



Selected Readings on Small Town Dynamics in India

Bhuvanewari Raman, Mythri Prasad-Aleyamma, Rémi De Bercegol, Eric Denis, Marie-Hélène Zerah

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SELECTED READINGS ON SMALL TOWN DYNAMICS IN INDIA

Bhuvaneshwari Raman, Mythri Prasad-Aleyamma
Rémi de Bercegol, Eric Denis, Marie-Hélène Zérah

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SMALL TOWN DYNAMICS IN INDIA**

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Selected readings on small town dynamics in India

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Abstract

This literature review aims at summarizing the state of knowledge related to small urbanised settlements. The significance of researching these localities can be inferred from the fact that a growing share of urban population lives in such agglomerations with a population above 10,000 and below 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants. This fact is not limited to India and a large share of the urban population worldwide lives in small and medium cities, which are understudied. The same dearth of research applies to the Indian context, as will be evident in this review, despite the importance of the resilience of an urban system comprising a large number of small towns and the diversity of these settlements in terms of their economic base and their social structure.

This literature review is structured around five themes: A) the first section lays out issues related to estimating the magnitude and sources of demographic growth in order to infer the contribution of small towns to urban dynamics; B) the second section on *Small Towns: Sources of Growth* explores the economic processes supporting the expansion of small towns, and debates the dominant vision of the relationship between urbanization and growth, as explained by the New Economic Geography; C) the third section focuses on the transformation of small town economies and social structures while examining practices of entrepreneurship, circulation of labour, social mobility as well as caste and gender inequalities; D) the fourth section on *Land and territorial transformations* focuses on the relation between property and entrepreneurship; and E) the last section on Governance makes sense of the literature on decentralization, government schemes, governance and the political economy of small towns.

This review constitutes one of the steps undertaken within the *Subaltern Urbanization in India* project (www.suburbin.hypotheses.org) to bring back to the fore the research on small towns.

Keywords: small town, urbanization, India, literature review

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBURBIN WORKING PAPER SERIES

The **SUBURBIN** Working Paper Series aims at disseminating the output of the ongoing *Subaltern Urbanization in India* (**SUBURBIN**) research programme on small towns in India.

The three-year **SUBURBIN** research project started in January 2011. It is a collaborative project with researchers of the Centre for Policy Research (New Delhi), the Centre de Sciences Humaines (New Delhi), the Centre for the Study of Regional Development (JNU, New Delhi), the Institut Français de Pondichéry, the University of Burdwan, the Department of Regional Planning at the School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi), and the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (Mumbai). This research network involves senior researchers, post-doctoral fellows, PhD candidates and several Masters students. The two French research centres in India - the Centre de Sciences Humaines based in New Delhi and the Institut Français de Pondichéry, are coordinating the programme. The project is primarily funded by the French National Research Agency.

SUBURBIN positions itself vis-à-vis a vision of global urbanisation reduced to metropolitanisation and competition between global cities, or “metrocentricity”. It aims at challenging the usual approach that tends to consider the urban world only through the prism of very large cities - even though half of the world's city dwellers do not reside there. **SUBURBIN** acknowledges the continuous increase of the urban population and its projected doubling in Asia between 2000 and 2030. However, current urban research tends to emphasise megalopolises, which are considered as the privileged site for the production and concentration of national wealth, innovation and talent, as well as the central location of social movements and environmental problems. This leads to public policies focusing on large metropolitan areas and promotion of economies of agglomeration as seen in the World Bank's recent World Development Report 2009 Reshaping Economic Geography. The **SUBURBIN** programme aims to offer additional perspectives on urban transition by focusing on small towns from a multiplicity of disciplines, linking macro and micro analysis. It questions the restricted representations and existing measures and explanatory models. It also strives to actively contribute to the debates about the plurality of development models, to provide analytical tools to policy makers and to inform public policy debates.

India is an ideal site to shed light on this question since one out of ten urban citizens is from India and even more importantly because the urbanisation dynamics here seem to diverge from the canonical centre/fringe model where large metropolises dominate. In addition, India has a stringent definition for classifying a settlement as urban within the census and additional criteria, which varies among states, before it is accorded administrative urban status. It has a large number of densely populated large settlements, which are classified as rural. The first results of the 2011 census indicate a decline in demographic growth of existing metro cities; while at the same time the number of new settlements recognized as census towns, i.e., settlements under rural panchayat administration with strong urban characteristics, appears very high (more than 2,500). The census towns' account for about one-third of the demographic urban growth between 2001 and 2011, indicating that reclassification is at least as important a process for urban transition as rural urban migration. Overall, the process of recognising new municipal areas is very slow and consequently the population benefiting from urban schemes grows relatively slowly. Only 242 new statutory towns have been recognized in the last ten years. This expanding world of small towns and big villages remain widely unknown, badly documented and ignored. There is a need to understand this subaltern urbanization as a specific part of India's settlement structure and to understand the ongoing social, political and economic processes.

This project discusses the relevance of definitions related to the distinction between rural and urban by utilizing the **Indiapolis** geo-localised database developed in a companion research project funded by the French National Research Agency, **e-Geopolis**. It uses a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, economic and social indicators provided by large existing statistic databases, notably recent National Sample Survey rounds, contribute to develop a more precise and comparative analysis of agglomeration dynamics; on the other hand, field monographs allow for a qualitative field-based analysis of the observed trends. The rapid transformation of economies and persisting analytical gaps call for a deeper understanding and renewal of certain important questions which will be the concern of this collection of working papers. A few of these are highlighted below.

- a. Where do we draw the line between the rural and the urban, i.e., the relative valorisation of administrative status, functional character and the experienced reality of residents? Accordingly, what is their level of social development when access to urban infrastructure is deficient, and how do these spaces relate to the containment of poverty?
- b. What is the relation between the proliferation of small towns and economic processes, i.e., to what extent are these settlements dependent on or autonomous from the metropolitanisation process? Are they just the recipients of diffusion processes and of the (re)-location of low productivity activities or do they have an independent economic rationale? Three related questions assume importance - (i) the extent to which these small towns are engulfed in metropolitan regions or in economic corridors, (ii) the nature of their formation and subsequent development, and (iii) their contribution to the Indian economic growth story.
- c. What kind of capital do actors in the smaller towns mobilize and for which activities? How do such actors articulate and connect their practices and knowledge to flows at different scales, from local to global? For **SUBURBIN**, such flows of capital and innovation are not restrictively defined. They encompass non-commoditised practices, social formations and modes of governance. Related to these dynamics are the types of innovations which emerge from small towns or networks of settlements and the role of land capital in contemporary transformation in relation to real estate activities, e.g., the emergence of new clusters of economic activity such as educational institutions.
- d. How resilient are clusters and networks of small towns? Are these sites of informal small scale diverse activities dependent on daily-wage and casual work? Is their development linked with mobility, seasonal migration and remittance flows? To what extent, are small towns engines of social change?

Eric Denis & Marie-Hélène Zérah

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1. Introduction: Aims / Key findings

This literature review aims at summarizing the state of knowledge related to small urbanised settlements. The significance of researching these localities can be inferred from the fact that a growing share of urban population lives in such agglomerations with a population above 10,000 and below 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (Denis and Marius-Gnanou 2010; Srivastava 2005). This fact is not limited to India and a large share of the urban population worldwide lives in small and medium cities, which are understudied (Bell and Jayne 2006). The same dearth of research applies to the Indian context, as will be evident in this review, despite the importance of the resilience of an urban system comprising a large number of small towns and the diversity of these settlements in terms of their economic base and their social structure.

Our definition of *small towns* is not bounded by the administrative status of the settlement. Such settlements can either be Statutory Towns and therefore being governed by an Urban Local Body. In this case, according to Government of India's official definition, agglomerations with such range of population fall under the categories of class 2 to class 4 and class 5 cities. According to 2001 census, the majority of urban localities are those with a population of 10,000 to 20,000, followed by those with a population comprising between 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants (Srivastava, 2005). However, these localities can also be Census Towns, which means that they remain under rural administration. The importance of these rural administered towns is confirmed by 2011 census results and the recognition by census authority of 2,532 new Census Towns (Kundu 2011a\b; Bhagat 2011). These new CT account for about one-third of the demographic urban growth between 2001 and 2011 (Pradhan 2013).

This literature review is organized under five themes: A) the first section, "Contribution of small towns to the urbanization process", lays out issues related to estimating the magnitude and sources of demographic growth in order to infer the contribution of small towns to urban dynamics; B) the second section on "Small towns: Sources of growth" explores the economic processes supporting the growth of small towns, and debates the dominant vision of the relationship between urbanization and growth, as explained by the New Economic Geography; C) the third section focuses on the transformation of small town economies and social structures while examining practices of entrepreneurship, circulation of labour, social mobility as well as caste and gender inequalities; D) the fourth section on "Land and territorial transformations" focuses on the relation between property and entrepreneurship; and

E) the last section on Governance makes sense of the literature on decentralization, government schemes, governance and the political economy of small towns.

We do not claim to have covered all the potential areas of research on small towns, neither do we assert that we have covered all the available literature. First, it is acknowledged that this review focuses on the postcolonial Indian context, eschewing a historical approach while recognizing that there is a literature with similar intellectual concerns, namely – the relationship of small towns to larger economic development, trade and capital networks, as well as social change, that is available in the context of early modern and colonial India (see for example Haynes 2012; Bayly 1983). Second, a recurring theme in the review is the metro-bias in both urban research and policy focus and the scant literature on various aspects of micro-level processes pertaining to small towns. Some of these processes are analysed in research pertaining to rural India, which is only partly referred to in this review. Thirdly, there is also a regional bias, due to the fact that available research on small towns in the Indian context is concentrated in a few States, particularly, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and Punjab which are the most urbanized. Research on cities in other parts of the country, particularly North-Eastern India, the newly created states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and the North-Western frontier states is limited. In other words, the poorest states are invisible.

Nevertheless, this review is one of the steps undertaken in the Subaltern Urbanization in India project (www.suburbin.hypotheses.org) to bring back to the fore research on small towns. During the 1980s, research on small towns and their role in economic development, as an interface between agriculture and urban market and their position in ensuring rural-urban linkages and economic development was important. By the middle of the 1980s, Hardoy and Sattertherwaite (1984: 5) already observed that "most of the literature on urban issues in the Third World is about capital cities or large cities. Most of the concern expressed about urban problems is about problems in large cities. Yet only a small proportion of the Third World's population lives in large cities." Since then, large metropolises and extended megacities remained the centre of attention in the literature and the target of public policies and governance reforms. We do not anchor our research and review in a nostalgic return to the small town studies *a la* 1980s. On the contrary, the economic and social structures have changed but metropolity growth is far from accelerating and the network of small towns remains solid, especially in the Indian subcontinent. In 2011, 312 million people in India were

living in urban and semi-urban settlements with a population between 5,000 and 1 lakh, while only 265 million were enumerated in bigger cities and urban agglomerations. For this very reason, it is more important than ever to study small towns from a multiplicity of perspectives and consequently to review the existing work related to these settlements.

2. Section A - Contribution of small towns to the urbanization process and the urban structure: Magnitude and source of growth

2. 1. What is urban and how are “small settlements” defined?

To assess the contribution of small towns to the urbanization process, it is first necessary to define clearly the term "small town". There should apparently be no ambiguity since cities in India are classified on the basis of their population sizes: class I comprises cities with a population above 100,000 people; class II comprises cities with a population ranging from 50,000 to 99,999; class III corresponds to towns with a population in the range of 20,000 to 49,999; class IV consists of settlements with a population ranging from 10,000 to 19,999; class V corresponds to towns with a population ranging from 5,000 to 9,999 while the last category, class VI, comprises settlements below 5,000.

Nevertheless, researchers do not always follow this classification strictly. For instance, when analyzing the results of the 2001 census, Bhagat (2005b) clubs together the last three categories under the label of “small” towns. He calls settlements with a population range of 20,000 to 50,000 “medium” towns and considers those with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 people, as “large” towns. Dupont (2002) also considers towns below 20,000 people as “small” towns but she includes towns with a population ranging from 20,000 to 100,000 in the category of “medium” towns. Any town with a population below 50,000 is a small town for Kundu (2007) while his definition of medium city has evolved in some of his writings up to 1 million. For Dhaliwal (2004) a "small town" is a town of up to 500,000 inhabitants and the term "medium cities" characterises agglomerations containing between 0.5 and 1 million people (Dhaliwal 2004: ix). So, depending on the definition adopted, the population threshold that distinguishes the "small" Indian urban agglomeration from the "medium" can vary from 20,000 to 50,000 or even up to 500,000 people.

This lack of clarity in the definition of “small and medium towns” can be partly explained by an imprecise vernacular distinction between the terms “town” and “city” that refer to the lower strata of the urban hierarchy and the large urban agglomerations respectively. The term

town or small town echoes the terms of *mofussil* (Weis 2005) or the *Kasbah* still in use in North-Western India for smaller cities. Jain, Ghosh and Kim (1992) proposed a population of one lakh as the limit to differentiate between a “town” and a “city”. Taking into account the above classifications, settlements included in the last three Census categories (up to 19,999 inhabitants) are considered small towns, those in class III of the Census (20,000 to 49,999 inhabitants) are called medium towns, urban agglomerations with up to 99,999 inhabitants (Class II of the Census) are referred to as large towns. Urban centres with more than 100,000 inhabitants (Class I of the Census) are called cities.

More broadly, these varied urban classifications result from looking at the smaller urban settlement negatively as not a million plus city. While definitions may vary, they all specify the criteria that circumscribe or classify agglomerations between the “village” and the “city” as small towns, medium towns or large towns. The above classifications of towns do not make any distinction between rural and urban settlements. Some authors have written on the importance of the rural-urban classification and its consequences in framing policies and in governance (Bhagat 2005a). The rural-urban categorization needs to be looked into.

Indeed, a preliminary step before studying small towns is to go back to the definition of an urban settlement. In India, there are two separate manners to define an urban locality (Bhagat 2005b). The first type of urban settlement is the Statutory Town (ST) which has been granted a municipal status by the State government (Sivaramakrishnan, Kundu, Singh 2005; Bhagat 2005b; Kundu 2011a). The urban local body is known as a municipal corporation or council, a Nagar Panchayat or a notified town area committee. The second type of urban settlement is the Census Town (CT), which corresponds to all settlements that fit the Census criteria, prescribed by the Central Government. To be declared a CT, a settlement has to fulfil the following three conditions: (i) the population must be 5,000 or more, (ii) the density must be at least of 400 persons per square kilometre, and (iii) 75% of the male workforce should be employed in the non-agricultural sector (based on the previous census results, for instance 2001 and 2011). The cut-off point of 5,000 inhabitants has not precluded the classification of some settlements below 5,000 people as urban ST (Kundu 2011a; Denis and Marius-Gnanou 2011). Conversely, Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2011), following Sivaramakrishnan *et al.* (2005), note that many settlements with a population of more than 10,000 inhabitants and having other characteristics of urban areas have not been classified as urban in the 2001 census. In the case of these CTs, the classification is dynamic since a CT may not only be

reclassified from rural to urban but from urban to rural as well (Bhagat 2011). This definition based on the triple criteria is specific to India (Gupta 2009). The economic criterion, though justified by the socio-economic context in India, is used only by six other countries and the Indian threshold of 75% is the highest among the seven. Some of the criticisms of the Indian definition are: there is no transitional area between the urban and the rural areas, consideration of only the male workforce introduces a gender bias and the exclusion of livestock, fishing and allied activities generates an industrial bias (Bhagat 2011). However, some others argue that the socio-economic context justifies the definition. These views are part of the debate as to whether definitions should be uniform worldwide or should reflect the specificity of each country (Satterthwaite 2006).

An important consequence of the above definition, not pointed out often enough, is that all urban settlements (ST+CT) are not governed by an urban local body. A large number of settlements, declared as urban by the Census, the CTs, and included in the calculation of the total urban population remains governed by rural local bodies. It is estimated that, in 2001, the population under urban governance was around 25.5% of the total, while the rate of urbanization was 27.8%. In other words, 21.9 million of the officially classified urban population were in fact living in settlements governed by rural panchayats. Statutory Towns are the only ones with the administrative apparatus of a town. The urban local bodies are called town panchayat (Nagar Panchayat), municipality or municipal council (Nagar Palika) and Municipal Corporation (Mahanagar Palika). On the other hand, in terms of governance, a CT remains a Gram Panchayat under rural governance (73rd Amendment) and benefits only from the existing rural schemes. This difference is not anecdotal. Between 2001 and 2011, 2,532 settlements have been declared as new CTs but only 242 have been notified as new STs. These 2,532 new CTs represent an increase of 65% since 2001 and their population accounts for one third of the urban population growth (Pradhan 2013). A large share of urban areas added in the last decade is yet governed by rural local bodies. The classification of urban and rural areas is thus not the result of a straightforward process but an outcome of a political negotiation between local authority, the State government and the Central government that is discussed further in section E. Therefore, a question arises about the real size of urban India, and whether it is underestimated?

2.2. The extent of urbanization in India

Bhagat (2011) raises the basic question: where does the growth of urbanization come from? The role of small towns in the urbanization process in India is the subject of an ongoing debate and the upgrading of 2,532 settlements to the status of CTs in the Census of 2011 has brought the issue to the fore. According to Kundu (2011a), this large number of new urban settlements is more than the total number of new CTs in the preceding ten decades. This steep increase could point to a form of census activism and supports Ramachandran's (1989: 106) view that the census at the state level uses arbitrary and unscientific methods that undermines inter-state comparison. For others, including policy-makers, the inclusion of these new CTs is an acknowledgement of an urbanization process that is often not recognized. Even those awaiting further results from the census to better qualify the urbanization process acknowledge that the 'impetus to urban dynamics' has understandably come at the lowest level. This is not reflected as much in an accelerated growth rate of small and medium towns as an increase in the number of census towns (Kundu 2011a). A recent work by Pradhan (2012) demonstrates that almost 70% of the CTs declared in 2011 already had the characteristics of an urban settlement in the preceding census, which contradicts the idea of census activism: 1,625 new Census Towns in 2011, home to 18.7 million people, satisfied the triple urban criteria even in 2001.

Several recent scholarly works, though different in their methodologies, argue that the urbanization level is underestimated in India. Uchida and Nelson (2010) have carried out an extensive inter-country exercise using GRUMP data wherein they use the notion of proximity to define the level of urbanization. They use the road network and settlement data to determine travel time between settlements. Based on the 2001 census data, they find that 42.9% of the total Indian population live within an hour of at least one Class I town and 52% live within an hour of at least one Class II town. They conclude therefore that there is a considerable underestimation of the level of urbanization in India, which could actually be even higher than the rate of 46% observed in China.

Another work carried out by Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2011) as part of a research project called Global e-Geopolis uses the UN's built-up area criterion to assess the extent of urbanization. UN defines each physical agglomerate or contiguous built-up area with less than 200 meters between buildings and with at least 10,000 inhabitants as an urban agglomeration. Using satellite images, the authors have matched the Census settlements geo-spatially with

those in the images. In the case of India, they find that, in 2001, 37.1% of the total population live in agglomerations of more than 10,000 people, which is higher than the official urbanization figure. Though the built-up settlements may not meet the economic activity criterion of the census Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2010, 2011) argue that the urban growth in India is underestimated because the official figures are skewed and reflect the several distorting biases. They further suggest that the Geopolis database provides a more accurate estimate of urban growth in India and includes urbanization from below. In the Geopolis database, twice as many units display characteristics of urbanity as the number in the 2001 census database. The difference between the estimates of urban population in the two databases is around 100 million. Viewed from the Geopolis perspective, the pattern of urbanization in India presents a more diffused landscape, far from the concentration of population limited to major metropolises, as is commonly believed. These differences arise from the way urban is defined in the two databases (Bhagat 2011).

Studying the urbanization level in Bhopal district, Gupta (2012) tests a number of criteria and shows that population density based on built-up area provides a more accurate measure of urbanity than official density data. She calls for a re-examination of the definition of population density used in the census database. Gupta's finding supports Denis and Marius-Gnanou's (2011) claims about the strength of Geopolis database for estimating urban growth in general, and the contribution of small towns in particular. In the same perspective, the working paper of Kanhu Charan Pradhan (2013) shows that Geopolis methodology predicts rather well the emergence of new Census Towns. As the Census authority uses employment figures of the previous census, we assume that in 2021, 1,625 CTs will be likely added to the actual number.

Studies on mobility confirm that common understanding of India's urbanization is biased. By comparing data of 2001 with previous census and NSS rounds, Pradhan demonstrates that the urban attraction has been quite low since thirty years and is still showing no sign of increasing. Rural to Urban residential migrations contribute to less than 25 percent of the urban growth (21.7% between 1981 and 1991 and, 24.2% between 1991 and 2001). As Sivaramakrishnan *et al.* (2005) noted the restrictive definition of urban in the census reduces the count of residential migrants toward urban settlements.

Using the National Sample Survey (NNS) 2009-10 data, Chandrasekhar (2011) analysed commuting patterns of people who live in rural areas and work in urban areas. He shows that

8.05 million rural non-agricultural workers commute to urban areas and constitute 9.1% of the total urban non-agricultural workforce. “Almost 32 million individuals, accounting for 4.3 percent of India’s rural population, live in households where one or more worker commutes from rural to urban areas” (2011: 23). He also calculated that 5 percent of the urban workforce is employed in rural units. The question remains as to whether people commute because of a preference for village life or rather because cities are becoming increasingly exclusionary (Kundu 2003), in particular the larger cities. Overall, a lot of research seems to indicate that many people live in close proximity to a large town, and rural non-farm economic activity which leads to a decrease in rural poverty, is galvanized by the proximity of small towns.

In a recent analysis of the Census data, Pradhan (2012), like some others, notes the role of CTs in the increased urbanization in the 2001-2011 decade. The emergence of new CTs that contribute 29.5% of the urbanization growth points to a process of in-situ urbanization.

The location of these CTs is an important indicator of the evolving pattern of Indian urban structure and concentration of urbanization. Kundu (2011b, 2012) proposes a process of exclusionary urbanization wherein the population of mega cities increases at a progressively slower rate or even decreases in parts. Pradhan’s work provides partial answers to our original question. He points out a statistically significant relation between the level of urbanization and the number of large villages in the district and also the enhanced effect of new CTs through the interaction of urban units. Second, for the whole of India, he looks at the distribution of new CTs and their proximity to different size-class of towns and he finds:

“that, among the new CTs in the vicinity of Class I towns, 45% of the number of CTs and 42% of population are in the proximity of towns with population of 1-5 lakh. Similarly, another 15% of the number of CTs and 19% of population are in the proximity of towns with population of 5-10 lakh. This means that even among the new CTs in the vicinity of Class I towns, only 39% of their population is in the vicinity of million plus cities, i e, only 13.1% of the population of the new CTs is in the vicinity of the million plus cities. It confirms the initial observation that while there are a large number of CTs in close proximity to Class I towns, many of them are not around the megacities and there are many more that are widely spread across the countryside. This appears to indicate that there may be multiple urbanisation processes at work" (2012: 48).

Bhagat (1995) argues that the lack of uniform criteria to define what is urban renders difficult to compare the inter-regional trends in urban growth. Besides, the census fails to capture the process of sub-urbanisation. The binary classification of urban and rural does not take into account the growth in the transitional area, resulting in an underestimation of urban growth (p.63). A uniform definition of urban is required for ensuring equitable allocation of funds for development. Bhagat proposes a concept of Standard Urban Area (SUA) and Urban Agglomeration (UA) to determine viable urban areas for municipal governance (2011). The author suggests that the movement of people from small settlements for different activities, need to be taken into account in estimating the contribution of small towns to urban growth. The aim of his proposition is to enable comparison of the urbanization growth across states.

2.3. The importance of regional differences

Pradhan's study (2013) indicates the existence of diverse processes at work. Concentration near large cities is observed in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, particularly in proximity to New Delhi. While there is a process of concentration near second-tier cities as well, a form of 'in-situ' urbanization can also be discerned. In the states of Assam, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan the number of new CTs in proximity of large towns is low. On the basis of their analysis of e-Geopolis data, Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2011: 1), suggest an "extended process of metropolitanization alongside diffused combinations of localized socio-economic opportunities, clusters, and market towns partially interlinked by developmental corridors. These diverse patterns of urbanization also diverge far from a dual conception of urban versus rural, metrocity versus small towns". If the definition of the urban agglomeration based on the built-up criteria used in their methodology is adopted, then the urban population in Bihar would have been 31.2% rather than the official figure of 10.4% in 2001. This difference could be explained by the presence of large villages that do not officially qualify as "urban" because they do not meet the non-farming occupation criterion though they have the necessary density.

Two factors are responsible for the significant differences between States. The first one relates to the fact that Statutory Towns, STs, are designated by the State Governments. The independent decisions by the States lead to distortions in the official level of urbanization (Bhagat 2005a). For instance, as Bhagat points out, Tamil Nadu became the most urbanized state in 2001 partly due to the conferment of municipal status to a large number of villages.

Indeed, while Tamil Nadu promotes rapidly villages to towns, Kerala and West Bengal tend to limit strictly their number.

In Kerala only, 362 new Census Towns are found in the 2011 census data, an increase of 78%, while in West Bengal their number was 528 (+68%). Singur, for instance, just reclassified as a Census Town in 2011, remains a village or Gram Panchayat despite the fact that Singur with its surroundings has 60,000 inhabitants, sufficient to satisfy the urban criterion set by the government of West Bengal (Samanta 2012). On the other hand, the specificity of the urbanization process in Kerala, a variant of the *desakota* urbanization (McGee 1991), with a linearly stretching and continuous urbanization was not identified since most settlements remained rural (at least till the 2011 Census). A recent paper by TISS shows that the relative increase in the number of Statutory Towns in Maharashtra has been very limited, whereas during the decade 1991-2001, it recorded the highest increase in the number of CTs after Punjab and Haryana. This work brings out the discretionary power of the States in defining “urban” and the legal aspects of urban classification before and after the 74th CAA. In the pre-decentralisation period, in Maharashtra, the only criterion to declare a local authority as a municipal body was a population threshold and this threshold was decided by the State (Bhide et al. 2011: 39). In the 74th CAA, (Article 243Q), to be recognised as a municipal council, criteria such as the population of the area, the density, the revenue generated for local administration, the percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities and the economic importance shall be considered. These differ from the Census criteria and in the particular case of Maharashtra, the criteria for a municipal council are the population and the proportion of the people engaged in non-agricultural activities (2011:40). Again, the urban criteria specified by the West Bengal Municipal Act, differ from both the Maharashtra and the Census criteria (Samanta 2012: 48). A map of urban India based on all the statutory definitions would be a mosaic of different patterns resulting from the different criteria adopted by various States for classifying a settlement as urban or rural.

All the recent studies indicate a renewed interest in understanding the morphology of urban India and its regional variations. Many of them underline the difficulty in understanding the processes because of the various definitions of statutory urban settlements that differ from one state to another. Consequently, these works question the reasoning behind the classification of settlements as urban or rural.

The factors responsible for the spatial (re)distribution of urban-suburban-semirural and rural growth in India during the last decade need to be described precisely and understood in the context of the existing Indian urban system. The pattern of this urban system reveals a complex dynamics with a low hierarchical profile. Nevertheless, it isn't an aleatory process. Urban growth and hierarchy are strongly dependent on regional settings and trends (Schaffar 2010). Cities grow in parallel with their own State dynamics. This process contributes to a consolidation of regional urban sub-systems. The federal structure, regional economic growth and urban policies influence the pattern of urbanization. As Sharma (2003) also observed, the integration of city and State growth is a fundamental characteristic of the Indian urban system. The Indian urban system seems non determinist as its components (cities) do not converge toward an optimal size. Eventually, Sharma noted that parallel growth is not clearly verified. However, these results depend on the method to build the databases. For instance, Schaffar (2010) considers only cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants between 1981 and 2005, while Sharma (2003) takes into account all the official towns and cities notified between 1901 and 1991. Both authors bundle together towns, cities and urban areas units, and therefore the urban physical extension is not constant over time. Other research based on statistical analysis underlines the importance of small towns in the regional system. Datta (2006) argues that the medium and small cities should be helped because generate ordinary level employment on a large scale while the high tech sectors are concentrated in metrocities and do not create many jobs.

Indeed, different regions in India experienced urban transformation in varied ways that defies a common explanation. Some states have a top heavy urban structure, such as West Bengal where Kolkata clearly dominates and others like Punjab where the primacy is low. Dasgupta (2000) argues that the zamindari system in Indian states like West Bengal during the colonial period led to the concentration of land in a few hands which in turn favoured concentration of urban population in large cities. In the areas under ryotwari system, as in Punjab, land was distributed more equally, encouraging a dispersed pattern of urbanisation. Apart from these, Kerala's urban experience seems to be unique and the 'rurban' pattern is peculiar to it. Sreekumar (1990) offers a detailed account of the spatial organization of Kerala where the dispersion of the towns resulted in a lower rate of urbanization. The earlier settlements were mere trade centres of foreign merchants (in the ancient as well as in the medieval periods) and there was no indigenous dynamics of urbanization in Kerala. Further, the decentralized nature of the colonial trade in plantation produce did not encourage the growth of towns. The

generally believed correlation between industrialisation and urbanization does not appear to be true for Kerala. Instead, commercialised agriculture and trading activities dominated the economic environment which resulted in the spatial dispersion of towns. Another possible reason for this dispersion is the peculiar settlement pattern in Kerala where dispersed homesteads and large villages seamlessly blend into each other without boundaries (Mencher 1966).

The post-colonial development also reinforced this urban rural continuum. However, the 1991 census reveals a process of agglomeration of smaller towns (Class II and Class III towns) to form a big town (Class I town). The functional structure of the system appears to be highly diversified and highly unstable. The emergence of new towns which contribute to urban extension has played a very significant role in the 1960s and 1970s. In the same period the degree of declassification was also very high. Sreekumar (1990, 1993) states that is indicative of a high degree of disorder in the Kerala's emerging urban system. Dasgupta (2000) predicts that Kerala could witness an "urban explosion" whereby the existing rural urban continuum would be replaced by an urbanization process all along the coastal state. This has more or less come true, but the exact mechanism and specificities of the process is yet to be researched and understood. As Kassinder pointed out in 1992 rather than being explosive the Kerala form of urbanization is related to the *desakota* mega region. McGee (1991) coined the *desakota* concept for Indonesian and Jakarta context and then for Asia at large where, in a high density environment, villages and towns merge and converge to compose an extended urban or metropolitan region.

Gupta (1995) investigates the dynamics of growth of small and medium towns, with regard to their economic base and institutional framework in three other states, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana. His two main objectives are: (i) to analyse the disparities in urban growth in the three states as compared to the rest of the country, (ii) to examine the economic viability of small and medium towns to finance basic infrastructure. His key finding is that the urban growth in the backward states resulted from an increasing intra-state migration. The spatially lopsided development of industries heightens the intra-state disparities. Nevertheless, growth of small towns in poorest districts of backward states is observed. In Haryana, agricultural development has been responsible for the growth of small and medium towns while, in Bihar, encroachment of settlements on agricultural land and regional backwardness have led to growth of small and medium towns. In Madhya Pradesh, the socio-economic indicators show

a weak correlation with growth of small and medium towns¹. Findings from this cursory look at a few states point to the need to study small towns in their regional context.

2.4. Is the case of India specific?

The weight of evidence from 2011 census reinforces the arguments forwarded by Denis and Marius-Gnanou (2010) and Gupta (2013). The 2011 Census indicates that the rate of growth of urban population in the period 2001-2011 was higher than in the previous decade, and simultaneously the demographic growth rate in the metropolitan areas declined. There is also evidence that residents moved away from the centre of metropolises, such as Delhi and Mumbai, over the last decades (Bhagat 2011, Kundu 2011b). Kundu interprets this as “the confirmation of” a process of ‘exclusionary urbanism’. The diversity and the vibrancy of small towns on the other hand are described by Denis, Mukkopadhyay and Zérah as ‘subaltern urbanism’ (2012). The relative importance of centrifugal urbanisation and in situ urbanisation from below remains to be assessed. If one looks outside India, Zhu’s work on China (2000) analyses the trend of urban development wherein the transformation of rural areas takes place without migration but is increasingly driven by the development of small town and village enterprises. To describe this process, he uses the expression “*in situ* urbanization”, a term already coined in 1991 by Brookfield and Abdul Hadi in an analysis of transformation of villages around Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Egypt's densely inhabited Nile valley and delta, very Asiatic in that regard, experiences a comparable trend imprinted by burgeoning small towns and coalescence of settlements in linear conurbations (Denis, 2007).

Indeed, the growing share of small towns in the urban system should not be read as a trend specific to an Indian urban development model and path. Other countries experience a comparable trend. Reaffirming the view of UN World Urbanization Prospect (2002), Satterthwaite (2003, 2006) underlined the growing importance of small towns:

“by 2000, just over half the world’s urban population and a quarter of its total population lived in urban centres of less than half a million inhabitants, our analyses of many recent censuses show that much of this population is living in market towns, small scale industry, mining and agro-industry centres or administrative centres with between 5,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. By 2000,

¹ He also notes the pull factors of large cities the skewed allocation of funding to the larger urban centres and the large cities, a phenomenon largely observed.

more than three-fifths of urban population of Africa, the Caribbean and South-eastern Asia were in urban centres with less than half a million inhabitants (as was also the case in Europe). This is despite the fact that, in many nations, there is an underestimation of the proportion of the population living in urban areas, especially in small centres” (2003: 1).

This observation follows extensive research on urban-rural linkages conducted by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Satterthwaite and Tacoli (2003) stated earlier that the social and spatial polarisation/metropolitanization so often linked to economic reform, restructuring and internationalisation of trade and production leads to an underestimation of the role of small and intermediate urban centres in economic development and in securing livelihood. Pointing to the continuum of settlements from rural to urban, Satterthwaite asserts that “in most nations, at least a quarter of the population lives in settlements that could be classified as ‘urban’ or as ‘rural’ or as ‘large villages’ or ‘small urban centres’” adding that “the economic importance of small urban centres is often overlooked or under-estimated” (2003: 60). In the case of Egypt, Denis (2007) found that while the official rate of urbanization declined continuously for two decades (44% in 1996 and 42% in 2006) to below its 1960 level (47%), the number of agglomerations with more than 10,000 inhabitants grew tremendously. This growth was driven by the coalescence of the tiny inhabited space, the Nile Valley and the Delta, into continuous urban areas, ruralopolis or “ecumenopolis” (Doxiadis 1976). In 2006, 80% of the Egyptian population was living in agglomerations with at least 10,000 inhabitants with 43% in big villages without urban status and associated services. Expanding its work, the IIED published in 2009 three monographs on small cities, migration, governance and labour in China, Pakistan and Philippines. Hasan and Raza (2009) show the relation between migration, notably to Gulf countries, and the development of small towns in Sindh and Punjab: remittances by emigrants, invested mainly in housing, contribute also to economic diversification outside agriculture and to changes in lifestyle.

In the Chinese context as well, small towns play an increasing economic role. Li and An have found that:

“between 1978 and 2007, the number of towns rose from 2,173 to 19,249 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2008). Between 1978 and 1998, the proportion of Chinese population living in small towns also increased from 5.5 percent to 13.6 percent

(reclassification during the liberalization and decentralisation era played a role in this process). People living in small towns as a proportion of the urban population increased from 20 percent to 45 percent between 1978 and 2007” (2009: 1).

The promotion of in situ urbanization becomes a public policy in China as shown by Hilman and Unger edited issues (2013): "The Party is essentially seeking to take the cities to the rural populace rather than bring the rural populace to the cities. Following the policy announcement at the 18th Party Congress in November 2012, a group of national ministries has been tasked with developing guidelines for promoting the urbanisation of rural China".

In Philippines, Basa, Villamil and de Guzman (2009) observed how overseas migrations support the conversion of fishing and farming communities into small urban centres. Internal and international migrations increasingly galvanize smaller towns rather than solely interconnecting metrocities. Transnational development processes directly affect small towns with multiple trans-border circulation of persons, funds, services and goods. In many cases, local entrepreneurs, migrant workers and traders are directly connected to foreign counterparts. These linkages contradict the dominant doxa on the nodal role of metrocities as places of transfers and connections.

The literature on smaller urban centres was important prior to the wave of works on metropolitan cities. Rondinelli's 1983 paper on "small towns in developing countries" is one of the important works on the subject. It was published when urbanization was perceived rather negatively, especially the extremely fast growth of megalopolises. Rondinelli advocates a more "diffuse and integrated system of central places", where small towns can better serve local economy in transition as "low-order centres" allowing a more efficient and "balanced" provision of services. Their improvement should get a better access to market for agricultural products. The development of small towns should provide better access to market for agricultural products, help the growth of agro-processing industry and support increase in productivity of agriculture. Following Mathur (1975), he observed that 80% of the Indian population still lives in villages with less than 5,000 inhabitants, a situation that he found as a contrast to that in Thailand.

In the Indian context, study on small town was always significant. The topic emerged with the monograph by Fox (1969) on a small town in North India where he forged the notion of family business. It was followed by Corwin's work (1977a) on a small town in West Bengal,

Mahishadal in Purba Medinipur district, with some 7,000 inhabitants in 1968 (20,000 today). She called it a “minimal urban centre”. The author emphasized the pivotal role of these towns in the socio-cultural integration of the Indian society. She underlined the centrality of well-connected regional elite and the diversity of activities and castes, even if the locality was small. Her analysis was based on cultural structure as a key to understanding the local political scene. Indeed, the decade of 1970s was the turning point as social sciences were for the first time concerned with cities in developing countries. It was also a moment when post-independence politics develop programmes oriented towards cities and their population, in particular regarding housing and industrialization. The World Bank’s Urban Division was set up in 1972 and its policies oscillated between the necessity to tackle the urgent infrastructure needs of extremely fast growing major metropolises and the strong belief that it is necessary to have a balanced spatial development, which led to policies that were supposed to discourage concentration and curb migration. Till the 1970s, the World Bank condemned the support for urban housing and social schemes, which was seen as a direct promotion of welfarism and migration from countryside to cities (Ramsamy 2006). Since Lipton (1976) and the “urban bias”, it was considered pertinent to force or divert investment away from metrocities and decentralize economic activities toward smaller urban areas. However, the ineffectiveness of such policies (Richardson 1987) led to a shift in perception and the metropolis was seen as an engine of growth (Harris 1989). Research and planning policies began to focus on large cities. In the 1990s, a host of urban theorists like John Friedman (1986), Saskia Sassen (1991) and later Allen Scott (2001) argued that some cities are more powerful than others since they are ‘command points’ and wield considerable financial clout over other places and cities and called them ‘global cities’ and ‘global regions’. A wave of rich literature on large cities of the developing world followed. They culminated in “metrocentricity” (Bunnell & Maringanti, 2010), which denies the existence of ‘ordinary cities’ (Robinson 2006). As opposed to this, in the US and in Europe as well, some authors have more recently attempted to bring back the role of smaller urban centres into focus (Demazière et al. 2012).

McCann (2004) cites the example of Lexington, a small city in US, whose fortunes changed abruptly when IBM decided to sever its manufacturing ties with the city. The city had to reinvent and repackage itself as a service economy. McCann (2004) states that the literature focuses on cities that are seen as powerful organizing nodes of the global economy. Cities like Lexington which were also connected to the global economy through production and circuits

of capital flow got little attention. He criticises the discursive practice which favours cities like London, New York and Tokyo over smaller cities and notes that the experiences of cities like Lexington are important in understanding the globalisation-urbanisation nexus. His work also points to the need to engage with the decline of small cities as much as with their growth and expansion in order to fully grasp the urban dynamics. Recently, Bell and Jayne have advocated increased research on smaller urban centres. They argue that "What is lost as a consequence of the bias towards large cities is a full picture of urban form and function: the urban world is not made up of a handful of global metropolises, but characterized by heterogeneity. Studying small cities enables us to see the full extent of this" (2009: 683). Further, they consider that even though work on small cities exist, "their overall approach to conceptualizing small cities is piecemeal and the research does not coalesce into a coherent critical mass of work capable of generating a meaningful dialogue within the urban studies literature" (2009: 684).

One of the main factors driving the existing "metrocentricity", though partly related to the large problems faced by metropolises, is the mainstream economics view that economic agglomerations are central to economic development and poverty reduction. In *The Triumph of City* (2011), Glaeser makes a very seductive presentation of the inevitability of big cities as drivers of growth. This book is highly useful to understand the plain arguments of the New Urban Economics/New Economic Geography (NEG) presented without their econometric armour. Scott (2012), on the other hand, has criticised this book substantially and exposes its shortcomings. The World Development Report 2009, titled Rethinking Economic Geography, is valuable for a proper appreciation of the policy, reforms and conditionalities justified by the NEG theory/arguments as expressed by Fujita, Krugman and Venables (1999) and others some ten years earlier.

3. Section B - Growth of small towns: Influence of exogenous and endogenous factors and linkages

This section aims at reviewing the main theoretical and econometric literature pertaining to location choices of firms and agglomeration effects. Since the relevant literature is large, the review is restricted to two sets namely, (i) the recent writings on 'New Economic Geography' and its application in the Indian context and (ii) theories on agglomeration of firms. The main questions raised are: why do firms agglomerate in a non-metro environment and can the

dynamics seen in small towns be reduced to a spillover effect? These are related to the debate on the sources of growth. In other words, is the growth of non-metros driven by endogenous or exogenous factors and if both factors play a role, how do they combine? The New Economic Geography theory and its model suggest that the growth of small towns is driven dominantly by exogenous factors, in particular, the location factor, with respect to a connectivity, proximity and accessibility to a metrocity. Small towns are seen as recipient of trickle down effects or sites for the location of activities for which low cost and market expansion are important. In contrast to the NEG, earlier models have placed more emphasis on endogenous factors, such as local innovation.

Some of these models namely, the NEG model, industrial clusters, and the evolutionary growth theory are reviewed below. Our intention is not to suggest the (re-)testing of either of these models but to engage in this debate for which field research on contextualized processes and practices is necessary. With the current dominant NEG framework and the focus on large metropolitan cities, it becomes difficult to appreciate the extent and trend of the non-metro economy. Results of current research in the Indian context (presented below) indicate that small town economy cannot be reduced to only a spillover of agglomeration economies, transitory clusters and sites of works subcontracted to small and medium enterprises. It is neither limited to the *mandi* economy nor agricultural, market and agro-industry linkages. In fact, the non-metro economy, which contributes a large share of the total and provides employment on a massive scale, is strongly resilient. On the contrary, several researches point towards an embeddedness of locally anchored ordinary economy, livelihoods and economic growth. Eventually, through innovative clusters and network of places, small and medium towns, which have their own local competences, are open to the world and connected to it without necessarily depending on the nearest metrocities.

3.1. New Economic Geography

Krugman (2004) argues that the NEG model has the potential to explain both the questions of where and why economies agglomerate and conversely disperse. The tendency to agglomerate is stronger when regions are very unequal and to diffuse, when regions are nearly symmetric or/and barriers to exchange reduce. According to this model, the tendency to agglomerate is stronger when regions are very unequal and the economy is dispersed when regions are similar or there are no serious barriers to exchange as predicted by the convergence theory.

This is the strength of NEG as compared to previous models on agglomeration economies, already able to explain firms' agglomeration but not their dispersal (Krugman 2011). Another advantage of the NEG model lies in its ability to account for both macro and micro trends (Venables 2009). Finally, earlier theories implicitly assumed the benefits of economies of scale with respect to their increasing returns on investment. They did not model for imperfect competition while the NEG theory explains increasing returns to an individual firm in such a situation (Krugman 2004).

3.1.1. Externalities

Positive externalities

First, the NEG model celebrates the positive externalities of large agglomerations characterized by both density and diversity of actors and activities. This concentration enables economic agents to have easy access to human, social and financial capital. The dynamics of the economy is conceptualized as co-evolution of two environments: the current distribution/location of economic activity, which determines market potential, which in turn determines how that first environment changes over time. Both these domains reinforce each other resulting in a spiralling growth of agglomeration and trade-off between specialization and diversification, which induces economy of scale and knowledge/technology spillover. The notion of spillover is at the core of economies of agglomeration. The NEG model considers two levels of positive externalities: (i) interfirm externalities within the agglomeration and (ii) the firm-city/agglomeration externalities. In effect, the model implies that the larger urban agglomeration is, greater are the benefits. Larger agglomerations are self-propelling. In other words, the theory predicts that larger the agglomeration is with a solid and diversified manufacturing sector, greater the market potential is, which spur intermediaries to locate in the region. This model stresses on the mobility of labour, capital and goods more than land as key factors influencing the concentration and expansion. The key aspect of the NEG model is the monopolistic competition², when no producer has total control over the price, that allow firms to increase their profit and reduce cost of production due to easy connectivity. Both benefits are generated by large agglomerations because of their infrastructures, the provision of public goods and their business friendly governance. Contrary

² In monopolistic competition, firms sell differentiated products (branding, quality etc will be different) that are not perfect substitutes and have a degree of control over price. It is a type of imperfect competition.

to previous urban economy modelling, negative externalities of the rapid agglomeration are minimized by the NEG model. The model rejects the earlier idea of over-urbanization.

Similarly, larger agglomerations have a greater potential for innovation (Fujita & Krugman 2003). Further, firms in large agglomerations are compelled to specialise to ensure increasing returns, which leads to the emergence of monopolistic market. This in turn will spiral growth and generate profits as employment. In an open economy, the growing agglomeration is connected to the capacity to innovate and incorporate a bigger chunk of the chain of value. It implies the capability to raise the workforce skill accordingly.

Connectivity and transportation costs

Second, the NEG model underscores the importance of easy access to different types of capital but of connectivity as well (see Fujita, Krugman and Venables 2000; Krugman 1991; Baldwin 2001). The quality of connectivity influences the evolution of large agglomerations. Firms that are located in large agglomerations benefit from minimal or almost no transportation costs. Krugman (2004) argues that transport cost is a key factor influencing in the location choice of a firm. It influences their ability to trade across regions. A key concept of the NEG model is the idea of the 'iceberg' to characterize transport costs. This notion implies that transportation costs are minimal or almost nil for firms that are located in large agglomerations. Further, Redding and Venables (2004) following Frankel and Romer (1999) conclude that proximity and openness to foreign markets is a statistically significant and quantitatively important determinant of profit levels. Thus, according to the NEG model, the persistence of disparities across regions and countries is related to the quality of connectivity and level of integration (Fujita, Krugman & Venables 1999; Storper 2010). Location matters. For instance ports remain privileged sites to enhance linkage with other/international markets; see for instance Lall et al. for India (2010).

3.1.2. The specific contribution of the NEG framework and its criticism

At the outset, the NEG resembles the old agglomeration theories in terms of its emphasis on the positive externalities of agglomeration (see Marshall 1920; Perroux 1955; Holmström and Cadène 1998) such as access to capital, labour pooling, technology spillovers and input/market access. The difference between the NEG and older theories is the attention given to the role of endogenous factors, like the influence of culture, history and local capital among

others. In addition, NEG differs from other models viz., Institutional Economic Geography and Evolutionary Economic Geography (Boschma and Martin 2011), in terms of three aspects namely: (i) assumptions of actors rationality; (ii) methodology, in particular its level of mathematical modelling; and (iii) its treatment of space as a key factor notably in considering "firm location choices". The basic premise of all location theories (centre place theory, urban hierarchy, market location, and cluster) is that the distance to markets influences a firm's choice of location. The centrality of transport cost is common to all the models. NEG criticizes central place theory for not taking in to account the uneven distribution of population across places and subsequent unequal opportunities (see Fujita and Krugman 2010). Similarly, it argues that urban and cluster economic models focus solely on the local production conditions - in the form of the supply of non-traded producer services which would only account for growth in some sectors.

Metro influence on the growth dynamics of smaller urban settlements

NEG has been criticised for overlooking the influence of endogenous factors in driving the growth of an agglomeration. The NEG argument is premised on the benefits of economy of scale in terms of attracting talents, and fostering innovation. While these arguments in favour of metrocity polarization are certainly important, these are not the only determinants of location of economic investments in the Indian context (Denis, Mukhopadhyay and Zérah, 2012).

The assumption of monopolistic economy in the wage equation of the NEG model has been contested by several scholars (Hodgson 2009; Lawson 2010). Lanjouw and Murgai (2011) suggest that the growth dynamics of rural areas may arise from endogenous growth as much as from the spillover benefits of the large city. Some of these endogenous factors include the role of local capital / endowments (Martin P. and Ottaviano, G. 1999). The political economic history of the town, the influence of culture (Amin and Thrift, 2000) and of local institutions. Krugman (1994) acknowledges that market outcomes are always unpredictable and incorporate a legacy of past choice and historical accident (path dependent). However, the manner in which entrepreneurs mobilise historical capital (capabilities) to secure resources and innovate is not taken into account.

The NEG has been railed for homogenizing diverse patterns of growth at different spatial scales (Moriconi-Ebrard 2010), Denis & Marius-Gnanou, 2010; Fingleton 2011). Some

authors suggest that NEG has limited explanatory potential to disclose the economic geography of smaller regions (Fingleton 2011; Combs, Duranton and Overman 2005: 19). These authors point out those regions are not uniform entities – their markets do not work in a similar manner and technology as well, as consumer tastes differ everywhere.

Negative externalities of large agglomerations: The issue of land

The NEG model overlooks the negative externalities of large agglomerations (Denis and Marius-Gnanou 2010), in particular the problem of land that is of great importance in the case of India as discussed later. The pressure on land and housing demand can affect the cost of living and potential for investment. In addition, land markets are far from perfect and are intrinsically embedded in complex political economies (Haila 2007). Criticisms have been levelled against the NEG framework for not having dealt with spatial issues adequately (Sunley 1996; Amin and Thrift 2000). The NEG considers space or location as a neutral entity with limited influence on economy or political process (Bosker and Garretsen 2007; Garretsen and Martin 2010; Fingleton and McCann 2007; Fingleton 2005; Redding and Venables, 2004). On the ground, though, politics shapes land regulation and the manner in which investments are made across different localities as well and this, consequently, affects how and where agglomerations evolve and grow.

There are also a number of criticisms of the relationship between city size and productivity. For instance, Quigley (1998) argues, based on a rank-size analysis, that urban productivity can arise from specific mechanisms fostered by the urbanization and localization of industries. However, it is difficult to conclude that urbanization is a necessary condition for the development process, nor is urbanization sufficient to increase output and well-being in low-income countries. But the case is strong, and the causal relationship is nevertheless clear. Further, he suggests that as the movements of capital and labour respond to market signals about scarcity, there is no reason for concern about the size of any city or the size distribution of cities in general. A similar question is raised by Redding's (2010) work. According to him, "although there is a substantial empirical literature showing that income and production are correlated with market access in the way suggested by NEG models, establishing causality and controlling for confounding factors are more challenging" (Redding 2010:11). Therefore, Redding (2010) argues that the lack of empirical research is one of the weaknesses of the NEG.

The NEG model makes strong assumption related to the quality of connection and the transportation costs (Bernard 2011). Such costs are assumed to be minimal or nil in large agglomerations but some authors have argued that in reality, transport costs are not iceberg in character. For instance, Combs, Duranton and Overman (2005: 19) argue that the assumption of NEG of zero transport cost as a key factor influencing returns to a firm may be valid for long distance market interactions, but for firms short distance effects, within a given system of cities, it becomes of secondary importance. Further, the assumption of perfect mobility of labour between regions - a key factor influencing wages – is questionable too since workers are not perfectly mobile (Combs 2005; Fingleton and Bernard 2011).

Puga, D. (2010) suggests that while there is enough evidence that shows the existence of agglomeration economies, there is a very narrow range of models that reflect their estimated magnitude and sources. The paper identifies the need for further research on these aspects: On the theoretical side, there is a gap in modelling the learning, technological and managerial cooperation, diffusion and transfer within a city. On the empirical side, evidence of activity matching as a source of agglomeration is perhaps most needed.

3.1.3. Does the NEG model apply to India: Contradictory trends?

The NEG framework, its emphasis on large agglomerations and connectivity both within and between countries, has influenced the spatial policies post 2000, particularly in countries like India. The NEG model was popularized by the World Bank and its policy focus on large agglomerations as ‘engines of growth’.

The 2009 World Development Report by the World Bank has converted the NEG model into a guideline for policy making. These policies are aimed at setting up Special Economic Zones and channelling investments in mega infrastructure projects predominantly in the metro areas. The emphasis on large agglomerations and proximity to foreign markets has reinforced the metro bias and worsen the neglect of small towns in urban policies (Bryceson and Gough 2009). Nevertheless, in the case of India, the 2011 Census shows that megacities do not grow that fast, (CPR, 2013), nor are JNNURM infrastructure investments yet stimulating a faster and significant industrial agglomeration and polarization of growth.

Building on that model, Lall et al. (2010) following Chakravorty and Lall (2007) have evaluated how Indian agglomerations and post reform/ liberalization economic growth are

correlated to and dependent on connectivity to international market. Both are notably associated with port location - reinforcing inherited colonial coastal bias. The post reform era leads to concentrated dispersion (dispersal of industries in the most advanced and urbanized regions, notably in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu) or concentrated decentralization as private investment is demonstratively inverse to lagging regions. Geographical forms of metropolitan turnaround are also linked to this centrifugal trend associated to cost reduction and it can shape extended metropolitan region. A recent paper on FDI in India (Mukim & Nunnenkamp 2010) also shows that coastal districts remain privileged location for foreign investment clustering. FDI reinforces the cumulative processes and trends in metrocities and fast growing regions. Foreign investments are very much intertwined with expenditures in infrastructure.

The recent studies looking at job creation performance of Indian economy using NSS data show that formal and modern sectors are far from creating massive employment opportunities (Chowdhury 2011): urban workforce has just grown from 115 million to 122 between 2005 and 2010. Chandrasekhar & Ghosh (2011) estimate that during this period urban job creation declined to only 1.9% annual growth compared to 4% during the previous 5 years. Capital intensive modern sectors like IT support GDP growth but do not compare to the extreme domination of auto-employment and daily/non-permanent worker: informal job still constitutes the ordinary fragile condition of some 92% of the total Indian's workforce (54% in urban). This ordinary economy from where the great majority of Indian family generates its daily subsistence largely takes place in the small town environment (Guerin, Michiels, Venkatasubramanian 2014). Guerin et al. observe a clear trend of social mobility in relation to linkage with the nearest town for employment in Tamil Nadu rural context.

The NEG model implies that the growth dynamic of non-metros is influenced by their proximity and dependence to a metropolis. According to this model, localities are not 'freely floating islands' (Fujita and Mori 2005) and the growth of non-metro locales is driven by the spillover effects of metropolitan growth. In this light, the NEG echoes the assumptions of a metro core and a dependent and linked periphery or hinterland.

India is not an exception, and several empirical analyses show how the effects of spillover occur. For instance, Durba (2012) highlights the linkages between "in-situ urbanization" and what he called "rural outsourcing" along NH 117 from Kolkata towards the rural West. It was especially true in the case of some labour intensive industries like sari embroidery. Semi-rural

outsourcing is seen as a spatial fix and adaptation of the commodity chain to an expanding market with the increasing non-metro middle class consumption. The expansion of this rural small scale and informal subcontractor network opened up a factual criticism of the “modernity/modernization/development on the Euro-Western model”. It shows that labour intensive low wage industry is diffusing locally, driven by international demand.

This empirical analysis confirms the findings of Ghani et al. (2012), for India as a whole, showing that the organized industrial sector shifts from urban to rural locations. They observed a clear decrease in urban output of manufacturing sector from 64% in 1994 to 56% in 2005 even as workforce remained stable at 40%. The slow expansion of official urban perimeter explains broadly this trend of peri-urban diffusion, but the success of rural cluster must also be considered. The map of industry distribution by district illustrates this phenomenon, which is a relevant departure point to question the seminal centre-periphery model. Nevertheless concentration matters and the metropolitan sub-region are yet concentrating industrial employment as measured by Chandrasekhar and Sharma using NSS data (2014).

Fig. 3a: India's manufacturing urbanization by district

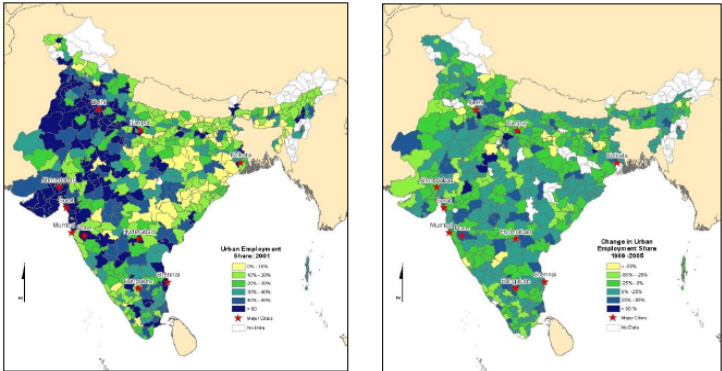
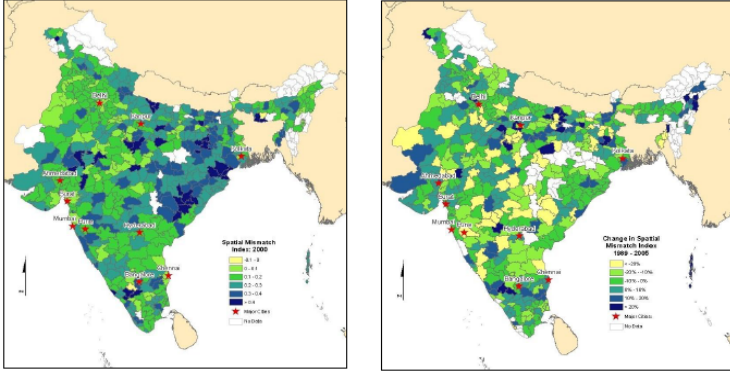


Fig. 3b: India's urbanization mismatch by district



Ghani and al. (2012)

Many small towns in Tamil Nadu that have experienced a rapid and important growth such as Tiruppur, Bhavani, Arani, Tiruchengode or those of the Palar valley are not close to the metrocities (Chari 2004; Banerjee and Munshi 2004; Harris-White 2003; Kennedy 2004). In all those cases, economic growth does not depend on the nearest metrocity redistribution. In fact, other direct inter-regional and international connections are at stake. Their economies are linked to a regional/district/corridor group of non-metro localities. Their productive units are involved in multi-regional links and eventually they concentrate capabilities to directly trade internationally. Another mix of local conditions and linkages are instrumental in their growth. What drives the growth of non-metros that are not close to metropolitan area remains a legitimate question, one that is of growing concern.

The reason as to why firms tend to agglomerate in large dense clusters may be explained by the nature of connectivity. Lall, Shalizi et al. (2004) examine the extent to which agglomeration economies contribute to economic productivity, by focusing on the sources and effects of agglomeration. The authors suggest that there are considerable variations in terms of the sources and magnitude of agglomeration economies between industrial sectors and that local diversity matters. They distinguish between three sources of agglomeration economies namely, (i) at the firm level, improved market access; (ii) at the industry level, benefits accruing from intra-industry localization economies and (iii) at the regional level, the effects of inter-industry urbanization economies. In terms of effect the authors contend that the benefits of locating in a dense urban area or a metrocity are marginal. The high cost of wages and rents may offset the benefits derived from density. Despite this, the reason for firms to agglomerate in dense urban areas is linked to the large inequality in the spatial distribution of transport infrastructure linking urban areas of different scales. Access to markets is an important determinant of firm level productivity. There is a predominantly high density of links between metros or large urban centres. Consequently, it is difficult for firms to move to lower cost secondary urban centres and still maintain linkages with final buyers and suppliers, including those from other industries. The authors conclude that it is possible to influence (encourage) the dispersal of firms to small urban centres by improving inter-regional connectivity, linking smaller urban areas to the rest of the network.

The study on the location of industries in India has also been influenced strongly by the literature on cluster, and even more by the Marshallian reading of agglomeration where

networks of firms are important, bringing back more emphasis to endogenous factors. Stanley (2009) argues that the dynamics and benefits associated with clustering depend, in part, on the character of the industry in question. He also suggests that clusters should be examined not as coherent, unified entities, but instead as agglomerations of groups (e.g. employers, workers, merchants, craftsmen) with distinct and only sometimes overlapping interests. Collective action and government intervention did occur within the cluster, though neither was intended to bring about cluster-wide success. Instead, they were initiated to serve more particular and individual interests and cluster-wide gains were favoured above those of certain classes or actors.

Endogenous theory explains the long run economic growth rate as an outcome of forces internal to an economic system, particularly those forces governing the opportunities and incentives to create technical knowledge or innovation (Agion and Howitt 2005). It states that the forces of growth are not only given, but are collectively constructed over time and at different levels. In her work on economic performance and social mobility in Palar Valley, Kennedy (2004) demonstrates how local resources, both the tangible and intangible: passive physical endowments as well as actively constructed advantages often based on relational and organizational resources shaped the growth dynamics of these small towns. The cooperation at the local level is significant in the development of this industry at this place, which was a key factor driving the sectorial growth and the development of the network of specialized small towns.

In contrast to the above, Flamant's study (2004) in the same region points out the combined influence of exogenous factors and the endogenous aspects particularly, the role of history. Flamant concludes that the growth of leather industry in a small town in Tamil Nadu was shaped by exogenous support via policies for promoting and modernizing leather industry as much as the Labbay Muslims' entrepreneurial spirit and their history.

In their analysis of how and why a small town, with no perceptible locational advantage is able to attract the secondary steel sector, Kundu, A. and S. Bhatia (2002) illustrate the role of history in shaping the location choices of firms. These include the history of entrepreneurship culture and the role of middlemen that are critical in organizing the setting up of enterprises, discussed further in the next section.

To summarize, the economic, geo-economic and socio-economic literature has looked at macro and micro scale but there are yet measurement gaps, in particular regarding the contribution of different components such as, migration, demographic changes and classification issues. Second, outside the field of the neo or post Marshallian debates on the cluster economy and small scale industry, small towns economy remains unappreciated globally, and especially in its diversity in term of economic weight and contribution to growth. Linkages to metrocity economy are still apprehended only through the spillover perspective. Small town economy remains associated to urban-rural linkages and market function: studies and papers related to mandi towns are very few and old (Harriss-White 1974, 1984). Only the recent PhD of Mekhala Krishnamurthy (2012) updates the knowledge on the role of Mandi towns in marketing agricultural products, showing that state agencies and procurement system in mediating wholesale markets still play an important role.

Third, studies which have been more focused at the micro scale clearly show the importance of history and the combined role of exogenous and endogenous factors that influence growth of small towns, confirming the need for more ethnographic research. It is also important to understand the processes that underlie some of the recent work on linkages between poverty reduction and small towns (Himanshu 2008, Mahadevia and Sarkar 2012) and location strategy and small towns (Lall 2004). The relative invisibility of small towns in the economic literature and unclear positioning between urban and rural economy leads us to turn in the next section to more ethnographic work, which has looked at the underlying processes.

3.2. Micro analysis of economics of small towns: Trajectories, rural-urban linkages and innovation

There is very limited longitudinal research on the transformation of small localities. The study series done by Barbara Harriss-White and her team of researchers (Basile 2009; Arivukkarasi and Nagaraj 2009) are exceptions. They shed light on the transformation of economic activities. These studies show the diversification of economic activities in a Tamil Nadu small town over a long period of time. Basile (2009) found that over a period of twenty years, the economic base of a small town which was once dominated by manufacturing has diversified into trade, services and more recently, new economies such as ICTs and finance have emerged. There is significant mobility in investment among sectors and activities. Further, some of these economies are integrated within regional and global circuits (De Neve and

Donner, 2007; Basile 2009; Chari 2007; Geertz 2009). Moreover, the diversification of economic activities have had a significant impact on social organization, particularly, on the position and fortunes of different ethnic groups and their claims on resources, in particular land (Basile 2009; Arivukkarasi and Nagraj 2009), discussed further in the next section.

An important point is the diversity in trajectories of change. For example in the case of Arni in Tamil Nadu, it is seen that while the scale of weaving had declined in some villages, it had increased in others (Basile 2009a) and overall increased in the urban areas of Arni as against the surrounding regions. Arivukkarasi and Nagraj (2009) suggest three reasons for the shift from rural to urban areas. These are (i) non-availability of child labour; (ii) technological changes related to the nature of fiber, and (iii) availability of power. The decline in traditional occupation like weaving, cultivation, livestock work in rural areas had resulted in increased outmigration both among male and female workers. A significant change is the scale of outmigration of women from these villages.

Many studies narrate the individual stories of a small town or a group of small towns for different states of India. Among the states that are extensively studied is Tamil Nadu where the economy of small towns is dominated by manufacturing predominantly in textile, leather even though work on Punjab (Kundu and Bhatia 2011) or West Bengal (Corwin 1977a) can also be referred to. Although literature evidences suggest that there are intra-state variations in the growth patterns and production relations, not much comprehensive study to compare the situation within or across states is available.

While a particular sector of an economy in a small town has been researched, a comprehensive study that traces the evolution of different sectors and on their interaction/influence on the growth dynamics of each other is limited. Even in studies analysing particular sectors, a focus is on textile, leather and small fabrication clusters, which have been documented extensively. Little is known about some other sectors as for example, the small town economies linked to automobiles, production of transport vehicles, metal or wood industry, exportation of cash crop or forest products. Another gap in research is the lack of attention to spatial connections and practices of small town economies across a particular region. Although a network of places have evolved around a particular sector, the focus is often on a single town and a single sector but not on the dynamics pertaining to inter-town connections.

3.2.1. The question of linkages: rural / urban and translocal

Regarding translocal linkages, small rural towns are emerging as distribution centres for “imported” goods (Wandschneider 2004). However, not much research has been done on how they are connected and on the impact of their emergence on the local economy.

Growth dynamics of small towns

is closely interlinked to the dynamics in the surrounding villages and vice versa. These economies are interrelated through circuits of consumption, production, employment and finance and various types of provision of various types of social service (Wandschneider 2004). The ways in which these linkages affect the political and economic processes in both small towns and the rural areas has not been researched extensively. There is a vast literature on rural-urban linkages in general and in the Indian context. A theme that is extensively debated is the nature of these linkages. Looking at rural-urban linkages and the economic processes that support the growth of small towns, the early perception of urban is as a parasite that extracts surplus from rural areas based on unequal exchanges. Lipton (1977) stressed the policy bias towards larger urban centres which has been a dominant influence on development policies. Harris (1984) questioned the parasitic dimension of small town urbanism and agricultural surplus accumulation. There has been a shift in thinking on the nature and impact of rural urban linkages since the late 70s and early eighties, where emphasis is laid on the mutual dependency of rural and urban areas, and the critical role of town and city networks in the process of regional and local economic development (see for example Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2003; Kammeier 2002; and Douglass 1998).

Another theme of discussion in this literature is that of remittances from urban to rural areas. Although some evidence related to metro-rural linkages suggest a two way flow of resources – finance, materials and political resources (ideas and bodies, moral economy) (Benjamin and Raman 2001) much of the focus in the literature is on the flow from urban to rural areas. It is useful to map the flow of resources, ideas, and bodies between small towns and rural areas and its effects to gain a better understanding of the growth dynamics of these regions. Focus on this research theme is important for, as Wandschneider (2004) argues economic regions do not respect administrative boundaries and an understanding of these linkages, trajectories of flows is needed for evolving innovative policies for economic development.

A third aspect of knowledge gap relates to the ways in which changes in rural economy impact the production and consumption dynamics in their regions. Available evidence suggests changes in rural economy due to depletion of water and declining terms of trade for agriculture. Cavalcante (2009) reports the following responses to these changes:- (i) shifts in the patterns of agriculture particularly towards high yield variety cash crop and limited mechanisation; (ii) feminization of agricultural labour; and (iii) increased consumption expenditure despite declining incomes. However, it is not certain whether these trends are the results of outmigration of men to cities or women being cheaper labour. The effects of these changes on small town growth dynamics are not clear. The magnitude of migration to small cities or everyday circular mobility to nearby towns for work has not been estimated. Anecdotal evidences suggest of the release of agricultural land for plotted development in villages along the transport corridors. There appears to be little research on the dynamics of this pattern of land transformation and its effects both for food production and territorial development, as discussed further in later sections.

Availability of technological resources and market pressures are two of the many factors that influence product /process innovation and its outcomes in small towns. While a number of studies have focused on economic practices or the characteristics of economies, the history and direction of innovation have received less attention. The work by Roman (2009) is one of the few studies that explore the changes and continuities in the production process of a small town's economic sector. The innovation of their products by textile producers at Arni in response to consumer demand was possible due to easy access to technology. Four findings of Roman's research are relevant. These are: (i) very often innovation builds on existing knowledge and also draws on traditional knowledge; (ii) The material circumstances and socio-economic relations influence the forms of innovation, its acceptance or rejection and its outcomes. Besides the interplay of technological resources and market forces, the development of specialised skills and expertise matters. Access to external flows of knowledge that bring market intelligence and ideas that enable the making of new products are other factors prompting innovation. The flow of resources and ideas in turn are shaped by better connections with the outside world; (iii) the role of the state is crucial in promoting innovation; and (iv) history and tradition impact the capacity to innovate (path dependency). Roman's work illustrates the embeddedness of the innovation process in a particular socio-economic context.

4. Section C - Transformation of small town economies: Practices of entrepreneurship and circulation of labour

In this section, we review studies in economic anthropology. Understanding small towns economies requires a documentation of practices of capital and labour. Amin and Thrift (2000) argue for a more evidence based research to comprehend the social, cultural and institutional understandings of economy in order to inform policies aimed at stimulating innovation, entrepreneurship and competitiveness at varying spatial scales. The histories of entrepreneurship and circulation of labour are some of the themes addressed in the studies reviewed here. A second set of studies focuses on cluster economies (Holmström and Cadène 1998) which provides a glimpse of the political economic dynamics in small towns.

A recurring theme in the reviewed studies is the role of household and community networks and relationships as the pivot of economic activities. Household and community relations influence the ways in which entrepreneurs mobilise resources for investment, regulate transaction practices and labour recruitment (Benjamin 1996; Chari 2007; De Neve and Donner, 2006; Harris-White 2009c).

Though these studies hint at the role of household, the dynamics at the household level remains to be unpacked. A second finding from these studies relates to the shifts that are observed in the ethnic control over production and one shall note that opinions on the outcomes of this mode of organization on social mobility of different group differ among authors.

The last part of the section reviews aspects of labour circulation and migration that shape the economies of small towns and deals with issues like remittances, recruitment networks and regulatory environment.

4.1. Practices of entrepreneurship

As highlighted above, the practices of mobilising household and community networks by entrepreneurs to organize production is highlighted in several studies (Harriss-White 2009a, b, c; Basile 2009a; Amelot and Kennedy 2010; Chari 2006; De Neve and Donner 2006; Fuller 1999; Béteille 2003). This practice is common to different groups and points to the importance of the relationship between caste and entrepreneurship.

4.1.1. Mobilizing networks for production and finance

Some anthropological research has examined the strategies for mobilising capital for investment by different communities but they have mostly focused on similar regions and industries, such as textiles and leather products, linked to global production circuits. Roy (1997) looks at migrant Sourashtra weavers and merchants in Madurai and the ways in which community ties organise production and trade. Most Sourashtra weaver families work in stable and long standing contracts with Sourashtra merchants. In Roy's study, which spans the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century, "common identity ensured that trust was not betrayed" and that agency costs were thereby avoided. De Neve's work on Mudaliar entrepreneurs shows how their caste networks are mobilized to organize production. In his research on Fraternal Capital, Chari (2007) documents the strategies of backward caste Gounder entrepreneurs to enter textile production and dominate it in Tirupur. Over time, backward caste Gounders channelled local agrarian capital surplus in textile units and transformed Tirupur's economic landscape.

Another example is the leather industry in the Palar valley, whose growth drew on the trade surplus of the Labbai Muslim community, who had migrated from different part of India (Kennedy 2004). The location of tanneries in Palar is attributed to three key factors: (i) abundance of water, and perhaps its quality; (ii) the proximity to traditional tanning materials, mainly tannins from the bark of trees collected from nearby mountainous areas; (iii) and the proximity to Chennai. But these factors in themselves are not enough to explain the domination of Labbai Muslims in the leather industry. Similar to Gounder entrepreneurs in Tiruppur and Sourashtra entrepreneurs in Madurai in early twentieth century, their practices are governed by norms of trust and reciprocity ensured and enforced through the household and community relations. Religious institutions, for instance the Jamaath for the Labbai, mediate the conflicts between firms and families as well as work to preserve the community's interest. Members of Dalit community have also been involved in this sector, but could not benefit from it despite having the required skills. This difference, as Kennedy's paper suggests, may be explained by the history of local trade, particularly between the Muslim community and colonial traders. The Labbai community, historically involved in trade and commerce, mobilised the household and religious networks to enter the industry and for its mobility. Both Chari and Kennedy underscore the significant influence of local histories, which is underexplored in understanding the shaping entrepreneurship patterns.

Small firm entrepreneurs mobilise finance from a variety of sources, as much from private and informal financiers and money lenders as from nationalized banks (Harriss-White 2010; Chari 2007; Benjamin 1996). Household relations and caste networks influence access and the terms of transactions with private small lenders (Harriss-White 2009c; Benjamin 1996; Chari 2007; Geertz 2009). Benjamin (1996) suggests that community/caste based finances are sourced at relatively cheaper costs by members of traditional business castes including Marwaris in North India (Benjamin 1996), the South Indian communities of Chettiars or Gounders (Chari 2007; Harriss-White 2009c). Though financiers extend loan to members outside their castes, such loans carry very high interest rates (Jodhka 2010). A related issue is the effect of microcredit schemes in small towns and large villages which was introduced to counter the influence of private finance. Harriss-White's narrative on the dominance of ethnic networks as a key source of finance raises questions about the effects of microcredit schemes.

The existing financial flows in these localities and the intersection with the economic or territorial transformations remains insufficiently understood despite a number of studies on informal finance (De Neve 1999; Fox 1969; Hazlehurst 1966). In particular, De Neve explores three concepts: value, chains and ladders in weaving industry in the small towns of Tamil Nadu. The economic anthropology of small towns, notably Harriss-White (2010) and Chari (2004) insists on the reliance of local private enterprise finance on chit savings and its embeddedness in the household or community domains. Questions of who enters into private finance, how finance is mobilised for circulation and under what terms do it is circulated remain to be explored. Further, entrepreneurs as well as workers get involved in a circle of investment in real estate and finance business across rural and urban areas (Benjamin and Raman 2001). How does this cycle of investment, influence the economic dynamics would be a question to pursue in future research.

Other perspective has also shown that entrepreneurs can gain authority and build constituencies by actively taking part in the cultural life of small towns. In the ethnography of temple festivals in two towns in Tamil Nadu, Bhavani and Kumarapalayam, De Neve (2000) examines how industrialists belonging to Mudaliyar and Chettiyar castes lead and finance these festivals and in the process refashion their social identities. In Bhavani and Kumarapalayam, the new 'community' remains firmly rooted in the social identity of weaver-artisans, their temples and goddesses. In a modernizing industrial context this identity has been reshaped to incorporate a wider group of people who can all recognize themselves as

either textile workers or textile manufacturers, and that community encompasses just about the entire town. De Neve argues that this redrawing of boundaries of “community” which previously included only a particular caste is significant. It points to the need to look at “community” beyond caste as an exclusive category as one that emerges in response to material imperatives.

4.1.2. Caste and entrepreneurship: Social mobility or elite domination

Caste is an important consideration to understand entrepreneurship. In a large work covering the whole of India, Damodaran (2008) shows how caste and entrepreneurship have interacted in the rise of new business class families in India. One of the important questions is the caste differences in entrepreneurship and in particular the situation of Dalits. The inequalities in access to economic resources has been analysed at the scale of India by Iyar, Khanna, Varshney (2013) using the analysis of economic census from 1998-2005. Based on a large survey of private enterprises, they explore more systematically the relationship between caste and entrepreneurship and their findings consolidate the fact that SC and ST representation in the economic domain does not match their gain in the political arena. They draw attention to the persistence of caste differences in entrepreneurship. Lower representation of SC enterprises as compared to their share in the population is found both in rural and urban areas, which point to the fact that social discrimination is not the sole reason but that other factors such as lack of access to institutional finances, difficulty to employ labour to expand business, lack of land ownership and deficit in education lead to smaller enterprises. They found that SC and ST enterprises tend to have fewer members and are less likely to employ labour from outside. On the contrary, they conclude that OBCs made significant progress in entrepreneurship between 1998 and 2005. The question that arises from these finding is – what are the factors that shape the opportunities for different social groups to gain control of enterprises? While the mobility of some communities officially categorised as backward castes or most backward castes is illustrated by the above works, the question of control of production by those at the bottom of the caste hierarchy or that of Dalit entrepreneurship is surfacing (Iyar et al. 2013).

The authors suggest more ethnographic work and the existing ones do corroborate these findings but differ in their interpretation about the ability of lower caste groups to gain greater control over production. Jodhka (2010) work on Dalit entrepreneurship in Panipat in Haryana

and Saharanpur in Western Uttar Pradesh shows that despite a rise of Dalit entrepreneurship, the constraints faced by Dalit businesses to access finance and rental locations remain a disadvantage. Further, they found it difficult to get enough supplies on credit as suppliers were doubtful about their ability to pay on time. Even when they had economic resources they were crippled by a lack of social resources. However, even though it is true across the entire spectrum of Dalits, it varied quite significantly across different caste communities. The Chamars, who have traditionally been involved with some kind of businesses and were producers and providers of leather, have been relatively more successful than the Balmikis, a Dalit community that have been historically restricted to cleaning latrines, sweeping, and scavenging.

Writings by Harriss-White (2010) and Basile (2009b) epitomize the view that the influence of caste and religious institutions reinforces existing social hierarchies and inequalities. The State's role in regulating these economies is characterized to be absent (Harriss-White 2010). In her analysis of the economic sector in a small town in Tamil Nadu, Harriss-White (ibid) concludes that there has been little change in the ways in which economies are regulated. Caste, religion and other markers of social identity continue to play a significant role in the regulation of economy, economic opportunities, economic behaviour and status (Harriss-White 2009; Cavalcante 2009). Harriss-White further notes that individuals' as well as communities' location in traditional social hierarchies continue to affect their ability to enter a particular sector, move up within it or diversify and thus, the opportunities of accumulation.

According to Harriss-White (2010), there has been little change over the years: traditional business elites still control much of the production process and assets, although backward classes have managed to establish a foothold in the economy. It may affect the mobility chances of other than the elite castes, particularly, the lowest in the social hierarchy. A similar view is echoed by Basile (2009b), who argues that caste associations perform two roles: one as institutions regulating economic behaviour of members within each caste group and two, as intermediaries in the political relationship with the state. The materialization of caste ideology – is necessary as 'non-class mediators of class interests' in order to limit capital/labour and capital/capital conflicts. However, caste associations by ensuring the alliance between capital and labour undermine the local harmony, and in turn, enhance capital's interests against labour's interests.

Further, women and Dalits still occupy the lowest rung in the work hierarchy and caste reinforced patriarchy and class relations. Women workers were insecure, exploited and oppressed. Harriss-White (2009?) argues that this practice has regressive social impacts. The latter groups find it difficult to establish a foothold in entering a particular sector or moving up or may get locked in a relationship of economic clientelism. Both practices have serious consequences for the upward mobility of relatively weaker groups in society. Regarding the specificity of gender, gender and caste inequalities in relation to occupation, labour market participation, asset ownership and access to economic opportunities are also pervasive (Harriss-White 2003). Women belonging to upper strata families hardly ever become involved in income generating activities. In contrast, lower caste women contribute to household economic activities and tend to engage in low-paid occupations, often on a seasonal or part-time basis, but seldom take on a managerial role within enterprises (Schneider 2004). Similar gender patterns were found in a medium-sized town in Tamil Nadu (Harriss-White 2003). Though, we do not cover an exhaustive review of the gender dimension, its importance is reinforced by Flamant's (2004) findings in a different town in the same state. The author notes that although the factory serves as a new space of sociability where gender relations are negotiated, the rules that prevail here are forbidden outside.

The other view is that mobilisation around castes enabled those at the lower end of the hierarchy to not only enter but also capture / dominate the economic space. Chari's Fraternal Capital echoes this view point. While he analyses the shifts in the ethnic control over mode of production by studying the agrarian histories and the histories of practices of different communities, he demonstrates the role of backward caste Gounders in transforming Tirupur's economic landscape from that of a small town to a globally embedded economy. The backward caste Gounder with limited access to intergenerational savings or to formal finances mobilised their household and community networks to start micro-enterprises for textile production. Tiruppur owners from agrarian or proletarian origins continue to work in networks of small firms, producing for global markets. Their "histories of practice", Chari argues, enabled them to enter Tirupur's hosiery production as workers and then rise to the position of employers and entrepreneurs and in due course coming to dominate local industry. The particular "practice" that enabled Gounder men to triumph as "self-made" entrepreneurs, despite a highly competitive environment, was "Gounder toil". Gounder men used this phrase to express what they claimed as their unique ability among other upwardly mobile castes simultaneously to participate in manual labour alongside their workers and to extract the

maximum work from them. Chari observes that Gounders successfully transferred the agricultural labour relations they had been familiar with, where they controlled the labour of 'lower' castes, including Dalit agricultural castes, to Tirupur's industry. Another example is the mobilisation of Nadars around their castes to capture both physical and economic space in a small town near Madurai. The works of Subramanian (2002) illustrate the erosion of caste hierarchies through the capture of economic base by members of non-Brahmin caste. Each of the ascendant caste in this case mobilised around their caste to source capital, cheap labour, and to lobby the State for infrastructure and policies to support enterprises.

A large body of evidence suggests the shift in the control of various economic activities by different caste-religious groups. Their relationship and embeddedness in small town economies differ across place and time. For example, Arivukkarasi and Nagaraj (2009), tracing the shifts in the economy between 1993 and 2009 in a small town in Tamil Nadu, found that the Vanniyar community which used to dominate the weaving industry lost control over time, which benefitted the forward caste Mudaliar community, whereas a converse phenomenon was observed in another district in Tamil Nadu. The analysis of caste dynamics shows that diversification is the outcome of the diversifying investment behaviour of capitalists responding to market signals (Basile 2009a). Further, although household and community relations continue to dominate the everyday organization of work, the new generation is trying to distance itself from these domains towards professionalism.

Prasad (2006) explores the political economy of road building in towns in Kerala after construction contracts were given to big companies based on global tendering displacing local contractors. These contractors who emerged during colonial period belonged to Ezhava (Backward Castes) or Nair castes or were Christians. The new institutional landscape, in the context of the restructuring of the public works department as per the World Bank loan requirements, that facilitated the entry of multinational corporations, was achieved despite contestations by local capital including formation of trade associations and collective bargaining. It will be interesting to explore the contestations between local capital and big capital in small towns as well collaboration, cooperation and co-option between them.

With the exception of Harriss-White research series in Arni, studies mapping longitudinal shifts locally are limited. Many such studies provide information on a few towns in one state of India. Moreover, the trajectory of the changes relating to economic practices and the various ways in which ethnic groups are embedded in it is an aspect to be considered for

further research. These shifts are closely related to the political transformation in the respective places, about which there is limited documentation. In Tamil Nadu, with the exception of few places and sectors mainly textiles, the dynamics of other towns are not known. Similar ethnographic studies on other states are limited.

The weight of evidence in the reviewed studies show that small town markets are best understood 'as a bundle of obligations and rights embedded in social relations' (Harriss-White 2010). Its implication is that the dominant economic theories of contract either the new institutional economics or the theory of interlocked contracts is inadequate to explain the phenomenon observed in small towns.

A critique levelled at the writings on culture of small town economy is that they often tend to homogenize the practices of a religion or caste (Kalam 2004). Focusing on Muslims in leather industry in Tamil Nadu, Kalam's work illustrates the diverse sub-cultures within the Muslim community involved in the leather industry in a small town in Tamil Nadu and the ways in which they affect their economic and social practices. The upward economic mobility brings social and cultural changes in its wake that affected the practices within the leather industry and relationship across the different groups. The economy of small towns in different Indian states is dominated by diverse caste and religious communities, whose subcultures and their influence on economic practices have received little attention. It may be useful to focus on the subcultures within a caste / religious community to understand not only economic practices but also the social circumstances of communities in small towns.

4.2. Migration and circulation of labour

Migration and circulation of labour are intrinsically linked to the growth of small towns but the literature is scant and far between. The literature on migration especially labour migration has preoccupied itself with migration to cities from villages while the literature on urbanisation, when it engaged with migration, looked at how migrants straddled different worlds-those of the big city and village- and negotiated different identities of caste, ethnicity and gender. Small cities rarely figure as a distinct form of articulation of these identities or worlds. This was because the geographical imagination of India was woven around its big cities and villages and the inter linkages between the two. This section examines selected literature on the relationship between migration and livelihood practices in small towns/cities.

A first dimension is the high segmentation of the labour markets around caste, gender and religion. De Neve (2003) argues that an understanding of the local context is critical to infer about the process of labour market formation and segmentation. His work on handloom production for a global chain in Europe invalidates the dominant vision of an exploited factory based labour force consisting of unskilled, female and migrant workers. The link is much more complex and can't be reduced to a mechanical dependence to the external demand and those who give order in the client-supplier relation. In contrast, production process in the handloom sector is organized around a network of subcontracting relations. Recruitment is done via network of agents and subagents. Caste, gender and kinship relations shape the recruitment of subcontractors and consequently, labour markets are highly segmented. The paper suggests handloom weavers' decision to enter into such relationship is influenced by perceptions of exit options. That said, introduction of a new job opportunity in the villages also modifies existing gender divisions of labour and gradually alters ideologies of skill, perceptions of work and values of domesticity. The paper illustrates the manner in which global and local processes mutually influence one another and is not a one way phenomenon as is characterized in a strand of literature.

Srinivasan (2009) describes the labour market in Arni (Tamil Nadu) as supply driven, self-recruiting and comprising two major groups – the self-employed and the hired workers. Mobility between the two sectors is difficult, which is indicated by the inter-generational involvement of families in self-employment and hired work. There are mobility barriers to enter and exit from trade. Mobility between trading opportunities is differentiated by caste. Interestingly, traditional trading caste members are not involved in trade anymore. Mobility within a particular sector is influenced by caste, skill formation and tied credit formation.

Another aspect of the relationship between migration and small towns is the influence of both internal and international migration practices through different channels. First, remittances of international migrants are an important source of finance for small enterprises in small urban settlements. They also affect the spatial morphology and quality of life in towns through increased construction activity and change in consumption practices. For example, the spectacular urban growth in Kerala could have been fuelled partly by remittances from migrants in West Asia. In 1999-2000, 23 per cent of the total income of the state came from remittances from migrants. This was 9 per cent in 1980-81. Kerala witnessed a spurt in economic growth in the same period: from 3.6 per cent in 1980s to 5.6 per cent in 1990s.

Pushpangadan (2003) points out that the leading sources of growth are the services and in particular, transport, trade, hotels and restaurants, telecommunication and other services. The surge in growth has emanated mainly from the increase in consumer demand in favour of durable goods. Remittances played a significant role in this spurt in demand. He argues that the inability of the manufacturing sector to meet the growing demand chiefly from migrant households for consumer durables has resulted in the increase in regional trade and transport. In the case of telecommunication, the demand came mostly from the large number of 'spouses away households' and from 'elderly living alone households' in the state for keeping in touch with their kin living within and outside the state. The durable goods accumulated by the households in the 80s have generated the growth of services in the informal sector for the repair, maintenance and servicing of these goods in the 90s. In Goa, though remittances constituted only 6.3 per cent of state domestic product, a sizeable proportion (17.4%) of it was used for buying/building houses or land (Rajan and Zachariah 2011). Migration also influences labour market dynamics that support multiple movements. For example, Bailey (2011) comments that migration of workers to Goa from Karnataka was in response to decreased supply of labour in Goa due to the migration of Goans abroad.

Indeed, internal migration too influences the economies through multiple channels and much of internal migration that involves small towns is short duration movements. Deshingkar and Farrington (2009) contend that livelihoods are multilocational for many Indian households and that the extent of circular migration in India is underestimated by official statistics in India especially the Census and National Sample Survey. They tend to underestimate short term movements and thus underestimate or miss altogether, seasonal and circular migrations which, according to recent village studies account for the bulk of migratory movements for work. For example, according to the National Sample Survey, people from Madhya Pradesh migrate to Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Migration from Madhya Pradesh (MP) to Gujarat does not figure significantly in the dataset though evidence from fieldwork testifies to the extent of this migration from the south-western tribal districts of MP to the small cities of Gujarat.

The migration of women as well as of Dalits and Adivasis for work is also underestimated by official statistics. Deshingkar et al. (2009) in their field survey in rural Andhra Pradesh (AP) found that the proportion of commuters in the survey areas has doubled between 2003 and 2007 which the authors attribute to the growing road network, improved communications, and

the growth of small towns. The rise in commuting is driven by growing opportunities in construction and services because of the rapid growth of small cities across rural AP. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2009) in a household survey in six villages in three districts in Madhya Pradesh between 2003-04 and 2006-07, found that migration to smaller cities showed an increase in 2006-07 though migration to big cities continued to be the most common type of migration. Rural to rural migration decreased because the tribal migrants from Mandla district who were migrating for agricultural work started going to nearby small cities for non-agricultural work. There are also some areas from where specialised workers migrate to different parts of India. Sharma et al. (2009) cite the example of ice cream vendors from Railmarga block in Rajsamand district in Southern Rajasthan. Those ice cream vendors from Railmagra reach many small cities in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu apart from bigger cities like Rajkot, Surat, Vapi, Anand, Solapur, Wardha and Nasik in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Breman (1996) profiles two villages in Gujarat that have eventually become census towns in 2001: Gandevi and Chikhli. Halpatis, the landless tribal labourers of these two villages, slowly moved away from agricultural work to casual labour in urban economy. He distinguishes three types of labour migration: (i) daily commuting (ii) seasonal circulation (iii) semi-permanent or permanent settlement elsewhere. He notes that the predominant pattern of labour mobility is not migration but circulation. Halpatis commute or seasonally move to work in the factories in Bilimora or Surat. Caste and kinship significantly affect outcomes of migration in terms of how successful the migrant is and how far he/she goes. Halpatis who migrate often return empty handed unable to gain a foothold in urban economy due to lack of resource and network, Anavil Brahmins from the same villages have greater mobility and have settled abroad especially USA, Britain and Canada. In a study of a village in Madurai district near Thirumangalam town, Keiko (2011) too points out that migration follows and reinforces the traditional class structure in villages. Due to the high cost of education necessary to acquire white collar jobs in the town, they were accessible only to the dominant landowning classes. This is an insight worth pursuing so that the rural class and caste backgrounds of migrants can be read together with their economic and social position in the town.

Vijay (1999) looks at Kothur, an industrial town in Mahaboobnagar district in Andhra Pradesh and the production process in a pharmaceutical and cosmetic company that manufactures for multinationals. He traces the proliferation of subcontracting to the

introduction of MODVAT which is a tax on value of output minus value of input. For large firms MODVAT meant an advantage in shifting the production of inputs. The taxes were borne by the small-scale firms from their profits which meant inputs could be acquired at cheaper rates and tax could also be shifted by opting for subcontracting. Vijay points out that this led to an increase in subcontracting by large firms. However, the main thrust of his paper is on migrant workers and the emerging institutions of social security in Kothur. He argues that in order to conceptualise social security, one must look at the insecurities of labour that are specific to migrant labour, arising on account of distance and hostility in the destination. Social security takes different forms such as solidarity, patronage, coercive protection, transactional support, political support and trust and is expressed through various institutions. This is because formal institutions like trade unions are restricted to local workers or short distance migrants from neighbouring districts. Long distance migrants from Bihar or Bengal do not have access to state support or trade unions in Kothur.

Second, migration reconfigures space in smaller urban settlements through the very process of labouring, congregating and living. Breman (1994) documents 'labour chowks' where casual labourers and prospective employers meet in Valsad in Gujarat. If there was only one such labour market in Valsad in the 1970s, twenty years later there are several such marketplaces in different parts of the town. We get important insights into the morphology of the town by documenting spatial practices such as labour-chowks. Prasad-Aleyamma (2011) too brings out the salience of the marketplace for labour in Perumbavoor, a town in Kerala that operates as a meeting point for workers from the same village in Orissa or West Bengal who have settled in different parts of the district of Ernakulam. It has also been instrumental as a space of resistance against police registration for migrant workers. Here, the space of the town is culturally produced by workers, police and entrepreneurs through repeated use, conflicts and contestations. This also points to the need to view small urban areas as lived cities and not simply as belonging to one administrative or empirical category or the other. It is pertinent to note that the surveillance practices and restriction on movement that are operational in small cities are different from that of big cities and these could be an axis of spatial formation.

Return migration is another phenomenon of transformation as migrants return and invest their savings to set up shops and businesses. Bailey (2011) examines the case of migrants from villages and towns in Karnataka to Goa who were at different stages of accumulating resources to go back to Karnataka. He points out that discrimination coupled with violence

and difficulties in accessing services infuses a liminal existence in the lives of these migrants, mostly construction workers and other casual labourers and this forces them to go back to their places of origin once enough savings to set up an alternative livelihood is mobilised.

Third, circulation contributes to the restructuring of space as well as transforming the urban-rural accepted divide. Mosse et al. (2002) have dismantled the binaries of urban-rural or tradition and modernity which has framed research on migration. They view urban rural connections as unequivocally complex. They also point out that seasonal labour migration is absent from National sample survey and local labour records. The 745 migrants they interviewed in Kushalgarh Taluk in Rajasthan in 1996-97 travel to 63 destinations. Many of these destinations were smaller cities like Ratlam, Neemach and Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh. These migrants were engaged in a wide range of occupations including construction, railway and road work, brick making and quarry work, stone-breaking, casual work in factories, paper picking, operating hand carts, working as watchmen and many others. Evidence from fieldwork, thus, clearly demonstrates a trend masked by statistics. Examining seasonal migration for work demands an exploration of the relationship between structure and agency, urban work and rural society. Labour migration should be viewed as a livelihood response which arises from a complex set of social relations rather than simply as an outcome of subsistence failure in rural areas. Migration also provides an opportunity to save, accumulate capital or invest in assets.

Migration introduces new types of consumption, of goods or clothes as well as of images and challenges existing in social relationships. Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2004) suggest that the figure of the circular migrant could radically unsettle our notions of cosmopolitanism. By presenting a theory of rural cosmopolitanism, they find that the migrant, through movements in geographic space reconfigures not just sensibilities and ideas but also the materials and techniques that enable the production and transformation of multiple worlds. They argue that cosmopolitanism need not be conceived essentially in relation to the 'urban' or the 'non-local'. Rural cosmopolitans, according to them, are those who originate in rural areas and who, having become bearers of cultural versatility, turn this to some advantage in either their rural source areas and/or their non-rural destinations. Their work has important implication for research on small cities as migrants and inhabitants of small cities often produce aesthetics of consumption and technologies that rival those of big cities. Prasad-Aleyamma (2009) suggests that journeys, rather than settlement, characterize the life of many of the workers,

especially those who are engaged in construction work since large construction companies keep shifting their worksites as projects move. A recent estimate suggests that one-sixth of India's population moves each year, many to work in agriculture, forestry, small industry and construction (Rogaly, 1998:273). It is not clear how much of this movement is toward metropolises, how much toward villages and how much toward small cities. Yet, ethnographic work on migrant workers suggests that itineraries of workers contain ever increasing number of places many of which are emerging small cities.

5. Section D - Transformation of territories: Patterns and practices

This section reviews the literature on small towns, urban development, and rural-urban fringes to infer about the patterns and practices of land transformation in non-metros. Land constitutes 45-75% of wealth of developing countries (Galal and Razzazz 2001). It has the unique characteristics of being a major input into production and consumption by residential real estate and infrastructure services (ibid). Land is one of the major investments for enterprises especially the variety of cluster economies in manufacturing, services and trade that dominate small urban localities. Two questions are important to understand the dynamics of land transformation. One, why do these economies cluster in such localities? Where and how do these economies locate within a locality? Two, is how does transformation from agricultural to urban uses occur? Who are the key actors? What are their roles? How do they mobilise necessary resources, including the State, in their endeavour? The review findings point to a gap in research on these two questions.

Focus on land issues is limited in the studies reviewed. Several studies have explored the social, political and economic dynamics of non-metros but they have focused mainly on labour market and labour conditions, culture of entrepreneurship (Harris 2003, 2010; de Neve 2005; Knorringa 1999; Chari 2005; Bhattacharya 1999; Findeis, et al 2003), migration and social transformation (Osello and Gardner, 2004) and, local politics and governance (Navdeep and Shah, 2010; Harris-White 2003, 2010). Ethnographies on the culture of entrepreneurship in small towns (Chari 2005; Harris 2010) point to the linkages between land and small entrepreneurship and the caste hold on land ownership (Harris 2010), but their primary focus is not on land transformation.

The literature on transformation of urban land is metro centric. Given the paucity of research on this aspect in the non-metro context, the metro experience in Indian and other similar country contexts have been included in this review. The studies on urban land transformation throw light on the factors driving it and the practices of land development. The former aspect is viewed via two lenses viz., the logic of the market or economy and that of state interventions in land.

The State intervenes in land in two ways viz. regulation of land use and giving direction to physical growth through the master planning process and investment in infrastructure. These actions have an impact on the patterns of land development as well as the characteristics of real estate market. Since the mid-nineties, the State's strategies for stimulating growth in and around cities included the creation of special economic zones (SEZs) and implementation of mega infrastructure projects especially transport corridors. The rural fringes adjoining non-metros are one of the sites for such interventions. In its policy intervention, the State sees non-metros mainly as a periphery of metropolitan cities. The emphasis has been on enhancing the connectivity of non-metros. Such interventions are also likely to accelerate the growth of real estate markets of non-metros. The temporal salience of focusing on non-metro real estate is also due to the saturation of metro real estate markets and the focus of developers for other sites³.

A number of studies published since the late nineties have explored the role of state intervention through a focus on Special Economic Zones (SEZs). As shown in section below, several such studies have drawn attention to the adverse impact of such intervention on small and marginal land holders in terms of dispossession and displacement. However, till date, there is little research about the extent to which and the direction in which state interventions have shaped land transformation in non-metros. A related question is the influence of other forms of state intervention including planning, local government investment in shaping the land dynamics.

The rest of this section is divided into three parts. The first summarises the findings from the studies on industrial clusters with respect to where and how to locate economies and the linkages between the land and economy. The practices of claiming land and the role of private

³ <http://www.indiaretailnews.com/premium/155093-small-is-big-multiplexes-in-smaller-towns-premium-franchise-plus>

developers is discussed in the second section and the third, explores the role of state in land and infrastructure.

5.1. Land's economy links

5.1.1. Location of economies: Land and Economic Geography theories

Factors influencing a firm's decision to locate in a place are explained by two theories viz., industrial districts (Piore and Sabel 1984; Marshall 1920) and New Economic Geography Theory (Fujita et al 1999). Both theories stress the positive externalities of agglomeration economies, which include: flexible specialization of firms, decentralized organization of production, easy exchange of information, reduced transaction cost (financial, time and transport costs); face to face contact; easy access to larger pool of specialized workforce; and a favourable milieu for innovation. However, there is a difference in the question that they seek to address and their political economic underpinnings. The NEG theory shifted the attention from 'Where will manufacturing concentrate (if it does)?' to the question 'What manufacturing will concentrate where and why?' (Lall, Koo and Chakravorthy 2003). Further NEG theory with its emphasis on the benefits of large agglomeration, particularly, metropolises have significant influence on State's intervention in land and infrastructure. A brief review of the central elements of the two theories is summarized below to understand the different implications for land transformation.

Industrial districts

The term "industrial districts" was coined by Marshall (1920), which is defined as a:

"socio-territorial entity ... characterized by the active existence of an open community of people and segmented population of firms. Since the community of people and firms live in the same geographical area, they will crisscross one another. Production activities and daily life overlap. The community is open because the industrial nature of the district and the related problems of increasing returns imply incoming and outgoing flows of goods and people." (Becattini 1991:111)

Marshall's seminal work on cluster economies focused on highly localized industries and their contribution to continued growth of a town and the industry (1920:271). It highlighted three key factors catalyzing the evolution and growth of industrial clusters viz., increasing returns to scale, labour market pooling and knowledge spillovers.

Marshall's (1920) articulation of industrial clusters brings to fore non-economic factors, specifically the importance of socio-spatial relations for small firms. It highlights the embeddedness of economies in a place. He argued that when an industry chose to locate in a neighbourhood, it is likely to remain there for a long time. Both employers and workers prefer neighbourhoods where there are skills and work respectively. Besides, small firm entrepreneurs prefer to cluster in places where there is easy access to input and output markets. The benefits of agglomeration economies thus set in process an upward spiralling of the growth of clusters. Over time, localities where these cluster economies thrive develop as containers of tacit skills and knowledge accumulated over time. The face to face interaction and everyday socialization between different agents congregating in a neighbourhood facilitate open flow of information and ideas and catalyze innovation. Due to intrinsic linkages between cluster economies and neighbourhood life, industrial districts are also referred to as "Neighbourhood as Factories" (Doeble quoted in Benjamin and Bengani 1998).

Flexible production and local networks

Interest in small and medium firm clusters was generated due to the potential advantages of "flexible specialization" (Piorre and Sabel 1984). The classic works on "The Second Industrial District" (1984) and "Work and Politics" (Sabel 1982) demonstrated that decentralized organization and flexible adaptation of technology and organization allowed small clustering firms to respond to changing market demands as compared to large firms adopting Fordist mass production methods. They conceptualized industrial clusters as "local (ized) networks" of firms producing a range of similar or complementary products. They were interested in the explaining why networks of small and medium firms succeeded in some regions and they introduced the idea of flexible specialization.

The central element of the industrial cluster theory is "decentralized production" facilitated by local networks. An implicit assumption is that firms will locate in those areas where they have access to forward and backward linkages. Its policy translation, particularly, in the developing country context was in the form of promoting industrial estates where firms with complementary trades can locate in close proximity. The focus was on a specific locale (neighbourhood or an industrial estate. While the theories on industrial clusters illustrate the importance of linkages, the role of localized networks, the spatial embeddedness of economic

activities in terms of location of skills, tacit knowledge and information, land as an explanatory factor figures less in these studies.

There are several dimensions to the spatial issues related to economic clusters. The first one relates to the place for agglomeration. The dominant discussion in the studies on industrial cluster reviewed above revolves around the positive externalities of spatial proximity in terms of information exchange, skill transmission and innovation. Two, relates to the place connectivity, specifically, the transport linkages between the production site and the market. Three, the idea of place is understood predominantly as a bounded locality in various studies on industrial district (as epitomized in the nomenclature of “neighbourhood as factory”). However, there are other aspects of spatiality that has received little attention in the industrial district / cluster literature. Land markets, specifically, land rents may affect where clusters choose to locate. Unlike other commodities, land markets are influenced by State actions in terms of regulation and infrastructure investments. In this light, it is useful to address the question as to how land regimes affect the evolution of clusters. A related aspect is the embeddedness of clusters in a larger region (Das 2005), which needs to be researched further.

Land regimes and evolution of industrial clusters

The manner in which land development and regulatory regimes affect the location of clusters within a city was illustrated by Benjamin (1996) work on “Neighbourhoods as Factory”. Set in West Delhi, the Neighbourhoods as Factory where small and medium economic clusters thrive are often characterized by flexible land development regimes, plurality of land and built property tenure forms, and flexibility of plot sizes and land regulation. Studies undertaken subsequently in Indian metros (Benjamin and Raman, 2001) lend support to the role of land in shaping the propensity and opportunities for firms to cluster in a particular location. Three findings from these studies are relevant here.

- i. One, land settings, specifically, the characteristics of infrastructure, regulations relating to plot sizes, flexibility of incremental development of plots, conditions of tenure shape the characteristics of economic activities in a particular place as well as the demographic characteristics of plot owners (Doebler 1995; Benjamin and Raman 2001; Benjamin 2004).
- ii. Two, the patterns of investment in infrastructure affects the type (or scale) of economies that cluster in a place and the real estate markets. Different economies

require different type of land settings, which is shaped by forms of investment in infrastructure. Investment in basic infrastructure like water, electricity and drainage is vital for the growth of small economies.

- iii. Three, the density and diversity of activities is critical to the vibrancy of a cluster. Tenure forms influence the location of diverse actors with a range of small to large scale of activity in a place (Benjamin 2004). Localities dominated by diverse and dense economic clusters are also characterized by heterogeneity of tenure forms (ibid). While land tenure forms have been mapped in the research on low income housing (Payne 2000; Durand-Lasserve and Royston 2002), it has not been covered in the research on cluster economies. Similarly, in understanding the process of land transformation, it will be useful to focus on the manner in which land tenure forms and mode of development influence the location of different economic activities in a place.

Besides the economic linkages and socio-spatial relations and networks emphasized dominantly in the literature on industrial clusters, there is a political dimension. The constitution of places that house small and medium firm clusters in a city is underpinned by a political process that operates at multiple scales, discussed later in this section.

With the exception of Benjamin's (1996) study, research on industrial clusters in India has focused predominantly on four aspects. The first one is the functional dynamics of cluster wherein the focus is on inter-firm relationship (cooperation and competition), technological and organizational flexibility, labour, the role of social milieu in promoting innovation, forms of supportive institutional environment (Das 2005; Vijayabaskar 2005; Kurien 2005; Lall and Shalzi et.al, 2004; Holmström and Cadène 1998; Lall and Chakravorthy 2010; Das 2005). The second is the ways in which macro policy environment affects specific sectors at the local and regional levels (Das, 2005). The third is the role that industrial clusters can play in poverty reduction (Schmitz 1989; Das 2005). Its policy and programmatic translation in India and other South Asian countries has been the development of clusters for artisan and micro-enterprises (see Schmitz 1985; Nadvi 1995). The fourth, perhaps, a dominant theme informing the understanding of small and medium firm clusters is that of informality (Das, 2005). Several works on "Industrial Clustering in India" (ibid) have focused on the informality of cluster economies, particularly the deteriorating labour condition and the situation of women

and children (Bhaskar 2005; Kurien 2005; Das 2005). The focus of these studies is more on economy than on land.

Implications of NEG theory for land transformation

The NEG theory builds on and expands Marshall's classic arguments (Fujita, Krugman and Venables 1999; Rosenthal and Strange 2004). The NEG theory shifted the attention from the preoccupation in industrial district literature about "How and why do firms concentrate in a place" to the question "What types of firms will concentrate where and why?" (Lall, Koo and Chakravorthy 2003). The specifics of NEG theory is explained in earlier sections. Discussion below is limited to the implication of NEG theory for land transformation in non-metros.

A key difference between the two theories – NEG and industrial clusters - is in their political economic underpinning. The NEG theory stresses two drivers of economic growth viz., 'exogenous' factors and positive externalities of large agglomerations. Fujita et al (1999) makes a mention about the influence of land rent on firms' decision to locate in a place but also suggests that the benefits of scale economies for firms locating in large agglomeration or metros will override this effect. Firms locating in metros benefit from upwardly spiralling returns to their investment due to two reasons (Lall, Koo and Chakravorthy 2003). First, diversity has a significant and consistent effect on cost reduction of firms. Second, firms located in larger metro areas are more likely to benefit from inter-industry technology. The NEG model, as explained in earlier section, prioritises connectivity as a key variable, which is translated as transportation cost.

According to this theory, land transformation in non-metros may be explained by localities' connectivity to metropolis. The theory postulates that economies tend to cluster in metro regions because of the easy access to input and output markets and the benefits of large agglomeration. In other words, transformation of land for urban uses in non-metros and their rural fringes is driven by the spill-over of demands for land from metro areas.

But spillover does not necessarily explain land dynamics in all non-metro contexts. As noted in the earlier section, towns where manufacturing clusters connected to global circuits in places like in Tamil Nadu are not necessarily proximate to metros. Is connectivity the only reason to locate in non-metros? Are there other factors driving the decisions of these firms,

especially local factors related to access to capital, skilled and talents, and also sub-markets? To what extent land is an influencing factor, given that the land rents in metros are high?

Such analysis favours State interventions in assembling land and polarized infrastructures through mega projects, transport corridors and spatial enclaves such as the Special Economic Zones. Evidence from metrocity environments suggests also variations in the institutional and legal regimes from state to state, notably on SEZ development and mega projects (Benjamin and Raman 2011), as discussed further later in this section. The impact of these interventions on real estate market may differ from policies on industrial clusters, which needs to be researched further.

5.1.2. Mobilising real estate surplus for investment and land assets

Small entrepreneurs in metro cities rely on land to mobilize finance for business investments, to accumulate savings, as well as hedge their risks (Benjamin 1996; Benjamin and Raman 2011). They invest cyclically their profit in land and tap land for generating finances for their business (Benjamin 1996; Benjamin and Raman 2001; Delphi study). Evidence on economic enterprise suggests that small enterprises are predominantly on land under rental tenure (Harriss-White 2009?). Both enterprise owners and households start with rental tenure, invest in land for own use and then plough back lease or rent into their economic activities (Benjamin and Raman 2011; Benjamin 1996). While leasing enables owners to mobilize finance it also facilitates tenants to accumulate savings (Kumar 2005, Benjamin and Raman 2001). Chari's work on Gounder entrepreneurship also shows land as a basis for mobilizing finance by small entrepreneurs. With the expansion of economy, the practice of incremental investments in land, according to Benjamin (1996) catalysed the rapid growth of real estate in the industrial district in Delhi.

There is little research about the ways in which land and economic activities mutually influence each other. Understanding this relationship may throw light on the real estate dynamics in non-metros. This aspect assumes a greater importance in recent times due to the phenomenal increase in both the residential and non-residential real estate activity, in small towns as well as in large villages. In this light, it is useful to explore the practices of small entrepreneurs in terms of how they mobilize land for locating their business as well as for investment.

5.2. Practices of claiming land

5.2.1. Patterns/Practices of land development

The practices relating to the supply of developed land in India as in other southern countries has been understood as a binary of formal and informal land markets. The formal refers to the State led land delivery practices facilitated by the master planned or special schemes such as the SEZs, or industrial and residential estates (discussed in the next section).

Several studies published in the eighties and early nineties engaged with the issue of improving urban poor households' access to land for housing (Kundu 1997; Bannerjee 1988, 1996; Roy 1983; Payne 2005). Their findings show that the dominant mode of supply has been outside the master planned process. These studies throw light on the typology of housing settlements, actors involved in land assembly and formation of residential plots and engagement with politics for regularisation. Kundu (1997) examined the motivation for farmers to convert their agricultural land into residential plots. He argues that the fear of acquisition by the State, low compensation and the difficulty to secure the compensation amount are among the factors that influenced small landowners' decision to develop their land into plots in order to pre-empt State actions. Although the rapid conversion of agricultural land for urban use is observed (Fazal 2000), there appears to be limited research on the practices of land development, the actors involved and their engagement with institutions.

5.2.2. Role of social networks and place-identity-economy links

The findings of several researches on small towns suggest the role of caste in shaping the spatial practices of households, the politics of controlling the use of territory (Srinivasan 2009; de Neve 2006; Harriss-White 2009a). Social networks embedded in caste provided the link between land developers, property owners and clients.

Srinivasan (2009) found that caste serves as a key social screening instrument to enforce segmentation in the economy in Arni, a small town in the Southern State of Tamil Nadu. Built and land property in Arni is controlled by different caste communities, predominantly by the backward caste. Many entrepreneurs in the town operated from rented premises. However, landowners prefer to rent out their premises to members from the same caste. This practice disadvantaged the SC and ST castes, who are seeking to move into self-employment. Entrepreneurs from the SC and ST castes face difficulty in setting up their business / enterprise in relatively productive locations of the town. Although, in theory the government

rents out shops, they are given on pagadi or lease, which is open to all communities and new entrepreneurs from the SC/ST community find it difficult to raise the lump sum amount. Consequently they are excluded both from the State and market provisioning.

The manner in which spatial politics and tactics shape the world of urban poor and working class in provincial towns is explored in the works of De Neve (2005) and Gorringe (2005). De Neve's ethnography illustrates the way in which an upwardly mobile lower caste community i.e., Vanniyars in a small town in Tamil Nadu mobilized caste to claim physical space and a new place based identity for themselves. The Vanniyars, who occupy a low position in the caste hierarchy benefitted from economic liberalisation and the boom in textile industries. Vanniyar entrepreneurs started as workers for upper caste communities (Chettiars and Mudaliars) and moved up the ladder to start their own units. The Vanniyar experience echoes those of Gounders of Tiruppur, who took over the control of garment production from traditional trading castes. With their socio-economic mobility, Vanniyar entrepreneurs relocated and centralised their dyeing units in the same neighbourhood. De Neve argues that by relocating their units to their 'own neighbourhood', the Vanniyar community seeks to mobilise space to reconnect with community, identity and locality. He argues that contrary to the expectation that globalisation would result in hybrid and heterogeneous urban spaces, they may produce a social and physical space in which caste, class and community identities overlap. The Vanniyars' relocation and concentration in a neighbourhood is a self-representation as a close knit moral community. In a locality dominated by a particular caste, members of other caste experience differential right to space. The practice of mobilizing caste to claim physical and social identity for the community is common to large number of lower- and middle-caste groups living in India's provincial towns today (Templeman 1999).

Gorringe (2005)'s work is another example of how the categories of caste and locality overlap in small towns. Gorringe analyses the activity of the Dalit Panther movement around their estate. The movement seeks to establish and redefine territories through a process of boundary marking and creating caste exclusive space around an estate in a large town in Tamil Nadu. Both de Neve and Gorringe studies illustrate the ways by which caste intersects with the politics of establishing claims to space and the power to shape its use. However, there appears to be limited research on the material process of developing land in small towns.

5.2.3. Land tenure forms, land assembly and development

Landholding size is one of the factors that influence the ease of land assembly. Land developers lobby for land acquisition by the State to obviate the prolonged negotiation involved in assembling land held by several small owners (Seshadri 2012). The difficulty to assemble land has also delayed State plan of acquisition (Benjamin 2009; Ravindra 1996). The size of land holdings vary across regions depending on the historical forms of land tenure and the extent to which land reforms were implemented. The British had instituted three broad types of land tenures systems for administering agricultural land in India: viz., zamindari system, ryotwari system, and mahalwari system (Hanstad 2005). Hanstad (ibid) notes that the size of land holding varied, with zamindari estates ranging from a few acres to thousand acres and it covered an entire village under the mahalwari system. Many of these agricultural lands are currently converted to residential plots or for other purpose. The implementation of land reforms varied across different regions. In the states, where reforms were implemented, land was subdivided but as Hanstad notes, there were cases where holders managed to control large tracts under fictitious names. From the perspective of land development, focus on the land holding patterns may be useful to understand how land tenure forms affect land development. Some relevant questions that arise are how private developers assemble land, who is involved in assembling and developing land under different tenure and for what purpose do they develop.

5.2.4. Legal pluralism, community controlled land and land development

Besides being in the position of individuals or families, land is also held as common property by groups or communities. Such lands have come under pressure for residential or commercial development. Erstwhile village common land under the control of the State was officially categorised by the British as poramboke land or waste land in the Indian context. The poor rely on such land for fodder, subsistence agriculture or housing need. The poramboke or waste lands are being appropriated for SEZ enclave development (Levien 2012; Seshadri 2011). In addition, this land is targeted for developing residential or commercial real estate. However, there is very little research on the transformation of community controlled land / waste land in India, with the exception of Ghate, Jhoda and Mukhopadhyay (2008) and Brara (2006). Existing research on urban commons focus on the reliance of poor on such land, the ways in which it is managed and the complexity of individual and collective claims over such land (Yanagisawa 2008; Pradhan 2007; Chakravarty-Kaul 1996). Research on

poramboke land in India has underscored the depletion of common resources. Given the real estate dynamics in non-metros, it will be useful to focus on how such land is controlled and by whom/how is it getting transformed.

Finally, land regimes may differ across the state. While in general, legal pluralism is the norm across different regions, the ways in which customary laws/practices and state laws interact may differ. For example, in the North eastern states, both customary laws and state laws are recognized equally by the State. Sinha (2011) points out that increased demand for land in recent times has resulted in conflict between local people and the State in the North East. Those in actual possession/occupation of other than government land, may be (are) necessarily given land possession certificate (LPC). He concludes that there is need for further research to map land tenure forms and their legal regimes for resolving conflicts over claims.

5.3. Price and state interventions in land assembly and development

Until the mid-nineties, discussions on urban land issues centred on the gaps in the provision of land for low income housing and on the adverse effects of master plans (Benjamin and Raman, 2012). Thereafter, the State's approach towards urban development emphasized the development of spatial enclaves for attracting foreign inward investment. The creation of special economic zones (SEZs) and townships are examples of such enclaves. Besides, the land management policy focuses on land as a vehicle of growth and on inward flow of foreign direct investments (FDI), the creation of spatial database, conclusive land titling, and master plans. Several states have introduced projects for surveying of land, digitizing cadastral maps and regularizing titles. In addition, with the saturation of metros, attention of policy makers and developers have turned to small towns as potential area for growth and investments.

The literature on small towns is silent generally on the patterns of state intervention in land and particularly on the new forms of development and their effects on small town land, economy and politics. Several studies relating to both policy and academic research have attended to management and political aspects of SEZs. Very little information is available with respect to reforms in land administration in non-metros. Much of what is available is in the form of policy documents and proposed plans. The section below summarizes some of the key findings on the above issues.

5.3.1. The real estate in non-metros

The few studies, published over the last five years, on land markets and real estate markets have a metrofocus. Commissioned by the World Bank, these studies have examined the real estate markets in four metros (Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi) and have described land prices, the functioning of land markets and the effects of State intervention (Dowell 2003; Dowall and Monkkonen 2008). Drawing on the neo-classical economic theory, these studies attribute the inequity in land access and the prevalence of high land prices to the malfunctioning of markets due to State regulations in land and housing. They recommend a review of the role of the State and planning regulations to facilitate the efficient functioning of markets.

Notable among these studies are those of Dowall (2003, 2008) on Chennai. In the paper titled “Land into Cities: Urban Land Management Issues and Opportunities in Developing Countries”, published in 2003, Dowall engages with the following issues viz., the functioning of land markets as regards catering to all income groups for different uses, particularly, the low income groups in the city; and the role of the State in facilitating the working of land market via providing infrastructure and regulating land development. He argues that the high cost of land is a key constraint in levelling the gap between supply and demand in the city. Both the scale and magnitude of urbanization in developing countries and the patterns of the State intervention in land have contributed to this situation. The State interventions in zoning regulations, floor area restriction and land ceiling act have resulted in the escalation of land prices in the city. While inappropriate zoning regulations and the floor area restrictions have curtailed the land area available for development, the Urban Land ceiling act dissuaded owners from releasing land for development. In addition, low income groups are priced out of the market due to high standards adopted in planning regulation with respect to plot sizes and subdivision. Besides, there are other bureaucratic hurdles in securing planning permits, which can shift control to the hands of developers and lead to over reliance on public land development (CMDA 2004).

Dowall recommends a series of reforms to minimize the State’s role. These include: deregulating land use planning, restructuring public land development agencies to minimise its role in land development, privatising land development, decentralising land management at the local level; developing a systematic Land Market Assessment (LMA) to provide information for governmental planning and decision making; evaluating government policies

and actions – particularly those affecting land based taxation systems, and providing information for private sector investment and development decisions. To the market proponents the competition over land is reduced to questions of supply and demand. And the supply constraints arise mainly from the regulatory role of the State. Dowell's paper epitomises this approach as also Annez, Bertaud, Patel and Pathak (2011) for Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

In their works on Chennai's land market commissioned by the Chennai Metropolitan Agency (CMA), Dowall and Monkkonen (2008) show that de-facto policy differences between political jurisdictions in the State have had a significant effect on land prices. They found that Chennai metropolis experienced simultaneous processes of densification at the centre and sprawling development in the periphery. The conversion of agricultural land outside the city limits to urban uses particularly in 1981 and 1991 is the result of amendments to land conversion and built property regulations for areas outside the Chennai city limits and investments in infrastructure. Prior to this period, the city had more land under agricultural use and owners were not willing to convert the land for other uses. The authors argue for deregulation and promotion of supportive policies for land conversion in the periphery to deconcentrate the city. However, the present pattern of land transformation in the periphery of both large and small cities raises concern (Dutta 2012). Alongside the loss of land under agriculture and its conversion into plots for development, speculative investments in such plots are a common scenario in India. The State's strategy of promoting real estate as a dominant mechanism for wealth accumulation both in metros and non-metros reinforces such speculative patterns of land development (Denis 2010, 2011).

The level and type of investment decided by the state for infrastructure have a bearing on land prices. The analysis of land values in Karachi by Dowell (1998) showed that the price of land in neighbourhoods where basic public infrastructure has been installed is twice as high as the price of land in similar neighbourhoods without any infrastructure. He suggests that infrastructure provisioning can contribute to doubling of land values and that local governments should consider private public partnerships to generate finances for investments in public infrastructure.

Several studies have investigated the functioning of housing markets in Indian cities. These include the works of Mehta et al (1989) on Ahmedabad, of Ravindra (1996) on land prices and metropolitan housing markets in Bangalore and of Wadhwa (1983a, b) on affordable

housing for the urban poor. Mehta et al. (1989) documented the housing supply and demand processes. Their work provides an account of the changing nature of the supply of housing by the public and private sectors, the impact of various policies, price and income structure for owners and renters across various income groups. The study suggests that low income groups are pushed out of both the State supply systems and the market. Further, the characteristics of private developers and the type of products cater largely to the higher income groups and the field is dominated by a few large players. Policies and programmes for the urban housing have been manoeuvred to benefit other income groups and developers.

Wadhwa (1983a, b) examined the impact of land taxation on the evolution of land use patterns in fringe areas. It revealed that the conversion of agricultural land to urban use occurs over a long time. During this period, much of the investment is speculative based on the future expectation of urban growth. Wadhwa's definition of speculators included a variety of actors ranging from private developers, public sector institutions, and organized group of individual investors.

Ravindra (1996) examined the impact of land policies on the physical growth of Bangalore. The city witnessed a rapid growth of its surrounding villages since the mid-eighties. The development authorities' policy of supplying developed plots involved acquisition of large tracts of land in the periphery. Land acquisition proved to be a difficult task mired in conflicts. Further it contributed to speculative investments in the fringes of the city.

Kundu's (1997) study is one of the few that have a comprehensive analysis of land markets and land price changes in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. The study shows an increase in land price in the city, particularly, in the peripheral colonies, between 1970 and 1990. However, the author cautions against generalizing from one study due to discrepancies between different databases on land price changes. The study found that land market in Lucknow is characterized by heterogeneous actors. Land prices vary considerably according to the type of suppliers, income of client groups, and the popularity of a locality. Land prices were found to be highest in colonies developed by public sector, and lowest in those developed by cooperative sector. Differences between land prices in the two types of development arose due to variation in the quality of infrastructure provided. Further, land price changes were more frequent in private sector colonies. Although land markets are segmented in a city, they operate with close reference to each other. State legislations relating to land acquisition and urban development policies also contributed to the land price changes in different colonies.

This study places a particular emphasis on the role of State interventions in shaping the actions of private players. Addressing the question as to why do farmers engage in the practice of subdividing agricultural land, he concludes that this action results from the fear of losing land to the State through acquisition. The study identified two areas for further research: (i) mechanisms by which urban poor secure land; (ii) organisation of rental housing market in the city in the city. Post 2000, there have been very few studies on land markets or land prices in Indian cities.

In contrast to Dowall's proposition, studies that take a political economy approach show that land prices are not given but are socially and politically constructed as much as driven by the economics of supply and demand. In understanding the dynamics of land market, it is important to look at the power structure and how it intersects with the economic system (Durand-Lasserve and Selod 2009; Ward 2003). Such an analysis would address the questions of who supplies land; using which logic; under which conditions; and the role of middlemen. Another question arising from the earlier discussion on the NEG is the extent to which land dynamics, particularly the real estate markets of non-metros is subject to metropolitan influence. In the context of small towns, few studies have mapped the land markets, including the price changes and the actors and strategies involved in the workings of these markets. A related aspect is the investment in real estate for capital accumulation and growth through appreciation of land prices – a practice common to different income groups, and about which there is very little information.

Although evidence suggests that landlessness has increased in some of the rural areas surrounding small towns (Arivukkarasi and Nagaraj 2006), there is little information as to the factors contributing to this trend. What are the factors that have contributed to this phenomenon? Is it linked to the implementation of mega projects and the related land acquisition? Who were affected by this phenomenon? How do the affected households respond to their changed circumstances, particularly, with reference to generating an income?

5.3.2. Master plan and its impact

The master plan is used as a reference to conceptualize the pattern of occupancy in Indian cities as elsewhere. In theory, the master plan is the legal document for regulating land use and land development. However, in many contexts, the city has developed before the plan was formulated or approved. Using the master plan as a reference, patterns of land occupancy and

development are conceptualized within the binary frame of formal/informal or that of legal\illegal (Dutta 2012; Nair 2005; Roy 2009).

Using satellite images, Dutta (2012) analyses the spatio-temporal patterns of land use in the urban and peri-urban areas of Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh and concludes that patterns of growth do not follow the master plan and that even the master plan deviates from the preferred land use. Of the total area of the conserved green belt, reserved forest and flood plain, 41.8% has been converted into built up area. In the context of metropolitan cities, Roy (2008) argues that informality constitutes a key mode of planning in Indian cities. Several studies have drawn attention to the regressive effects of the master plan on the housing or the workplaces of the poor (Sarin 1982; Ravindra 1996; Nair 2005; Holston 1989). These studies have focussed predominantly on the metropolitan areas. Studies on the history of planning in Indian metropolis expose how planning has been used as a tool to reconfigure elites and the State agents control over land (Dossal 2010).

The master plan for such localities is undertaken by different government agencies – the panchayat, local governments and the town and country planning organization. In India the administration of land also differs with land categories particularly in the rural context. Land under cultivation is regulated by the Revenue Department and those within the village boundary, by the Panchayats. The common land, categorized as *poramboke* or waste land is administered by the Revenue Department. The local governments – the municipalities and the panchayats are in charge of planning within the town limits and surrounding villages respectively, but again It may vary from State to State and regarding the size of the real estate or industrial project. Within each municipality, there is a town planning wing, which is monitored by the Town and Country Planning department at the State level. The local governments are responsible for coordinating infrastructure provision in these localities. As mentioned earlier, the role of the municipal bodies or panchayats in planning /directing / regulating physical growth and land development has not been researched extensively. Further, the pattern of governing land development in and around the villages in urban peripheries differs across Indian States. The study on small towns by people like Harriss-White mentions about the lack of finance for small municipalities to implement infrastructure programmes, but there is not much analysis of the institutions that influence land use and development in non-metros.

A limitation in the existing literature on planning is its metro centrality. There is little information available about the process of planning in small towns. The history of the city suggests that much of the city developed before the master plan was constituted (Srivatsan 2012; Benjamin 2012). For example, opening a highway by institutions of the central or the State government triggers changes in patterns of land use and development. Similarly, investment in basic infrastructure by local government as part of their regular activities influences plot owners' decisions on investing in upgradation or in setting up units for non-residential use. Moreover, city spaces are shaped by different institutional processes. Besides the master plan, the city development plan is the legal document that guides infrastructure investments. Over the years the power to take decisions regarding planning and infrastructure investments in cities, especially in the large cities, has shifted from the local governments to the higher levels of the State despite the decentralization process. Therefore, rather than a singular focus on the master plan to understand the patterns of land development, it may be useful to have a historical perspective to understand the logics and patterns of land development.

5.3.3. The SEZ story

In this section, we summarise the review findings related to SEZs. The politics of land acquisition and its adverse effects on relatively weaker groups in urban and rural areas is underscored by the findings of many studies on SEZ. Apart from their metro bias, the literature is silent on the way SEZs impact real estate in other locations.

The SEZ policy is a successor to Export Processing Zones that did not have the expected outcome in terms of promoting growth and inward investments. SEZs are, in theory, supposed to attract large volumes of investment by providing world-class infrastructural facilities, a favourable taxation regime, and the benefits of economic clustering (Jenkins 2007). Unlike in the case of the earlier incarnation EPZs, the SEZ policy envisages enclave development by private developers (Seshadri 2012; Jenkins 2007), with the Central and the State governments providing several incentives and concessions (Banerjee-Guha 2008). Some of these are as follows: (i) recognition of SEZ enclaves as duty free zones and foreign territory in terms of trade operations, (ii) exemption from income tax, sales tax and service tax: 100 per cent of the tax amount for the first five years and 50 per cent for the next five years, (iii) exemption from custom regulations (iv) permission to subcontract to any extent, (v) freedom from

environment impact assessment regime, (vi) exemptions from state electricity regulatory commissions, exemption from state taxes on raw material and import licences rules and (vii) assurance of all basic infrastructure (See Banerjee-Guha 2008; Vijayabaskar 2010; Kennedy 2014).

The act was drafted in 2000 and approved by the Parliament in 2005 and the policy was implemented by the Government of India in 2005. However, several States have formulated their own acts, and these (as well as the Government of India's own SEZ guidelines) have been revised in several respects on a number of occasions, notably in Gujarat (Varma et al 2010; Jenkins 2007).

Since 2005, the Government of India has acquired vast tracts of land for setting up special economic zones. Banerjee-Guha (2008) states that in the 462 sites formally approved till May 2008, about 1,26,077 hectares of land was acquired. There are plans to acquire additional 50000 hectares of agricultural land for SEZ and 1.49 lakh hectares for mega infrastructure projects (Levien 2010). The State often uses the eminent domain in acquiring land from farmers. Since land acquired by the State is then transferred to private developers, compensation for displacement is pushed to a private arena with the negotiated quantum determined by market, and with the state having no responsibility for rehabilitation. Those who lost their land are often untraceable or have moved to the city (Varma et al 2010).

Other impacts of SEZ on land owners have been widely discussed in the literature. Two themes recur in these discussions viz., the adverse impacts of SEZ on livelihoods of small farmers, fishermen, and the urban poor and their place of living (Varma et al 2010; Sampat 2008; Banerjee-Guha, 2008) and appropriateness of jobs (Varma et al 2010). Sampat (2008) argues that SEZ policy epitomizes the state's role in promoting corporate led development and that overwhelming evidence point to the policy's adverse impact in displacing thousands of people and depriving of their culture, land and livelihoods. According to Banerjee-Guha (2008), SEZ policies epitomize a strategy of "accumulation by dispossession", which related to a larger process of progression of global capital and its strategy to industrialize the south. This strategy leads to marginalization of labour, dispossession from land and the arrival of real estate dynamics.

Regarding labour and employment, the pattern of growth without increase in jobs has resulted in the exclusion of many from the benefits of globalization and marginalization of large

section of population. It has been accompanied by informalization of labour, shrinkage of public sectors employment (Basu 2007), subcontracting practices, insecure employment, and exploitation of labour. Companies located in SEZ enclaves are exempted from labour laws, including the Minimum Wages Act, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, and strikes in the SEZs will also be considered illegal. The Chinese experience too supports the marginalization and exploitation thesis, this is evident in mounting social inequality, declining per capita food grains availability for the rural masses (Patnaik 2007).

The State's assumption is that jobs created through SEZ will compensate for the loss of livelihood associated with land dispossession (Tyagi 2007). Few studies have examined this assumption. Tyagi (2007) argues that the State has been acting in favour of corporate economies at the expense of other groups in society. The jobs created by new industries are inadequate to compensate those affected by land acquisition (Varma et al 2010) and the nature of industries does not match with the skills of the local labours (Tyagi 2007). This observation is echoed by Banerjee-Guha, who in her paper on SEZs shows that the type of activities being developed in the SEZs and the jobs created are often not suited to the local population. According to Upadhyaya and Vasavi (2008), the jobs generated absorb workforce from educated middle/upper class and offer little benefit to small landowners whose lands were acquired. The SEZs are spatially delinked from the surrounding areas and connected to faraway places.

The second issue relates to the effect of SEZs on real estate – about which there is not much research. Different types of SEZ, single product enclaves and multiple product enclaves, have been implemented in India – each requiring different types of land. The SEZs Act provides for 50% of the land to be developed for productive purpose and the other 50%, through real estate. The mode of development planned would lead to gentrification, since entry of people would only allowed to those carrying approved identification (Varma et al 2010). The special status given to real estate in general and within SEZs as well, rationalized as a strategy of growth is relevant here. The land within SEZ reserved for real estate is geared towards boosting demand for elite consumption like better housing, automobiles, organised retail, hotels and entertainment, banking and share market-related activities that will generate very low domestic employment. This policy has resulted in the conversion of dynamic farmlands in many states into areas of high-tech corporate activities, spatially and socially disconnected from its surroundings. In addition many authors are considered with food insecurity as many SEZs are proposed on productive agricultural land (Patnaik 2008). Besides agricultural land,

common land that the poor depend on for grazing or subsistence agriculture is targeted for SEZs (Banerjee-Guha 2008). Most of these lands are classified as wasteland and have been appropriated for SEZs (Down to Earth, 2006 quoted in Banerjee-Guha 2008). Besides land acquisition, the real estate dynamics is also accelerating alienation of small farmers from land and the resultant conflicts. As per the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, the state is the ultimate owner of the land and it can take over any tract for "public purposes", if it pays reasonable compensation. This issue is taken up later in this paper.

Thirdly, SEZ related real estate is targeted for promoting high end consumption. Infrastructure investments to support such high end real estate are predominantly for creation of inter-state transport corridors, mega infrastructure projects particularly flyovers and urban renewal programmes. These programmes are financed through centrally sponsored schemes and their institutional and legal frameworks are designed to overrule local level dissent (Banerjee-Guha 2008). Even though the recent JNNURM Second Phase is aimed at extending these funds to small towns the bias towards metros is likely to affect small towns.

Fourthly, there are very important debates around the question of land acquisition. Narain (2009) describes the implications of the land acquisition process in a village in the Gurgaon district of Haryana state in north-western India. Gurgaon city, the district capital, is emerging as a major industrial hub, its growth made possible by the large-scale acquisition of agricultural lands by the government. The expansion of the city has altered patterns of rural natural resource use, created social, cultural and economic changes, and bred resentment among many peri-urban residents against urban authorities. The author argues for replacing the current top-down policies for land acquisition with a participative process in which landowners and peri-urban residents themselves are involved in land related decisions. The paper suggests that speedy disbursement of compensation for lands acquired, improving transportation and connectivity to the city, and the spread of livelihood opportunities in the periphery may help in mitigating the adverse impacts of dispossession and displacement of the poor due to mega urban development projects.

A related question is about the ways in which affected persons respond to SEZs. Some of those who were compensated used the money to purchase land or a house in other locations, start a small business or enter the money lending trade (Levien 2010). But many owners and tenants (sharecroppers) resist SEZ projects due to loss of livelihoods, displacement from their residence, and the trauma linked to resettlement (Sampat 2007; Varma et al 2010).

Resistance to SEZs by the affected group is violently repressed in different state (Varma et al 2010; Levien 2010).

Levien (2012) argues that in the Indian context, the process of accumulation by dispossession cannot be understood simply as an economic phenomenon, where capital seizes under-commoditized assets (Harvey 2003, 2006). It is a political process as the States act as land brokers for capital, using eminent domain to neutralize subversion of land acquisition. Large developers and globally connected economies increasingly look to the state to expropriate land from farmers because the majority of land is in the hands of small-holding farmers who are often not interested in selling and/or do not have clear titles to land. Second, SEZ policies and the contestations that arise around them cannot be reduced to a binary of global/local conflicts. Rather, the accumulation for SEZs generated by dispossession accrues more to Indian than transnational capital. Third, SEZ conflict is not only about capital versus peasants, but generates a whole chain of rentier-based class that incorporates urban middle classes and well-placed rural elites. Land is acquired at low rate and transferred to large developers who develop rural land mainly for luxury consumption and profit from appreciation of artificially cheap land acquired by the state. SEZs catalyze a pattern of agrarian transformation through land speculation that benefits rural elite, but dramatically amplifies existing inequalities and fuels non-productive and pre-capitalist economic activity. For example, in Rajasthan, where jagirdari system was dominant, land was controlled by mainly higher caste households. The lower castes who relied on land for fodder or held land on tenancy tenure for cultivation lost their livelihoods and could not claim compensation. Given the minimal benefits for rural India in this model of development, farmer resistance to land dispossession is likely to continue. The ability to play the land market too differs depending on socio-economic positioning and the impact differed among members of SC and OBC castes. Inequalities were exacerbated not only between castes, but within castes and families. It will be useful to disaggregate the impact of SEZs by land ownership, regimes and caste groups.

Conflicts over land acquisition have resulted in court cases. Some authors conclude that adequate compensation to farmers may limit resistance. In the initial phase of SEZs, land was allotted to the industries at below the market price and farmers were not compensated adequately (Tyagi 2007). Among the recommendations is inclusion of farmers as shareholders to reduce legal battle, and faster development of industries (Varma et al 2010; Seshadri 2012; Tyagi 2007). Although the compensation issue is to be addressed by the new R&R bill of

2007, the authors contend that poor implementation of R&R Bill, 2007 is reinforcing the opposition to SEZs (Varma et al 2010).

Responses to land acquisition around SEZs have varied across different states as implementation of central government policies gets mediated by regional political economy (Vijayabaskar 2010). He notes that although a large number of SEZs are located in Tamil Nadu, the State did not witness resistance to such projects or to large scale land acquisition. He concludes that land acquisition in Tamil Nadu is secured more by consent than by coercion. To understand the departure from the experience in other states, it is important to locate the debate within the larger political struggles in the State. First, for many farmers, land is more a fixed asset than a source of livelihood. This is due to the low returns of agriculture together with a vibrant land market driven largely by speculation. Second, socially disadvantaged groups i.e. Dalits are dominantly agricultural labourers or small and marginal farmers. Although agrarian relations have changed in the State, the Dalit activists feel that moving out of low return agricultural sector is important for their own social and rural-urban mobility.

Seshadri (2012) suggests that existing land legislations constrains the development of SEZs. This is one of the few works that have examined the SEZ's from a land perspective. It presumes that SEZ is important for promoting growth. It explores the constraints faced by developers in assembling land for large SEZs. The author argues that the constraints in developing large SEZs in India is due to the influence of land regulations such as the urban land ceiling act, land conversion procedure, building regulations particularly, the Floor Space Index (FSI). The urban land ceiling act acts as a constraint in holding onto large parcel of land and the FSI regulations makes it difficult to develop SEZs within the city. The procedures of land conversion add to the difficulties faced by developers in having to deal with bureaucracy and in higher transaction costs.

The assumption that SEZs are inevitable among both supporters and detractors of SEZ has turned the discussion on land to questions of compensation for neutralizing dissent. Several criticisms can be levelled on the above works.

First, as Jenkins (2007) notes, very little actual construction in those areas officially designated as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has taken place, and the policy's economic and political effects are still a matter of conjecture. Further, almost all SEZs were approved in the

vicinity of major cities like Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Mangalore and Pune (Varma et al 2010). The extent to which SEZ policy affected other localities needs to be researched.

Second, several works (Seshadri 2012; Prudhomme 2004) tend to read the process of state interventions in land and its influence on land transformation to that of market dynamics. The contestations over land in this context are then reduced to the State's failure to regulate supply and demand. Another problem with this school of thought is that it tends to see the State and the market as a homogenous sphere with clearly defined boundaries. Seshadri (2012) assumes a perfect market that will work to allow large SEZs once it is freed of regulations. Further, such a free market will allow small and medium developers to thrive and flourish. Large developers' alliance with the State is explained as a dynamic elimination of the constraint faced by the former in assembling land through a market process. The question of power relations and its influence over land transactions, fixing land prices are ignored (see also Haila 2008 for a critique on the concept of land markets). SEZs are one form of land development and much of these are located in the fringes of metros or large cities. The second is an assumption that the politicized nature of land dealings comes from State interventions. Third, assembly for education institutions is done outside the SEZs and it raises the question how these actors were able to do it. The assumption that deregulation by itself will allow a level playing field is questionable. Large developers have been lobbying for a bill for registering developers and which threatens to crowd out smaller players. The benign role of developers and the assumption that land markets operate in a similar manner to that of other commodities is an assumption that is contested.

Finally, Jenkins (2007) and Sampath (2007) draw our attention to the implication of the institutional and legal arrangement to implement SEZs on municipal governance. According to these authors the SEZ policy overrules the provisions of the 74th amendment that empowers local governments to intervene in decisions on land planning and development, and in special acts such as the Scheduled Area acts for protecting tribal alienation from their land.

5.4. PPP in land development for accelerating the poor's access to land

Mathur (2013) suggests that in the light of resistance to compulsory land acquisition and the local government's poor fiscal situation, the State needs to experiment with alternative ways

of developing land such as land pooling and Reconstitution (LPR)⁴. The LPR has been used in the state of Gujarat in India. Mathur's paper highlights the key success factors, suggests reforms that would increase the tool's effectiveness, and identifies the lessons learned from Gujarat's experience. Specific lessons include the following: use revenues from the previous LPR projects to fund infrastructure and services in the new projects using a revolving fund mechanism; delink the resolution of land ownership disputes from LPR scheme preparation and approval process; institute extensive grievance redressal process; and develop infrastructure early to garner landowner support for LPR.

The idea of PPP for land supply to the poor has been in circulation since the nineties. This is influenced by the need to facilitate "formal" or legal access to land. To a dominant proportion of population, land supply in Indian cities as in many countries, has been outside the master plan (Payne 2004). These diverse forms of land supply have been categorised as informal land mechanisms (Payne 1999). Public-private partnership for land reconstitution and development, land readjustments and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), involving NGOs and private developers, were viewed as a way to enhance formal access to land for low income groups or enlarge the scale of supply. Other schemes include participatory development schemes and Slum redevelopment through incentives. Much of the documentation focuses on the experiences in metros, and predominantly in the single context of Mumbai.

In the Indian context, the town planning schemes were inherited from the British Colonial Administration. More recently, urban development authorities have experimented with TDR in Mumbai. The TDR is aimed at encouraging private developers to tender for public land, or develop private land parcels on condition that they provide an agreed proportion of plots for low-income groups.

⁴ Land pooling and reconstitution is advocated as a strategy to extend services to settlements that emerged spontaneously outside the master plan framework. It involves pooling together small plots into a large land parcel and reconstituting the land into plots with additional physical and social amenities including roads, parks and other public utility services. Landowners participating in such schemes will collaborate with one another and with the development agency to realign property boundaries in a development plan and in return get serviced plot. The cost for servicing the plots is raised through sale of some part of the serviced land. The concept is based on land owners and the State agencies capturing real estate gains for serviced land in return for giving up part of their unserviced land. The closest example in the Indian context is the town planning schemes.

The reviewed studies on PPP in land development shows that formal partnership based projects have had only a modest impact in terms of scale and providing land access to low-income households (Edwards 1995; PADCO 1991). PADCO (1991) suggests that the public-private modes of land development cannot replace other modes of land development or land supply; that public-private partnership may not only maintain or increase the authority of the State but this requires a greater knowledge of how land markets work. Finally the literature is limited in explaining the role of the government in land regulation and development at different scales. The State enters into such partnership on account of its financial constraints. Given the finance situation of non-metro municipalities, what are their strategies for supplying developed land to low income groups?

Discussions on partnerships predominantly engage with a managerial approach of how to make partnerships work. The relevance of these debates for understanding land transformation in non-metros is not clear. In the non-metro context, there is very little information on land development practices and the actors involved in it. Another gap is the role of the State in facilitating land access to different social and economic groups in non-metro localities. This raises a number of research questions including: what are the mechanisms of land development in non-metros? Who are the actors involved? How do they assemble land and develop it for different purposes? How do they engage with the State in terms of regulation and partnership for development? Who do they cater to?

Kennedy (2009) argues that a focus on the role of subnational or regional State is important to map the process of land transformation in India. Land transformation is accompanied by restructuring of state and is aimed at reshaping India's economies and built environment.

The financing and implementation of mega projects is supported by new forms of institutions and laws (Benjamin and Raman 2009). However, there is not much research on the institutional and legal frameworks underpinning land development, particularly in non-metro context. A contested action of the State is its use of eminent domain. The provision of eminent domain in law is to acquire land for public purposes. As per Land Acquisition Act (LAA), 1894 and amended LAA, 2007 acquired land should be used for public purposes. The use of eminent domain in the SEZ context has been to purchase land for transferring it to private capitalists is for public purpose/public good (Levien 2012). The LAA 2007 is designed to address the weakness of earlier bill with respect to compensation and limiting the adverse impacts. One objective of the policy is to minimize displacement. It recommends

acquisition of only the minimum necessary area and to limit the conversion of agricultural to non-agricultural use. The compensation is to take into account market value of the property. Despite all these features of R&R policy livelihood losses, displacement and non-rehabilitation has become recurring features (Sharma et al. 2009, Sharma & Singh 2009; Varma et al 2010).

5.5. State-Citizen relationship over land

Land development by private actors in many cities, though undertaken ahead of the master plans are formulated in many cities, is not entirely delinked from the institutional process.

It is not that these 'informal' arrangements are entirely outside the State domain. According to Edwards (1995), these thrive because of tacit partnership, where the government may turn a blind eye to unauthorized subdivision and development and eventually provide settlements with services or the local authorities relaxing rules and official standards rather than attempting to change them (Edwards 1995). In contrast Benjamin and Raman (2001, 2011) suggest that rather than viewing land development practices as a binary based on its relation to the State, it will be useful to map the different institutional and political alliances linked to various land development practices.

Benjamin (2000) maps different circuits by which citizens engage with the State to secure land or to influence the pattern of infrastructure investment. The dominant practice of private land developers, particularly with small to medium scale of operation, align with elected representatives and street and mid-level bureaucrats in regularising land and in lobbying the State to extend basic infrastructure services. In contrast, high end developers and corporate sector, contesting for similar locations and localities as the small players, draw on their alliances with senior bureaucrats and elected representatives. The institutional space of municipality is vital for the former groups (Benjamin 1996). A similar, yet cautious conclusion is arrived at by De Wit and Berner (2009) in their research on the relationship between the poor and municipal councillors in Delhi, post the implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment. Focusing on the micropolitics of mediation, representation and inequality, De Wit argues that the councillors do play a useful role as regards the poor in a limited, incidental and personalistic way, but they have limited power in influencing structural issues of poverty, such as securing land tenure.

Benjamin's circuit of state-citizen engagement makes a clear distinction between the elites' and popular classes' engagement with the regional and local scales of government. However, in practice both rich and poor attempt to manoeuvre the levels of the State. For example, large landowners and local economic bigwigs dominate the municipal councils in many cities particularly non metros (Harris-White 2002). Moreover, over the years there has been a change in the power of municipality and agents connected to it over influence of urban land related decisions. With the concentration of powers to both formulate and implement decisions at the higher level, the circuits of engagement and alliances have shifted further reinforcing the centralisation of power (Raman 2010). Evidence relating to citizens engagement with the State in non-metros is not easily available. It is important to map the institutions involved in developing land, their relationship with citizens to infer about the role of state and citizens in shaping the practices of land transformation.

Both De Wit (2009) and Benjamin (2000) studies are based on the experience of citizens in metrocities. Harriss' studies (1981) on everyday politics in small towns illustrate small entrepreneurs' engagement with the institutional and political processes of municipal government. Harriss (1981) examines the political actions of agricultural merchants. Their engagements are not specifically over land but more to do with price, threats from competing economic actors like farmers and manufacturers, or internal regulation of trade.

Since most of the cluster economies in cities are located outside master planned areas, land and infrastructure issues are among the factors driving locality politics (Benjamin 1998; Benjamin and Raman 2001). The mediation with the State occurs via electoral and everyday politics to extend infrastructure or regularise land tenure and this process is important for dominant sections of citizens to claim land and productive locations for their enterprises or residences (Baken 2003; Benjamin 1996; Benjamin & Raman 2001). The relationship with elected representatives connected to the municipal, subnational and national scales is vital for small entrepreneurs to shape policies relating to land and infrastructure (Raman 2010).

This relationship is dominantly conceptualized within framework of patron clientelism and has been debated extensively in the literature on urban land and housing, specifically in the studies on low income groups and private land subdivisions (Baken 2003; Linden 1988; Wit 1996, 2005). Views on the role of clientelistic politics in catering to the needs of the poor are polarized. The dominant view is that poor citizens are exploited. A similar sentiment is echoed by Barbara Harriss-White (2005) in her description of local politics in a town or

mofussil areas in Tamil Nadu. She argues that the local state in small towns is captured by local economic agents, who are predominantly from the upper business castes and who perpetuate feudalistic, hierarchical relationship. An opposing view is that institutional and political spaces of municipality in which small entrepreneurs generally and those in non-metros particularly, negotiate their claims over land and infrastructure (Benjamin and Raman 2001; Benjamin 2006). With the exception of a few studies by Harriss-White (2003), research on land – politics linkages in non-metros is limited. It is useful to explore the following questions: whether and how do land developers, occupiers engage with elected representatives and in which institutional scales? How does land intersect with electoral politics? Who enters municipal politics? How and why do they do so? Do landowners and local economic agents have an interest in local politics as their economic fortunes are tied to the locality as argued by Logan and Molotch (2007) in a very different context?

6. Section E - Governance of small towns

This section deals with the set of questions related to the governance of small urban settlements and starts with the politics of classification, mentioned in section A, since this determines the manner in which reforms are implemented and the type of governance.

6.1. The politics of classification

As shown by Bhagat (2005, 2011) the discretionary decisions of each state are a major issue in the definition of what is defined as urban area. Even if the demography is one of the major criteria, statutory towns are also the outcome of a political process and there are important differences between states where census towns do not have necessarily urban government. Possibility or not to be a Urban Local Body (ULB) varies from State to State, and sometime within a same state, as the demand can come from the local government (as it seems to be in the case of West Bengal – Samanta 2012), or the decision can be taken directly by the State authorities.

Existing literature has pointed out the cost benefit advantage of being or not being a statutory town. Bhagat (2011) said that, in theory, the recognition as a town would have implication not only in terms of provision of urban infrastructure and civic amenities, but also for

reproductive and child health services. However, as Sivaramakrishnan noted down, these places “in between” will be “better off as panchayats since government funding and various other concessions available to panchayats are more in number and much larger” (2011b: 50). Similarly, regarding the implementation of the Common Minimum Programme, Kundu and Sarangi (2005) had already demonstrated that the classification of an agglomeration as statutory urban can be exclusionary by preventing it from getting the benefit of rural schemes. Furthermore, in practice, there is also a direct interest of some settlements (particularly those located in peri-urban areas) to stay rural to avoid any stronger urban taxation (Bhagat 2005). Situated work provides further insights into this. The research by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences demonstrates that beyond questions of definition, the urban is a “contested terrain” (2005: 43). In Maharashtra, if one applies strictly the population criteria, then a number of existing municipal councils should not be declared urban while on the other hand, some settlements which pass the population criteria are not recognized as urban. In reality, what is urban clearly does not satisfy the state’s official criteria and they mention many reasons for resisting being urban: the importance of agriculture and primary sector, the local and economic stakes. In other words, there is a form of optimization between various parameters, such as land, tax, investments and development programmes that each locality tries to carry out (Denis, Mukhopadhyay, Zérah 2012). The importance of denied and contested settlements appears increasingly as an object of study. This distinction is important since urban reforms will not concern census towns, which remain under a rural governance framework.

6.2. Urban reforms in small towns pre and post decentralization

6.2.1. Brief history of schemes towards small towns

As Dupont (1995) and others have noted, a quick review of urban policies reveals the failure of Indian planners and decision makers to take into account the specific case of small towns.

After Independence, the Indian government was trying to limit urbanization by improving the retention capacity of the rural areas through the "community development program" (launched in 1952 during the first Five-Year Plan 1951-1956) which divided rural India into 5200 development blocks. It was criticized by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (1972) for not having been able to turn these administrative headquarters into settlements with thriving economic activities. Twenty years later, during the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1979), the "Integrated Urban Development Programme" (IUDP) was launched by the central government to explicitly develop small towns in rural India. But these small

centres simply failed to benefit from it because of their competition with the metropolitan cities, which were finally also allowed to take part in the IUDP, and were best placed to mobilize resources (Ganguly 1988). Later on, in 1977, a report commissioned by the central government, the "Task Force on Planning and Development of Small and Medium sized Towns and Cities" recommended to give a special attention to the towns of 50 000 to 300 000 inhabitants, hoping to slow the metropolitanization process and facilitate a better dissemination of the industrial activities in the countryside. This recommendation had been incorporated in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985) within the program "Integrated Development of Small and Medium Sized Towns" (IDSMT), especially dedicated to the infrastructure improvement of 235 cities with not more than 100,000 inhabitants. But its evaluators (Nagarlok 1986; Nandy 1985; Vishwakarma 1985) severely criticized the IDSMT pointing out that the economic base of towns had been neglected and that no rural-urban reinforcement strategy had been thought of. Despite this new failure, the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) renewed the IDSMT and even extended it to 102 new cities up to 300,000 people, which put once again the smaller towns at a disadvantage.

In the early 1990s, ignoring the recommendations of the first National Commission on Urbanization (1988) about the necessity to rebalance the urban structure, a major turning point has been reached with the development of 32 urban centres of more than one million people, now considered as engines of economic growth, and clearly financially privileged. Sandesara (1991) noted that the launch of the new Industrial Policy, in July 1991, inaugurated the era of liberal reforms resolutely oriented towards foreign trade (devaluation and partial convertibility of the rupee in 1992) and the abolition of industrial licenses (except for certain strategic industries), which does not allow the government to control the location of industries (except the polluting ones), and indirectly reinforced the attraction of already urbanized and developed areas (Shaw 1996).

Partly, this new strategy is also related to a major change in public services management with the Expert group on commercialisation of infrastructure (1996), which endorsed the models promoted by the World Bank, focused on reducing public sector involvement by decreasing infrastructure costs, opening the capital market, privatization of infrastructure and simplification of laws. Amitabh Kundu (1989) is one of the first authors to worry about such new principles as cost recovery and liberalization of investment, which he argued would contribute to further cripple smaller towns. In particular, Kundu (1997) disagreed with the

new fiscal discipline, imposed by the Reserve Bank of India to the parastatal agencies, about borrowing from financial institutions and increasing own municipal resources, which is particularly difficult to achieve in small towns. As some others observed later on (Bagchi 2006; Mahadevia 2011) he noticed that Indian planners have gradually clearly influenced the emergence of liberal policies favouring the characteristics of cities at the expense of those smaller towns, less productive and less profitable even though small towns have engaged into reforms process as well.

6.2.2. The landmark reform in political decentralisation

The 1990s are also marked by the major political reform on decentralization that has been studied both for rural settlements (Kumar 2006) and urban settlements (Pinto 2000; Baud and De Wit 2009; Ruet and Lama-Rewal 2009).

The decentralisation in India was constitutionally introduced in 1992 through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, respectively, for the rural and urban settlements, which officially recognized the existence of local governments and assigned to them political and technical functions (local elections and management of local public services). The preparation of the 74th CAA received less attention than its rural corollary, the 73rd CAA, which was given a political priority due to the large part of the rural population and the electoral discourses on the rehabilitation of the Panchayati Raj system at that time. While the rural amendment is very detailed, its urban equivalent is much more elusive, leaving more leeway for regional states in its application (Barthwal 2004). Sivaramakrishnan (2011b) remarked that the 62nd Amendment Bill, which was the precursor to the 74th amendment, was more precise and even clearly classified the differentiation between different types of urban local government, towns and cities following “quantitative criteria” (like a specific demographic size for example). This was given up and the criteria for classification in the 74CAA are “expressed in non-quantitative terms” which leave them open to manipulation giving rise to various definitions. For settlements others than large cities, it only describes the Nagar Panchayats as “settlements in transition from rural to urban”, while a smaller municipality and a larger municipality are settlements so notified by the government. *A contrario*, in the case of the 73rd amendment, the definition of a village is very clear, following a “long-established practice of land revenue departments of a state government which is not

dependent on any demographic or economic criteria” (Sivaramakrishnan 2011b: 50). As a result, there is considerable heterogeneity in the definition of each type of urban local body according to the municipal law of each State. Furthermore, most of the states have not explicitly and precisely specified their criteria and generally leave the decision about the status of a settlement to the governor of the province (Bercegol 2012: 64)

In other words, it can be argued that the 74CAA did not envisage the specific situation of small towns as Kundu and Sarangi pointed out (2005) and the regional inequalities that would be increasing because of decentralization and would even further favour the larger towns (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000). A closer look at the reforms that were undertaken post-decentralisation seems to confirm the fears of those who were concerned by the inherent neglect of small towns in policy framing.

6.2.3. The JNNURM and other schemes

This inherent big city bias against small town in the formulation of urban policies is replicated with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) which was, for Mathur (2007), "the largest initiative of the central government in urban development". JNNURM is a massive scheme launched in December 2005 to upgrade the social and economic infrastructure in cities. Its funding is vastly greater than that for any previous program (150,000 Crores) and it involves a wide-range of urban sector reforms to modernize municipal governance in accordance with the 74th CAA.

It is composed of four main components:

(i) The Sub-Mission for “Urban Infrastructure and Governance” (UIG) administered by the MoUD with a focus on water supply and sanitation, solid waste management, road network, urban transport and redevelopment of cities of national importance;

(ii) The Sub-Mission for Urban Infrastructure Development of Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) administered by the MoUD, with a focus on small towns infrastructure improvement in continuity of the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) and Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme (AUWSP);

(iii) The Sub-Mission for Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP), administered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA) with a focus on integrated development of slums;

(iv) The Sub-Mission for Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) also administered by MHUPA, which was implemented since 1993-94 with the

objective of providing safe and adequate water supply facilities in towns having population less than 20,000 as per 1991 Census.

Although the central government has always been investing in small towns' infrastructures, Mahadevia (2011: 59) pointed out that the financial ambitions of these programs cannot compete with their counterpart) for large cities, Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG). Indeed, within the framework of JNNURM, while 57.64% of investments were available to finance infrastructure projects in 640 small towns (mainly devoted to the renovation of distribution system of drinking water or sanitation), it indeed remains proportionately much lower than the allocation to each of 65 UIG cities. Sama Khan (2012) calculated that these 65 cities that comprise 42% of the total urban population, accounted "for 79% of the total allocations whereas only 21% of allocations [were] attributed to the remaining [towns that accounted] for 57% of the total urban population" (2012: 7).

Observing that out of 5161 urban centres, 4207 are yet to be covered despite a large underutilisation of funds available in JNNURM, Kundu and Samanta explain that this inadequate allocation reveals the technical "inability of the smaller urban local bodies to prepare detailed project reports and generate matching resources" (2011: 63). The authors stress the need to focus on urban governance reforms, building capabilities at the ULB level and developing professional management capabilities of city governments, especially in those in the economically backward states. Kundu and Samanta also deplore "the shift of emphasis from the provision of basic amenities for the poor to integrated multi-storied housing projects [which] inevitably brings in real estate developers and enables them to corner a large part of the slum land that will then be used for commercial purposes" (2011: 9).

More broadly, the country's official auditor – the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) – in its report on "Performance Audit of JNNURM" (2012) has severely criticized the inordinate delays in releasing the matching share to the implementing agencies: only 8.9% of approved projects have been completed since 2005. Furthermore, diversion of funds, ineligible beneficiaries getting benefits, showing undue favour to contractors, lack of monitoring of the schemes and delay in release of funds from the Centre to states were among the several lapses detected by CAG. Despite these criticisms, very little research that throws light on micro-politics, i.e., how programmes like JNNURM impinge on municipal finance and importantly, cities' financial and political autonomy has been carried out. Schemes and policies are also an outcome of political struggles between different scales of government and

thus a focus on the history of these policies – how and why they were formulated - and the factors that shape their practices and institutional arrangements for implementation becomes important. These questions are rarely addressed in the existing literature. In general, in writings on the institutional arrangements, policy process (both on the aspect of formulation and implementation), and how the party politics at different scales (regional, local and central) affects the arrangements for governance are themes that have received little attention in urban research pertaining to Indian cities, in particular small towns where the scale of the district is of specific importance.

Interestingly, the MoUD announced that the next phase of the scheme will “focus on smaller cities which are growing much faster than the larger ones” (The Hindu, 14/12/2012). Sama Khan (2012) remarks that JNNURM funding will in any case be denied to a large part of the small town population living in the Census Towns because they remain under rural administration. On that aspect, Amitabh Kundu (2011a) had already polemically asked how the 2774 new census towns will be included and when will they be declared statutory towns. The financial base of small towns is indeed increasingly dependent on the policies and programmes of central government which question the financial sustainability of the scheme in a long term perspective. One of the major failures of the scheme has been its inability to facilitate the implementation of decentralization reforms agenda through financial incentives. For Sivaramakrishnan (2011a) this is due to the excessive discretion left to States, which appears, for example, in their unwillingness to set up District Planning Committees, whereas the latter could have been directly relevant to small towns. The role that District Planning Committee is supposed to play would have possibly addressed the problem of urban poverty at the district level and taken into consideration the specific case of small towns.

6.3. Local governance in small towns

6.3.1. Urgency for small towns: high level of poverty and absence of infrastructure

First of all, a number of studies point to the higher levels of poverty in small towns: the smaller the population, the higher the percentage of people living below the poverty line (Kundu and Sarangi 2005). The population of small Indian towns has a very low per capita income due to the lack of jobs, low activity in the secondary sector and the growth of informal employment, which makes households highly vulnerable (Kundu, 2005). A study done by Himanshu (2008), based on the National Statistical Survey data, clearly demonstrated that

poverty is higher in small towns than in any other urban centre and even villages: in 1999-2000, 16.6% of households in cities with a population of more than 10 million, were below the poverty line, 24% in cities with a population between 50 000 and 1 million and 35.3% in smaller towns, which is higher than in rural areas (28.7%). Lanjouw and Murgai (2011) found a consistent relationship between poverty levels and the size of urban centres both nationally and regionally. Their research shows that the proportion of poorer groups residing in small and medium towns is higher than that of metros. This situation is explained by the patterns of migration. The cost of migration may influence poorer groups to migrate to small towns rather than to a distant metropolis. At the outset, it may appear that connectivity to metros influences poverty levels in small towns, reinforcing the NEG thesis. However, besides connectivity to metros, Lanjouw and Murgai's work also shows agglomeration benefits arise from endogenous growth and inequalities in infrastructure access and proximity to metropolis can also play a role.

Further, as mentioned in section B, the dynamics in small towns may influence the nature and scale of poverty in the surrounding rural areas. Lanjouw and Murgai (2011b) argue that promoting growth in Non-Farm Employment (NFE) is important for reducing rural poverty since NFE jobs exert an upward pressure on agricultural wages and that 50% of income of households in rural areas comes from these types of jobs. Rural non-farm activity growth (or economy diversification) increases with the increase in consumption levels in nearer urban centres, particularly when it is a small town. Consequently, the authors suggest that policies towards accelerating growth in urban areas may have positive spillovers on rural development and thus can be an important strategy for poverty reduction. Young men from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds with low levels of education are the dominant group among NFE employees. The result may vary from region to region, in Tamil Nadu for example the economies of several small towns that are not located close to metros, are integrated in global economic circuits and provide employment. Nevertheless, the question of youth unemployment is important both in terms of a culture of 'time pass' and forms of work engagement that provide intersections between the rural and the urban world (Young and Jeffrey 2012).

Inequalities are insufficiently captured by income analysis and the factors play a role in the overall social well being. The work of Desai and Dube looks at the role of caste in contemporary India and highlights that "on the whole this table shows greatest inequalities in

developed villages and smaller cities, while the least developed villages and metrocities show lower levels of caste inequalities” (Desai and Dubey, 2011). In infrastructure as well, the differences between smaller settlement and metrocities are significant, the percentage of households not equipped with basic services increases systematically as one moves down in the size of towns (Dubey and Gangopadhyay 1999). A survey by Raghupathi (2005) for the National Institute of Urban Affairs confirmed that the coverage of basic urban services in metropolitan cities is clearly higher than in any smaller town and as Kundu et al (1999) noted, it worsens in the least developed states, and especially those which have experienced rapid urbanization such as Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Inequalities have been further entrenched by the lack of access to institutional funds. As noted by Mahadevia and Mukherjee (2003), “the smaller municipalities having less income are getting less grants”. Kundu and Bhatia (2002) pointed out that there is indeed a wide disparity in the availability of these institutional funds between large and small cities, pointing out that 50% of funding from HUDCO had been directed towards large cities, even when the development of small towns had been one of the stated objectives. The adverse finding of the UIDSSMT further illustrates this metropolitan bias in the financing of basic urban services. Therefore, Kundu (2009) keeps advocating for a better understanding of small towns by planners, in order to prevent a scenario where “the small towns of less developed countries continue to live in inhumane conditions, without clean water, no toilet and no electricity” (Kundu 2009:169).

6.3.2. Lack of capacity: weak human resources and poor finances

In her book *How India’s Small Towns Live (or Die)*, Paromita Shastri (2011) addressed the questions of human resources and finances in an extensive study of 29 small towns (mostly in North India, her case studies are spread over the states of Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar). She pointed out that largely due to the imperfect implementation of the 74th amendment, there are some common problems faced by the majority of small towns, like a finance gap and a lack of planning which are linked to their weak institutional capacities and the sub-optimality of their administration. She therefore states that small towns are a drag on the financial health of municipalities on the national level and the financial base of local governments is increasingly dependent on the policies and programmes of the central government.

Invariably, many small municipalities run deficits and are highly dependent on transfers from states. As Kalpana Sharma (2012) mentioned, the finance gap happens because of a lack of

capacity of small municipalities to raise their own revenues, simply because they do not have the manpower to collect the few taxes that they have been entitled to. Indeed, most of these urban local bodies do not know how to maintain basic accounts and elected representatives are unable to read budget. As noted by Joshi based on first hand observations, the recent accounting reforms [National Accounting Manual of 2005] is difficult to implement in small towns because the capacity of municipal bodies is far below the required level of qualification and concepts of double entry bookkeeping are still missing: "All the thought, agenda technicality and practices involved in the launching of the recently achieved municipal accounting reforms in India so far seem to have very scant understanding or concern for the extent of impoverishment, problems and specific needs of the typical Indian small or medium towns" (2003: 110).

As a result, as Bercegol (2012) remarked, the little funds available are spent in salaries and maintenance, and consequently, there is no money left for development purposes. Furthermore, because of this lack of capacity, these bodies are not only unable to raise their own resources but they are also deprived of all access to borrowing, and they depend heavily on grants-in-aids from the state and central governments to finance the delivery of basics urban services (which for Shastri (2011) can be a real drag on the financial health of municipalities on the national level).

As Sivaramakrishnan, Kundu and Singh noted (2011), it leads to a vicious circle where the poor performance of basic services deters private parties from investing in such towns, and as a consequence from bringing new sources of revenues for the municipal local bodies. Shastri (2011) summarized the situation of weak finances and fiscal overdependence by saying that municipal bodies are handicapped "by birth" and this absence of financial autonomy is a kind of subversion of the process of democratic decentralisation. Variations across states exist, partly because there are varying rules established by each State Finance Commission. A detailed analysis conducted by Mahadevia and Mukherjee (2003) of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab confirms important differences. For instance, regarding the ability to raise their own revenue, there is a very strong bias for metropolitan cities in Gujarat, while the better financial management of smaller urban local bodies in Punjab facilitates the growth of small towns. At the other end of the spectrum, urban local bodies of Andhra Pradesh are extremely dependent on the State. The manner in which municipal reforms to accelerate the adoption of new accounting procedure, to amend property tax structure, and to abolish octroi system is

implemented differ across states but their effects on small towns are not well known. Shah's work on small towns in Gujarat shows the differential ability to introduce municipal reforms. In this case, the author notes that municipal reforms have contributed to improving municipal accountability and transparency of decision making but the power is shifted in favour of bureaucracy, particularly of the commissioner.

6.3.3. Is it possible to define small town governance?

There exists a large gap in the research on the practices of urban planning and development of small towns. Many studies on planning and land development focusing on metropolises suggest that over the years the practice of planning has shifted from the creation of a master plan to a series of projects often funded by the central government (Benjamin et al. 2008; Ruet et al. 2009) but no comparable study exists for smaller towns. Another research gap relates to the institutional arrangements for planning. The scarce available research on small towns argue that the lack of capacity precludes also the small municipalities from undertaking local planning which still lies de facto with centralised bodies and state agencies. Bercegol (2012) remarked, in the context of western Uttar Pradesh, that it is rare to come across a town where land use has been planned and that in most cases, small towns do not even possess an accurate town map and can only do non-technical tasks as simple development works (laying down streets and gutters, collecting garbage...). For Sharma (2012), "it is evident there are no rules" and this absence of planning norms leads to anomalies which can be dangerous for households and especially for those in the poor settlements which are less covered by basic urban services. On the other hand, traditionally, the municipalities or the respective panchayats were in charge of regulating land development and infrastructure provision. Two questions arise regarding the changes in the mode of governance in recent times. First, in localities that have recently been upgraded from rural to urban area, how has the reclassification impacted the local bodies' ability to address planning issues? Second, what are the institutional arrangements for regulating urban development? In the case of a settlement in Haryana, which was recently upgraded from village to urban, Zérah (2013) shows how the planning by urban authorities or promoters concerns only the newly developed area and leaves out the original village and the self-constructed colonies, creating a disjointed city. Since the institutional arrangements at the State and local levels and the relationships between the various institutions involved, including private actors and consultants differ,

further research on spatial transformation and planning would be necessary both at the micro and at the district level.

In this context, both Bercegol (2012) and Shastri (2011) agree that most of the reforms promoted by JNNURM appear “disconnected” from the realities of the small towns. While a lot of emphasis was put on e-governance, accounting practices, tax reforms, user charges and provision of basic services, empirical progress is weak in small towns which, often, are simply not able to draft any Detail Project Report by themselves. Nevertheless, the actual dogmas usually neglects these issues of weak capacity, by promoting for instance “innovative” financial mechanisms, such as land banks and land pooling (Sahasranaman 2012), which seem difficult to achieve for the moment. But, on the other hand, some surveys have pointed out some more positive effects of the reforms.

More broadly, despite all the reforms launched since the 1990s, there is still little research that has focused on how it impacts the health and wellbeing of the city. The studies available show the range of infrastructure deficiencies as municipalities are financially weak but the material practices of service provision (water, solid waste management and drainage etc.), which have shifted to the local government, remain understudied (with the exception of Bercegol 2012). While there are many case studies that have looked at the problems in a particular city or the failure of larger municipalities, there is need for further research on how service provision is specifically organised in small towns. Who are the key players in shaping policies related to it at the local level? It is important to address these questions to draw any conclusion about urban governance issues, particularly the functioning of urban local bodies.

As Broadway and Shah (2009) point out, new institutions and financial instruments are emerging as the primary modes of governance in different scales of Indian cities. Urban reforms have also resulted in the creation of new processes whereby governmental and non-governmental agents compete for funds. Although the architecture of new institutions and its effects have been documented in the context of metrocities, not much is known on this aspect beyond these large cities. In understanding the role of the state in shaping space, it is useful to map the various institutions involved. Besides the local bodies, special purpose agencies (Sharma 2003) at different scales influence the planning and investment decisions in smaller urban centres. Not much research has been carried out on the changing nature of the State, the new institutional arrangement and the resultant state-society relationship in the context of spatial issues.

6.3.4. Politics and the state-citizen relationships: what beyond metrocities?

There appears to be little research on the aspect of citizen–state relationship in the context of small towns in India. Several studies have explored this aspect either in the metro context or in rural areas (Fuller and Bénéï 2000; Chatterjee 2004; Budhya and Benjamin 2000; Berenschot 2010; Zimmer 2011). Some of these studies stress the importance of focussing on everyday practices and relationships for a nuanced understanding of citizen-state relationship (Fuller and Bénéï 2000; Corbridge 2005; Harris 2005; Gupta 1995; Tarlo 2000). Anthropology of the Indian state documented by these studies illustrates the embeddedness of the State in society and consequently, the blurred boundaries of state and society (Fuller and Bénéï 2000; Gupta –). It also highlights how state representatives themselves have differential relationships with the state apparatus and constantly (re-)negotiate their access to state resources (Tarlo 2001; Bawa 2009). These findings have implication for theorizing the characteristics of Indian State and its relationship with citizens. The studies also point to the importance of local state representatives in reinterpreting policies designed at higher governance levels such as the State or the Central governments.

Another relevant finding from several studies is the significance of citizens' relationship with the institutional space of municipality and with political representatives to claim resources and jobs (Fuller and Bénéï 2000; Chatterjee, 2004). Chatterjee's (2004) thesis on political society and civil society reflect the differences in the way that citizens from varying socioeconomic backgrounds engage with the State. The former, i.e., political society is critical for a majority of citizens, particularly the poor, in securing resources from the State. A similar theme is echoed in Benjamin (2000) concept of circuits of state-citizens engagement where he states that poor and non-poor groups engage with the state(s) through different circuits. While the former forge alliances with field bureaucrats and elected representatives to lobby with the local government, non-poor groups engage with senior bureaucrats at the local and higher scales of the State. This study highlights the importance of municipal, institutional and political space for the majority of citizens to negotiate with the State for resources, and for shaping the rules of urban economy and land development.

Several other works on Indian cities have underscored the significance of political clientelism for small economies and the majority of citizens to claim land and other resources, shape rules or influence investments in physical and social infrastructure (Baken 2003; De Wit and Berner 2009; Sharma 2003) and have also shown their reliance on elected representatives and

field bureaucrats to tackle their individual and collective problems. As outcomes for citizens are reached through these negotiation processes, they are hardly ever stable. Instead, citizens frequently need to engage in interactions with local politicians and bureaucrats in order to secure access to resources such as public services, urban space, or government funds (Zimmer 2011).

The dearth of studies on smaller settlements has led to an under-exploration of the state-citizen relationships. Describing the political economy of small towns as 'predatory capitalism', Harriss-White states that local political space, dominated by the local economic agents, works against the interests of poor groups. She also mentions the importance of clientelist bargaining in the policy formulation and implementation processes. This is an area for further research. A related question is to what extent citizens of small towns but also their elected representatives at local levels are able to negotiate the regulations and schemes that are not in alignment with their interests and the channels by which they do so. Along with the question of predatory capitalism and patronage some authors raised the issue of local corruption which can either fritter away already scarce resources (for Shastri 2011) or be apprehended as a necessary lubricant to smoothen the municipal work (for Bercegol 2012), both of which, are attributes of small town governance. For these two authors, the cooperation/conflicts between elected representatives and executives within the local body can be seen as a facilitator or as a major roadblock for the town development. Bhide (2011) in her work on Nashik also highlights the role of other local actors, often less visible in small towns, such as journalists.

7. Conclusion and gaps

This literature review was aimed at exploring some of the existing literature on small towns in India, centred around general and updated debates on the question. It has covered a number of aspects of interest to the "Subaltern Urbanization" research project, in particular economic dynamics, migrations, social changes and governance. However other important topics, such as small towns in a historical or cultural perspective have been left out. Consequently, this literature review does not claim to be extensive. Further, from a methodological point of view, we collectively decided to provide detailed arguments on each of the topics covered rather than a more extensive annotated review. We also acknowledge that the present literature review hasn't covered at all the very rich gray literature and set of reports existing in different Ministries, research centres, and schools of planning and universities in India.

We therefore hope that this literature review will be a useful tool for other researchers interested in small towns and will then be expanded further. We are also aware of a number of gaps that remain, either because of our own interpretation of the existing literature, or because of the fact that research has bypassed important topics or solely looked at them with a lens focused on metropolitan cities and a critique of metrocentricity.

Among these gaps, for instance, further research is needed to better understand the role of migration in the dynamics of urban growth and the spatial distribution of urban poverty. The situation in small towns is not homogenous and factors driving poverty or affluence, specifically the influence of exogenous factors like spillovers from the metro, need to be explained and will lead to a better understanding of the potential redistribution of the benefits of growth.

Governance and politics are key issues as well to understand the relationship between the state and the poorer groups but research which has attempted to clarify these everyday relationships to the state have either focused on large cities or on rural settlements. Decentering research towards smaller towns and large census towns is a must.

Linkages between the small towns and their surrounding rural areas have been changing over the last two decades and need to be studied further. Works such as the longitudinal study on Arni are the exception and do not enable us to make sweeping generalizations on the ongoing transformation of rural-urban linkages.

The governance section has clearly highlighted the reality of a politics of classification for which a number of authors have proposed explanations. Nevertheless, understanding what this politics of classification entails in different cases and different states might lead to clearer explanations as to why urbanization numbers can differ.

This is also important because this distinction at times can prevent adequate analysis of service provision. The classification that distinguishes ST from CT prevents a clear analysis (for instance related to poverty or infra provision) since settlements that might share similar characteristics will be treated totally differently in databases.

Two questions arise regarding the effects of such programmes. One, the creation of SEZs has been accompanied by large scale acquisition particularly in the villages surrounding small and medium towns. Criticisms on SEZ formation in the metro context is relevant here, notably because their location is rapidly transforming peripheral small localities and minor places along development corridors. The ways in which the policy of mega-projects has transformed the political economy of small towns, as well as the livelihood strategies of the rural population affected by these acquisitions, has received little attention. Such interventions may also have significant effect on the land markets in the surrounding region. Understanding the land market dynamics, the shift toward speculative real estate, and the role of the State in shaping these dynamics are themes for further research.

Another gap in understanding relates to the practices of urban planning and development of small towns. A historical perspective on this aspect is limited. Many studies on planning and land development focusing on metropolises suggest that over the years the practice of planning has shifted from the creation of a master plan to a series of projects often funded via central government schemes. In the light of this criticism, it will be useful to map the existing practices of spatial planning and development and their implications for governance as well as for poverty alleviation.

These gaps as well as several other unanswered questions related to small town dynamics are now informed by the programme "Subaltern Urbanisation in India". The edited book to be published at the end of 2015 by Springer India will give access to the results and analysis. Our debates around the state of literature, presented here, constituted the starting point in 2010.

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