. The majority of the workers lived within walking distance of their place of work, and few could afford public transport. Though the linkage of livelihood and place of settlement is becoming more accepted in resettlement and housing policy today, the program of the CIT and those who advocated slum clearance failed to consider these issues.

As the bustee issue became more politically prominent, its leadership passed from the Bustee Federation and the Praja Socialist Party that led the movement in its early days to the Communist Party of India. The CPI leadership believed that politicizing the problems of the slum dwellers would help them gain a larger vote-base in the city. Haren Chatterjee, a leader in the Bustee Federation as well as member of the CPI, said in an interview published by Unnayan that, "The idea of forming bustee organizations in bustees... the political parties began to think of this only after 1950 and it was mainly the Communist Party. Aside from people's welfare, organizing this huge population would also mean getting support and votes of this section."[45]

Swadhinata, the CPI newspaper, announced in 1954, a "Call for a united movement to stop eviction, to develop bustees for improving the health of the bustee dwellers, and to

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[44] From the CIT Chairman's Note, 1955, presented at a Calcutta Improvement Trust Meeting on Slum Improvement and Rehousing Slum Dwellers in 1955.
[45] From an interview for Unnayun, 1989

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establish the voting right of the bustee dwellers.[46]" Getting bustee residents, many of whom were new and recent migrants to the city, on the electoral rolls became an important concern, as support for the communist party amongst the large numbers of   poor and lower middle class people grew. The CPI already had considerable support amongst the Bengali middle class, as well as Bengali intellectuals. Their initiative in getting the bustee residents enrolled on voting lists, so they could participate in the democratic electoral process, paid off in the 1957 Assembly elections, when the Left won seats in 16 constituencies, doubling their tally of 8 in 1952. Most of these were concentrated in North Calcutta, where the bustees were concentrated, and in Howrah, an industrial centre where a large part of the industrial work force lived (Unnayan, 1990).

The CPI's bustee programme was more radical sounding than the bustee dwellers demands articulated by the Busteebasi Samelan, and include calls to confiscate the properties of zamindars, and even requisitioning the home of the zamindars.[47]
In the CPI's 1957 election manifesto, the CPI presents their perspectives on resolving the housing crisis. These included proposal of a 'work plan' to provide housing for " workers, the labouring poor and low-income people", a proposal to reclaim marshland to develop and build cheap housing, the provision of alternate accommodation for those bustee dwellers that are required to be cleared and provision of water supply and sanitation in those that are not cleared. They also proposed modifying the Rent Act so that the Thika tenant interests were better protected. Finally, they proposed that industrial concerns should provide housing for their workers.

There is an interesting dichotomy expressed in these documents, between the need to clear the bustees, long perceived as a public health menace, and provide improved, planned housing conditions for the poor – hence the provisions for alternative accommodation and acquiring new land for housing, versus the demand to ensure that bustees remained where they were, close to their workplace and community network. This dichotomy reflected the divergent views of the bustee movement leadership.

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[46]In Swadhinata, May 10, 1954
[47] Unnayan quotes from the Political Resolution adopted at Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of India in 1956, and other party documents, where the CPI addresses housing issues of bustee dwellers and refugees. These include radical measures like "Rationing of housing accommodation. Taking over the palatial mansions to house the homeless", "A special tax on the rich for refugee rehabilitation" and "Drastic measures against profiteers and confiscation of their entire property."

The leadership of the bustee federation clearly demanded that they should not be removed on any grounds, but upgraded where they were. Quoting from Unnayan's interviews of the leaders of the Bustee Federation:

"The main slogan of the Federation was "Develop Bustee's without Eviction". There were two main reasons for this slogan. Firstly, in our view the Government did not have sufficient resources to rehabilitate all the bustee dwellers even in a hundred years, and secondly, it was not clear what would be the rent in the new houses and whether removal costs would be covered."[48]
"Our demand was that Thika tenants cannot be evicted"[49]
"We formed the All Calcutta Bustee Federation out of a necessity of resisting eviction and out of a demand for a permanent residential right for Thika Tenants. We demanded that if there was a need to evict, then rehabilitation should be given nearby, and the rent has to be within the means of the tenants and employment opportunities have to be provided."[50]

Almost 40 years after the struggle, Haren Chatterjee in an interview with Unnayan, had some doubts about the insistence on having the bustees remain where they were.
"The bustee evictions could have been done properly. Some may have told you to develop bustees where they are. I think this kind of thinking has a limitation. There may be a difficulty to move away from the place of work, but gradually commerce will increase to such areas. This we did not explain. We had said instead, Where will you go? What will you do? Those who worked as maid servants, we said, your husband does daily labour here, where else can he get work? If we had explained in another manner, then the problem could have been resolved in another manner. But in the leadership, none of them, whether CPI or Congress kept this vision in mind".

For the bustee dwellers themselves, it was clear that the most important issue was to prevent the loss of home and livelihood. The most significant factor for them was gaining recognition and permanent tenancy rights in the properties where they lived as baratiyas or thika tenants rather than getting 'pucca' houses built or better civic services.
Thus the CPI leadership on the bustee issue chose to focus on preventing eviction and adopted the Bustee Federation slogan of "Development without Eviction". There was an

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[48] Prakriti Mitra, Fromer Bustee Federation Secretary, Interview for Unnayan 23 December, 1988

[49] Biren Roy, CPI leader and bustee resident. Interview for Unnayan ,9 January, 1989
[50] Laxmi Sen, CPI and Trade Union leader. Interview for Unnayan ,24 June, 1989

implicit assumption that once the Congress was out of office and the Left in power, the housing crisis would be dealt with in a more comprehensive manner.

4.8   Evictions under Calcutta Improvement Act

Despite the protests and public mobilization, the CIT amendment act was eventually passed, and in 1954, some two thousand residents of the Patwarbagan Bustee received a government notice to vacate their huts. The bustee was over a hundred years old and largely Muslim. The residents worked in the nearby factories as biri workers, press workers and others were small shopkeepers and traders. The purpose of the eviction, according to movement leaders, was to acquire land for an extension of the Victoria College nearby.

Unnayan interviewed movement leader Abdul Rahaman:
" When the notices were served, we took up the issue. There was a bustee committee whose President was Babu Lal Mia, he is dead now. The communist party of India (CPI) also had a local Committee, and I was a member then. We discussed what could be done to prevent the eviction, we spent two nights without sleeping preparing a survey of the families who would be affected for placing before the Government along with a petition[51]"

The CPI news organ, *Swadhinata*, reported,
"The grievance of the bustee dwellers against the government conspiracy of eviction is taking shape in the form of an organized protest movement". The protest gradually grew in support and took on a more organized aspect. Students of a local university organized a protest rally, party members and union leadership became involved, and processions were taken out in the streets. The movement was successful, and ultimately the evictions did not take place and the settlement still exists.

Soon after this incident, the Kathmarbagan bustee in North Calcutta became another flashpoint in the struggle. The bustee landlord, who had been trying for years to evict the residents, brought in the police and a court order for eviction. The eviction was resisted by 1000s of bustee dwellers and their supporters, including communist party leaders. The eviction was stalled. In other cases, the protesters were not quite so successful and a number of bustees were demolished in the next few years. However, the residents who had been evicted were rehoused under the CIT's Bustee Rehousing Scheme. The Rehousing

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[51] Abdul Rahman, CPI leader and resident of Patwarbagan bustee, interviewed for Unnayan, 15 May 1989

schemes were not total failures from resident's accounts, but the CIT lacked financial resources to implement more than a few such schemes (Gupta, 2000).

In 1955, as the uncertainty over the bustee's legal status grew and the need to provide stronger safeguards for the thika tenants grew, the various local bustee organizations, the CPI led Bustee Federation, and Forward Bloc, RSP and PSP's Bustee organizations all formed a joint "Calcutta Bustee Federation." The leadership was comprised of prominent CPI leaders who were also MLA's and the working committee included Bustee resident leaders. The leadership presented petitions to the municipal commissioner and mayor about issues such as property tax increases, drinking water provisions and the prevention of epidemics. Previously, these issues had been dealt with on a local level through representatives of individual slums. The united federation was able to exert a more organized pressure on the corporation. They appear to have been successful in their demands- for instance, the Federation protested tax increases and demanded that bustee dweller's representatives be represented on the tax assessment committees, which the municipal commissioner agreed to.

Swadhinata reported a number of conferences were being held throughout Calcutta in preparation of an All-Calcutta Bustee Conference. The conference slogans were, "improving municipal facilities in bustees," and "establishing tenancy rights of bustee dwellers," and "Amendment of the Thika Tenancy Act." On 18th March 1955, the forum organized a satyagraha. The forum, Bustee Ucched Sangjukta Protirodh Committee was composed of the bustee organizations of the main left parties[52]. The leadership of the Committee rested on the prominent leaders of the CPI, several of whom were elected members of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The Federation empowered the bustee residents to articulate their demands before municipal authorities. Before the federation came into existence, pressure for the provision of civic amenities was localized, but now a more organized pressure was exerted. Deputations of bustee dwellers presented their problems to the mayor and other authorities, to protest tax increases, demand an increase in water supply, and preventive health measures to prevent the spread of epidemics.

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[52] These included Calcutta Bustee Panchayat (Forward Bloc), Bustee Unnayan Samiti (Revolutionary Socialist Party) Bustee Praja Mangal Samiti (Praja Socialist Party), Calcutta Bustee Federation (CPI)(Unnayan, 1992)

4.9   The Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act

Despite sporadic clearances and improvements made in the bustees, the situation was still unsatisfactory, both for the residents who lived under precarious shelter conditions, and the city government that was unable to intervene at the scale that it wanted, as increasing crowding and congestion and lack of water and sanitation, made water born diseases like cholera reach epidemic proportions.

A similar situation was evident in slum settlements all over the country. The ruling congress government at the center expressed concern about the growth of slums in the major cities of the country and policy formulation on urban development, with particular regard to housing, began with the first five-year Plan document (GoI, 1951).   Funds were allocated for slum improvement, and the Central government introduced a scheme in 1956 (the beginning of the second five year plan), by which financial assistance would be given to the states for clearance and improvement of slum areas and rehousing slum dwellers removed as a result of clearance.

To facilitate the process, a law was passed in Parliament in 1956 called the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act. A number of states passed their own versions of this act. In Bengal, the bill was presented with the unfortunate title of the "Slum Clearance Bill" The bill was placed before the assembly in 1957, and catalyzed the third major phase of the bustee dwellers movement.

The opposition members debated it heatedly in the assembly.   In a meeting between representatives of the bustee federation and the local self-government minister, the Minister at the time, Iswar Das Jalan, informed the leaders that the government was drawing up an act for Bustee development. He informed the delegation that the central government had sanctioned funds for the proposed bustee development scheme. The meeting in itself was significant, as the government had taken the initiative to invite the federation to discuss the development plans. The minister assured the residents that rehousing the slum dwellers would be assured in the clearance plan, and that rents would be within the reach of the slum residents (Ford Foundation Legal Notes, 1963).

The Congress government looked upon the bill as a progressive social legislature, in line with the Slum Areas (Clearance and Improvement Act) enacted at the central level and

which was being replicated in a number of states. The bill's purpose was to improve the habitations of slum dwellers and the general development of Calcutta as a city. The government had given certain statutory powers and obligations to the CIT in this regard (Ford Foundation Legal Notes, 1963). However, despite the consultation, when the bill was placed in parliament, the opposition members did not find it satisfactory. Was the opposition to the bill just ground for political agitation for the left? As CPI leader Jyoti Basu writes in his reminisces, "We did not miss a single opportunity to criticize the Congress government in the Assembly."[53]

The principal fear of the bustee dwellers was eviction and displacement. The fear of eviction caused them to view government acts with suspicion. The question of clearance and rehousing was a complex issue whose practical application was likely to be difficult, and which would have direct effect on the lives of the slum dwellers who were being evicted. The assurances to provide rehousing were not accepted, and there were questions about where the new housing settlements would be, if they would be accessible to the work places and markets, if their rent would be affordable and if the community networks would be disrupted. The title of the bill declared that its primary intent was clearance rather than improvement, and the fear was that the Act would lead to a wholesale clearing out of bustee areas from prime parts of the city.

A survey by anthropologist Guha in 1958 [54] in a Muslim dominated bustee regarding their opinion of the Clearance Act, showed that most of the residents were skeptical about the new bill, despite its promise of a pucca home and better services. Amongst men and women, the fear that they would be deprived of their income was their primary reason for concern. However, a gendered analysis showed that while a majority of the men would approve the bill if provisions were made for alternative accommodation and employment, women especially, indicated a reluctance to leave a "Muslim" locality, and an attachment to their homes. The residents felt that the clearance move would scatter them and break their solidarity. The bill was viewed with special concern amongst the Muslim community, as communal tensions were palpable during these times, and the refugee demands often expressed themselves in anti-minority terms.

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[53] Basu, Jyoti Reminiscences, "Memories: The Ones That Have Lasted", printed in Ganashakti and available online at www.cpm.org
[54] Guha, Uma. "Contemporary Opinion Among Bustee Dwellers",Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, 1958.

The Left Parties argued these concerns in the Assembly. Their main contention was the very purpose of act- would it be used to mandate large scale clearances and move the slum dwellers to the city's periphery? Or would be it be used to improve the conditions of lives in slums as they were? As communist Leader Ganesh Ghosh said, "There is nothing to object if the bustee dwellers are provided pucca houses. But it is impractical to solve the problems of 5 lakh and 33 thousand bustee dwellers this way."[55]

The individual issues raised by the Opposition were that both renters and thika tenants should be considered in the scheme, whether rehousing or improvement. They said that 75 percent of renters in a bustee do not have official receipts or documents, but the government should take responsibility for them. Once an area is declared a slum area, the government should acquire the land and give permanent occupancy rights to the thika tenants, and landlords should be given minimal compensation. The tax system in the bustees should be changed to relieve the residents of the heavy tax burden.[56] Thika tenants should be responsible for improvements, and there should be some provision that the bustee dwellers themselves remodel their homes. In this way, less money will be required to develop bustees. Finally, they demanded that a representative body to decide matters of slum clearance and improvement be set up, which included members of the legislature, CIT, corporation councilors and bustee dwellers representatives.

As the bill was in the process of finalization, the Bustee Federation took to the streets in a rally where over 10,000 bustee residents participated. Women and children were involved as well. Major newspapers like *The Statesman* as well as *Swadhinata* reported the protests, and they occurred simultaneously with two other communist organized rallies- one over food distribution, and the other by the refugees and displaced people. The CPI leadership expressed satisfaction that the gathering of the bustee dwellers included both Hindus and Muslims, and women of both communities.

When the Congress government used police force to suppress the protests and arrested key leaders, the Left merely increased their agitation, adding government repression to their list of grievances.

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[55] In *The Statesman*, 6 July 1958
[56] Bustees used to be taxed at a single rate based on the size of the actual landowners landholding rather than individual huts. With no interest in the land, the landholders failed to pay taxes and bustee residents collected the amount and paid the corporation to avoid harassment and withdrawal of services(Unnayan, 1992)

The Statesman reports: " Mr. Jyoti Basu, the Communist Leader, said their primary task was to strengthen the unity of tenants and hut owners. He alleged that the government intended to divide them, and that the bill needed fundamental changes to become acceptable to the bustee dwellers."[57]

In response to the opposition demands and the insecurities of the bustee residents, the government renamed the statute as the "The Slum Clearance *and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act*", as a signal that its purpose was equally rehabilitation as well as clearance. Though the opposition and the government failed to come to an agreement on its provisions, the final Act laid out the government's obligations to provide both compensation and alternative accommodation for occupiers as well as owners, to provide a six-month notice of eviction.

What were the actual provisions of the Act? The act authorized the State Government to declare an area to be a "slum-area" if it is satisfied that the huts or other structures used for human habitation are unfit for such purposes, or that the unhealthy or unhygienic conditions thereof or of the huts and other structures is dangerous or injurious to public health or to the health of the area's inhabitants, and after giving the affected persons an opportunity to be heard" [58]

Within one year of the declaration, the State Government could acquire the land together with the huts and other structures. After publishing a notice of its intention to acquire the land and taking possession, the Government becomes the absolute owner, but it must comply with three conditions before it can take possession.

The Government must give two-months notice of eviction. Its must offer "alternative" accommodation as near as may be within a radius of one mile from the slum area to the occupier of such hut or other structure at a rent which the State Government is satisfied is comparable to what was being paid by the occupier". The designated officer must pay the prescribed amounts for the cost of removal or dismantling and re-erecting any plant, machinery or such other equipment used for any trade or industry, and compensation for temporary loss of occupation[59].

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[57] The *Statesman*, 5th March, 1958
[58] From Ford Foundation Law Notes, 1963. This definition was different from the other corporation definition based on size of the plot.

Epilogue: After the Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act was passed, the bustee movement petered out. In 1964, the communist party split into the CPI and the CPI(M) and neither party continued to take much interest in the bustees. The Calcutta Bustee Federation became more or less inactive, and slum residents took up individual issues at a local scale. The most significant achievement of the movement was that slums that were recognized under the Act were protected from arbitrary eviction; hence their place in the city was firmly established. The West Bengal Slum Areas (Clearance and Improvement) Act was amended and made to include similar provisions to the Calcutta Act so that slum development activities could be taken up in the surrounding municipalities and other urban areas.

The approach of the government towards the slums reflected the thinking of the times towards slum areas. In the sixties, several bustee resettlement schemes were attempted. Though the BRS schemes met with debated success, the bustee movement leaders view them as one of the achievements of the movement. However, the clearance and rehousing approach was abandoned in favor of in-situ upgradation by the late seventies and eighties, which became accepted as a more practical and efficient approach to improving housing conditions in slums (CEMSAP, 1995).

The Thika Tenancy Act was finally amended to ensure permanent tenancy rights for Thika tenants only after the CPM came into power. Under the amended Thika Tenancy Act 1981, the slum land belongs to the government but the residents have permanent occupancy rights. The bustees are thus completely protected from the market demand for central land in the city, and cannot be bought out by developers.[60] However, illegal constructions in the slums, rent increases, illegal sales to developers and corruption in the CMC are purported to be problems. In the 1980's, the CMC amended the Corporation Act to allow further development work in the bustees, to allow the construction of 2-3 storey dwellings.

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[59] The Act spells out three compensation formulas: The landowner is to receive a specified percentage of the actual sale price on a particular date, plus ten times the net annual income derived or derivable by him from any huts or structures he owns (GoWB).
A lessee or sub-lessee (including a thika tenant) is to receive the amount derivable by him for the unexpired period of the lease based on his net annual income from the land and from any huts and structures owned by him.
The owner of any hut or other structure is to be paid the cost of construction of a similar hut or structure as of the date title is taken, less depreciation (GoWB).

[60] Kumar debates whether this provision is actually a good thing for the city and the bustee dwellers, and contends that it reduces the scope for effective land management. See Kumar, R.M " Land Management in Built Up Cities: Some issues, constraints, and possible strategies in the the Calcutta City Context", Times Research Foundation, Calcutta, 1986.

4.10 Conclusion

This study shows first, that legalization is not a straightforward process from "illegal" to legal, made in a single step for political gains. It was a debated, contested and public struggle that went on for a good part of the first two decades of post-independence Calcutta.

Given the current anathema towards involving politics or politicians at any but the most local level of organizing, this study shows that the Leftist "political opportunism" in taking up the bustees and the refugee causes was not purely instrumentalist. The Left parties incorporated these two causes as part of their broader ideological and political mission, and achieved a redistribution of land, wealth and power in West Bengal. Both bustee residents and refugee activists were involved in these movements as representatives of the affected groups and as party members.

The bustee and the refugee movement shows that marginal groups in the city- the poor and the dispossessed, when threatened with eviction, shaped alliances with political parties who could give them voice and integrate their problems into a larger city-wide movement for establishing the rights of the urban poor. The role of the political parties in uniting the causes of two would-be oppositional groups—the largely Muslim and lower caste slum dwellers, and the Hindu East Bengal refugees, is particularly important.

Thus, the refugee and the bustee movements were unusual in that they compelled the state to not only tolerate the slum dwellers, but incorporate them into existing systems and devise an innovative tenure system for these settlements. Evictions in the bustees and refugee colonies in Calcutta stopped by the sixties, and, if bustee land was acquired, rehabilitation was made obligatory on the state. Once these marginal groups acquired a permanent place in the city, their numbers gave them a significant political voice. Through these stories there are some strategic lessons that can be learnt that are of interest to those seeking sustainable or long-term methods of providing housing and security to the poor.

CHAPTER FIVE: ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS: EVICTION OR INCLUSION?

" *For many years, we have been living on the banks of the Narendapolli Canal, West Road, next to Maratha Canal. Some of us have lived here for the past 50 years. Many of us were born here.*

Most of us have come from South 24 Parganas, some from different districts, and still others from other states. We are living here solely to earn a living. Due to lack of employment in our native lands, we, or our parents came here. You will not be able to believe the filthy and unhealthy conditions in which we live. Very clearly, we do not stay here of our own volition. We live here only because we have no alternative arrangements. The men drive rickshaws or vans, work as casual laborers in factories, or as 'ghoramis' (people who build earthen houses). Most women work as domestic help in the locality.

We have come to know, from print media and hearsay, that the state government wants to evict us for cleaning the canal and to beautify the surroundings. We are not opposed to this project to beautify the city. But if we are evicted, we have no alternative arrangements to make a living. This eviction raises a question of life and death for us. Where would we stay afterwards? Where would we get jobs? We don't even know what we would eat. Moreover, our children study here. The inhuman eviction project would strip them of their right to education, their childhood and future.

We appeal to you to consider our case and give a judgement so that, at least, we do not loose the roof over our heads. If we are forced to move from this area, then we should be given prior rehabilitation."

This deposition from the residents of Maniktala Bagmari Canal was put before *The Peoples Commission on Eviction and Displacement[1]*, held in September 2002, roughly a year after some 4000 families were evicted from their homes on the banks of Tolly's Nullah[2].

On Dec 10th 2002[3], the residents of the Maniktala Bagmari Canal, part of the long stretch of the Beliaghata/Circular canal where the largest numbers of squatter settlements were located, were forcibly evicted, along with over 5000 other families who lived along the canals. The canal was to be cleaned and its banks beautified, as part of the on-going Megacity project funded by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO).[4]

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[1] The *People's Commission on Eviction and Displacement* was a public hearing organized by prominent local civil rights groups. It was chaired by Rachinder Sachar, former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court. The Commission has so far brought out a brief Interim Report and Interim Recommendations.
[2] "Tolly's Nullah:Govt to go ahead with eviction" in *The Statesman*, September 20, 2001
[3] "Eviction over and done" in *the Statesman*, December 12, 2002.

[4] Under the Government of India's Megacity Program, Calcutta is one of five urban agglomerations that are receiving special funding from the center for infrastructure improvements.

Squatter settlements along Tolly's Nullah and the Beliaghata canal had not been officially recognized. Termed "illegal encroachers", their residents were deemed ineligible for resettlement or rehabilitation.

5.1   Introduction

This final chapter is concerned with settlements in Calcutta that remained unrecognized, but were allowed to proliferate, with tacit approval from the ruling authorities[5], over the past three decades.

While the past chapter was historical, this chapter is concerned very much with recent events, and is thus speculative in nature. Despite the wide differences in conditions in the fifties and sixties, when the bustee movement and refugee resettlement occurred, there are distinct similarities and parallels between present events and discourses, and those that I explored in the earlier case. These parallels suggest that history offers valuable lessons and insights into the present situation, and provides groundwork for recommendation for government policy and action regarding the "unrecognized" settlements.

The parallels between past and present are presented through interpretive case studies of three sets of "unrecognized" settlements located along Calcutta's severely degraded canals. The largest concentrations of unrecognized settlements are located along these canals (Unnayan, 1992). Two have recently been evicted without any provision for rehabilitation, while the third, falling within the project area of a multi-lateral donor-funded project, has been promised resettlement under its strict resettlement policy guidelines.

Prior to presenting these case studies, I lay out a background examining government attitudes, actions and policies towards these settlements. The government attitude towards the growth of illegal settlements in general can be described as a deliberate neglect. Evictions and displacements were frequent, but sporadic, and other than the clearance of slums to create the new township of Salt Lake City or Bidhannagar, have not occured at the scale with which they have been taking place in the past two years (personal interview: Rabial Mallick, March 2003).

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[5] The political support that led to the growth and proliferation of these squatter settlements is undisputed. Articles and editorials describing squatter settlements in local newspapers, interviews with government officials and activists, and some surprisingly honest opinions stated by politicians themselves, confirm this picture.

In the face of governmental neglect, an influential new actor, the NGO Unnayan was instrumental in advocating the rights and entitlements for "unrecognized" settlements in the eighties and nineties. Unnayan has also been instrumental in documenting and surveying these illegal slum settlements, as well as proposing concrete measures for their rehabilitation. In the nineties, urban NGOs became widespread, but there was little engagement between the grassroots political party affiliated organizations and the NGOs. The NGOs, though they brought widespread attention to the fate of the urban poor, and occasionally prevented evictions, failed to persuade the government to change the status of these unrecognized settlements (personal interviews: Mallick, Sen, Ramaswamy, 2003).

A consistent and fair policy towards these long-term residents of the city can be achieved by affording them the same rights as those given to bustee dwellers, by formally "recognizing" them as legal "slums". The aim of this chapter is to make a case for the recognition of the canal bank settlements, based not only on human rights norms, but also on historical precedent, and on legal provisions that were designed with the aim of protecting the poor and vulnerable, and strengthening their right to the city.

The growing spate of evictions in and around Calcutta due to developmental projects, and the brutal, inhuman manner in which they have been conducted so far points to the need for a viable and urgent solution. Though it is impossible to predict how the government will resolve the problem of unrecognized settlements, it is obvious that the issue can no longer be ignored.

In some ways, history offers a glimmer of hope in an extremely grim situation.

5.2   Background: The Growth of Illegal Settlements

Till the late-sixties, Bustees offered the primary source of housing for the poor. Bustees, unlike squatter settlements, were legal, if severely degraded settlements that grew out of certain historical conditions that no longer exist. When most of the bustees were formed, in the early part of the 20th century, the city's industry needed workers, land pressure was far less severe, and centrally located vacant land for rent was available. By the seventies, the situation had changed drastically. Affordable land to rent or buy, close to the city's employment core was completely inaccessible to the city's poor. The bustees were already

overcrowded. CMC statistics show an increase in bustee population from 0.64 million in 1961 to 1.3 million in 1981[6], indicating that their density had almost doubled (Ghosh, GoI census, 1991).

In addition, rents in many bustees had increased beyond the means of incoming migrant workers. The typical bustee rental accommodation consisted of a single room, which at times housed as many as ten men. These conditions were not conducive to family life. The poorest bustee residents, or those living with their families, were forced to seek other accommodation. Thus, squatter settlements are in many ways spillovers from the bustees.

These squatter settlements mushroomed on vacant land on the margins of city infrastructure during the 1960s and 1970s.   They can be found along drainage and sewerage canals, along railway tracks and highways, under bridges, on vacant public land and on pavements. Because of their illegal status, these settlements are denied municipal services. In consequence, the unrecognized settlements represent some of the most degraded environmental conditions in the city, with severe health impacts for the people living there, and with potential larger public health consequences as well (Unnayan, 1983). The fear of eviction and demolition looms large over residents and tends to inhibit community initiatives to improve housing and settlement conditions (personal interview: Ramaswamy, Mallick 2003).

There is no authoritative official data on their numbers, their economic and social profile, and their income. There remain no official estimates of the number of such residents in either the CMC area, or the CMD (personal interview: Burman, 2003). In 1987, the CMDA surveyed pavement dwellers in 1987, and estimated that there were around 56,000 pavement dwellers[7].

By the mid-1980's, these settlements provided a substantial percentage of housing for some of the most impoverished new migrants. Surveys undertaken in the mid-1980s by Unnayan estimated the number of unrecognized dwelling, of all types, at between 5 -10% of the metropolitan population[8]. Unnayan's studies carried out from 1983-84 estimated that there

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[6] This was before the extension of Calcutta's boundaries; therefore the population increase is not spread over a larger area. (See Table 5, Chapter 2).

[7] Bhattacharya, Bela. " Slums and Pavement Dwellers of Calcutta Metropolis", Aparna Book Distributors, Calcutta 1996

[7] Unnayan,, "Living on the Margins: A preliminary report on marginal land dwellers in Calcutta" August 1983

[8] ibid

[9] Unnayan, "Living on the Margins:A preliminary report on marginal land dwellers in Calcutta", Unnayan, Calcutta Based on newspaper articles, letters, websites and from discussions with Calcutta residents.

[10] Based on newspaper articles, letters, websites and from discussions with Calcutta residents.

are at least 200,000 such residents living along the margins of canals, roads and railway lines. In the broader metropolitan area, Unnayan estimates the number may be as high as 400,000 to 500,000 people.[9] The first official indication of an acknowledgment of the existence of such settlements is to be found in the CMDA's *Plan for Metropolitan Development, 1990-2015*. This document estimates that there are about 200,000 unauthorized dwellers in such settlements in the CMA, and recognises that such settlements are spreading rapidly (CMDA).

Unnayan's studies identified that a majority of the residents were below the poverty line. A large number of these settlements housed members of the minority communities, and scheduled-caste workers (Unnayan, 1983). Also, more recent surveys carried out by the NGO ASHA in the canal settlements, in 2000 showed a prevalence of women-headed households, and a significant number of child workers (CMC, 2000).

From my discussions with Calcutta social worker and community activist, V. Ramaswamy in January 2003, the prevalence of marginalized groups in the illegal settlements   was largely the result of deep-rooted structural inequalities in Indian society. However, they represented the Left Fronts lack of commitment to addressing these inequalities, despite their strong commitment to secularism and equality in policy.

The negative perception of slums by the middle-class[10], reflects not only class-based and cultural biases, but   increasingly ethnic ones. An article by Jeremy Seabrook, about the "communalization of poverty" says that the growing influence of Hindu fundamentalism has made inroads into Left-ruled Calcutta, and led to a growing segregation between poor Hindus and poor Muslims. He points out that many slum areas, particularly the most squalid, are now 90 per cent or more Muslim[11]. Rightwing Hindu rhetoric and popular perception of the slums as the breeding grounds of crime, drug-dealing, gang warfare, meet in focusing upon the slums as the site of every social and moral infamy. The concentration

of Muslims in these slums makes it easy to label their residents "illegal infiltrators" from East Bengal.

However, it is important to realize that even in the extreme poverty, marginalization and

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[11] Seabrook, Jeremy "Apartheid Revisited", *The Statesman*, (not dated). See also, Mehta, Chander. "Apartheid India Style is just as debasing", March 23, 2003, *East African Standard*, and Banerjee, Sumanta "Bengali Left: Pink to Saffron?", March 1, 2003, *Economic and Political Weekly*.July-August 1983

powerlessness of the squatters, there is conscious, responsible decision-making. Thus, they employed many strategies to increase their rights over the land. In their strategies, they rely largely on political channels and political patronage.

Contrary to popular opinion, these encroachers do not simply invade vacant lands in large numbers and set up homes. There is a parallel, extra-legal process of land acquirement and control in unauthorized settlements. Most of them "buy" or rent the plots of land from an unlawful land mafia, formed by a nexus between lower level political agents and criminals[12]. Ashok Mitra, the West Bengal Finance minister, economist and a frequent commentator in the New Internationalist, describes the evolution of the nexus, through the illustrative story of a young slumlord, who rises from a small-time offender to an influential and hardened criminal and finally a party candidate[13]. One of his primary activities is the control of illegal land. Political parties rely on him to deliver votes to them, and form a "clandestine coalition" with him. To reward him, they later grant him a party ticket.

The connection between "criminal elements" and politics is nothing new to West Bengal. Indeed it has been a feature of Calcutta politics since its early days (Chaube, 1991, Das, 1990, Chatterjee 1997). However, not all political intervention and patronage in the slums is related to criminal activity. For the vast majority of the slum dwellers, cultivating political patronage is a means towards security of tenure, and a gradual acquisition of rights over their land. For politicians, the unauthorized settlers provide a reliable vote-bank. Nearly all the settlements have some sort of neighbourhood association, usually in the form of "Sports-club", which lower-level party members use as an informal meeting place (Roy, 2003) [14]. Unauthorized settlements are affiliated with different political parties. For instance, Tolly's Nullah residents are supporters of Mamta Bannerjee's Trinamool, while Beliaghata residents are largely Left party supporters[15].

With the support of party workers, many residents gain a right to postal services, ration cards, and to enlistment in the voters' list[16]. These documents are important proofs of

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[12] From discussions and interviews with V.Ramaswamy and Solomon Benjamin on the growth of informal settlements.
[13] Mitra, Ashok. "Learning a Dirty Game", in The New Internationalist, Vol 136, June 1984.
[14] From surveys carried out in the Canal Settlements by NGO ASHA to identify community groups, as well as discussions with local activists.
[15] From personal interviews with Rabial Mallick, NGO Forum, May 2003, various newspaper articles and the party newsletters of the radical left group CPI-ML (Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist, Liberation, available at www.cpiml.org)
[16] Rooftops Canada, "Eviction of Sqautters in Baghbazaar Municipal Yard, 1988", 1988, Habitat International Coalition and Rooftops Canada.

residence, as they provide an address, and are signs of stability and some permanence in the city. They are generally kept with great care by the sqautters.[17] Gradually, they obtain a minimal level of services. In general, most settlements have illegal electrical connections. After sustained efforts, most of them manage to get tubewells installed, often through the discretionary funds of municipal government councillors.[18] In settlements where the land belongs to the Railways or the Port Trust, communities have, after protracted effort, been able to get the CMC to agree to install a tubewell; but nothing can be done without the agreement of the land-owning agency, which is rarely forthcoming. NGOs with funds available for construction of low cost toilets in such settlements are denied permission to install these[19]. Municipal conservancy staff does not service canal-side settlements, which are under the Irrigation Department. The Irrigation Department itself has no provision for garbage clearance.

Squatter settlements that have a long history in the city have acquired a tacit recognition through the support of local councillors and party workers. In such cases, the perception of security has meant that the communities have invested effort and resources, largely on their own and without any external support or guidance, to improve environmental conditions to the extent that they can. They organize their own religious activities and support the efforts of religious and non-governmental organizations to set up schools. A large majority of the children in informal settlements are enrolled in non-formal schools, including child workers (Rooftops Canada, 1987, various NGO sources).

However, the efforts and initiatives of community associations in squatter settlements are largely divorced from the formal urban management functions of formal institutions. Sewerage and sanitation facilities, and garbage collection which require more considerable investments and municipal support, are denied. In addition the illegal squatters, a large percentage of whom are under the poverty line,[20] are also outside the scope of the food distribution system (Roy, 2003). Roy, in her study of the political geography of poverty in Calcutta, cites an interview with Animesh Haldar, Head of the CMDA's planning department

The CMDA was charged with preparing a list of the city's poor for use by the Food Ministry to identify "below poverty line" persons eligible for subsidized food grains under a central government Public Distribution Scheme announced in 1997. In the interview Haldar admits that the study deliberately excluded all squatter-settlements, studying only pavement

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[17] From a personal interview with Rabial Mallik, NGO Forum.
[18] From discussions with Solomon Benjamin, March 2003, and Rabial Mallick, May 2003.
[19] From discussions with V.Ramaswamy, January 2003

dwellers and slum-dwellers.[21] He says,

"We are concerned that studying squatters will give them a false sense of legitimacy. We cannot acknowledge their presence."[22]

Their 'unauthorized' status in effect, deligitimizes the very existence of these communities.

My own conversations with the former Municipal Commissioner, Asim Burman, in January 2003 revealed a more nuanced understanding of the illegal settlements. He acknowledged that many residents of illegal settlements had a history in the city dating back to the 1971 war, and also that they were mostly legitimate citizens of India with voting rights[23]. However, he blamed politicians for supporting their illegal encroachments, and suggested that regularizing or recognizing them would lead to even greater rates of migration. The city's meagre resources were already strained and would be unable to bear an increase in migration, or the obligations for service provision that came with recognition.

To end this section, I recount a history of the Beliaghata settlement, paraphrasing a deposition by Mr. Rabindranath Das and Mr. Gobinda Saha of the Bagmari Canal Traders Association, made to the People's Commission on Eviction and Displacement, held in September 2002.

" *In the 1960s, people from South Bengal, notably from Minakahn, Basanti, Gosaba areas of the Sunderbans, began settling along the banks of the Canal. Other people, living as homeless folk on the footpaths of the streets of Calcutta, also flocked to this area. The main settlements came up in 1967-69, during the era of the United Front Governments. The people of Sunderbans had come here because they lived under extremely penurious conditions, where only one crop grew per year. Salt water ruined the soil time and again, and they wanted to escape that life. The women started working as domestic hands in nearby houses, while the men acquired jobs from traders of the canal area, or from nearby factories.*

The initial relationship between the residents of the shanties and those of the nearby localities were not very good. Resistance was seen to their using water. But gradually relationships became smoother. At times, even, weddings occurred between 'para' (middle class locality) boys and shanty girls.

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[20] From surveys of canal squatters undertaken by the NGO ASHA in 2000, for the ADB Canal Resettlememt Plan.
[21] I infer from the CMDA's inclusion of pavement dwellers in its studies, that pavement dwellers though illegal, are unlikely to develop a 'false sense of security', given that most of them are temporal migrants, do not have pucca structures, and also typically do not have families.
[22] Roy, Ananya. 'City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty", 2003, page 27
[23] In popular discourse, the residents of unauthorized settlements are routinely referred to as "illegal migrants" and lately even as "infiltrators".

In this particular area of the canal the main trade was with Babri (iron casts), scrap (mainly East Bengali traders), timber go-downs-cum marts (many people had sawing machines, and the tradespeople were mainly Gujaratis). There also live some 100 families of image makers. In earlier times, people coming from the Sunderbans used to mix sawdust from the mills with sediments from the canal and sell that as "gul" (a kind of fuel). Along the road by the other side of the canal lived mostly people from East Bengal (Dhaka, Mymensingh, Barisal districts).

Because the Revolutionary Socialist Party has some political influence in the Sunderbans, it also had some influence on the people who had settled in the canal area from there. Forward Bloc also had some influence. The CPI(M) no significant influence.

The question of eviction first came up, albeit mildly, in 1967, over an incident of digging the canal. The Calcutta Canal Traders Association cooperated in digging the canal, and in order to remove soil, the shanties were temporarily relocated.

Then came an attempt to evict the shanties along the canal during the Emergency of 1975-77. The Police Station came and issued a declaration that no one would be allowed to live along the Canal, all must move away. What happened as a result of this drive was that people removed the shacks from the canal bank and relocated them at the canal slope. The police also happily filed a report: we have cleared out the canal side. At this time, the Irrigation Department gave land to the forest Department to plant trees along the canal.

A large-scale effort was made to carry out evictions in October-November 1981. Prasanta Sur, a minister at that time, had ordered the eviction drive. The people of the locality organised resistance in Galiff Street. The plan was to carry out evictions from Bagmari to Galiff Street. Women as well as men rallied to the resistance. The cops turned up and started smashing up the shacks.

After this, evictions were halted when the Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, ordered the police to desist. The DC (Eastern Subarban Zone) Sultan Singh, the DC North Subimal Dasgupta, the Commissioner of Police Nirupam Som, the OCs of Maniktola, Beliaghata, Shyampukur, etc Police Stations, and the association leaders, met in the presence of Jyoti Basu. Jyoti babu said that he had ordered that roads and pavements should be cleared, not that shanties should be smashed up. But he also said that the residents must move away somewhat. Present in these meetings were leaders of the Calcutta Canal Traders Associations and the Calcutta Circular Canal Traders Association (mainly controlled by the Forward Bloc). Others present included RSP leaders Sunil Sengupta, Nikhil Das, Forward Bloc leaders Dr. Subodsh De, Sankar Das, etc. Later on, the role of the RSP declined considerably. The influence of the CPI increased. In particular, the CPI Councillor Chanchal Ghosh had a striking role. Two months before the death in 2002 of Chanchal Ghosh, a joint committee was formed, taking 14 units from the 14 municipal wards in order to organise the anti-eviction struggle."

5.2   The implications of Legal "Recognition"

At this point it would be useful to review the entitlements that official recognition as a "slum" begets:

(i) Firstly, the Municipal Act of 1980 proceeds with the assumption that "recognized slums" or "informal settlements"[24] are to stay and their clearance is to be avoided (CMC, 2000).[25] Under the Act, a "slum" is characterized by the fact that "the huts or other structures used for human habitation are unfit for such purposes, or that the unhealthy or unhygienic conditions thereof of the huts and other structures is dangerous or injurious to public health or to the health of the area's inhabitants"[26] The Act further provides for the acquisition of slum land by the State Government. The government has the authority to execute essential civic works, to implement improvement schemes, pay compensation for vesting of rights, and to sanction plans for the improvement of huts and structures.

(ii) The Calcutta Thika Tenancy (Acquisition and Regulation) Act of 1981, considerably revised from the 1949 version, applies in "recognized" slum areas. Thika tenants, or owners of the huts and structures, now do so directly under the state government[27]. Tenancy rights are inheritable but not transferable. In addition, Thika tenants have the right to make improvements and also construct common facilities with permission from the state government. Renters are protected by the "West Bengal Premises Tenancy Act".

(iii) Under the "Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation Act of 1958", bustees targeted for clearance for various reasons require that the residents, both owners and tenants, of these slums be adequately compensated by being re-housed within close proximity of their present place of residence (GoWB, 1958). Finally, recognized slums or bustees have been the target of one of the most extensive and long-standing programs of slum improvement in any Indian city, which has grown from upgradation and basic services provision to economic development, social services, and community based management.

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[24] Informal settlement here refers to "recognized informal settlements", which consist of the refugee squatter settlements.

[25] This Act supersedes the 1951 Corporation Act, whereby slum improvement activities were obligatory on the slum owners, failing which the corporation would undertake interventions under a standard plan. Also, the corporation could acquire or purchase land if required.

[26] This is almost identical to the definition under the Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation Act of 1958

[27] From my interview with the municipal commissioner I learned that approximately 90 percent of the housing in Calcutta is built on land vested in the state government, on a long-term leasehold basis. Thus, the "slums" are not unique in this regard.

5.4 Government Attitudes, Actions and Policies towards Illegal Settlements

Given the strong protections and governmental obligations that legal recognition implies, the rigid attitude of government authorities is understandable, but it only serves to ignore a problem that worsens over time. The growth of such settlements is a **structural outcome** of the housing and economic situation in the metropolis, and its surrounding hinterland. It is important to note that the recognized refugee colonies also started out as 'illegal' settlements, while the bustees were on the verge of being cleared whole scale as a public health hazard.

Given the history, ideology and populist traditions of the Left Front in Calcutta, one would imagine they would be sympathetic, if not pro-active in supporting moves to legalize the "illegal" squatter settlements.

An examination of slum statistics indicates that this was not the case. However, the number of recognized slums in the Corporation boundaries grew from 4371 in 1948 (Ford Foundation Legal Notes, 1963) to 5500 at present (CMC, 2003). This increase was during a period when the municipal boundaries of Calcutta increased from104 square kilometers to 187 square kilometers, when outlying townships were included. The primary source of increase in the number of "recognized" slums was the regularized refugee colonies that were concentrated in the outlying townships. As discussed in the previous chapters, the basis of the regularization was the identification of refugees as "political" migrants who had arrived prior to 1971[28]. Economic migrants were deemed ineligible (Chatterji, 2001).

Why did the Left parties, once they had come into power, ignore the growth of unrecognized settlements? Why did they not seek to incorporate them into the city's development, by recognizing them?

An analysis of the characteristics of these settlements shows that "unauthorized settlements" developed on state-owned or public land. Once the Left Front was in power, they were reluctant to give up control over their land-holdings. On the other hand, both bustees and refugee colonies existed on large private holdings, and their redistribution

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[28] This provision creates an implicit bias towards Hindu migrants over Muslim migrants from Bangladesh

supported the Left Fronts "ideological and organizational commitment to exclude propertied interests from participating in the process of governance" (Kohli, 1987, pp 4).

In addition, given that most unrecognized settlements in the CMA lay on the margins of infrastructural features, the relevance of the *in-situ* upgradation associated with regularized slums was questionable. Resettlement in a new location also posed serious difficulties. Most importantly, by the mid-eighties the Left-Front was well entrenched in West Bengal. Even in Calcutta, where the Congress still had significant influence in certain areas, they already acquired a loyal support among the bustees and resettlement colonies, and were not dependant on electoral support in unauthorized settlements (Kohli, 1987, pps 3-4). In any case, the politics of patronage was a reliable means of assuring political support as it maintained the relationship of dependency between the unauthorized dwellers and their political patrons (personal interview: Ramaswamy, 2003).

Finally, encroaching on state owned land was an illegal act, and the government did not want to reward illegal activities by granting tenure rights and recognition. Also, there is a widespread perception amongst municipal authorities that granting legal recognition will result in an overwhelming influx of migrants into the city, who would arrive in vast number to acquire "free" land in the city (personal interview: Burman). In my research, I have not come across credible statistical support for this belief; however, it is a concern that I heard frequently expressed by bureaucrats, planners, and academics, and by politicians when they accuse rivals of indulging in the politics of vote-banks.

Thus, no moves were made by the state to legalize "unauthorized settlements". Conversely, in the 1980s, the state government "cracked-down" on illegal squatters and initiated a program of evictions and demolitions in the eighties. While most of these evictions were sporadic, and targeted at pavement dwellers, public "nuisances" and supporters of the opposition Congress party [29], eviction on a large scale took place on the marshy lands bordering the city, where the new township of Salt Lake was developed.

The drama of evictions was played out with the usual political accusations, protests and dharnas (sit-ins). In several cases, evictions in the canal areas were prevented by public protest and action, and interventions from senior political leaders, including chief minister

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[29] Rooftops Canada, "Eviction of Sqautters in Baghbazaar Municipal Yard, 1988", 1988, Habitat International Coalition and Rooftops Canada.

Jyoti Basu[30]. From NGO sources and newspapers, I gathered that large-scale evictions reduced in the next decade. Unnayan documentation does not extend to this period, and I unfortunately do not have any statistical figures.

The role of the Courts: The attitude of the Courts on the issue of unauthorized settlement appears to be quite rigid, as is evident from a recent Supreme Court directive on the eviction of unauthorized squatters living on a lakeside in southern Calcutta.

The Supreme Court order   superseded an earlier High Court ruling that authorized the eviction, but required the state government and railway authorities to provide interim sanitation facilities, till a decision on rehabilitation could be reached. The case was prompted by a public interest litigation filed by the Howrah Ganatantrik Nagarik Samity [31], complaining that the residents of the unauthorized structures along the rail tracks were polluting the lakes. In the ruling, the Supreme Court declared "We find no reason why railways or the state of West Bengal should be directed to provide sanitary facilities even as interim measure.[32]"

The issue of rehabilitation will be taken up separately; however, a strict interpretation of the Land Acquisition Act of 1984 or the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1971, the mechanisms under which squatters are evicted, provides no room to compensate illegal occupants (CMC, 2000).

Laws and Procedures Governing Land Acquisition and Eviction : At this juncture, it would be useful to look at the legal mechanism through which the government undertakes evictions in "unauthorized settlements", given that they do not come under the purview of the Slum Clearance and rehabilitation Act of 1958. The government acquires land for these projects under the authority of various national, state and municipal laws. For the CMC, there are two possible alternative procedures for Land Acquisition (CMC, 2000):

(i)   Negotiated acquisition by the CMC under Section 536 of the CMC Act of 1980

(ii)   Compulsory land acquisition through a CMC application to the state government under sections 533 and 537 of the CMC Act of 1894.

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[30] A deposition by Mr. Rabindranath Das and Mr. Gobinda Saha, of the Bagmari Canal Trader's Association, to the Peoples Commission on Eviction and Displacement, Sep 20-22, 2003 recounts incidents where intervention from Mr, Basu prevented the eviction of residents.

[31] "Howrah Ganatantrik Nagarik Samity & Ors vs Union of India", 2003, SOL Case.No.197, 2003-04-17

[32] "SC orders eviction of squatters", *The Statesman*, April 22 and "Apex court nod for Lake ouster
- Separate hearing for Rehabilitation plea", *The Telegraph*, April 23,

Under this act, persons who occupy land illegally are not entitled to compensation (CMC, 2000). Evictions of persons who occupy land illegally are mandated through the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971. This Act requires that the occupants be provided 15 days notice stating the cause of eviction, and authorizes the use of such force as may be necessary.

Table 9. Evictions in Calcutta Metropolitan Area from 1983-1989

Notes: These aggregate numbers of evictions for each year are compiled from Unnayan's recording of separate incidents.

Sources: Unnayan, 1995.

Date	Location/Project	Reported no. of People Evicted
1983	Near the Eastern-Metropolitan Bypass, for the Development of a middle-class residential township in Salt Lake	5080
1984	Bagh Bazaar Corporation Land	400
1985	Bhowanipore	1250
1986	Series of evictions involving smaller pavement settlements	1049
1987	Salt Lake- evictees returned and were removed once more six months later	3000
1987	Along various canals, on highways near airport and railway station.	13,765
1988	Topsia and Tijala (leatherworkers settlements with a large concentration of harijan and lower-caste tanners)	13,012
1989	Salt Lake	1000

Table 10. Evictions and Projected Evictions in Calcutta Metropolitan Area from 2000-2004

Sources: *The Statesman* newspaper, *The Telegraph* newspaper, NGO Forum, Eviction-Watch, and the ADB Resettlement Plan document.

Date	Location and Project	No. of People affected	Rehabilitation or compensation
September 22, 2001	Tolly's Nullah, for extension of the Calcutta Metro under GoWB Transportation Dept.	15,000	Rs.2000 shifting costs per household
Dec 10,2002	Beliaghata-Circular Canal, for dredging the canal and beautification of the canal banks under the GoI Megacity Project	at least 20,000	Rs. 2000 shifting costs, some discussion of compensation for families below poverty line but nothing materialized.
Projected 2004	Canal Rehabilitation under the ADB funded Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project	11,000	Resettlement Plan providing resettlement along Canal banks for majority, within 800 metres of present home.
Projected under Supreme Court directive [a]	Rabindra Sarobar Lake, Railway Land. Cleaning of Lake and environmental improvement.	5000 (approximated from newspaper accounts)	The question of rehabilitation of the squatters by the government has not yet been decided by the High Court, which would adjudicate upon their claim to right to life. [b]
Projected	Lake Garden, on railway land	N.A (estimated 20,000 by NGO Forum)	N.A
Projected	Squatters along railway tracks	N.A	N.A

[a] On July 10, 2003 The Calcutta High Court today dismissed an application of Ms Savitri Ghosh and 153 other squatters occupying railway land adjacent to Rabindra Sarovar and observed that the earlier order of this court for eviction of these unauthorized occupants should be enforced without delay. The High Court's order had been confirmed by the Supreme Court. The order was in response to a PIL filed by environmentalist, Subhas Datta of Howrah Ganatantrik Nagarik Samiti in 1997.
(*The Statesman*, July 11, 2003).

[b] The Supreme Court overturned a High Court directive to the Railway authorities and state government to provide interim sanitary facilities and delay evictions. In an order dated June 18, 1999, the high court directed that sanitation and other amenities be provided to the squatters and that the Calcutta Municipal Corporation "shall see to it that no further infiltration takes place". The railways and the state government were asked to shoulder the costs. Against this order, the Union of India, through Eastern Railway, Calcutta, moved the Supreme Court. (*The Telegraph*, April 23, 2003).

5.5   The role of Non-governmental Organizations

When I talk of non-governmental organizations in this section I mean those specifically not affiliated with political parties. NGOs, particularly those belonging to religious missions such as the Lutheran Church, Mother Theresa's Sisters of Charity, and the Ramakrishna mission,

had been active in slum communities for a considerable period, but their work focused on humanitarian activities, education and health care support. Political education and advocacy was largely left to the political parties and their affiliated party organizations.

One of the interesting outcomes of the intense politicization of Calcutta slums, and the history of grassroots political activism among the urban poor, is the awareness and articulation of their rights as citizens. This is evident in the statements and depositions presented to the People's Commission on Eviction and Displacement.

However, these political connections did little to improve the living conditions of illegal squatters, give them legally recognized tenure rights, or guarantee them the same entitlements as other residents of the city. The widespread evictions and demolitions that occurred in the 1980's led to the emergence of protest and advocacy groups, ranging from community-based organisations affiliated with the radical Left parties, to apolitical civil rights groups.

Unnayan was the most prominent and influential of the civil rights organizations. "Unnayan" is a Bengali word, literally meaning "development ". The organization was established in 1977 with the objective of "supporting the laboring poor in their struggles to develop and gain control over their lives. "(Sen, 1975). Its founding members could be described as the city's progressive intellectual elite.[33]

In 1979, Unnayan conducted studies into the lives and work of the rickshaw-pullers of the city, as one study among others it was doing on the nature and structure of the "unintended city" in Calcutta (Sen, 2003). The publication of the report took place just days before the Left Front government embarked on an intensive first round of what Unnayan termed "banning the unlicensed" in Calcutta. Rickshaw-pullers were the first the major casualties, but in 1983-84 as part of the consequences of "urban development" policies, the following years saw the evictions of thousands of households of "marginal land dwellers" in the city (Unnayan, 1989).

The evictions in Calcutta echoed similar actions in India's other major cities, and Unnayan was instrumental in setting up the Committee for Right to Housing in 1985, to build networks amongst housing rights activists and advocates across the country. The committee emerged as a direct response to the Supreme Court Judgement in the Olga Tellis case of

July 1985, which, though it acknowledged the right to livelihood of the pavement dwellers, empowered the Bombay Municipal Corporation to evict pavement dwellers.[34]

Unnayan was a primary organizer of the decade long National Campaign for Housing Rights, (NCHR) initiated in 1986 with the support of social activists, lawyers, architects, planners, academics, NGOs, community groups and trade unions. Along with Unnayan, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) Bombay, Legal Resources for Social Action, Tamil Nadu and Lokayan, New Delhi[35] were instrumental in the campaign. The campaign's objectives were to make the right to housing an explicit fundamental right, through a constitutional amendment, to influence national and state government policy on housing and shelter, and to support and build solidarity with organizations and individuals involved in the struggle for housing in the country (*Advocacy Update*, 1995).

The Campaign launched an intensive all-India debate on Draft National Housing Policy in 1987-88, and drafted an alternative democratic housing policy. It succeeded in making housing issues a visible and primary concern, and convinced various political parties to address the critical issue of housing in their election manifestos in a comprehensive manner.[36] This resulted in a better-informed debate on the subject by ministers in parliament. It also had a considerable impact on subsequent national housing policies (*Advocacy Update*, 1995).

At the local level, Unnayan's successes were in bringing attention to the problems of urban illegality. They conducted extensive studies, surveys and seminars on the urban informal sector, illegality and its impacts on the poor. They also built up a resource base and library, networked with national and international housing rights groups (including Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions and the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights) and protested and documented state-conducted evictions.

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[33] In the first instance, it was set up as an organisation in order to put into practice the hypotheses put forward in the essay "The Unintended City" written by Jai Sen in 1975, after the publication of the essay had stimulated some discussion about an alternative praxis of social development work.

[34] In *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation,* the Supreme Court held that the right to life included the right to livelihood. However, it concluded that "No one has the right to make use of a public property for a private purpose without requisite authorisation and, therefore, it is erroneous to contend that pavement dwellers have the right to encroach upon pavements by constructing dwellings thereon."

[35] Advocacy Update, "Campaign for Housing Rights", Pune, February- March 1996.

[36] Interestingly, of all the major political parties in India, the CPM is the only party that refers to a "right to housing" in its manifesto.

Their primary relationship with the Left government was adversarial. This was understandable given the actions of the CPM in the eighties, and Unnayan charged the Left government with abandoning its pro-poor ideology. Also, their efforts at community mobilization were hampered by the extensive political base the Left parties had in the slums. In an interview with V.Ramaswamy, formerly a member of Unnayan, and experienced community organizer through the *Chhinnamul Sramajibi Adhikar Samiti* (Organisation for the Rights of Uprooted Laboring People), he expressed the opinion that intensive politicization had prevented the formation of a vibrant civil society in Calcutta, similar to the one in Bombay.

To quote Ramaswamy: "Party politics at the grassroots level is about power, for oneself and those one considers one's own. Power can mean material benefit, besides being in a position to do what one might want, without any disruption. Having power means being able to appease a few people, and thus remain in power. Gratifying some also helps to keep them in obligation, for repayment in one form or another - donations, participating in party rallies, voting for the party and getting one's friends and relatives to also support the party, joining the party group in its conflicts."

An interview with Solomon Benjamin in March 2003, planner and participant in the NCHR, revealed his mixed opinions about the campaigns achievements and the concepts of housing rights. According to him, the role of day-to-day politics was a key part of the informal housing process, and that planners working in informal settlements needed to understand and strategize according to these practices.

The groups fighting the most recent assault on the "unauthorized" settlements appear to appreciate the need for political support. Interviews with Rabial Mallick of the NGO Forum, another umbrella group of anti-eviction organisations, revealed that members of the far-Left parties like the CPI-ML (Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist), RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party) and SUCI (Socialist Unity Centre of India)[37] participated in the anti-eviction protests, petitions and provided strong support to their cause.

In general however, there is a strong mistrust of politics and politicians, particularly at the local level, in NGO circles, that is not entirely unfounded. However, based on the past

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[37] CPI-ML and RSP are members of the CPM-led ruling coalition, while SUCI is deeply critical of the CPM. However, the Left Front has recently been wooing fringe left groups to gain support for its campaign against the Hindu-rightwing BJP. See "US gum to paste fringe groups to Left Front" *the Telegraph* , March 3, 2003.

experience of the bustee movement, political competition, and even opportunism can be a tool through which communities achieve formal recognition.

In recent years, there has been a growth in the number of funded, institutionalised NGOs, working in bustees and with unrecognized dwellers[38]. They are supported by public policy rhetoric that refers to "people's participation in development", and the involvement of civil society. Their activities include education, health, environmental awareness, women's empowerment and economic development. The limited nature of independent shelter - related initiatives with the urban poor by NGOs in Calcutta is because of the distinctive history of the laboring poor's housing in the city, which is closely tied to Leftist politics. Initiatives with the unrecognised dwellers are difficult because of their 'unauthorized' status, and NGOs are refused permission to undertake shelter improvements in them. Without underplaying the valuable work done by NGOs in support of the poor and vulnerable, I would echo Ramaswamy's assertions that their activities affect a small percentage of poor. As far as shelter and environmental upgrading is concerned, the CMC and CMDA have a much longer history and experience than any NGOs. Even Unnayan, now largely defunct, was primarily a research and advocacy organisation.

More than the individual NGO's, the joint action networks formed between various NGOs and community based groups, some party-affiliated, are likely to play a significant role in the struggle towards security and citizenship for illegal squatters. These networks are organized around specific problems such as street children, evictions and displacement, and womens rights[39].

In all poor communities, the community groups are an important resource for political and social action, and comprise neighbourhood-based clubs and associations of the local youth[40]. They are active in their localities, and organize welfare activities for the poor, blood donation camps, tree planting, awareness raising, garbage collection, *pujas*, and other cultural and recreational activities. Faced with the threat of eviction, they were involved in protests and marches, helped older and very young victims of displacement, and on occasion actively fought the authorities. They also help the NGO-networks keep track of the community's residents when they are displaced (personal interviews: Mallick, Ramaswamy, Dasgupta 2003).

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[38] These include ASHA, ABC, PUBLIC, etc.. that have ties to international donor agencies and participate in slum projects funded by DFID,ADB and national funders like HUDCO and GoI. In addition, many of them have influence with the planning agencies, the CMC and higher level political figures.
[39] From discussions with Rabial Mallick, of NGO Forum
[40] From discussions with Ramaswamy, Mallick etc.

Finally, another core of NGO actors has emerged, whose focus on environmental concerns conflicts directly with the agenda of pro-poor organizations. They blame squatters for much of the environmental pollution and degradation in the city, particularly of the rivers, canals and water bodies. The *Howrah Ganatantrik Nagarik Samiti*, for instance, led by environmentalist Subhas Datta, fought and won a court case to remove illegal squatters living on railway land close to the Rabindra Sarobar Lake in Southern Calcutta on grounds of the environmental pollution they were causing.

5.6   The Canal Settlements: Two Evictions and a Resettlement

In this section, I focus on three canal settlements that have been severely impacted by their lack of formal recognition, despite their long history in the city, and considerable political patronage network. The canals and their banks are owned by the Irrigation Department of the Government of West Bengal, and accommodate the greatest concentration of squatter settlements (Unnayan, 1989). Many legal slums border the canals, and the canal bank settlements began as an outgrowth of these slums (personal interview: Ramaswamy, 2003).

Calcutta's canal network serves various purposes. Originally drainage and navigation canals, they have not been used for navigation since the 1960's. Beliaghata canal takes off from the Hooghly river and links up with the Kesptopur canal encircling the eastern boundary of the recent Salt Lake development. This connects with the Bagjola canal, and wanders through the semi-urban and rural areas surrounding the urban agglomeration till its joins the Kulti river. Populated almost along its entire stretch, the settlements at the edges of the CMA appear more similar to villages than urban settlements. They are less dense than the settlements within the core city, and built of thatch rather than permanent materials (Roy, 2003). The southern part of the city is served by a similar system, which is drained by Tolly's Nullah and the Panchannagram canal.

The general impression about the unrecognized squatters is that they are a liability to the city, adding to the crowding, causing environmental degradation, and a breeding ground for crime. Social workers involved in the slum settlements contend that they are no more likely to contain criminals than the bustees (personal interview: Ramaswamy, 2003).
It is less widely acknowledged that the squatter settlements contribute significantly to the huge informal sector, which is the largest sector in employment terms for Calcutta

(Banerjee, 1990). Residents, then as now, are mainly rickshaw pullers, porters, scavengers, daily wage labour in the prawn and tannery industry, and domestic servants.

In 1983-84, Unnayan carried out a series of studies on squatter settlements in the Beliaghata canal area, as a background to a proposal for rehabilitation of the settlements, on land on the canal banks itself[41]. Though the study was supported by the CMDA, it was never formally considered for implementation. Despite the pressing need to find solutions to address the environmental condition of the canals, and the health hazards faced by their residents, their "unauthorized" status disbarred them from any governmental intervention.

When Unnayan carried out its 1983-84 study on the Beliaghata squatter colonies, they noted that the postal services did not reach the slums, and most residents did not have ration cards or the right to vote. In the 20 years since then, nearly all the residents had been registered in the voters list and had the voting rights. Nearly all the residents in addition had ration cards[42]. Thus, they are not politically disenfranchised, despite popular opinion and the tendency to term them "illegal" migrants, and even sometimes "infiltrators".

Environmental conditions in these settlements are appalling. The canals are used as a means for disposing sewage. The squatter families, lacking sanitation and waste management services dispose their wastes directly into the canals. The canals also receive the effluent discharge from industries, as well as untreated sewage from city sewer lines.[43]

Not to mince words, they are fetid, filthy and acutely unsanitary. Their contaminated condition presents a threat to the thousands of people who live and work on their banks, and to the larger urban population. Studies of the incidence of cholera and other waterborne diseases point to high incidence in the wards, which include canal areas (personal interview: Ramaswamy, 2003).

Given the severely degraded nature of the canals, the government initiative to clean, de-silt and upgrade the canal is welcome. There are three separate government projects for canal renewal in different parts of the city, two of which are already underway. Under the GoI funded Mega City project, the West Bengal Government received a loan from HUDCO to

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[41] Unnayan, "Renewal of Squatter Settlements in Beliaghata Canal", unpublished report, Calcutta 1989.
[42] Depositions, interview with Mallick and with Municipal Commissioner.
[43] "City Canals Face Sewer Threat", The Statesman, April 2003.

desilt and excavate city canals[44] (CMDA, 2003). The Megacity project is concentrated on the canal network in the northern part of the city, which includes the Beliaghata-Circular Canal network. Canal work is implemented jointly by the CMC and Irrigation Department.

Tolly's Nullah is the site of two State Government Projects. The first is the Government of Indian Ganga Action Plan, and the second is the Calcutta Metro Rail Extension.

Beliaghata Circular Canal:

The 2002 eviction of at least 20,000 people living along the banks of the Beliaghata canal marked the single largest eviction in Calcutta's recent past, according to Rabial Mallick, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, and convener of NGO Forum, an umbrella organization of NGO's working on urban poverty in Calcutta. The last time evictions nearing this scale had occurred was for the development of Salt Lake Township, in the mid-eighties.

The eviction has been on the anvil since October 2002, and notices were given to the residents two weeks in advance, as per the requirements of the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 (*The Statesman*, "Eviction from Canal Areas Next Week", October 17,2002). However, the eviction was delayed by a lack of political will, and the inability to come to a decision on resettlement.

A *Statesman* interview with officials of the State Irrigation and Waterways department provides insights into the nature of political patronage that has kept these settlements relatively secure for the past thirty odd years. A IWD survey of the canal area found that small steel fabrication units, paint manufacturing shops, in addition to a large number of four and two-wheeler repairing shops had been built illegally on the stretch of the canal where the eviction drive would be conducted (*The Statesman*, Oct 22, 2002).

In the interview, officials alleged that a section of local political leaders had helped the encroachers to set up the manufacturing units. They further alleged that these leaders were

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[44] The centrally sponsored scheme of Infrastructural Development in Mega Cities in operation from 1993-94 applied to five megacities namely, Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The scheme is meant to promote investment in economic and physical infrastructure and to facilitate building up a revolving fund for sustained development of infrastructure in the Megacities. The scheme is administered through the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment. Cost sharing between the Central Government and the State Governments is in ratio of 25:25 and balance 50% is to be met from institutional finance, through HUDCO etc.. An aggregate outlay for the scheme of Rs. 86.50 crore had been provided for 1998-99 but the allocation was subsequently reduced to Rs. 75.00 crores. The whole amount has been released to the State Governments. (GoI Planning Commission, Annual Plan 1999-2000).

collecting money from the encroachers every month as 'cess.' The officials alleged that they did not receive any cooperation from these leaders and doubted whether they would cooperate with them during the eviction drive (*The Statesman*, Oct 22, 2002).
"For the past one decade or more some local leaders are getting money from the encroachers on regular basis. How could they ask the encroachers to go now? No eviction is possible unless the nexus between these leaders and the encroachers is demolished," said one official (*The Statesman*, October 22, 2002).

The nexus between the leaders and the encroachers failed to assure that adequate compensation would be provided for the displaced people. Thus while they had extensive connections with lower level party workers of the CPI and CPM, the extra-legal nature of these transactions meant that, formally, they were "illegal encroachers" who deserved no rewards for their unlawful acts of squatting on government land. Thus, the government took a hard line on resettlement benefits (*The Statesman*, Nov 7, 2002).

In the project outlay, there was no clear allocation of funds for resettlement. *The Statesman* quotes figures from the West Bengal Government, that of the Rs 140 crore project funded by HUDCO to dredge 12 city canals (of which Rs 14.05 crore is for the Circular and adjoining Kestopur canals), Rs 1.25 crore is marked for the "clearance of encroachment, and resettlement" (*The Statesman*, Oct 17, 2002.) Mr Alokesh Dasgupta, chief engineer of the Irrigation Department, requested Rs 1.0 crore to evict encroachers from the banks of Circular-Beliaghata canal, in a 4 km strectch between Gaznavi Bridge and Orange Surrah. The government identified 3,600 families that were living in the project area, and set aside Rs 90 lakh as shifting charges. Another Rs 10 lakh would be required to bear the incidental and operational expenses (*The Statesman*, Oct 22, 2002).

The issue of resettlement and compensation was taken up by community groups, including the *Janabasati Ucched Pratirodh Committee*, an umbrella organization of slum-dwellers, NGO Forum, political activists from SUCI (Socialist Unity Centre of India) and the USFI (United Socialist Federation of India), radical left groups, the CPI and RSP, Left parties within the ruling coalition, and most prominently by the oppositions Trinamool Congress under Mamta Bannerjee.

Given the paucity of funds within the project outlay for resettlement purposes, NGO activists and political leaders pointed out funds were available under that the GoI Ambedkar Yojana, and discussed the provision with Urban Development Minister Ashok Bhattacharya and Amalendralal Ray, Irrigation Minister (personal interview: Mallick, 2003). According to Mr.

Mallick, the ministers agreed to consider compensating families that were below the poverty line, on humanitarian grounds, and the organizations were asked to identify land for resettlement under the Centre's Ambedkar Yojana. The minister suggested acquiring land in the surrounding suburbs towns if no land was available in Calcutta, though the residents and activists had repeatedly stressed that their livelihood was closely tied to their place of residence. Many worked in the prawn and leather tanning industries along the canals. A large number of children worked as scavengers, and women as maid-servants in neighbouring middle-class localities (personal interview: Mallick, 2003)

A Trinamool MLA, Mr Sadhan Pande, submitted a proposal to the minister to utilise a sum of Rs 27 crore received from the Centre under the Yojana for resettlement. (*The Statesman*, Nov 7, 2002) Under the Yojana beneficiaries have to pay half the price of the plots and houses they get while the government pays the rest.

Without resolving the issue of resettlement, on Nov 7, 2003, the Government announced a December 10 deadline for evictions. (*The Statesman*, Nov 7, 2002). Mr Ashok Bhattacharya announced that an initial shifting charge would be paid to those evicted, but refused to make any promises about resettlement. No provisions to disburse the funds from the Ambedkar Yojana, identify eligible applicants, or come to an agreement about the amount of compensation were made prior to the evictions

The community refused to vacate without adequate resettlement. The paltry "shifting costs" of Rs.2000 [45] per family which the government offered, similar to the sum residents of Tolly Nullah were given, was perceived to be less than adequate. The *Janabasati Ucched Pratirodh Committee* filed a writ petition to the Supreme Court on the eviction. Mr. K.P Ghosh, secretary of the organization said many Left parties including the CPI-M have earlier promised rehabilitation and have used them as vote banks. (*The Statesman*, Dec 8, 2002).

The eviction took place as planned over two-days December 10th and Dec 11th, 2002. Several Leftist groups such as the USFI noted that the evictions were carried out on International Human Rights day, and accused the Left Front of giving in to neo-liberal policies. The eviction was a   brutal and violent affair, with a number of huts being set on fire, and skirmishes between the residents, activists and the police. The day before the eviction, one elderly resident committed suicide, leaving a wife and family (*The Statesman*, Dec 10, Dec 11, 2002 and *The Telegraph*, Dec 11, 2002). 100 persons were arrested,

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[45] The Poverty Line used by the government of West Bengal is Rs 15,000 rupees per household per year. The average West Bengali household contains five to six people (IDRC, 1997. www.idrc.ca/books/reports/1997.htm)

including party workers and community leaders, as well as 'anti-social' elements accused of arson. The protestors included the local Jhupri Federation, the *Hawker Sangram Committee* (a street Hawker's Union) and local CPI councilor Ms Mousumi Ghosh.

The eviction was carried out by the CMC and the Calcutta police. Five pay-loaders [46] and a 10-member CMC demolition squad, as well as officials from the CMDA, were also present. (*The Statesman*, Dec 10, 2003). The eviction effectively wiped out a settlement with a forty-year history in days (based on Depositions to the *People's commission on Eviction and Displacement,* September 2002).

Residents scattered after the evictions, and set up temporary homes in the suburbs, on pavements, and in other squatter colonies (personal interview: Mallick, 2003). The squatters, many of whom work in the informal sector, continued to go to their place of work. The eviction hit children the hardest, since most of them were enrolled in NGO run informal schools. The anti-eviction organizations have made a concerted effort to keep track of each resident, as they continue their demands for resettlement and adequate compensation. According to Mr. Mallick, none of the families have returned to their villages.

 Six months after the evictions, the canal appears to have been dredged, but further work on beautification appears to be stalled due to a shortage of funds. A few of the residents, with nowhere else to go, have returned and constructed temporary shelters (*The Statesman*, June 30, 2003).

Mrs. Gita Singh, a shanty dweller who has reoccupied her space, justifies her actions: "Where do we go? I have a family comprising my son, daughter-in-law and their children. My cart puller son is the only bread earner. The government has paid us only Rs 2,000 to move out. With that, it is not possible to get a place on long-term rent. When the police come and wield their sticks, we take shelter underneath the overbridge" (*The Statesman*, June 30, 2003).

Tolly's Nullah:

The removal of 15,000 residents from squatter settlements along Tolly's Nullah on 22th September, 2002 laid the groundwork for the Beliaghata evictions. (*The Statesman*, Sept 22, Sept 24, Sept 26 2002)

The Tolly Nullah eviction received far more public scrutiny, as opposition leader Mamta Bannerjee of the Trinamool Congress raised the issue in the legislature and in the streets.

She also appealed to the Central government, which the Trinamool supports. Mamata Bannerjee was injured in clashes with the police during the eviction, but failed to prevent them.

The state government requires the cooperation of the CMC to carry out evictions, and the Tolly Nullah evictions were carried by the CMC in coordination with the state government's Irrigation department. The eviction issue exposed a wide rift between Ms. Bannerjee and her deputy, Calcutta Mayor Subrata Mukherjee. They had previously publicly disagreed over the eviction of street hawkers by the mayor, in the incongruously named "Operation Sunshine". (*The Statesman*, Sept 21, 2002). On Mamata Bannerjee's insistence, the mayor was forced to allow hawkers back on the pavements (*The Statesman*, July 23, 2002). About 35 legislators supported Miss Banerjee, while many of the city councilors support the mayor (*The Statesman*, September 20, 2002).

The city mayor, Subrata Mukherjee, has taken a pro-active role in 'improving' the city, and implementing municipal policy reforms. His tenure has been marked by several controversial decisions, such as a tax on water, clearing the pavements of hawkers and evicting squatter settlements in collusion with the CPM. In addition, he has approved several new city "beautification" projects, including a millennium park, and an "India Gate" similar to Bombay's Gateway of India[47].

As a step towards ensuring that plans for the city are sanctioned, Mr. Mukherjee has made a point of supporting the state government in its eviction drive, despite the public opposition of his own party's leader Mamata Bannerjee (*The Telegraph*, Dec 11, 2002). An opinion piece in *The Telegraph* welcomes the cooperation between the parties, suggesting that it marks a convergence of popular opinion and political consent for change in West Bengal (*The Telegraph*, Dec 11, 2003). The author describes the demolition drive as the first-ever 'joint venture', between the CPM and the Trinamool Congress in Bengal. "Mayor Subrata Mukherjee of Trinamool and urban development minister Ashok Bhattacharyya of the CPM were not just partners in the exercise; none could do it without the help of the other".[48]

Neither the CMC nor the State Government accepted responsibility for the squatter's resettlement, alleging that as "illegal" occupants, they were not eligible for compensation (*The Statesman*, Sept 30, 2002).

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[46] An excavating machine.
[47] Gateway to Folly", in *The Telegraph*, June 27, 2003.

More than a year after the evictions, a Statesman report claims that conditions in Tolly Nullah are worse than before. (*The Statesman*, Dec 25, 2002). The article highlights the futility of the eviction drive: "the only thing that seems to have been cleaned are the dwellers. The nullah remains as stagnant as ever, if not more" (*The Statesman*, Dec 25 2002). The article charges that the government has still do decide how to proceed with the project works. It quotes Mr. Ashok Bhattacharya, state urban development minister as saying, "We are holding meetings to decide what to do. We haven't come to a decision yet."

Residents of the neighboring bustees, some of whom had supported the evictions, say their problems have increased. Earlier, we thought the area was dirty because the encroachers lived there. An open area now, the region is dirty like never before," says Mr Pabitra Mitra, a resident of Tollygunge.

Mr Tapan Sarkar, another resident, said: "The state government has completed another eviction at the Beliaghata canal. But I am sure work there will only be restricted to eviction drives. The canal will be as bad until encroachers start staggering back to the place." (*The Statesman*, Sept 25, 2002).

I spoke to the former Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Asim Burman, about the allegations. He said the Metro Rail construction project was well underway, and that the pillar foundations[49] had been built. Mr. Mallick of NGO Forum, however, contended that the pillar construction had been on-going for five years, while the squatters were still in residence. The canal had been dredged, but the waste had not been disposed.

The Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project:

The "Illegal squatters" who have made their homes on the network of branch canals adjoining Tolly's Nullah, which include the Chuagaria, Rajapur, Kalikapur, Madurdaha, Paschim Chowbhaga, Garfa and Laskarhat[50], will be displaced according to the provisions of the Asian Development Bank-funded Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project (CIEP).

All these canals fall within the corporation boundaries, and the project will be undertaken jointly by the CMC and the State Irrigation Department. Unlike the residents of Tolly Nullah and Beliaghata, the squatters falling within the ADB project area are assured rehabilitation

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[48] Chakrabarti, Ashis. "Consent for Change Rolls in", *The Telegraph*, Dec 11,
[49] Environmentalists have opposed the construction of pillars for the Metro Rail extension through the canal as they claim it will block the drainage outflow. Incidents of flooding in neighboring residences due to the blockage of the canal give some weight to their claims. (*The Telegraph*, April 23, 2003).

under the ADB's resettlement policy. Closely based on the World Banks influential policy document on resettlement, ADB's resettlement policy provides that illegal encroachers will be fairly compensated (ADB, 1998).

The ADB's Policy on Involuntary Resettlement state that the absence of legal title to land should not bar any project affected person to compensation for lost assets. These residents are entitled to compensation not for land, but for assets other than land, and resettlement assistance in lieu of compensation for land (ADB, 1998).

The ADB resettlement is described by the CMC as a "pioneering project" that takes into account the resettlement and rehabilitation of informal canal dwellers that are affected by canal improvements. (*The Statesman*, September 24, 2002).

The resettlement plan is a landmark, since it represents the first officially sanctioned intervention in favour of illegal squatters. In July 2000, the ADB organized a 3-day workshop on resettlement, in which former Calcutta Municipal Commissioner Asim Burman participated (ADB, 2000). The workshop was designed to sensitize officials to resettlement issues, and involved members of SPARC[51], Mumbai, who had recently coordinated the successful relocation of 60,000 railway squatters under a Word Bank funded transport project (Patel, d'Cruz, and Burra, 2002) .

However, the workshop appeared to have done little to influence Mr. Burman's views on the issue of resettlement for illegal residents. In a personal interview with Mr. Burman, he agreed with the resettlement policy in theory, but believed that it would set an unsustainable precedent. According to Mr. Burman, the municipal and state government lacked the funds to support a land acquisition policy that included illegal encroachers. The municipal government was facing a severe funds shortage, in part due to policy reforms reducing state subsidies. He also expressed his view that a generous resettlement package would encourage mass-migration from rural areas. His final argument against resettlement was the unavailability of land in the central areas of the city, close to sources of employment[52].

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[50] See Calcutta Environmental Improvement Project: Full Resettlement Plan, CMC, 2000.
[51] SPARC, or the Society for Promotion of Area Resources, is an influential, innovative and important NGO working with the urban poor in Bombay,
[52] The issue of land management is extremely contested. While government authorities repeatedly stress the shortage of land in the core city, detailed studies on Land management by Kumar, have suggested measures for land recycling, identifying derelict building stock and vacant public land in prime areas of the city. (Kumar, 1986)

Further, Mr. Burman argues that, "The CMC does have a serious problem with these so-called homeless, many of which are illegal immigrants, many are controlled by political voter blocks, many by unscrupulous local mafia with good connections, and may of which are not homeless; they find it convenient to have some members of their family work for cash in Calcutta when things are slow in their home village, in between planting and harvesting, so are not really indigent. But some are legitimate long-term residents; (it is) very difficult to separate them." (personal interview: Burman, January 2003) .

Since ADB's policy does not specify the scale and amount of compensation to illegal dwellers, entitlements and compensation issues were to be resolved through a dialogue between the ADB and government agencies. The issue of resettlement for "unauthorized" occupants was a bone of contention between the government and the ADB. Mr. Burman revealed that the project almost fell through on this issue.

I quote A. Jorgensen, project director at the ADB, on the contentions over resettlement.

"We are not the World Bank. They have extensive access to soft loans/IDA so all their projects involving resettlement and slum rehabilitation are financed by these soft funds, which gives them strong leverage with the Ministry of Finance who in turn requires local end users to accommodate the World Bank. ADB does not provide concessional lending to India, so we get little leverage on our loans, rather the onus is on us to demonstrate the reform impact, the catalytic benefits of doing things better than local norms, otherwise India would not keep us around. ADB is less than 1% of India's annual expenditure on infrastructure, so we are not here because India needs us[53]. But as indicated we do promote "permanent" resettlement, as opposed to the current game of evictions under which 70% or more seep back within a few months to where they see their living as being, and in many cases so they can get the package all over again. But outside of friendly persuasion, it is difficult for us to "get tough" on evictions outside the Project. We do not have legal grounds to withhold loan funds, and threats to suspend the loan, would just play into the hands of those who feel very strongly against reforms, ADB's presence and requirements. " (personal communication, Jorgensen, 2003)

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[53] ADB lends to India, through the Ministry of Finance at about 2.5%, though the long-term cost is closer to 5%. MoF re-lends the funds to the State at 30% grant and 70% loan, normal formula for loans from external agencies The loan portion is at 11.5% (long term LIBOR at 5%, 1.2% for sovereign guarantee, about 5% for swap/currency risk). The State passes this on to CMC at same conditions and rates. CMC is paying 11.5% for the ADB loan and is naturally careful in the use of such expensive funds. ADB is only financing 60% of the total Project cost; the remainder comes from the State and CMC (ADB, 2000 and personal communication, Alex Jorgensen, 2003).

Despite ADB's lack of muscle, they were able to persuade the CMC to go through with the resettlement plan, for squatters evicted under the CIEP. A Resettlement Action Plan was prepared by CMC, reviewed by the ADB's Ruwani Jayewedena and incorporated in the Loan Agreement. The plan involved the issuance of ID cards to encroachers on the affected canal banks. According to Mr. Burman, the ID was tantamount to formal recognition, and would provide the resettled squatters security of tenure and protection against eviction (personal interview: Burman, 2003).

Mr. Jorgensen states that the compensation package is considered very generous by CMC, and by the other squatters in the city, who have heard rumors, mostly incorrect, as to what these resettled squatters will actually get. The compensation support is not in cash, but rather in the form of paying for relocation, or providing materials to replace those lost due to relocation. Both the ID card system, and the provision of compensation as building materials, ensured that squatters from other parts do not move into resettlement areas to avail themselves resettlement benefits (personal communication, Jorgensen, 2003).

Minutes of the meetings on resettlement, attended by ADB representatives, the CMC officials, the Mayor, NGO representatives and ward councilors of project areas, show that the issuance of "patta" or title to resettled residents was a bone of contention, and the CMC refused to accede to NGO and ADB requests for individual titles (CMC, 2003). The new homes would be inheritable but not alienable.

The resettlement plan was prepared by the CMC and passed by the ADB in 2002. The plan was drawn up by an engineering firm, STUP consultants, in collaboration with the NGO ASHA. The final plan provides a fairly comprehensive resettlement package (CMC, 2000). A majority of the residents will be resettled on Irrigation Department land bordering the edge of the canal. They will be provided pucca structures, made of low-cost materials, with toilets and sanitation facilities. In addition, special assistance will be given to families below the poverty line, and to child workers (CMC,2000).

Evictions for the project are slated for 2004. I asked Mr. Jorgensen on whether the ADB trusted the CMC to carry out the resettlement plan after its actions in Tolly and Beliaghata:

"The State sent the World Bank packing a couple of years ago for what some local interests saw as excessive interference in State matters. I suppose we could do the same, but to what end?"

Conclusion:

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In the brutal evictions, the government showed a clear disregard for the human rights of the canal squatters. The actions show that the government refuses to acknowledge that they are legitimate citizens of the city, and justifies its action by criminalizing actions such as land invasion, which they once condoned. For a pro-poor, secular and Leftist government, with a history of squatter mobilization, the lack of consistency between their present actions and their history, between their rhetoric and practice is glaring.

Neither the state nor the municipal government's vision for Calcutta provides a space for the city's huge numbers of squatters. Popular rhetoric blames them for the city's ills, and justifies their removal in the name of environmental improvement and beautification. The squatter's lack of official recognition provided a justification for the government to avoid the issue of resettlement. Their concession to consider providing resettlement help only to those squatters who were below the poverty line, on humanitarian grounds, reinforces the lack of citizenship the "unauthorized" status entails. Resettlement support to squatters is thus considered charity rather than their legitimate right. Also, in the squatter settlements, no surveys have been taken to identify BPL residents, nor were they listed prior to eviction. The government made no commitment on how they would define the BPL status of squatters, since not all of them had ration cards, and those who did were likely to be slightly better off.

The involvement of the ADB, and its insistence on the rehabilitation of squatters within its project boundaries, complicates the situation. On the one hand, the project provides the first opportunity for the government to intervene positively in the squatter settlements. On the other hand, when viewed in conjunction with the incidents at Tolly nullah and Beliaghata, the Calcutta case shows that donor pressure does not ensure a change in government attitudes and policies towards "illegal" squatters.

The continuous drama of eviction, displacement and renewed land invasion and squatting has not been resolved. Even the cruellest evictions have failed to keep residents from returning to their land. Without resolving the larger issue of squatter settlements in the city, and defining a clear basis for their inclusion in the urban process, with the same rights and entitlements as the slum dwellers, selective resettlement and inclusion may exacerbate the problem. The increase in evictions of illegal squatters over the past two years could be due to a rush to remove squatters for various projects before the ADB project sets a precedent for compensation of illegal residents.

Admittedly, relocation is a difficult problem. Residents wish to remain close to where they work and require affordable rents. Relocation to peripheral areas with few work opportunities and expensive transportation costs to the city seldom works (ADB, 1998, Cernea 1993). Urban land pressure and shortage of funds present further difficulties. Under these constraints, "unauthorized" settlements should be recognized on the basis of clear criteria such as the age of the settlement, the income and demographic profile of the residents, and the presence of women, children and other vulnerable groups. Though the government has no information on these slums, the residents, community groups and NGO's have collected detailed information about the residents, primarily to avoid eviction and show proof of residence.

Lack of official "recognition" should not be used as a means to avoid the problem of resettlement and compensation, and the obligations to provide basic services and support. The Left government has acknowledged these obligations in the bustees and refugee settlements. After over 30 years of avoiding the problem by refusing to acknowledge it, the state should now formally acknowledge its responsibilities towards huge numbers of urban poor deemed "unauthorized".

The critical issue here is the political will to include the illegal squatters within the formal urban development processes. There are clear parallels in the "illegal" dwellers struggle for tenure rights and the bustee and refugee movements in the 50s and 60s. These parallels suggest some of the sources of political will are emerging in the struggle over eviction. As in the 50s, community action and political mobilization, and party conflicts are converging to assert the rights of illegal settlers. The eviction issue has brought their status to the forefront of public discussions. The support of NGO networks, a significant section of the media, and the policies of international donors, may help generate greater support and influence public opinion, and lead to a policy in favour of illegal dwellers.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis concludes that a clear, long term-oriented policy in support of the impoverished residents of unrecognized settlements is now imperative. This would carry forward the consistent focus on the housing conditions of the urban poor that has been a feature of the West Bengal government's urban policy, and through which bustee improvement and refugee resettlement was undertaken. In Calcutta, the difficult question of providing land for housing the urban poor is significantly eased by virtue of the fact that the majority of such households live in legal bustees, which through political and legislative efforts have attained legal protection. A similar entitlement has now to be extended to the unrecognised dwellers.

As a political move, legalization offers a strategy for the Left Front to chart a course distinct from the BJP's Hindu nationalist agenda. Illegal settlements house a large number of the city's impoverished minority and lower-caste population. "Anti-communalism" is one of the Left's most important political platforms against the ruling party, and the Left has had a proven record of supporting the struggle of marginalized groups to assert their right to the city. In the context of widespread right-wing rhetoric that advocates limiting migration to cities, and targets minority groups, a policy that favours legalizing illegal settlements indicates that the Left continues to stand for the political rights of the poor regardless of ethnic affiliations.

I briefly restate the arguments that support this conclusion:

(i) The first is that political mobilization by the Left-parties and their affiliated community organizations played a significant role in achieving legal status and security for the two largest sources of housing for Calcutta's low-income residents, the bustees and the refugee resettlement colonies, in the post-independence decades. Advocating tenure security for the poor and displaced fit the Communist Party's ideological framework of redistribution of resources to the poor, as well as provided them an obvious political platform

(i) Secondly, in Calcutta, slum upgradation and municipal services were implemented only in those settlements that that had been "recognized" and thus given legal status. Thus, security of tenure in this case was a precursor to public intervention, rather than an outcome. Assumptions that the transition to legality is affected as a by-product of slum improvement programs and government interventions ignore the underlying causes and consequences of urban illegality.

(ii) Thirdly, the Calcutta case suggests that the blind eye turned towards the growth of illegal settlements, through their acquisition of some political support, creates a generalized perception of security of tenure that is precarious. While the "politics of stealth[1]" through which squatters gradually acquire rights is a commendable survival tactic, their lack of recognition is a powerful indication that they are not deemed equal residents of the city entitled to government services and legal protections. Despite the perceptions of security, these patronage networks often fail to support them, particularly at the time of eviction for development and infrastructure projects.

(iii) A piece-by-piece or project- based approach to tenure security in specific slum areas- such as those displaced by donor-funded projects, may exacerbate the problems of urban illegality. Thus, the ADB's resettlement guidelines for illegal settlements displaced by canal rehabilitation projects have been strongly resisted by the government, and may have spurred a widespread program of slum clearance and demolitions in areas outside the donor project boundaries. Solutions to urban illegality should addresses all the long-term settlements that are at risk, on the basis of defined and collectively applicable norms for "recognition" as slums, rather than provide special benefits to a particular set of "illegal" residents merely by virtue of their living in areas within the project boundaries of donor institutions.

(iv) Further, the recognition of the illegal settlements would not only benefit the "illegal" occupants, who would finally find a legitimate place in the city, but would also be beneficial for the city as a whole. An extensive body of research[2] supports the argument that with legally protected tenure rights[3], they would be more likely to make investments to upgrade their homes, participate in community projects and activities, pay for services such as electricity which they now steal, and contribute to the tax base of city[4]. Once the squatter settlements are recognized, relocation could be undertaken under the purview of the slum clearance and rehabilitation Act of 1958, which is a tool for clearing slums that constitute a public health hazard or must be relocated for development projects. Under this act, relocated slum dwellers will be afforded adequate compensation and resettlement benefits.

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[1] A term used by Solomon Benjamin, in a personal interview on March 2003, to describe day-to-day politicking in squatter settlements to obtain measures of security and improve their living conditions by obtaining water connections, electricity etc.
[2] see www.unchs.org/tenure and www.worldbank.org/urban/poverty/policy.html
[3] I do not mean freehold title, but a guarantee of security and shelter and resettlement in case of displacement.
[4] Both bastees and the legalized refugee settlements contribute to the tax base of the city. (SeeGoWB, Institute of Local Government and Urban Studies. " A Handbook on Municipal Administration", 1989, Calcutta)

Recommendations

A policy in favor of unrecognized dwellers is an effective recognition of their 'right to city', and a place in its social and political processes. For the government, it implies:

(i)   Recognising them as productive citizens, who are struggling for survival and are compelled to live under such conditions, as a result of which they at risk;

(i)   Recognising that evictions and demolitions are ultimately counter-productive, besides being inhumanely traumatic for the dwellers;

(i)   Recognising the scale and magnitude of the problem, and the fact that it is an outcome of the city's land and housing process. If unattended, their numbers would grow dramatically, with grave social and public health consequences.

(i)   A commitment to empathy, and to a vision for a city that affords and enables opportunities for improvement in the living conditions of the impoverished squatters;

In the long run, it calls for a commitment to a comprehensive strategy addressing the underlying causes of urban illegality that would, over time, help to mitigate the forces that lead to illegal squatting.

The experience of Calcutta is also a call for the international donor community to assess the broader impacts of their resettlement policies. Though the contention that Calcutta's widespread evictions have been spurred by the ADB's generous resettlement package cannot be proved at this stage, it suggests that providing compensation and resettlement benefits that are perceived as too generous will prevent them from being adopted by resource–poor national and local governments. The protection of the rights and dignities of the poor in the city cannot in any case be dependant on the policies of international donors, especially when internationally funded projects form a small minority of the number of projects likely to cause displacement. This is a particularly relevant concern in urban areas, where evictions are frequent occurrences, and a number of government funded, private and donor-funded projects are underway simultaneously. A solution to address this problem must be based on extensive research that examines the success of resettlement guidelines beyond their direct impact on project-affected people, such as their influence on national and state-level resettlement policies.

Caveat

A policy in favor of the dwellers does not mean providing them with individual title or freehold rights. The issue under discussion is security of shelter and livelihood, achieved through formal 'recognition' by the state. In many of these illegal settlements, a provision such as in the bustees where land is vested in the state, and the residents are under a long-term lease is appropriate.

In the past, when the bustees and refugee settlements were granted legal recognition, arguments over whether tenure rights were a right and entitlement, or a charitable support granted by the government were never resolved. In the case of the refugees, criteria were set to define those worthy of receiving government aid. In slum settlements, the mechanism of "recognition" allows the government to select the 'deserving' poor and exclude the 'unwanted' poor. Though the Left parties used the language of universal rights when they advocated tenurial rights for the poor and protection from eviction, when translated into practice, their policies continued to define criteria, such as legal recognition and illegality, through which large numbers of the poor gained, but many others were excluded.

Given the city governments financial and land constraints, its need to discourage future land invasion, and the widespread fear that legalization will lead to increased migration, **a policy in favor of the illegal settlements would inevitably require the definition of some criteria according to which settlements are formalized**. The definition of criteria also allows the government to remain in control of the process of "recognition". Ideally, criteria should be developed in consultation with the residents and should be based on legitimate indicators such as length of residence, economic and social considerations.

Finally, as the bustee experience shows, there are drawbacks to politicization, and to legal provisions that preclude the recycling or renewal of urban land. Bustees which have received improvement benefits are not "de-recognized", but continue to receive free services and slum improvement funds. Despite the fact that they are no longer the most effective solution for housing the poor, bustees are so firmly entrenched that their relocation is practically impossible. This precludes experiments such as in Bombay, where private developers were invited to invest in housing provision in slum areas.

Keeping these problems in mind, a policy for illegal settlements should include more flexible legal mechanisms, and provide some means to de-recognize slums and settlements that

have achieved a verifiable level of improvement, through government support. Given the scarcity of funds for shelter related activities, a mechanism to de-recognize some slums based on upgradation of environments and incomes is imperative.

Further Research

The first task in the preparation of a policy in support of such dwellers is a comprehensive participatory[5] study of unrecognised settlements. This could be undertaken collaboratively by the CMDA and the community groups and NGOs. The information gained from these surveys will offer relevant insights into whether segregation and discrimination has been a significant force in shaping the settlements of the poor.

Government authorities repeatedly cite the fear of increasing migration as an argument against the recognition of squatters, and research in this area would be important to either dispel or prove these claims, as the case may be. Further research is required assessing the relation between legalization/formalization and urban-rural migration

The Calcutta case offers some insights into the politics of urban land redistribution policies that suggest areas for urban research, particularly of a comparative nature. Research into strategies employed by informal settlements in other cities towards realizing formal tenure rights, and into the sources of political will that lead to policies and actions in favour of formalization, would provide a comparative framework within which to judge Calcutta's example, and suggest directions for planning and policy on informal settlements. Conversely, the lens of 'social and political inclusion', when applied to urban policy, may reveal marked biases and strategies that promote segregation. Formal recognition is a tool for inclusion as well as exclusion from the urban process, and comparative studies of how this tool is used in other cities in India and globally would be illuminating.

We have as yet an incomplete understanding of the relationship between the formal and informal sector in developing world cities, or of the implications of illegality. This thesis suggests that there are many little-explored linkages between politics, legalization, social and political inclusion, discrimination and human rights that need to be understood more fully in order to address the structural causes of urban poverty.

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[5] A "Participatory" approach is crucial given recent in trends in India, where the Mumbai city and other Right wing governments have sought to deport legitimate Bengali Muslim nationals without formal papers, accusing them of being illegal migrants. (See "India Plans Migrant Crackdown", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2638297.stm)

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

In Calcutta, January 2003:

Anthya Moorthy	DFID Consultant for CIEP, Capacity Building
Asim Burman	Former Municipal Commissioner of the CMC
Devananda, Chatterjee	Architect, and member of Unnayan
Rabial Mallick	Director of the Christian Centres for Study of Religion and Society and Convenor of NGO Forum
Raghuvendra Das	Project Director, CIEP
Smita Kothari	CMC Gender Specialist
V. Ramawamy	Social worker, Chairman of Howrah Pilot Project and Secretary of Metropolitan Assembly for Social Development , consultant to DFID

In Bombay, January 2003:

Shiela Patel	Director, SPARC

In Cambridge, March 2003:

Dr. Debdas Banerjee	visiting scholar at DUSP and economist, Calcutta
Dr. Solomon Benjamin	Planner, consultant and member of Housing Rights Campaign

Email and phone interviews from January 2003-June 2003

Jai Sen	Founder of Unnayan, Housing Rights Activist
Alex Jorgensen	Project Director, ADB
Dr. Pabitra Giri	Professor of Sociology, Calcutta University
Keya Dasgupta	Researcher at Calcutta University

WEST BENGAL
(District Map)

N

Map not to Scale

State Capital
District Headquarter
State Boundary
International Boundary

SIKKIM
BHUTAN
NEPAL
Darjiling
Jalpaiguri
ASSAM
Koch Bihar
Uttar Dinajpur
BIHAR
Dakshin Dinajpur
Maldah
BANGLADESH
JHARKHAND
Murshidabad
Birbhum
Nadia
Barddhaman
Puruliya
Bankura
Hugli
North 24-Parganas
Haora
Calcutta
(State Headquarter)
Medinipur
(Midnapur)
South 24-Parganas
ORISSA
Bay of Bengal
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Source: www.mapsofindia.com

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KOLKATA
(CALCUTTA)
City Map

N

Map not to Scale

State Highway &
Other Road
National
Highway
District Boundary

Chandmari
Tribeni
Kalyani
Magra
Baidbati
Kalyani
Adisaptagram
Barooi
Kanchrapara
Rajhat
Bandel
Halisahar
Hugli
Ganta
Naihati
Debipur
Deulpara
Chandannagar
Madrail-Fingapara
Kankinara
Mankundu
Shyamnagar
Bhadreswar
Gurdaha
Baruliya
Champdani
Defence
Baidyabati
Estate
Ichapur
Barti
North Barakpur
Seoraphali
Barakpur
To Dattapukur
To Haringhata
Barakpur
Shrirampur
34
35
Patuliya
Titagarh
Rishra
Kerulia
Nabapalli
Barasal
Konnagar
Hridaypur
Madhyamgram
Shardah
Sodpur
New Barakpur
Madhyamgram
Konnagar
Panihati
Hindmotor
Agarpara
Bisarpara
Madanpur
Dimund
Nobta
Uttarpara
Ichrara
Dum Dum
Bamuh
Uttarpara
Belgaria
Uttama
Nashla
Mota
Durganagar
Rajchandrapur
Baliahat
Sultanpur
Bali
Dum Dum
Chakpara
Sinthi
South
Uliae
Dum Dum
Nibra
Sinthi
Kaliara
Ramnagachhi
Baghazar
Jyangara
Dasnagar
Belgarh
Bamatola
Kulpara
Manikhala
Bijannagar
Mourigram
Santragachhi
Sibpur
Hawra
Salt Lake
Dhagya
Krishnapur
Abdul Jorna
Podara
Ghori
Ghori
Kankurdachchi
Panchla Sankrail
Mahikpur
Bantacpur
Beleghata
6
Abada
Garden
Tangra
Para Circus
Dhapa
Road
Kustia
Naipur
Panchur
Alipur
Baliganja
Jaganaathnagar
Kasba
Fort
Gloster
Krishnanagar
Beri Khal
Satanagar
Akra
Brace
Ganri
Nangi
Bridge
Kalighat
Tehgaria
Dhakuria
Chaigali
Gaurta
Rajbati
Nungi
Tehgana
Bai
Santoshpur
Bai
Jadabpur
Rajapur
Baghajatin
Boubeda
Uttar
Bademasla
Raipur
South
Purba
Suburb
Pahan
Gaha
Chakdaha
Banadroni
Sonapur
Rajpur
Cheari
Chak Subhasgram
Jagaddal
Mallikpur
Baruipur
Shasah
Road
Kalyanpur

CALCUTTA
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

0   8
Kms

INDEX

Municipal Urban

Non-Municipal Urban

Non-Municipal Rural

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