Notes from the Fringes: A Brief Note on Mumbai Metropolitan Region

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The reality of globalisation, changing governance pattern, challenges to the polity calls for an approach that compels us to explore and investigate beyond the formal organizational discourse and move into the dynamics of spatial politics and power. It is in this context that the role of peripheral city regions (as sub-state spheres of politics) assumes importance. For it is essential to perceive of governance in general and in the fringes in particular in its three important dimensions, namely, who wields authority and power, how benefits and costs are allocated, and the role of public participation in decision making. This alone will help understand sustainability of any governance or development programme be in the core or in the so-called rim- land.

Urban Metropolitan Regions have they become 'sites' of scattered urban settlements and the different political problems of these metropolis-hinterland systems are bound in intricate ways to the adjoining urban areas. The questions that can be raised are:

i. Can cities per se have their independent identity?
ii. Should we or can we treat cities separately from the regions surrounding them with which, in multiple ways, they are entwined?
iii. Do they form part of what we mean by the term city?
iv. In an increasing globalising world are these interconnections more important than ever before?

This brief not partly tries to locate the inevitable inter-connection, inter-action and inter-dependence between the city and its surrounding areas.

The City: Imagined and Real

The city has always fascinated human thought and action. It is a place where ordinary people hope to build viable lives and enjoy decent living. Thus, each generation of urbanites, including migrants, bring hope, optimism, vitality and energy that keep cities alive and dynamic.Most people know that the city encompasses both problems that it faces and the possibilities it offers. The essential physical dimensions of a city's existence are the fixed sites, the durable shelters, the permanent facilities for assembly, interchange and storage, the essential social means and the social division of labour, which serve not merely the economic life but the cultural process as well. Mumbai too fulfilled these functions and came to be associated as the apex hub in Maharashtra.

The cities of the post-colonial period have always been viewed in terms of their demographic expansion. Urban theorists have described the phenomenon in various ways but with one overarching meaning, viz., expanded cities with exploding population, without corresponding development in either social or physical infrastructure. For instance, terms like 'pseudo-urbanisation', 'hyper-urbanisation' or 'over urbanisation' are used to describe the social and economic problems of urbanisation in most of the megacities of the developing countries, to connote the fact that urbanisation has not been accompanied by economic or social development of the right kind. What has taken place in these countries has been a rapid rate of urban growth accompanied by a phenomenal increase in urban areas and the concentration of urban population in a limited number of cities like Mumbai. This has further accentuated the problem of urbanisation. As a result of this, the urban centres in India have become a confused web of disorganised human activities, creating difficulties for urban governance.

Most of the large metropolitan cities in India have continued to expand laterally and are better described by the census term 'urban agglomeration' (UA). This term denotes a continuous urban spread and generally comprises of a town/city and its adjoining outgrowths. Of the 35 metropolitan cities in 2001 with a population of over a million, only three, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Faridabad did not have such outgrowths. However, most of the available accounts are statistical, spatial or descriptive and they fail to represent the complex, multidimensional and changing nature of the urban phenomenon. This is apparent in the case of Mumbai too. This city is also caught in a complex web of pluralistic and multiple patterns that are intertwined.

Thus, technical details (mainly relating to the spatial, statistical or politico-administrative) apart, the reality of life is rather difficult to explain. In fact, the city encompasses multiple and complex realities, which seem distinct from and even opposed to each other, yet all are intricately interwoven in a many-layered mesh of interdependent relationships in the social, political and spatial realm. Thus the relationship between Mumbai and its adjoining regions has been lopsided, uneven, unequal, opportunistic and unpredictable.

Gottman (1961) originally coined the term 'megalopolis' to describe the emerging economic hub that was the Boston-to-Washington corridor. Derived from the Greek and meaning 'very large city', the term was later applied to a number of other regions. Ohmae (1993) later argued that 'region states' had replaced nation states as the organizing economic units the global economy. Mega region is not an artefact of artificial political boundaries, like the nation state or even its provinces, but the product of concentrations of centres of innovation, production and consumer markets.

Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR)

Mumbai is the most populous city in India and the sixth largest metropolitan region in the world. It is a complex agglomeration that presents a socio-spatial structure exemplifying complexity that has developed over the past two centuries as the island city itself has engaged with processes of transition from colonial to post-colonial, industrial to post-industrial, and from local–regional to national-global status. Mumbai is a city of contrasts. It reflects within its boundaries both, the ills which afflict any city and its citizens and the dynamism and flexibility that are its driving forces. In fact, in contemporary Mumbai, the existence of parallel cities is a very striking phenomenon.

Mumbai has over the decades been managed by a large number of institutions. Their performance in the past has been marred by a certain measure of rigidity of approaches and procedures; lack of co-ordination between various agencies, inefficiency and corrupt practices presence is found in almost all the basic services. The following table indicates the governmental organisations, non-state actors and their role in the provision of basic services in Mumbai and MMR. (Mohan Sudha: 2005)

Setup / Level	Actors/ Organisations	Sectoral Relation	Role
Central Government	Ministry of Urban Development Planning commission	Overall Urban Development.	Oversee implementation of Urban Objectives into policy and action
State Government	Urban Development	Urban Development- state subject, hence direct role	Direct Management, Planning and Development of Urban Development in the State
Statutory Authorities			
A) Water	♦ MMRDA ♦ MWSSB	Metropolitan Planning Water supply and Sewerage	Preparation of local and regional level urban development plans and water distribution
B) Housing	♦ MHADA ♦ CIDCO	Poor /Lower Middle class urban population	Social Housing/ Affordable Dwelling
C) Health	Municipal Hospitals, Private Clinics, Super Speciality Hospitals	Poor/Lower Middle class, Upper middle and affluent sections, Resident and Non resident affluent sections	Free / Subsidised Health Service, Emergency and Quality health service, Ultramodern and High Cost health care
D) Transport	♦ MSRDC Railways (Central Govt)	Road Development Catering to a majority of commuters	Catalyst for Public and Private Transport Augmenting Rail Services through MU ♦ MUTP initiative
Municipal / Local Govt.	Local Authorities, BMC, Municipal councils	Urban Local Areas	City Administration and Development
International Agencies	UNDP.WB,ADB,OEC Multinationals, UNCHS	In the area of transportation and slum redevelopment	WB supported MUTP. WB supported Slum - Sanitation programme
Non Governmental Organisations (NGO)- State / Local	♦ SPARC, ♦ YUVA, ♦ CEHAT	Housing, and Health	Persuasive, Collaborative and Advocacy role
Private Sector Enterprises/ Corporate Sector and MNC,	Tata, Birla, Mahindra, Bajaj, ICICI Infosys,Reliance, Britannia , Novartis, Cipla etc.	Transportation, Health, Education and Housing	Fulfilling corporate, social and Community responsibility?

• MMRDA: Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority
• MWSSB: Mumbai Water Supply and Sewerage Board
• MHADA: Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority
• CIDCO: City and Industrial Development Corporation
• MSRDC: Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation
• MUTP: Mumbai Urban Transport Project
• SPARC: Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centre
• YUVA: Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action
• CEHAT: Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes

That there is the need for development of backward areas in a co-ordinated manner for balanced development has always been a concern but never been implemented in a committed manner. A critically neglected component in the MMR are areas that at the fringes of development, both geographically and otherwise. But the fact remains that neither the city nor the suburbs and the extended regions developed in a sustained manner in all these years after the conception of the first Plan for the MMR in 1973. It needs to be clearly mentioned here that the Draft Regional Plan for Mumbai Metropolitan Region 1996-2011, by its own admission, mentions that "Twenty years after the Plan, Greater Mumbai continues to reel under increased demographic pressure, poor infrastructure and high level of environmental pollution." Though there are several problems of Mumbai city it is in the metropolitan region, its peculiar problems and developmental measures that have been completely ignored. (TISS/ YUVA Report 1996) The so-called 'rural rimland' that forms part of the MMR, occupying about 60 percent of the area with just about 6 percent of the regional population, is least influenced by the over-all development taking place in the city and thereby has lagged behind the Mumbai city in its basic social and physical infrastructure services. Special efforts are required to develop this part along with other areas of the metropolitan region. This would involve creation of conditions conducive to participation of

its citizens in city-oriented employment and provision of amenities and services.

Greater Mumbai, the city proper, occupies only 438 km and yet it is often confused with the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, which is almost ten times bigger (4,355 km) and includes the outlying townships of Kalyan and Thane, which are 1 million-plus cities in their own right. (Pictures 1 and 2). The MMRDA is responsible for planning and developing civic infrastructure in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which covers 4355 square kilometers. Of this, 468 square kilometers belongs to the city of Greater Mumbai. The rest of the MMR contains five municipal corporations, fifteen municipal councils and several villages.

According to the Washington-based Population Institute, the Mumbai metropolitan region in 2020 will be the world's most populous at 28.5 million,

with Tokyo trailing at 27.3 million. The MMRDA is an apex body regulating and coordinating the activities of all these organisations, and is responsible for planning and administering the island city and its environs.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Matters as it accounts for 22% of the state's population, 40% of growth; has almost double the state's per capita income and 70% of all state taxes and 74% of sales tax are from MMR The mega-regions, that the MMR is rapidly becoming opens new and large forms of economic landscapes, political battlegrounds and cultural changes and spatial contestations. In his new book on 'The Great Reset', Richard Florida (2010), talks about the 3 T's, namely Talent, Technology and Tolerance to which a forth T has been added, i.e., Territory Assets. More than ever before 'place matters' and geography has certainly NOT become history! Territory assets

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are the built settings of the community. This is one dimension that is agreeable to me from this controversial scholar.

Urban scholars have analyzed in detail how neoliberal globalization has negatively impacted cities and city-regions. Since the 1990s there have been changes in land use from agricultural to residential and industrial/commercial; (Pictures 3 and 4) Changes in the use of natural resources, for instance, deforestation, water depletion and pollution, land levelling because of excessive quarrying, land degradation because of brick kilns and increased solid and liquid wastes. (Pictures 5 and 6)

Consequences of such drastic changes can be found in the formations of

• New forms of segregation;
• Polarisation;
• Socio-spatial fragmentation resulting from

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• Deliberate planned political and policy operations;
• Blatant violation of rules and regulations
• Nexus between Politicians, Bureaucrats, Developers and Business.

Above all scholars have raised critical issues regarding ideology and politics directing urban development process in Mumbai through in the light of MMRDA plan and other initiatives and attempts to develop a critique of the entire process of recent urbanisation. (Swapna Banerjee-Guha 2002 and Veronique Dupont 2007).

The latest plans for the city assumes that the total population within the metropolitan region will increase to 34 million by 2031. Within 25 years, an additional 12 million people will need to navigate the city's territory. This calls for a very clear planning strategy those factors in the lives and livelihoods of people living in the villages that are part of the 'metropolitan' regions; enhance and enable employment opportunities by strengthening the vital and unique small scale and cottage industries in the regions.

For example papad making and clay works in Penn. (Pictures 7 and 8). These activities mostly are still in the rudimentary form and assistance from both the government as well as the non-governmental organisation in both regulating, strengthening as well as providing basic technology to enhance storage capability will be welcome by this sector. (As was pointed out by people employed in the sector during my visit and interaction with them).

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City and City regions share a symbiotic relationship; if this association is understood and carefully nurtured, both will move forward together. If not, a city's heedless expansion may threaten the region's natural endowment, generating economic, social and environmental costs that will ultimately undermine its own development.

Issues and Concerns of MMR

In most metropolitan region that this researcher visited, the problem is of insufficient allocation of resources and very un-coordinated work by different organisations. For example, in Panvel, where I did field work and also interviewed and discussed with Journalists, Engineers, Municipal Counselors and common men and women. Most seem to lament the lost status and glory of the onetime heritage city that was Panvel. It was dotted by a number of wadas. (Traditional, sustainable structures/homes, (Pictures 9 and 10)

Most of these wadas have now made for re-development projects and highrises have come in their place. There are just a few wadas left in Panvel. Of the two wadas that I visited, the Bapat wada is over 300 years old and was once flourishing is now in dilapidated state. There are about 40-50 families living in its premises but none of them want this wada to be registered as a heritage structure and nor are they keen on repairing it. Neo liberal development has a way of penetrating mindsets and this is so clearly visible in peoples 'idea' of what they want as development. They want that place to be re-developed for a good sum and a new house. The other wada that we saw was Patkar wada which is next to the old Thane-Pune highway. The owners have made efforts to preserve the original structure here. However, they too do not want their wada to be registered as a heritage structure as it brings restrictions on the extent of re-development and the use of the property.

The question that can be raised is who decides what 'development.' If owners of property believe that it is difficult to maintain and manage/protect and preserve such 'heritage' structures, with no assistance from the government, do they have a 'right' to decide? Should there be a concerted effort on the part of the government to identify such 'heritage' structures, make special provision for maintenance and upkeep of such places? Where does that leave owners of such property? These are larger questions that were posed to this researcher, answers to which are still unavailable.

Secondly Panvel was also known as a city of lakes. However, over the years, most of these lakes have been closed to make way for construction. There are hardly 5-6 lakes remaining in the area today. Old Panvel, which comes under the jurisdiction of Panvel Municipal Council, has been impacted the most because of major infrastructure development projects coming up on its sides.

MMRDA in its enthusiasm for 'developing' these areas as growth hubs has been engaged in a wide range of activities. A small list given below is clearly exemplifies the motto as well as the modus operandi of an organisation keen on making this a 'global megacity region'. Ironically, what MMRDA has been involved with are a series of allocations for various MMRDA projects.

MMRDA has proposed to set up Asia's largest 'Innovation Park' within the MMR. The park will be largest in the field of Research and Development. The MMRDA is expecting the park to attract about 25,000 scientists from over 100 countries. The Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA), which undertakes planning and developing civic infrastructure projects in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), has an idle investment of Rs 8.42 crore. These are the findings of the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

The following are some of the ongoing projects:

• An airport, a mega-city and Asia's biggest railway junction are coming up on its periphery. Most of this work has been undertaken by CIDCO. These Projects have attracted their share of controversy with vast stretches of villages and human settlements having to undergo displacement to make way for these big projects.
• In case of projects like the mega city, the objection has primarily been over the rehabilitation as CIDCO has planned rehabilitation on the periphery of the mega-city with the villages being dispersed on all its sides in small pockets.
• In case of the airport, the controversy has also been over environmental clearances, CRZ norms and mangroves.
• In terms of development, a 200 acre Central Park has been planned which will be a green zone within the emerging city.
• The authorities also stress that there is hardly any scope for development in Old Panvel as the existing land area has already been occupied. A portion of the wet garbage from this area is sent to a biogas plant; however, the gas generated out of this plant has not been put to any use yet. (See for more information website of MMRDA, www.mmrdamumbai.org)

City-Regions: Need for Mapping Assets and reinforce Democracy

The tangible assets of city-regions can be thus be divided into seven clusters that encompass human, social, cultural, intellectual, natural, environmental and urban assets. (Friedmann 2007).

These resources still are available and existing in most of the MMR. The question is, does the State care or does it brush these beneath the official neo liberal government discourse in the pretext of 'development' and change? It is important especially at this stage of flux and complex change to map out the basic assets of each one of the regions in MMR. To examine the strength and merits of these tangible assets, objectively evaluate and appraise the manner in which it can be further enhanced and strengthened. By this process of 'mapping' alone, I believe regions can take advantage of some of the 'givens' that are available to them either in the cultural or environmental fields.

What is also required now, according to me, is an active search for creative and progressive alternatives to the current situation. In fact a politics of substantive democracy offers much hope for creating more just urban places. As Mark Purcell states, 'Democracy' is a question that must be woven into our current understandings of city-regions and their ongoing political and economic restructuring. Just, sustainable and truly civilised city-region. (Purcell 2007)

City-regional researchers from Geography, Economics, Sociology and Political Science should be more engaged in progressive agendas to rebuild cities and regions. One suggestion is that the economics of city-regional agglomeration (as much as the politics of city-regionalism) 'are creating tensions and interests around which new alliances and struggles could be coalescing'. It is said and rightly so that as places of politics and struggle, city-regions matter. (Jonas and Ward 2007)

With the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992, some hope for peri-urban areas has emerged with the Act's recognition of 'transitional' areas and the granting of civic status to them as 'nagar panchayats' or town panchayats. (Mohan 2001) However, the central act has left it to the different states to create this new category for the proper governance of peri-urban areas. There is also Marginalization that is perpetrated in the name of urban planning termed as urban revanchism by Neil Smith (1996). Besides, there are several examples of increased disparity; inequality and uneven/haphazard development in many city-regions of India as a result of such processes are already plenty (Kundu, A 1997)

I very ardently believe that research on city-regions could benefit from more sustained and critical attention to the question of sustainable development and substantive local democracy. Understanding their political dynamics is important.

There has to be more critical examination about how decisions in city-regions are made, why they are made that way, and how they can be made more responsibly, responsively and more democratically.

Mumbai and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (A Comparison)

Population (In Millions)	Year 1981	Year 1991	Year 2001
Mumbai Island City	3.28	3.17	3.33
Mumbai Outer City	4.96	6.75	8.59
Suburbs(Outside Mumbai)	1.66	3.45	5.79
Metropolitan Mumbai	9.90	13.37	17.70

Share Of Population	Year 1981	Year 1991	Year 2001
Mumbai Island City	33.2%	23.7%	18.8%
Mumbai Outer City	50.1%	50.5%	48.5%
Suburbs (Outside Mumbai)	16.8%	25.8%	32.7%
Metropolitan Mumbai	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Share Of Growth	Year 1981-1991	Year1991-2001	Year 1981-2001
Mumbai Island City	3.2%	3.5%	0.5%
Mumbai Outer City	51.6%	642.5%	46.5%
Suburbs (Outside Mumbai)	51.6%	54.0%	52.9%
Metropolitan Mumbai	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Population Change (In Millions)	Year 1981-1991	Year1991-2001	Year 1981-2001
Mumbai Island City	(0.11)	0.15	0.04
Mumbai Outer City	1.79	1.84	3.62
Suburbs (Outside Mumbai)	1.79	2.3	4.13
Metropolitan Mumbai	3.47	4.32	7,.80

Percentage Change	Year 1981-1991	Year 1991-2001	Year 1981-2001
Mumbai Island City	3.4%	4.8%	1.3%
Mumbai Outer City	36.2%	27.2%	42.3%
Suburbs (Outside Mumbai)	108.1%	67.7%	71.3%
Metropolitan Mumbai	35.1%	32.3%	44.1%

N.B: Greater Mumbai comprise Mumbai Island City and Mumbai Outer City
Sources: Calculated from Census of India 2001 and MMRDA data

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