

**Politics of S.H.I.T.**  
(Sanitation, Housing, Information, Transport)  
**Hydra Urbanism versus New Civil Society Processes**

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**Introduction**

Contemporary Urbanism in the developing world today is constituted through 4 interrelated processes: 1. through state sponsored interventions, 2. via the market through an increasing interest in the urban realm by mega corporations, 3. through new civil society initiatives and 4. by what I call in this paper ‘Hydra Urbanism’<sup>1</sup> popularly known in academia as the informal city or in middle class parlance as the slum city or illegal city.

One of the biggest phenomenon of the 2000s in India (and in Mumbai, where all the cases here are drawn from) is the corporatisation of urbanism reflected in the speed and scale at which corporations (and their intermediate agents; the big developers) are building land banks<sup>2</sup> and participating in the provision of ‘efficient urban service delivery’ at various levels such as road infrastructure, the metro, and private market places<sup>3</sup>. Much of this land assembly is obtained by questionable means. The State is of course another player in the shaping of contemporary urbanism. However its processes have changed drastically from being a provider to a facilitator and from a builder to an urban manager. Its processes are increasingly inviting two agencies to participate in the urban development processes: private players and New civil society agents. While the first two processes are transforming the urban landscapes in unimaginable ways and through completely new processes, with their own politics, that requires close examination, these do not fall in the purview of this paper. Here we look at the other two processes that are driving urbanism. The third - through the agency of New Civil Society and fourth - a more organic city building process termed in this paper as ‘Hydra Urbanism’, showing distinct political processes and manifestations in the urban realm.

In this paper we shall discuss New Civil Society Processes and Hydra Urbanism through 8 cases in the city of Mumbai in the case of 4 types of infrastructure viz. Sanitation, Housing, Information and Transport. - The first, the *New Civil Society Processes*, describes the politics involved in the operationalisation of the newer paradigms of participation, partnership good governance via non governmental organisations, citizens’ groups, etc. that renders the agenda of a greater common good. The second, *Hydra Urbanism*, conceptualises the politics of tactics used by agents involved in the development process, not only to access vital urban infrastructure, but also to counter the gross generalisations of the New Civil Society Processes. The first contention here is that while the first group (comprising new civil society organisations) in many cases was formed in resistance to power structures that prevented fair distribution of resources, its processes have made it morph with the very power structures they set out to challenge. On the other hand *Hydra Processes* in much more complicated ways than the greater common good perpetuated by the civil society processes, through wheeling dealing and through tactics, manage to have a wider access to urban resources and a greater claim on urban space. The second argument here is that new civil society processes too (though non profit in their façade) stem from much deeper middle class aspirations of a corporatised globalisation (the phenomenon may perhaps be termed as domestic corporatisation with sit-at-home affluent citizens filling its ranks) and from a frustration with uncouth hydraish ways of local politics, with all

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<sup>1</sup> The term Hydra in thinking about contemporary urbanism has also been used by Solly Benjamin (2005)

<sup>2</sup> Fuelling these actions are National policies like the new township act that states that any agency that owns more than 100 acres land can become a Special Planning Authority. This is further supported by the State in helping to acquire small swatches of land that fall within the 100 acres but do not belong to the large land owning agency.

<sup>3</sup> Under the Planning Instrument of Public Private Patnership (PPP)

its seemingly problematic operations of “illegality”, “corruption” and “ad hocism”. Civil Society processes are then manifested in not so benign ways in urban interventions and policies that aestheticise urban space, pushing the urban poor further into the margins.

### **New Civil Society Processes**

The 90s have seen an increasing presence of ‘Civil society’ in development work. This is largely supported by international funding circuits of donors, who have a great mistrust on the third world States and their local politics. Working definitions of Civil Society, particularly favoured by the donor-funding language, locate civil society as “between the State, the business world and the Family” (CCS 2001) Further, historically, civil society in its Greek origins, implied a “political society with active citizens shaping its institutions and policies. This also very clearly implied that there were then people excluded – non citizens, barbarians, who were not part of Civil Society” (CCS 2001). These definitions when mapped onto contemporary urban space present a complicated politics of exclusion and claim. Firstly, New Civil society, by donning the mantle of historical definitions conveniently places itself in a position that is always already understood as the just, non partisan position. This further serves as the right position to activate its two pronged method of speaking of the “greater common good on the one hand” and a moral position of speaking on behalf of the poor. Inherent to this approach is a ‘do gooder’ tendency that somehow remains outside the politics of the development process armed with a modernist ambition of ironing out all complexities and conflicts. Similarly, those left out of civil society (the equivalent of the Greek non citizens or barbarians) are those who do not fall into the list of benefactors on behalf of whom civil society speaks or those who corrupt civic values by engaging in illegal access, corruption and an anti aestheticisation of urban space through encroachment.

### **Hydra Processes**

Hydra Urbanism<sup>4</sup> refers to the Hercules-Hydra<sup>5</sup> Myth. From the beginning of English colonial expansion in the early seventeenth century through the metropolitan industrialisation of the early nineteenth century, rulers referred to the Hercules-Hydra myth to describe the difficulty of imposing order on increasing global systems of labour. They variously designated dispossessed commoners, transported felons, indentured servants, religious radicals, pirates, urban labourers, soldiers, sailors and African slaves as the numerous, ever changing heads of the monster. But the heads, though originally brought into productive combination by their Herculean rulers, soon developed among themselves new forms of cooperation against those rulers, from mutinies and strikes to riots and insurrections and revolution. (Linebaugh, Redicker 2000) On the other hand, to the rulers, the labours of Hercules symbolised economic development: the clearing of land, the draining of swamps, and the development of agriculture, as well as the domestication of livestock, the establishment of commerce, and the introduction of technology. (Linebaugh, Redicker 2000) These associations perfectly fit an understanding of the relationships in the new urban condition. The contention here is that while the State, the Market and New Civil Society through their own interrelated processes harbour ambitions of ‘Planning the City towards efficiency’ these efforts are constantly frustrated by a hydra type urbanism that finds new ways of subverting these processes.

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<sup>4</sup> After Peter Linebaugh and Markus Rediker (2000), ‘Many Headed Hydra’, this reference has been used frequently by Solly Benjamin, Jeebesh Bagchi and Lawrence Liang.

<sup>5</sup> Detailed by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker in ‘The Many-Headed Hydra, Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic’ (2000) as the hydra of Lerna, a creature born of Typhon (a tempest or hurricane) and Echidna (half woman, half snake), was once in a brood of monsters that included Cerberus, the three-headed dog, Chimera, the lion headed goat with a snake’s tail, Geryon, the triple bodied giant, and Sphinx, the woman with a lion’s body, who according to the Greek legend, Hercules attacked. When Hercules lopped off one of the hydra’s heads, two new ones grew in its place. Eventually Hercules kills the hydra by cutting off a central head and cauterising the stump with a flaming branch but according to the authors, the colonial rulers found in the many headed hydra an antithetical symbol of disorder and resistance, a powerful threat to the building of state, empire and capitalism.

## Cases

The arguments made with the help of the 4 cases below question a few things:

1. They look at whether the public-private-partnership model that New Civil Society is increasingly embracing in conjunction with the state in the first place is the efficient model it claims to be and secondly whether it allows access to public goods in a non partisan way or as Asha Ghosh<sup>6</sup> mentions is the PPP moving towards a private public? Further cases look at whether the rhetoric of scaling up allows greater accessibility or whether there is a loss of case specificity in the process, in turn making for a fat financial return for the provider and a stalemate in terms of access to urban infrastructure for the urban poor
2. Secondly it looks at the processes of participatory planning and community based organisations purported by New Civil Society to see how it is actually manifested on ground and whether it facilitates an equitable access.
3. Thirdly it looks at the funding architecture of the New Civil Society processes to see if there is a link to the kind of urban development manifested in the urban realm.
4. Fourthly it looks at the processes of good governance through land management, urban information systems etc to see who the processes benefit and how they are effective in laying claims on urban space
5. Lastly, they question whether the rights based methods in their broad brush proceedings allow the urban poor to lay claim on contested urban space and infrastructure or whether other more clandestine ways, that of hydra urbanism are more effective in staking these claims. These further look at processes through which hydra urbanism tweaks/subverts/resists many of the above processes and manifests itself in completely new ways in the urban realm.

## 1. SANITATION

### CASE 1a: Civil Society Processes

The Slum Sanitation project was instituted in 1995 as part of the Greater Mumbai Municipal Council's (MCGM) Mumbai Sewage Disposal Project (MSDP) with World Bank assistance. The model followed saw a paradigm shift in sanitation service delivery in Mumbai. The earlier delivery systems were implemented directly via agencies like the MCGM and MHADA. These earlier cases saw initiatives by local corporators, as part of a vote bank politics, of bringing and maintaining services in slums. The new model however bypassed the entire gamut of local politics to involve completely new actors. Here private players were involved as construction agencies for building toilets. This it was believed would facilitate cash flow in the development process. Further, concepts of "Participatory approach" were played out through the involvement of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) who would be in turn trained (through a "capacity building" process) by Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to participate actively in the implementation of the service. The toilets were supposed to be "demand-based" and "community-driven" so as to instil a sense of ownership in the facility. This it was hoped would ensure that the toilets were maintained by the owning community.

On site narratives<sup>7</sup> of the various SSP projects showed interesting patterns that make one rethink concepts of 'participatory planning' and assumptions that all government implemented work is somehow substandard and that it is implemented by a Kafkaish corrupt bureaucracy. Here several

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<sup>6</sup> Public –Private or a Private Public, Promised Partnership of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, Asha Ghosh, published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XL, No 47, November 19, 2005

<sup>7</sup> An Evaluation of SSP was undertaken by TARU Leading Edge for the World Bank where CRIT was involved in technical assessment and field studies.

challenges faced by the private sector themselves are brought to light. One further questions how the role of civil society is any different from the market position.

The diagram below shows the intended involvement of the various actors in the SSP process and their respective roles:

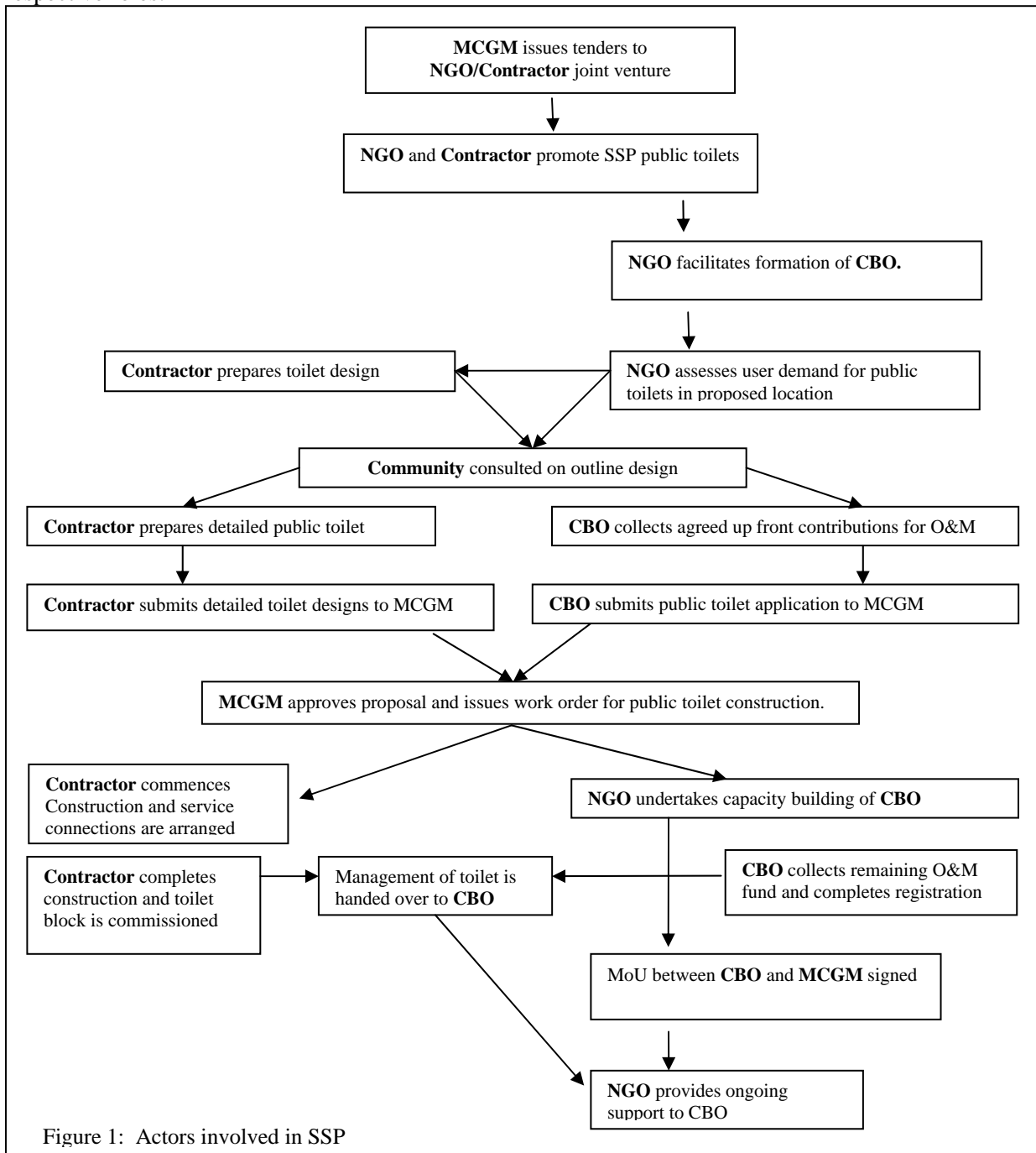


Figure 1: Actors involved in SSP

### Case1: Anna Nagar, Dharavi

Anna Nagar, established more than 50 years ago on State Government land, is located in G North ward, in Dharavi. The slum accommodates about 1,200 households with a population density of more than 3,000 persons per hectare, mostly migrants from Tamil Nadu and other southern states of the country. The settlement has 2 SSP blocks and 2 MHADA blocks. One of the SSP toilet blocks surveyed was managed by the Sahara Social Welfare Centre, a CBO.

The Secretary of the organization, sat at the granite counter and collected money from paid users. He also oversaw the cleaning operations of the toilet block. The toilet block appeared spic and span at the time of the visit. The CBO had issued 300 passes<sup>8</sup> to people in the slum. However they refused to give out passes to the labour in the slums, mostly the jari workers who worked there on the grounds that they were not residing there. They were charged Re 1 per use of the facility. Tenants in the slum were also not allowed to apply for passes. Pay per use clients landed up spending at least Rs. 300 per month as against the Rs 30 per month spent by the



Figure 2 and 3: Anna Nagar SSP block showing critical water leakage in proximity to electrical installations but clean and well maintained toilets



pass holders. The CBO estimated 400 daily pay and use clients. However this figure seemed much higher, on observing the traffic generated within 1 hour of being around the facility. This brings out problems of exclusion that earlier models of MHADA and BMC toilets did not face. The facility was run by a group of entrepreneurs from the slum who found a business opportunity here. Though the SSP block was in principal meant to be for “community” use and not for “pubic use” it was being used as a “public facility” for generating income for a select group. The presence of the NGO or its role in “training” the community seemed questionable here.

The toilet block seemed to be very well maintained and also had water and electricity. The CBO had engaged 4 sweepers. The block being 4 months old at the time of the survey, the CBO had just received an electricity bill of Rs. 15000 for the past 3 months. The rates applied were commercial rates

and the CBO thought the bills were very steep and that it would be difficult for them to pay these. These findings make one question whether the facility was being maintained well because of the larger profit involved on account of not having to pay utility bills yet and whether the same enthusiasm would be retained once maintenance of the facility and payment of bills cut into the entrepreneurs’ profits.

The toilet block however, showed severe leakage problems. It appeared that the sanitary pipes were not laid properly, resulting in internal seepage, that spread dangerously close to the main electric distribution board with a potential danger of causing an accident due to electrical short-circuiting. Here the quality of service delivery and the accountability thereof of the actors involved comes into question.

### Case 2: Indira Nagar

Indira Nagar is located in the K west ward of Jogeshwari, established in the year 1975 on MHADA land. Currently it has around 1300 households with a population of around 5000. Other than the toilet built under the SSP program, there is one community toilet (repaired by MHADA with additional community contribution for maintenance), and two MHADA toilets in the slum.

The SSP toilet was a two storied building with Gents’ toilet seats on the first floor and Ladies’ toilet seats on the ground floor. The caretaker’s room was provided on the first floor beside the gents toilets. The toilet block was provided with a septic tank. There was a *nallah* behind the toilet block into which the septic tank overflow was discharged. The soil pipes were broken at places causing the toilets to choke and eventually break down. It was

<sup>8</sup> Within the SSP framework there is a rule that people who have paid an upfront contribution of Rs. 500 for building the toilet block will be issued monthly passes for Rs 30 a month for use of the facility.

quite a paradox that a block which appeared robust and befitting middle class aspirations from the outside, was in fact dysfunctional from the inside.

The CBO, Indra Nagar Rahivasi Sangh was formed in the year 1983 with a view of developing the community. With the initiation of the SSP toilet, the maintenance of the toilet block was handed over to them. Around 480 families were given passes. Water and Electric connections were never provided for the toilet block. The CBO had managed to take illegal electric connections from a nearby house and were paying a nominal amount of Rs 500 for the usage. The CBO was completely dissatisfied with the toilet and the NGO because of the poor construction of the toilet block. The satisfaction level of the community was so low that the CBO had to stop taking monthly contributions from the community. They felt that the services were so poor that taking charges was not justified. The community claimed that their grievances were not addressed in spite of constant complaints. Eventually the community used the other MHADA toilet in the vicinity. One finds that in spite of having a strong CBO, the community was unable to get the right services. Here again the unchallenged faith in the private sector to deliver and in the NGOs to aid the process in a non profit manner comes into question

### Case 3: Ganesh Murti Nagar

Established in the year 1993, on State government land, the settlement, housing 2000 households, is located behind the World Trade Center at Colaba. Major part of the slum is located on Marshy land.



Figure 4: Toilet Block in Ganesh Murti Nagar

There were 2 SSP blocks in the area. One of the blocks surveyed displayed several construction quality and workmanship related issues at the time of the survey. The building showed differential settlement with a wide crack running at its base. Several plumbing fixtures were leaking, in turn damaging the wall. The Caretaker and community complained of frequent blockages of drainage and subsequent overflow. The staircase had risers of unequal height and some floor as well as wall tiles had already broken though the block was only 8 months old at the time of the survey. The cleaning schedule however seemed to be regular.

The CBO *Soniya Mahila mandal*, was in charge of the maintenance of the toilet block. The management of the block was outsourced to a contractor. At the time of the visit the contractor seemed to be sitting at the counter; though he claimed to be a hired hand. The community members around informed the researchers of this status. The contractor paid a stipulated amount to the Mahila Mandal as rent. Per day earnings of the contractor

were estimated at Rs 2000, making for a whopping Rs 60,000 per year. This could be higher. Community members contributed a sum of Rs. 200 for the construction of the toilet block. However none of them had been issued monthly passes; they had to pay per use of the facility. The only members who had passes were the 11 members of the committee. Even children were reported to have to pay Re 1 per use. The children's section, which was in the front open area, where one did not have to pay, was kept dysfunctional and had to use the regular toilets. On enquiring with the President of the CBO, she said that construction work was still on in this section. This seemed unlikely after 8 months of commissioning of the toilet block. No construction activity was visible on site. The community was very dissatisfied with the way the toilet had been operating. They also reported of capture of the other two MHADA toilets in the slum pocket by the same CBO. Since the CBO had not issued any monthly passes and charged children and adults alike 1 Re per use of the facility, a 5 member household is estimated to have to pay a minimum of Rs 10 per day, leading to an expenditure of Rs 300 per month as against the average Rs 30 amount suggested in the SSP guidelines. This could increase based on the usage and the size of the family, becoming even more difficult in times of illness.

However a visit to the same place 5 months later showed that the place had shut down completely because of severe drainage problems and has sadly become a garbage dump.

The case presents serious questions on equitable service delivery and lack of accountability of the participating agencies in providing robust facilities.

#### **Case 4: Qureshi Nagar**

Qureshi Nagar also known as Umerwadi (Kasai wada) of L ward is located in Kurla. The slum pocket has one community toilet block built by a prominent NGO under SSP with 8 and 9 seats for gents and ladies respectively. The toilet block was never used because of structural problems. The building showed differential sinking and had tilted by 2 feet from the normal. The community refused to use this block until the problems had been rectified. Attempts made to salvage the structure also seemed to be wrongly directed. The contractor was ready to give a stability certificate for the structure but the community did not accept it. In the meantime the toilet block was vandalised.

Since the households had no other toilet block they constructed their own private toilets, comprising of a squatting platform, covered with a plastic sheet. The waste in these cases was directly deposited into the *nallah*



The CBO, Sahara Rehavasi Seva Sangh was formed in the year 1994 against eviction by the BMC. The CBO consisted of five board members who were managing other developmental activities in the slum. The community was highly organized and maintained records of all accounts and correspondences. However their efforts at obtaining a functioning toilet block had not fructified.

#### **Case 5: Ovri Pada**

Ovripada slum is a 40 year old settlement, located along the service road to the Western Express Highway in Borivali. The settlement is located on private land.

The settlement had two double storied SSP toilet blocks and two MHADA blocks. The slum also had around 30 individual toilets connected with a sewer line. A new sewer line was under construction in the part of the slum that was using the surveyed SSP toilet block. Some households had already constructed individual toilets and were waiting for the sewer line to get connected.

The toilet block was constructed by a prominent NGO and maintained by Jai Maharashtra Mitra Mandal, an unregistered CBO. The toilet block was maintained through one caretaker who was provided a hut adjacent to the toilet block. The CBO was controlled by the local corporator. Around 225 households in the settlement were allotted family passes, while others had their individual toilets or used the MHADA toilet block. During the survey, more than half the toilets in the SSP block were locked and not open for use. The reason given was that this was necessary to prevent misuse of the property and that the load then was not very high. Moreover, the old MHADA toilets were also occasionally used by several members of the community. In addition, several households had individual toilets. The case hence seems to be an example of excess facility provided without any understanding of local needs.

The new SSP toilet blocks built are large, accommodating 20-30 cubicles. These are either 1, 2 or 3 storied. They follow standard designs, layouts and sizes, which could be implemented anywhere where adequate space is available. This is in direct contrast to standards and scales in slum housing, which innovatively shrink to make use of space in ways unimaginable to middle class imagination or classroom architectural building knowledge. However lack of specificity made the SSP blocks giant superstructures that then needed to be fitted into slums for which the NGOs had to find various solutions. The contention is also that the over zealous location of large RCC blocks in the SSP programme comes from a middle class position that seeks to 'clean up' its cities in visible and loud ways without bothering about field level specificity of the programmes. In most cases the SSP blocks were built by demolishing the earlier BMC/MHADA toilets. However the space occupied by the earlier toilets was much less than that occupied by the new blocks. In many cases this posed problems. While in most cases, where building was not possible due to very dense conditions, the SSP programme did not reach, in some cases the building was achieved by treating some families in the Slum as Project Affected People (PAPs) and sending them away to rehabilitation sites constituted under the Mumbai Urban Transport Project. Moreover SSP toilets had difficulty finding their way in sites of complex land ownership such as in the case of Private Land and Central Government Land. In instances where the NGOs had forcibly built toilets on Central Government Land, without obtaining

an NOC from them, the toilet blocks were denied instalment of utilities like water and electricity by other Government departments.

Field narratives<sup>9</sup> of the various toilet projects revealed a new scenario in toilet management. The diagram below shows a synthesised understanding of how the diagram above gets tweaked on field. The resultant relations are much more complicated than the ones formulated by the SSP programme.

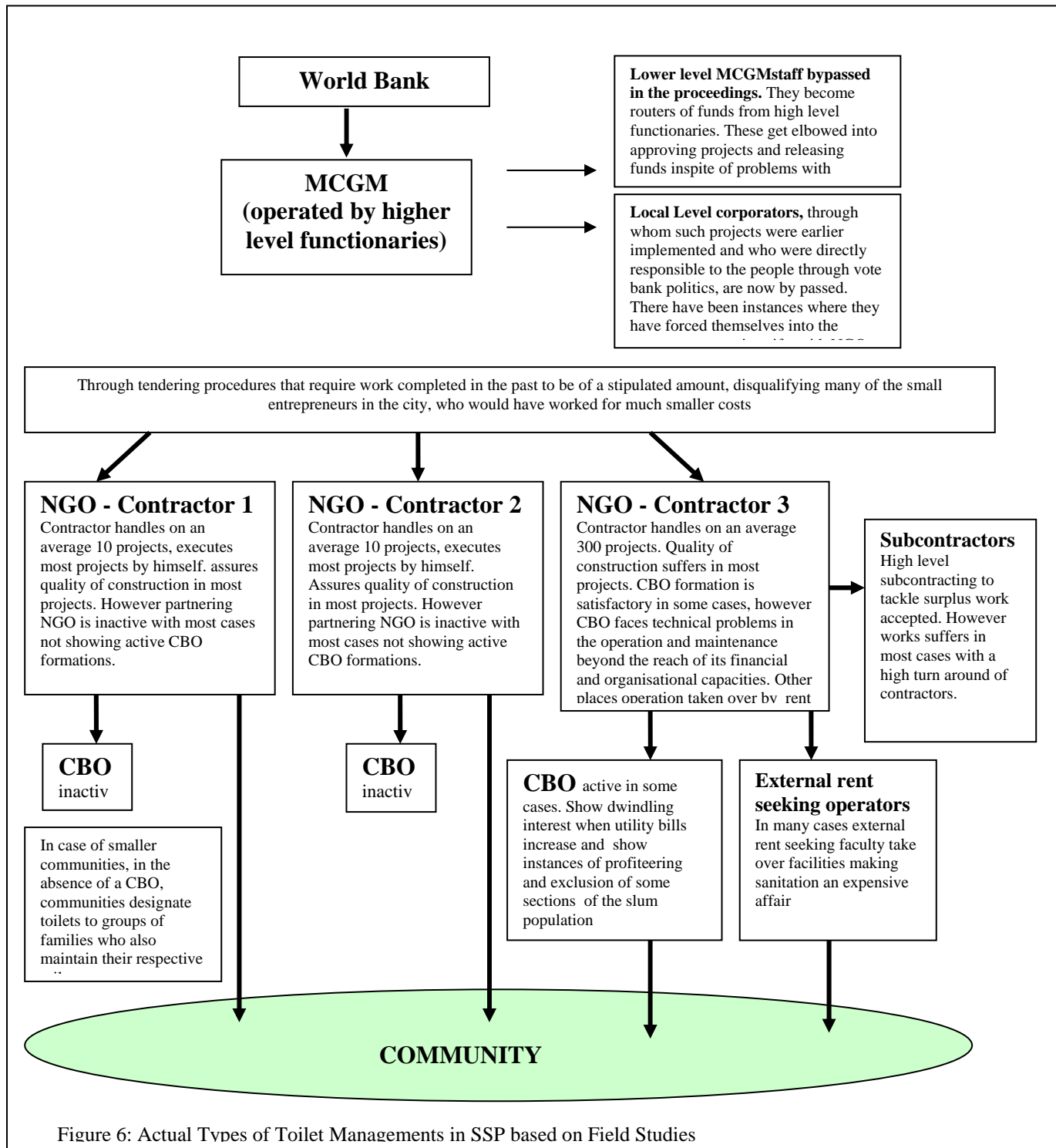


Figure 6: Actual Types of Toilet Managements in SSP based on Field Studies

<sup>9</sup> Narratives are detailed in the previous paragraph and are synthesized below.



The funding circuits of the SSP project as part of MSDP I are as shown below. The dotted line box shows funding obtained indirectly outside the framework envisaged by the SSP:

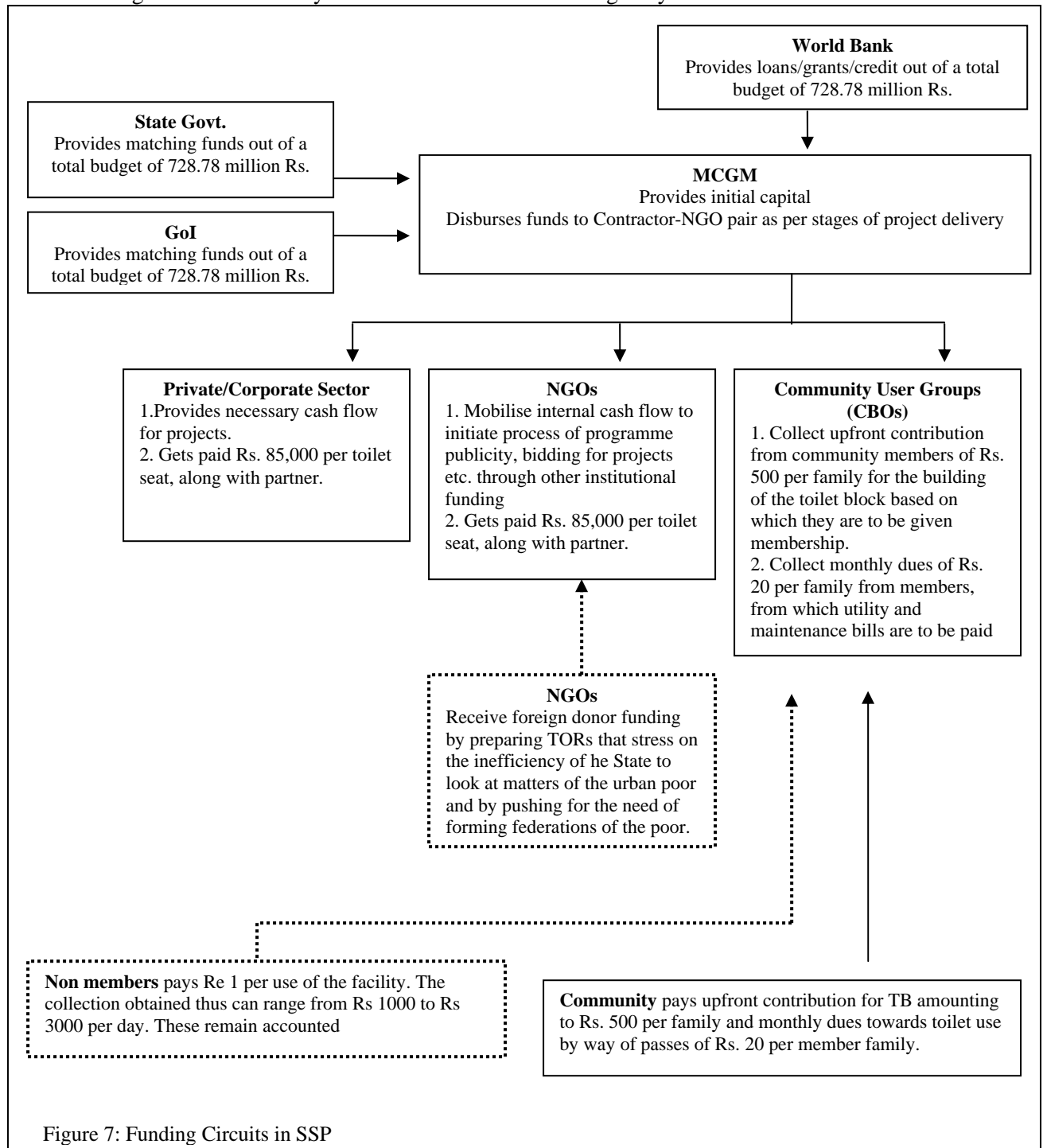


Figure 7: Funding Circuits in SSP

The next phase of the SSP project as part of the 25 year MSDP II involves a much larger budget amounting to Rs. 16252.5 million more than the one expended in this phase. Simultaneously NGOs are reportedly stepping up their funding demands from donor agencies in a bid to scale up formations of CBOs. A mega funding architecture exists here that is out of sync with results of on field narratives as we have seen before.

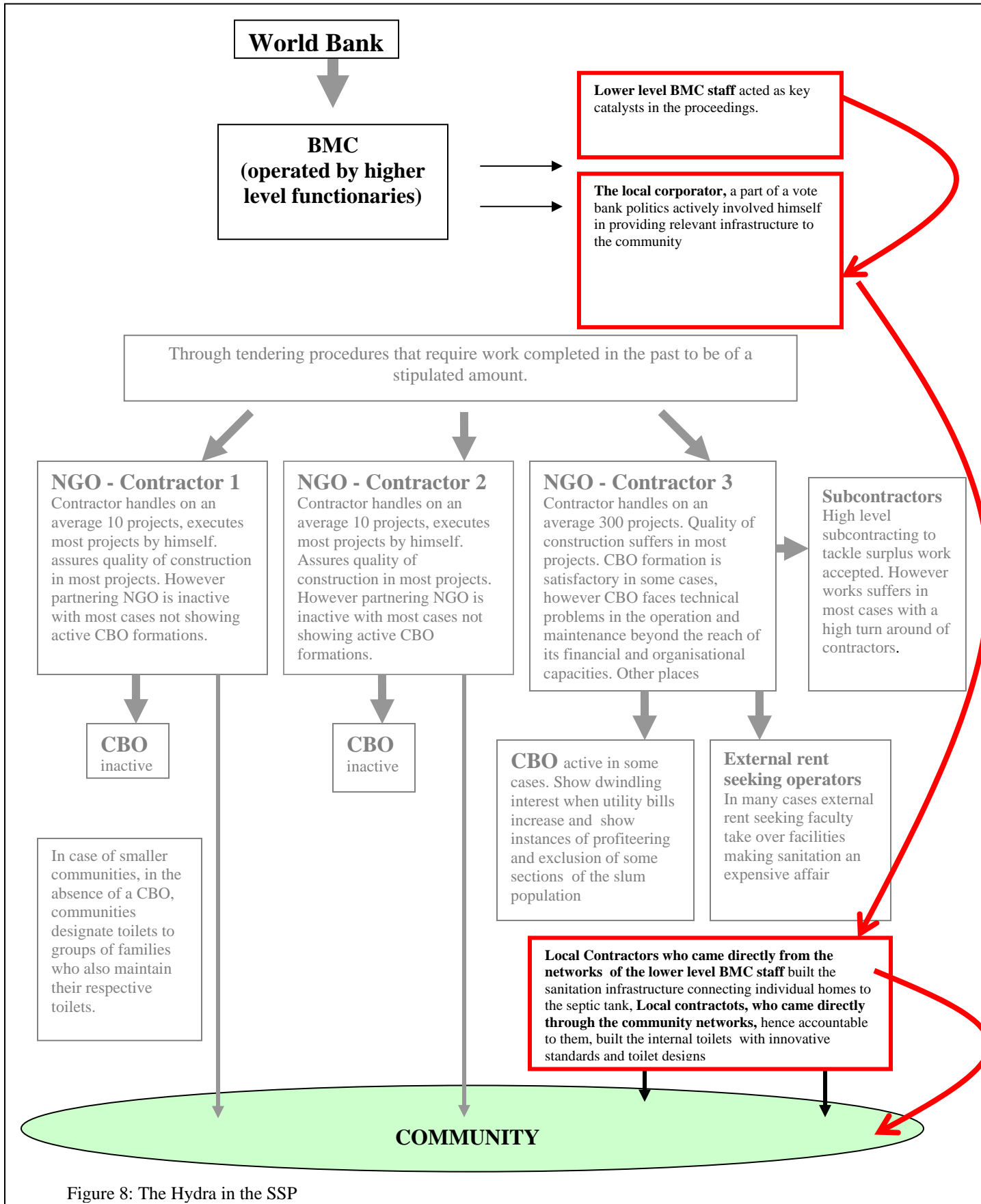
## **CASE 1b: Hydra Processes**

While the first instance shows a large funding circuitry, with mega bucks being circulated in the system and a complicated organisational process planned for the upkeep of the toilets, with the product being a mega toilet building, much more difficult to maintain as we have seen in the various narratives above, the hydra processes operate in a completely different plane. In an instance of subverting the mega global architecture of toilet delivery, within the SSP programme itself, the lower level BMC staff smelled the politics of shit and realised the problems of the SSP. In an MOU made to the NGO-contractor group, they inserted a clause of including individual toilets as a type to be explored wherever the situation prevailed. The same staff had experimented with this type in the initial stages of delivery, within lots 1-6, when few NGOs came ahead with proposals. They implemented a scheme in Chembur, with the help of the local corporator. They realised that it was possible to build individual toilets in the slums. With the money allocated for SSP toilets, they built the basic sanitary infrastructure connecting each house to a common septic tank located at the entrance of the slum. Individual community members later invested their own resources to build individual toilets themselves. Local contractors who built these internal toilets tweaked all standards allocated for toilet design in middle class planning circles to build working toilet solutions. The result was a greater sense of ownership than the mega toilet blocks could instil! The idea that the poor could have their own toilets was unthinkable to the civil society imagination that sought big bucks from aesthetisation of the way the poor in their neighbourhood conducted themselves. The process that followed saw a short circuiting of the entire process of service delivery between the lower level BMC staff and the corporator directly interacting with the community. The entire jamboree of high profile NGOs and contractors was eliminated in the process. Further, the process did not allow any other agencies to deflect the gains of the programme or subvert it for personal profits.

Here land was managed at an extremely local level. The provision of toilets funded partly by the MCGM increased the claims of the slum community on the land they inhabited. This reduced the challenges of finding large open space to build a mega block in the slums. Further this solution came much closer to fulfilling aspirations of the slum community in having adequate and dignified sanitation facilities than those imposed on slum communities through the robust, visible, but in most cases ill functioning mega toilet block.

Figure 8 below shows how the process was short circuited to eliminate a whole set of actors to directly benefit the community with a completely site specific response.

Figure 9 below shows how the hydra process also short circuited funding cycles to draw in the funding earmarked for sanitation facilities and in the process eliminating many of the profit seeking middle agencies. The contributions at the community level went towards building their own toilet facilities assuring complete accountability and returns instead of contributing towards a mega block that in many cases has shown disrepair within months of its construction and in other cases has shown exclusion by agents that have captured the facility.



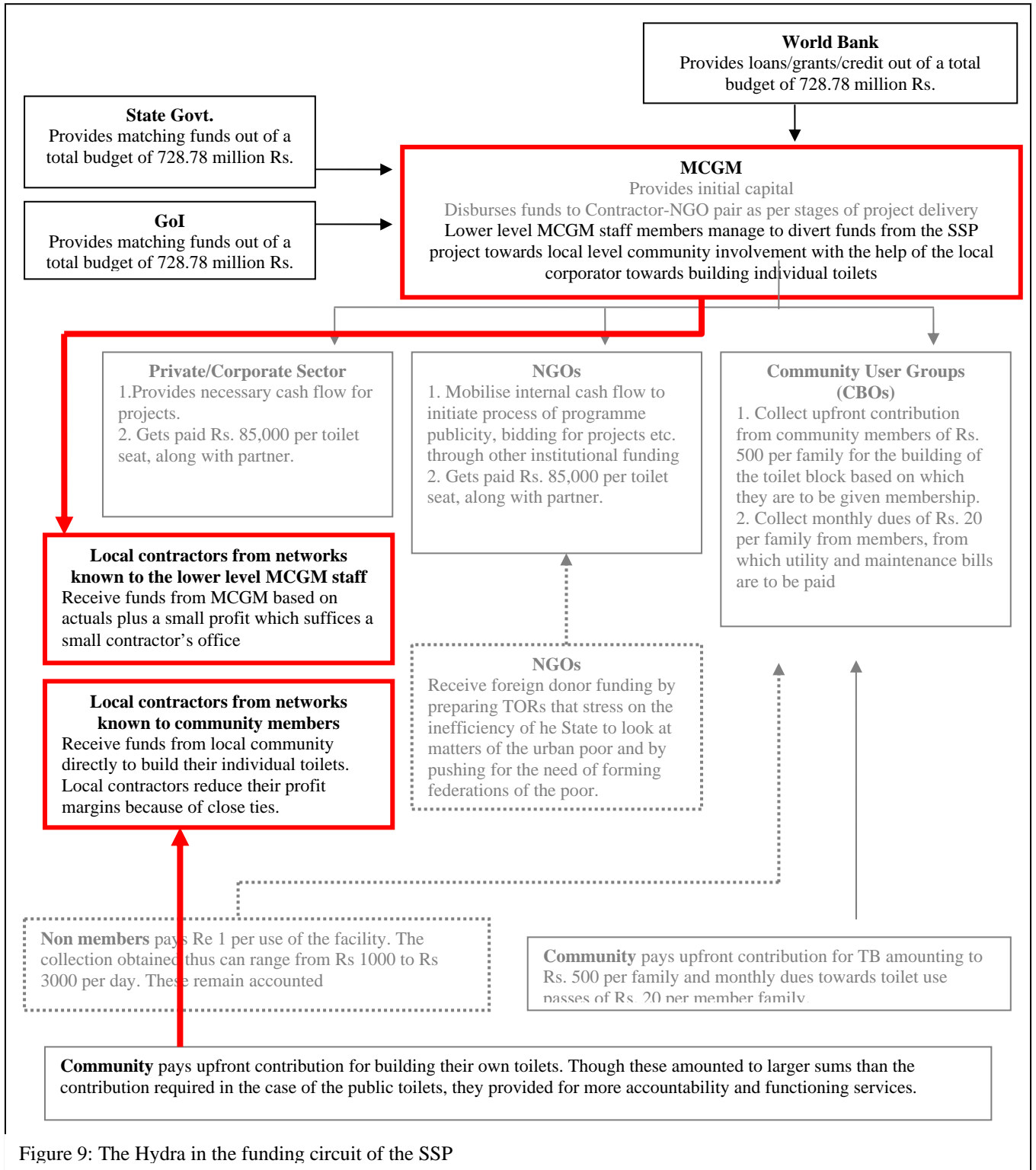


Figure 9: The Hydra in the funding circuit of the SSP

## 2. HOUSING

### CASE 2a: Civil Society Processes

In Mumbai currently housing is being provided to the Urban poor affected by the MUIP (Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project) and the MUTP (Mumbai Urban Transport Project) under the rehabilitation and resettlement policy. This project has seen a robust partnership between the State and NGOs in facilitating housing. Here the Government is liaising with official NGOs to facilitate the smooth transition of the PAPs (Project Affected Persons) to the resettlement sites to be housed in newly built 225 sq ft. houses at new locations. This partnership marks a landmark shift in NGOs operating on behalf of the poor to acting as liaison agents, paid to iron out any conflict arising out of the massive relocations.

A reconnaissance survey of the stock of housing developed for the PAPs and interviews conducted with those rehabilitated reveal several problems with this model. Gross relaxation of bye-laws that were meant to regulate basic liveability of tenements in terms of light and ventilation are observed here, making the unliveable conditions of the rehabilitated units perfectly legal. The most pressing problem though is the loss of livelihood in most cases. While the slums the families lived in earlier were active sites of entrepreneurship, satisfying multiple needs of livelihood, social wellbeing and shelter due to the prevalence of strong networks, hybrid city activities and a mix of social classes, the new places are now dormitory locations barely satisfying the shelter function. Other chief complaints of the rehoused are the lack of civic infrastructure by way of municipal or reasonably- priced private schools and municipal hospitals in the areas they have been relocated to. Many go on to narrate problems of corruption in allocation of houses on the part of NGOs and their constituents and problems of poor construction of the units. The grievance-redressal cell has not helped mitigate their problems. The presence of NGOs in the process of Rehabilitation, one would expect would have accounted for a more nuanced solution of working with those affected. In fact an important point to note is that the Rehabilitation and Resettlement policy drafted by the World Bank in 1986 not only stresses on adequate R and R of the affected persons but also seeks their 'partnership' in the process of development. None of the MUTP R&R projects have operationalised such a partnership. In fact, its scope is not even understood by the concerned projects. A few instances however, where a few social activists involved have demanded such a partnership of PAPs in the form of sharing a small amount of royalty per tonne of the extracted minerals, in the case of a mining project, or offering the capital shares of the projects to PAPs, have shown how this policy can be implemented (Sharma R.N.) This clause could well have been pushed forth in the case of the MUTP R&R by the NGOs who attained influential policy and decision making roles in the project. However their roles it seems were relegated to transition-facilitation.

The relocations follow house for house compensation given only to owners of the premises residing in the premises prior to 1995. This process excludes many of those who do not fit into these categories, viz. the tenants and the new comers who were allowed to exist because of complex land tenures in the earlier locations that were not based on clear titles.

Figure 10 below shows the involvement of various actors in the housing delivery and the circulation of funds in the network. Here private developers invest in housing for the PAPs and the NGOs help facilitate the smooth transfer of PAPs to these dwellings. The developer in turn gets development rights which s/he can either sell in the open market or use in other parts of the city northwards. The profits made from these ventures are high. The NGOs in turn are employed by the state and are paid handsomely to negotiate the smooth flow of people to these dwellings, without conflict. In addition NGOs receive funds from external donor agencies as institutional help.

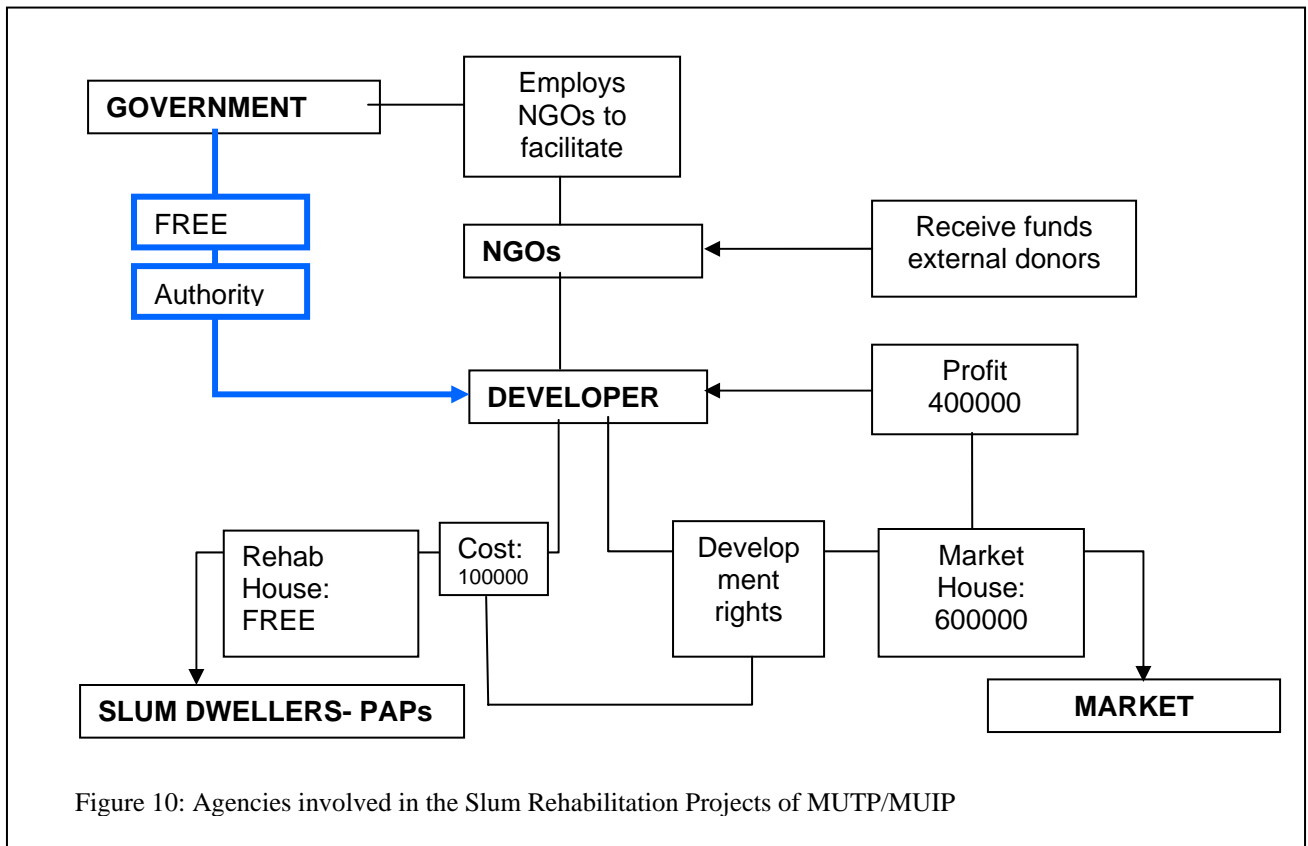


Figure 10: Agencies involved in the Slum Rehabilitation Projects of MUTP/MUIP

**CASE 2b: Hydra Processes**

Urban Hydra works in complex ways in slums, fulfilling its demand for housing. It works with all values that offend civil society imaginations. It squats on land owned by private or government agencies and further defies all notions of property through its multi tenure transactions within the community. It manages for itself all urban utilities through manipulations and negotiations and engaging in complex social relations right from corruption at very low levels, involving very little money and clientelism involving strategic social networks. It accommodates its own need for housing and maintenance through an inbuilt incremental process<sup>10</sup>. These transactions challenge urban middle class claims on urban space and urban middle class imaginations of what cities should look like and how they should behave

In many ways the hydra resists large scale developments like the relocations which are a sure recipe to their effacement. However in times of crisis when choices are limited, it finds ways of jumping on to the band wagon, however tweaking the system to allow its own terms to prevail. The example below is that of a community in Chembur, Mulund that affected by the MUIP project refused to move into the rehab housing but attempted to negotiate with the state to allow it to develop its own housing.

Milan Society is located in the path of the proposed link between Wasi Naka and Anik Panjrapol. The community here has lived in this area for more than 45 years. They are endowed with large infrastructure in the form of open spaces and adequate toilet facilities and water supply. Moving into the rehabilitation housing would be an anathema for them. Moreover they have with them tenants who as per the rehabilitation rules would not be accommodated. They realised that they would be left with some space after the expressway was accommodated. With the help of a local housing activist

<sup>10</sup> Solly Benjamin's PHd thesis.

and some local architects (from Collective Research Initiatives Trust – also a mutant organisation), they started negotiating with the State (the PWD ministry and the State) for the remaining space to develop their own housing. They realised that if they went for self development, they could in the first place get the housing designed to their needs and secondly deflect the profit the builder otherwise made, to their own society, which would help them build a corpus that could help them maintain their premises.

The new actor network, eliminated the builder and the facilitating NGO in the process and involved some local technical support persons and an ex-MLA in the process to build a pressure group to facilitate the housing. Instead of turning into PAPs they registered themselves as a society. They would try to acquire the land, under the 1976 society's act and would go ahead to develop the property by themselves without involving any builder. Milan society is at the first stage of its negotiations.

Hydra Urbanism works through completely different notions of property. The current crisis driven urbanism forces violent changes that attempt to force it into embracing such concepts. The fallout of such enforcements could be detrimental to a healthy economic life of the city leading to civic strife. Hydra Urbanism has much to offer as against the modernist planning ambitions of civil society. In the Milan society case, the community instead of settling for a house title is negotiating for land otherwise given away to a builder/developer. Once its achieves a community title it can develop housing within on its own terms. Moreover a fascinating math conducted on the plot of land they are negotiating for shows that the profit margins can be ploughed back into earmarking larger houses for the community members, which in turn could help house the tenants who would otherwise be thrown out of the loop.

The hydra in the above case introduced a spoke in the wheel of the funding circuits set up between the state, the private developer and civil society, where funds circulated within these powerful lobbies. The hydra, through piggybacking on laws less known or suppressed from public knowledge, attempts to turn the tide in its favour.

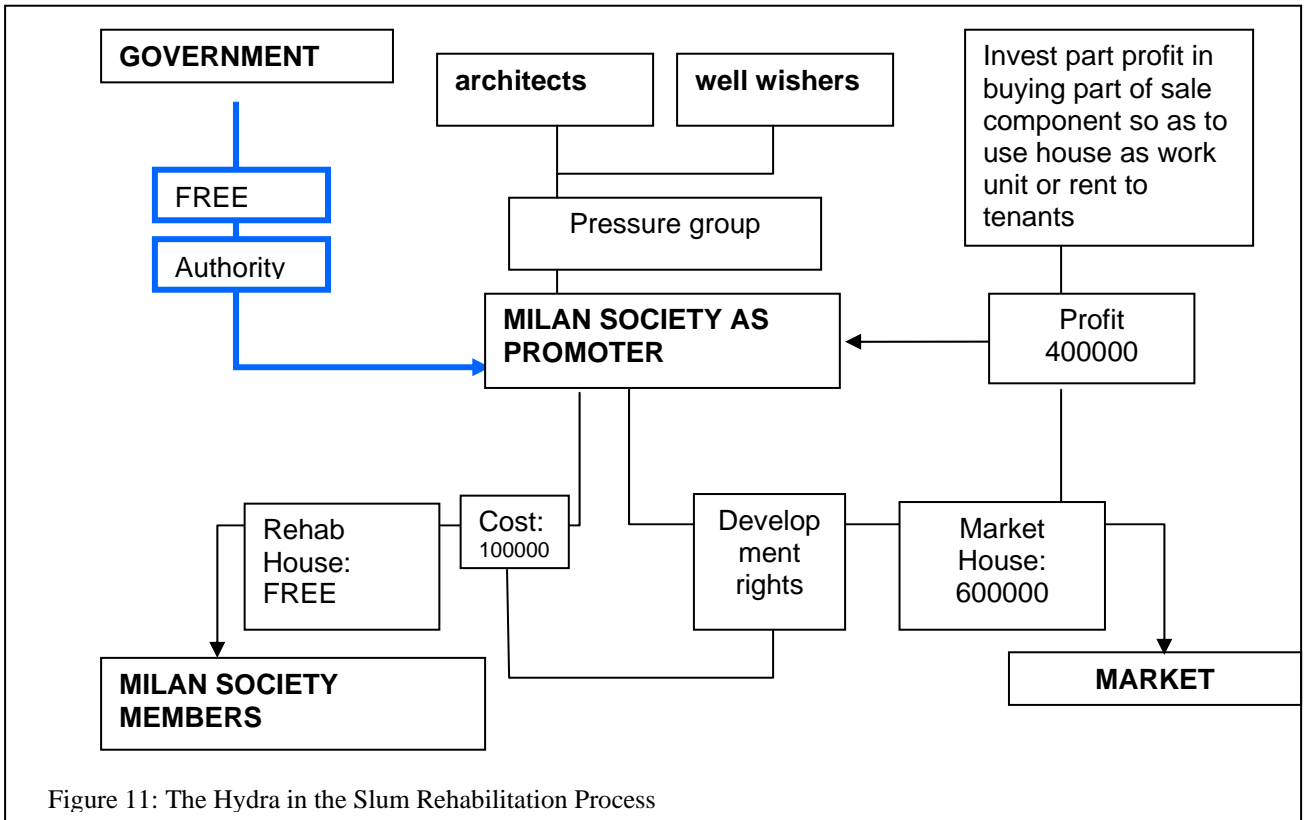


Figure 11: The Hydra in the Slum Rehabilitation Process



### 3. INFORMATION

#### CASE 3a: Civil Society Processes

This is the case of three villages - Akloli, Vajreshwari and Ganeshpuri, located outside the municipal boundary of Mumbai but within the metropolitan region. The place is famous for hot water springs and a series of temples built for local deities and saints, the Mother Goddess Vajreshwari, Saint Nityananda and a local deity, Bhimeshwara. Several myths and legends circulating locally about the place, construct the place as a highly powerful mythological site capable of healing difficult diseases. The site is endowed with natural hot water springs emanating from the region's volcanic terrain. These help support the local legends. These have traditionally been pilgrimage sites for local tribal groups. More recently these have been attracting urban middle class pilgrims.

The 3 villages have a population of around 10,000 people with more than 50% classified under the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes by the government. More than a third of the private property in the region is owned by temple trusts with this share rising rapidly by acquiring agricultural lands from neighbours and fencing the same off. Gradually a Non Agricultural status is obtained for all the acquired lands. Within these lands several luxurious leisure based tourism centres like nature parks; meditation centres, hot spring spas, etc. are developed. The trustees of these trusts have become powerful members in the decision making process and are known to leverage their influence at all levels of the government. The region has been marked in the city's development Plan as a potential tourism zone. Moreover, when the government decided to spend some money on the development of the area, the most important problem that was articulated was that the spiritual atmosphere and sanctity of the place was under threat due to the haphazard construction activities undertaken by the village folk.

Under pressures from local activists and villagers, the government was forced to appoint a neutral agency to advise it on the priority developments. Collective Research Initiatives Trust (CRIT) was appointed for this project. CRIT was able to articulate that for centuries, the place was inhabited by locals for whom the hot springs and the volcanic mountains were a way of life. A religious pilgrimage place had developed here with busy streets and dirty crowded open spaces. This was characteristic of several cross-class places that have developed like this. Recent upsurges of orthodox Hinduism has brought new kinds of pilgrims from urban areas who have been pouring in money into such sites and enclaving it from those who do not "fit".

CRIT's investigation into the activities of the trusts ended with a discovery of a Master-plan developed by one of the trusts for the entire area. The trust had acquired a satellite photograph, (difficult to obtain in the pre-google earth days) and developed this Master-plan through some consultants in Auroville (a spiritual place in the south east of India). The entire area was mapped through a geographical information system, with details of each plot regarding ownership, vegetation etc. Further information regarding land already acquired by the trusts, and all land that would be possible to acquire easily was also indicated. The Master-plan suggested several relocations of existing villages and roads and clearing of not only the whole site, but also a much larger area outside the site for "spiritual development". Several spas, recreational centres, meditation halls, local transport nodes, swimming pools, sauna etc. were planned elaborately. This Masterplan clearly showed the intentions and ideas of the trust. The villagers further revealed instances of forced eviction of villagers from their property by the trusts. The map, which appeared to be a benign, technologically sophisticated information system, was made in the name of Environmental protection. It was infact a road map to usurping land by a section of people.

The above case shows how new civil society processes in the name of ecology and saving the environment use sophisticated information systems to exclude and evict those who do not fit into their bourgeoisie environmental imaginations<sup>11</sup>

### **CASE 3b: Hydra Processes**

Lamington road in Mumbai is the mecca of computer hardware and DN road in Mumbai of pirated computer software. Both places defy capitalist notions of competition and use information to bond and work in harmony to survive in an economy that only valorises command functions of the economy<sup>12</sup>. Lamington road is the name assigned to an inner city region of Mumbai popularly known by the main spine that runs through the precinct. This area traditionally a market place for native inhabitants of the colonial empire, now houses a quasi guild of computer hardware dealers. The complex tenancies under which people in the area occupy work places, make for interesting shop typologies like the under-the-staircase shop, cupboard-type shop, mezzanine shop etc. All these shops are linked with an internal telecommunication system termed in local lingo as the 'beta phone'. These help shops stay connected with other shops to maintain business. They use several tactics to operate in the market. One shop for instance, cannot afford to stock its own equipment. The shop owner then lines up empty boxes outside his shop in the beginning of the day to appear as if he is well stocked. He then transacts his entire communication over the beta phone and acquires his equipments from other neighbouring stockists on a commission basis. Others use the beta phone to connect up to shops that do not have a frontage. In a classically zoned urban designed area, shops would have a street frontage while residences would be located in more privately accessible locations. But Lamington road, transformed to house a low budget assembled computer hardware market works with different configurations. There are shops located in obscure locations with only their sign boards located on street fronts. These link up with shops with a frontage through a beta phone network to serve the steady flow of clients who come from all geographical corners of the city to buy cheap computer hardware equipment and assembled computers.

DN road sells all the latest pirated software and music cds at a fraction of the actual software prices. These transactions have gone a long way in making the city one of the most computer literate cities in the country. DN road uses information in a completely innovative way. All the cd vendors are networked either with mobile phones or a helper who runs between shops. In times of police raid this large network is activated like a mega game of urban Chinese whispers, such that the entire area gets cleaned within seconds. The vendors come back to set shop once the danger is averted.

While the previous case articulated an instance of how New Civil Society uses Information to hoard resources and accrue large personal benefits, hydra processes show how the less privileged use the sphere of information to spread, thrive and protect itself through the use of networks.

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<sup>11</sup> Amita Bavisker has articulated the term bourgeoisie environmentalism ( ).

<sup>12</sup> In "A New Geography of Centres and Margins: Summary and Implications" from *Cities in a World Economy* (1994) Saskia Sassen notes, "Mega Cities largely constitute two types of cultures: the first comprising the corporate culture at the centre of the command functions of finance and services, global markets and production sites for the advanced corporate service industries and the second at the periphery, forming the large labour pool involved in low paid and manual services that are never represented as part of the global economy but are in fact as much part of the global economy as international finance is. The new economy works through a valorisation of the first with extremely high paying jobs and a devalorisation of the second, where most of the producer services are located, with very low paying jobs and insecure labour. The joint presences of these two cultures in the city, makes it a contested terrain".

## 4. TRANSPORT

### CASE 4a: Civil Society Processes

The very first thing that strikes one on examining the BUTP (Bombay Urban Transport Project), MUTP (Mumbai Urban Transport Project) and MUIP (Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project) is the sudden jump in expenditure from 320 million Rupees to a whopping 71,740 million rupees (45,260 million rupees in the case of MUTP and 26,480 million Rupees in the case of MUIP). The age of Mega spending is here with India's expenditure increasing by more than 200 times. More importantly there now are organizations willing to fund these ventures at its door-step. Global capital one finds enters the city via FDI's and World Bank loans which need to assure smooth travel of the work force in the service of global capital. This is facilitated by the State, which is now suddenly flushed with funds with acquiring land and supporting the technical development of the road infrastructure. In such a scheme of things however an entire set of actors who do not directly serve the global capital in its command functions<sup>13</sup> and are much lower down the ladders in terms of skill sets and economic accessibility are relegated to the list of the dispensible. In contrast the command economy is supported by increasing dependence on PPPs.

The results are increasingly exclusive transport proposals that plan for those heralding the global economy. MUIP particularly is a case in point. MMRDA's data noted that the last two decades were characterised by significant increase in private car ownership, where while population growth was 3% p.a. vehicular growth was 8.81% pa.<sup>14</sup> When MMRDA makes such projections and then immediately embarks on a plan towards facilitating this increase by way of MUIP one finds a problem of lack of vision. A plan to absorb increase in private car ownership makes one wonder about the persistence of the planning imagination in the dogged belief in the neutrality of its operations. The planning discipline, in the race to prove efficiency is forgetting its objectives of equity. If MUTP has to be successful, it needs to follow a much more aggressive Public transport policy that curbs private car ownership. All over the developed world car-owners pay for the costs they impose on society by their private privileges, by polluting the environment, occupying scarce road resource, thus denying it to another etc. in terms of higher taxes and fees. (Congestion tax in London, Parking charges in most developed countries, higher duties etc.) However in India it seems like the atomistic pursuit of self-interest by individuals is being rewarded by easier loans, lower car prices with favourable budgetary allocations(as the recent budget has shown) and minimum parking charges. It seems like the middle class is getting away with freebies, while those lower down the ladders are having to pay the price. Further one finds that here our middle class actually forms the large pool of the consumers that global capital has come down to tap. And hence perhaps the pressures to overlook their effects. The result of such horse sighted planning is more roads, more road widening and more flyovers that will benefit only 7% of the city's population.

### CASE 4b: Hydra Processes

Hydra Urbanism then represents alternative strategies used by people who remain un-served by the large mainstream infrastructure projects. While transportation is a centrally planned and provided entity, very difficult for the hydra to replicate, in many cases here transportation is replaced/taken over by innovative means of communication using mobile phone networks or alternative intercom facilities, as we saw in the grey software market mentioned above. If nothing else works, the hydra

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> MMRDA's figures quote, "Private vehicle registration in 2011 is expected to be more than double the 1991 level (13,56,498 vehicles). Number of vehicles per 1000 persons is supposed to increase from 44 in 1991 to 61.1 in 2011. Private vehicles are thus expected to grow at a rate of 4.95% per annum as against the population growth rate of 2.19 % per annum"

simply takes the form of an added Resilience that facilitates travel in Mumbai's highly overloaded, but equitable Mass Rapid transportation system.

