

## ***Title: WHO'S CITY?***

### ***Urban Regeneration of Fishermen Community in A Century Old Indian Metropolis To Create A Sustainable And Liveable Society At Mahim Koliwada, Mumbai.***

Subtopic: **Responsible design and sustainable society**

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## **Abstract**

The year 2009 shall remain a milestone year in the century probably as the year which witnessed the major shift of diaspora in urban centres for the first time in human history.

Does the growing city with an economic disparity and tremendous polarization of amenities really considers their criticality and social aspects, deeply rooted within these communities thriving in the vast, continually changing physical fabric? In this context it is also essential to understand the socio-spatial negotiations happening and may happen ahead between the physically growing city and the everyday life, work live relationship of these invisible communities within the city.

This paper in the first stage studies and presents a narrative on one such community (koli community) and their spatio-temporally manifested physical morphology (mahim koliwada) along with the allied planning framework and sociocultural attributes.

The second stage is to hypothesise and demonstrate collective strategies that would re-assert the community rightfully, with dignity in the city ensuring there is a symbiotic and humane relationship between the city and these blind-spots through an urban renewal and transformation process putting the people at centre. It is important to reach to a rationale, considering existing planning framework and creating new possibilities to ensure holistic responsible design strategies and create a sustainable society.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Cultural Spaces, Urban Planning

## 1. Introduction

The notion that 'There is a time and place for everything' gets carried into a set of prescriptions which replicate the social order by assigning social meanings to spaces and times." (Harvey, excerpts from conditions of post modernity, 1980)

Indian societies are essentially formed by the physical/static entities and non-physical attributes along with the people and collectively communities thriving within them and together they form a landscape of plurality. The container and the contained is in a continuous state of dialogue and negotiation intercepted by enactment of everyday processes of life forming a coalesce of a vibrant social scape.

"Nothing disappears completely ... In space, what came earlier continues to underpin what follows ... Pre-existing space underpins not only durable spatial arrangements, but also representational spaces and their attendant imagery and mythic narratives."(Lefebvre, the production of space, 1974).

With the growth and gentrification of cities, old-native quarters of the city and the immediate neighbourhood faces immense physical as well as spatio-social pressure from the city. The social fabric of such neighbourhoods exhibits a wide gamut of informal and basic functions. The plural nature of such informal, highly associative neighbourhoods give rise to multiple activities and a vibrant social profile. With time these spots in the city allows gentrification to a great extent, various social groups get juxtaposed against each other, start building house followed by customization of the immediate peripheries and forms a self-organized, spatio-temporally evolved morphological collage. Occupational forces acting from within the core of such neighbourhoods play an important role in shaping the physical profile and thereby resulting in a dynamic and robust society. Cities are not static entities, just like any other living organism, they grow. They evolve, change shape and often degenerate into ruins as described by Lewis Mumford too through his proposition of 6 polis. In such older neighbourhoods of city, with time the paradox of sacredness and pollution, urbanism and ecology, resource overutilization and social sustainability is under question. Often the generalised and unchecked influence of morphological alterations, socio-cultural attributes within the entity lead to the degraded condition of such neighbourhoods. The informal and marginal groups who caters to the urban nouveau classes experience inhumane living conditions, their occupations are under threat and incompatible land use has further intensified this pressing issue. Spaces though respond to the immediate needs of the residents are non-resilient to changing demands of the society at large and are often inefficient. Cities in India are ageing. The 1901 census says there were about 1830 urban centres in the country. This indicates more than 1800 cities in India are centuries old. This ageing of cities has resulted, in their core areas, high density-built fabric, physical degradation of buildings, and conflict of land use, ecological pollution, poor accessibility and lack of character.

1950 -1970 witnessed force demolition and relocation common in many states. Maharashtra government created Maharashtra vacate lands at 1975 which was punitive for the non-privileged section of society.it ignored the basic grassroots level economic logic where internal migration is the key catalyst of development and empowerment in an agrarian country like India where agriculture is a seasonal phenomenon.

Various combinations of rent control and opaque distorted land markets were created as a resultant. Stiffening building byelaws/regulation and low FSI have resulted in the dearth of low cost and affordable housing in Indian metropolitan cities.

World Bank funded slum upgradation program in 1985 which was inclusive and was looking to lease slum land to Cooperative groups of slum dwellers along with loans for housing improvement. It aimed towards more of a community-oriented participation in the development of the local physical environment.

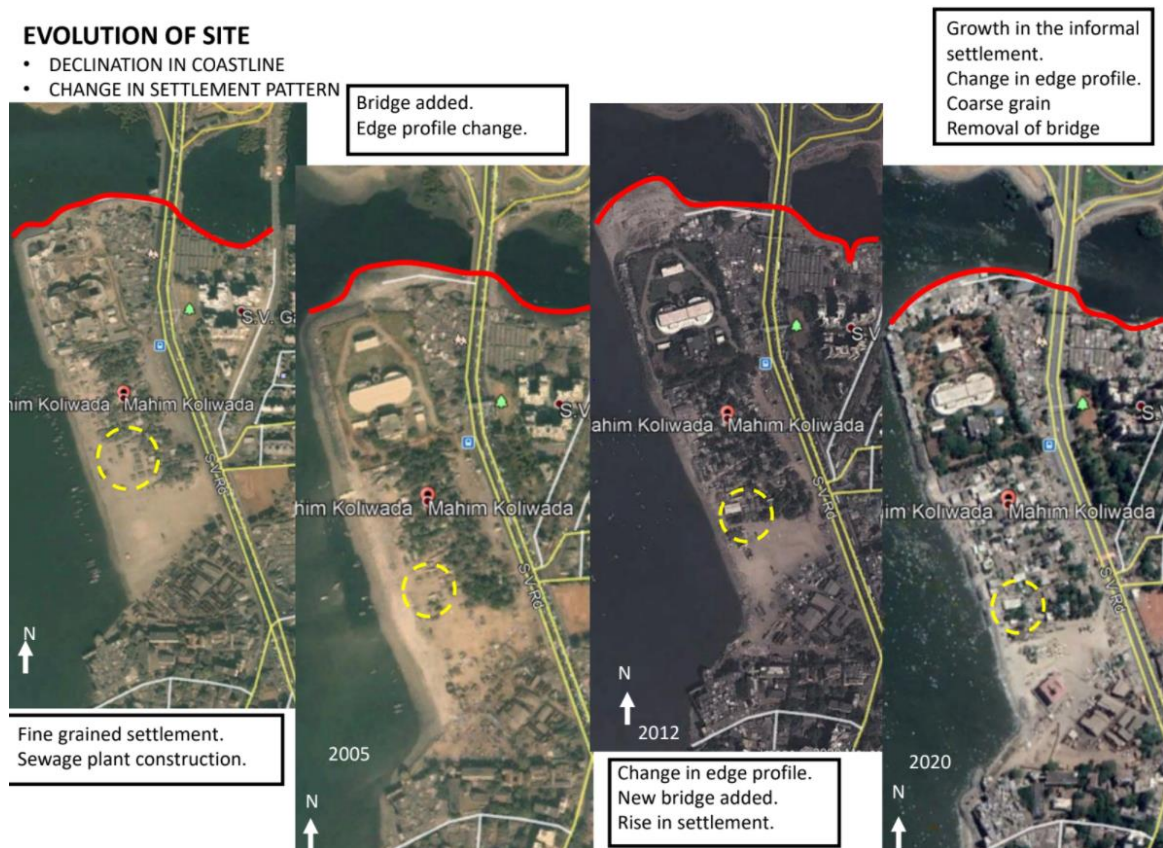
25 slum rehabilitation schemes under SRA (slum rehabilitation authority) in Maharashtra looked out to bring private developers on board in the process of developing housing. The idea was if they could build in-situ to pukka housing for residence of slum like Dharavi they would develop the rest as they found suitable. The 2004 DRP took a further step ahead in which they piped in private developers that would rehouse 300 square feet apartment towers.

This was an unsuccessful attempt because of inadequate data and lack of land within the Dharavi precinct coupled with failure to take slum representative on board thereby ignoring the informal economic networks which is a crucial component for the whole planning process.

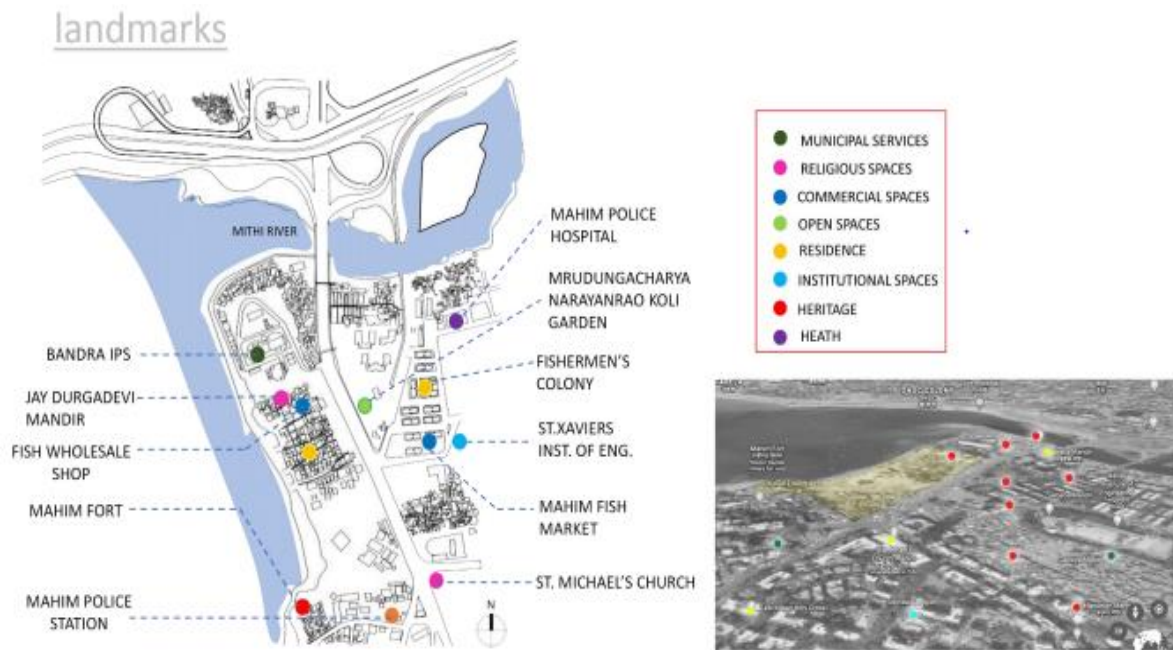
The government of Maharashtra finally came up with SDCR (special development control rules) for gaothans (urban villages) and koliwadadas.

**Mahim koliwada:**

The area around Mahim Fort is known as Mahim koliwada and remains as a fishing village of small dwelling units and impoverished huts, rarely visited by outsiders.



(Image: Arti p, bvcoa design studio 2020. studio coordinators: Pritam dey. Swapna D)



(Image: Dhruv p, bvcoa design studio 2020. Studio coordinators: Pritam dey, Swapna d.

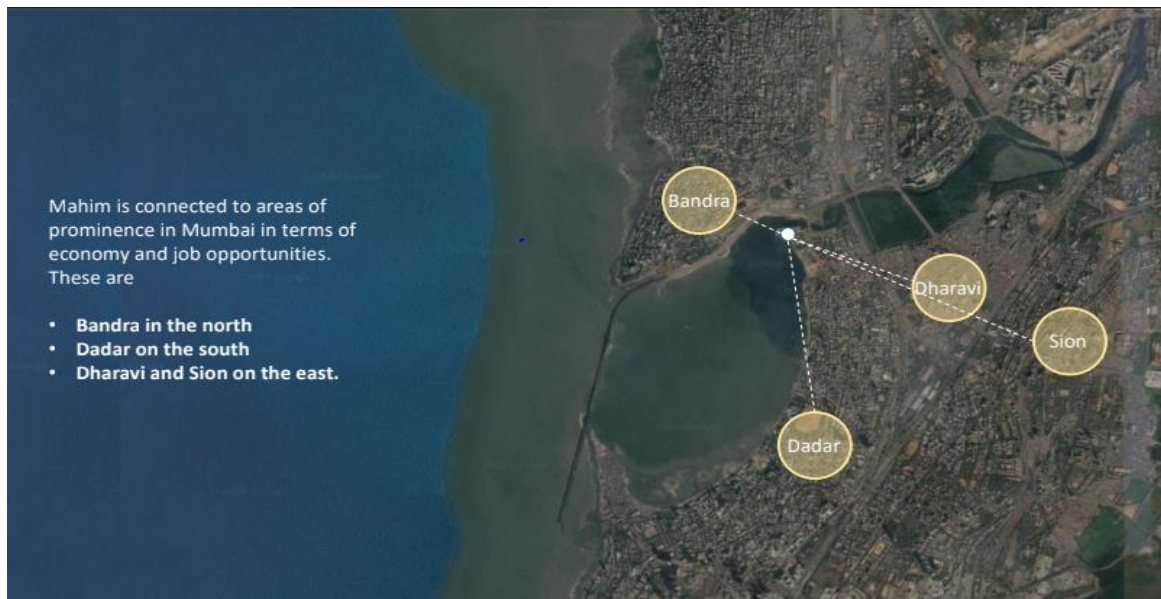
With barely any amenities present and limited social infrastructure basic necessities like water supply and other facilities are often shared and if one gets too close to the sea, most houses do not have toilets.

The kolis are the original inhabitants of Bombay. They are fisherfolk and koliwada means habitat of the kolis. They sell fish and as one walk around mahim koliwada there is a strong sensorial feel of the presence of commercial fish-oriented activity. The boats parked on the main road itself passing through the koliwada, fishing nets drying and the strong smell that prevails in the air. The land is not only home to kolis but also attract people because of the scenic beauty and historical heritage value (Mahim fort). However, the community is dwindling, their land is being encroached by the capitalistic growth of the city and ecology is hugely compromised. As a result, mahim koliwada in its present context is in a vulnerable state of existence due to the forces of the city.

Kolis the Mumbai Metropolitan Region has three sub-communities:

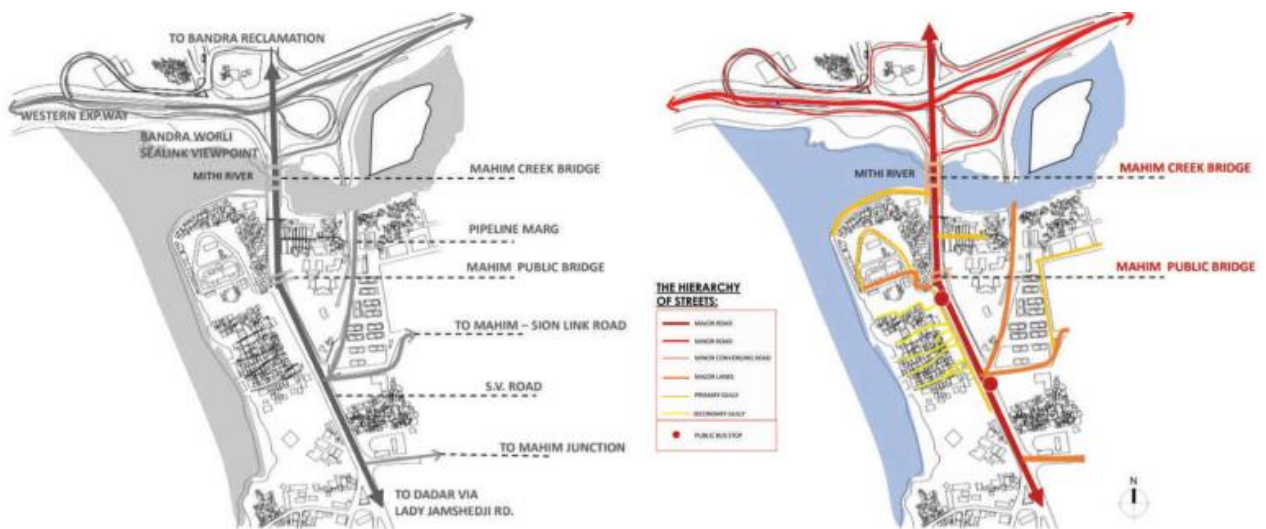
- 1) Son Kolis, folks who are residents of South Mumbai, known as the original native population,
- 2) Mahadeo Kolis, who reside in the periphery of Mumbai, as in Vasai (Thane District), and considered as ancient migrants and now as native of these places, and
- 3) Malhar Kolis, who reside in hills of the MMR.

The fisherman community moved up and down the western coast Of India never really settling in any place but in 12th century when King Pratapbimb established his Kingdom mahikawati he invited 66 kulas or tribes to be part of his new Kingdom. This is the earliest history of the present Mahim koliwada.



*Presence of 3 most prominent commercial areas in Mumbai in proximity to the mahim koliwada makes it one of the most sought-after land Patch in Mumbai from real estate perspective. (Image courtesy: pranjali mali, bvcoa design studio 2020. Studio coordinator-pritam dey,Swapna d)*

Mahim coastline is approximately 8600 metre long bounded on either sides by the worli sea link. The southern tip has the worli koliwada and the northern eastern part of the Bay has the mahim koliwada. The mithi River drains into the Bay from the North eastern corner. The mangroves in this region serve as an important ecological zone and it is the breeding ground



for a lot of species of fishes and lobsters .the mangroves are currently retreated into the mouth of the mithi River and due to the pollution caused by the slums and industries dumping untreated waste directly into the river,the area is ecologically extremely threatened.

*(Image courtesy: joel jutsna, bvcoa design studio 2020. Studio coordinator-pritam dey,Swapna d)*

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



1 Housing condition

- G and G+1 kachha/unfinished houses
- Use of corrugated and tin sheets for roofing
- Closely situated



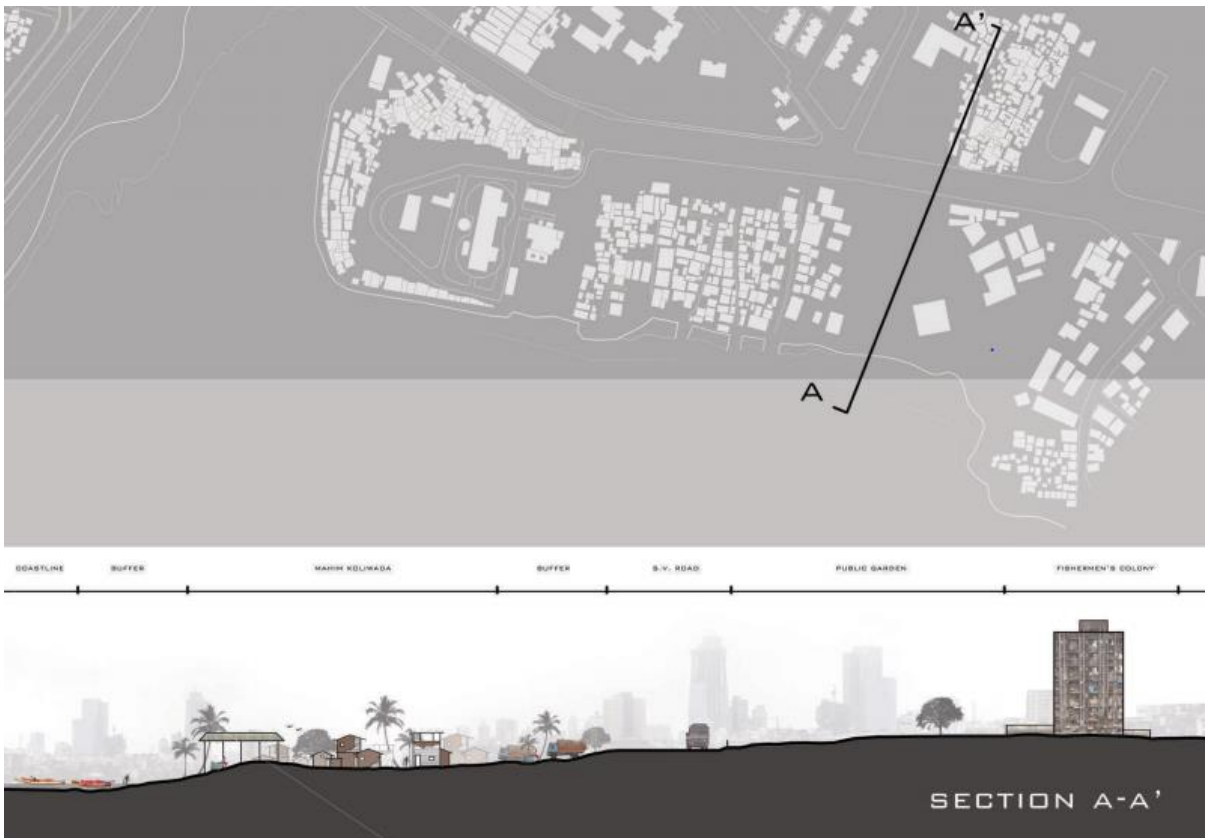
2 Streets or gully

- 2-3 m narrow lanes or gully's connected to highway as well as coastline
- unfinished or unpaved gully's



3 Open space

- Open ground just besides the settlement use by community for social gathering like aagr-koli festival, ganesh utsav etc.



## A plethora of physical and social issues:

### 4 Waste management & sanitation



- In waste management the dust bin is placed near 1<sup>st</sup> lane but it is not enough and the trash is spread all over coastline
- Only 1 public toilet present adjacent to highway which is also in poor structural condition

- The water pump is placed between the lanes and water is then stored to the local water tank



### 5 Water supply

### 6 Coastline



- Coastline is in poor maintenance
- lot of trash and toxic pollutants are present on coastline
- Decrease in mangrove area

The koliwada suffers from a series of infrastructural woes with limited amenities making this as one of black spots within the city. loss of cultural identity because of rampant housing encroachment, sanitary issues, no dedicated space for fishing related activities and lack of safety for the community has plagued the koliwada conditions and also sewage waste directly finds its way into the sea. The recently developed BKC (Bandra Kurla Complex) further eclipsed this area and ecological aspect which includes the coastal belt and bank of river *Mithi* hugely compromised.

(Image courtesy: yash c., BVCOA design studio 2020. studio coordinator: Pritam dey / Swapna d)

## Mahim Koliwada saga.....stepping at present what is the way ahead?

### Population and Household Data:

According to primary source (Mr. Bhushan Nijai, 37, Mahim Koliwada, Mumbai), the total population of Mahim Koliwada is around 15,000, which spread across five nearby locations in Mahim. Out of five different locations of mahim koliwada, our study area is near to sea which accommodated more than 700 households. This count further divides into two sub category one with huge carpet area 1000 sq. ft. of each that is 212 households which accommodated 1100 person approximate and second one is more than 500 houses, population of nearly 3000 person of 200 sq. ft. to 500 sq. ft of carpet area. Small commercial shops which are in the frontage of houses are approximately 50 in no.

### Importance of Woman, Community:

According to primary source (Mr. Sanket Koli, 35, worli koliwada, Mumbai) Women plays very significant role in fishing community, they are the most active member in the family for fish drying and selling. Approximately 20% of total population stays in joint family and 80% in nucleated families.

### **Restrictions to ‘open access’ and Land Economics:**

According to primary source (Mr. Bhushan Nijai, 37, Mahim Koliwada, Mumbai) Fishermen in Mahim voiced their concern over the restrictions on open access to sea laid by the Marine Fishery Bill, 2009. As per 1771 gazette notification during British era British has given free access to fishermen in the sea to 5 nautical miles but as per new bill there are restriction. Since the ownership feeling to the sea has vanished and it is the main concern raised by fisherman. They have spoken about their panic that they would be removed from the coastal villages for establishing new industries or new building projects to benefit builder lobby and Industrialist in various platforms. The beach tourism on the shores are developing to benefit surrounding area population, they are high income group and it would turn into tourist attraction point for foreigner as well Indian tourist, due to which fishermen would become refugees in their own land.

### **2. Community housing and Public Participation**

Most of the koliwada redevelopment projects in Mumbai are described by high real estate value of the settlement area, here land economics plays an important role to develop special sea facing residential or commercial areas. These proposals were built by developer in very few koliwadadas like Sion, Mahul and Masjid Bandar. Authorities like MHADA, MMRDA and SRA can approve the redevelopment of koliwada, if they own the rights over these lands but these lands are owned by kolis and to develop that land authorities need consents from them. As per annexure II of DCR 33(10) of SRA policies, once consent from the majority (70% of total existing tenements of that land parcel) is proven by developer, then SRA scheme can implement on that particular land parcel.

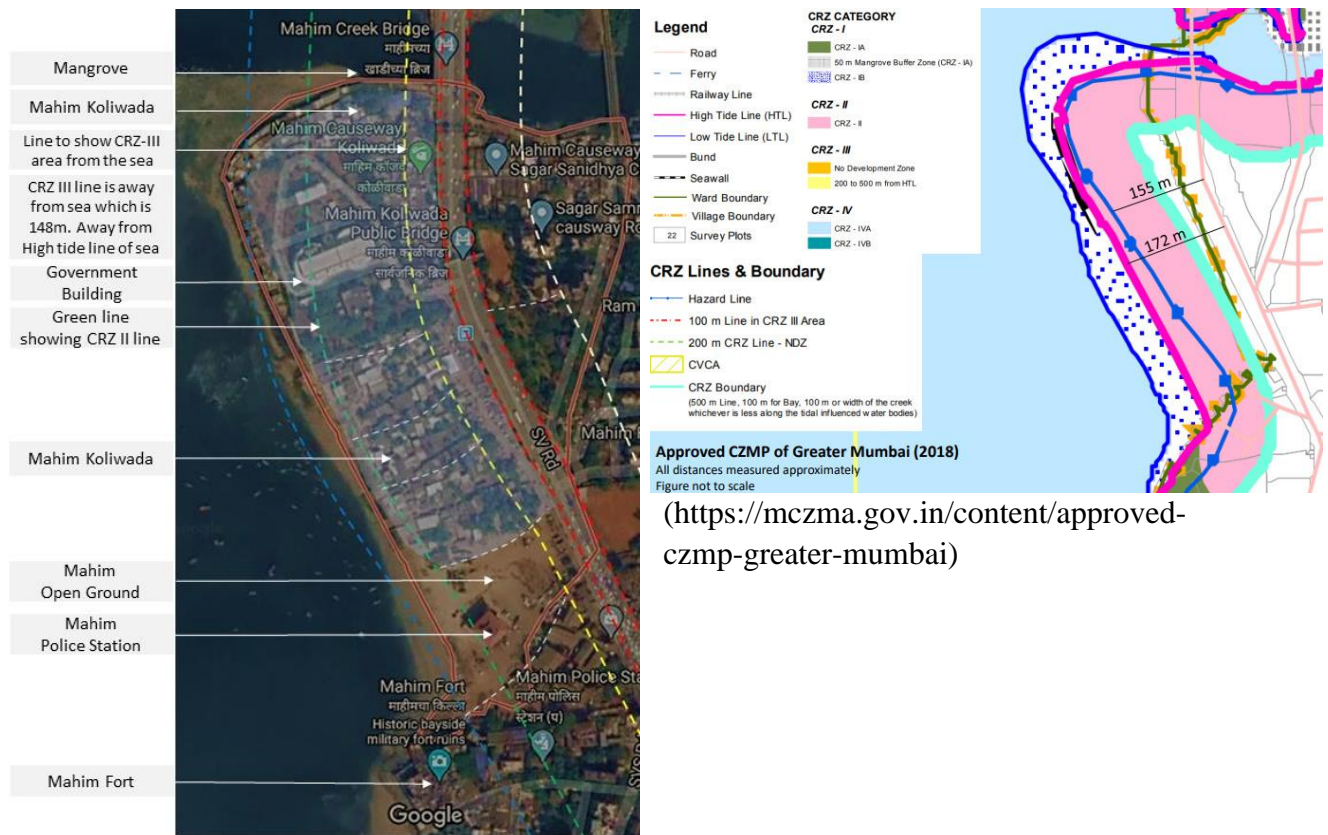
According to Berkeley Scholar David Dowall, Mumbai saw a sharp increase of 720% in land value between the periods of 1966-1981. Post liberalization in the 1990s, real estate markets become more speculative as land values shot up, owing to the burgeoning demand; thus, increasing real estate value four times between 1998 and 2012. (29, ISBN: 978-93-81444-18-4)

*According to primary source (Mr. Girish Salgaonkar, Thane) Developers attracted due to real estate market of that land parcel and no focus has been given to the community requirements, which bounces back with the negative impact to the overall growth of that particular area and that is why koliwadadas/Gaothan/Adiwasipadas are left undeveloped for so many years.*

### **Environmental and Coastal Zone Management concern:**



As per Maharashtra coastal Zone Management Authority this area falls under CRZ-III, as koliwada are considered to be special planning zone so they are not completely dependent on CRZ norms for development.



As per DCPR 2034, Reconstruction/Redevelopment of Koliwada area FSI requirement for reconstruction/redevelopment of any property under koliwada/ adiwasi pada i.e. on land shall be as follows:

- (a) For plots facing on roads below 9 m width but more than 6.0 m, permissible FSI is 1.5
- (b) for plot fronting on road width of 9 m and above (existing or proposed), additional 0.5 FSI shall be allowed for commercial use subject to condition that margin and parking space as required under these Regulations are provided.

Provided that for (a) & (b) above, consumed FSI of existing buildings, utilized authorized shall be permitted.

(Page 255, Development Control and promotion Regulations 2034, MCGM))

So in our study area it gives freedom to add 0.5 addition FSI in permissible FSI of 1.5 that FSI will be 2.

### 3. Why Slum Rehabilitation Scheme?

SRA projects give wide range of options for any developer to develop that land parcel at own cost but in return it provides Transferable Development rights to the developer. Basically, koliwada lands are not owned by government neither they are completely individual koli's residents. As koliwada is first and original inhabitants of the city they demand to the

government to take step to preserve these communities. The builder lobby in responsibility with civic officials have done a lot of destruction to gaothans.

*According to primary source (Ar. Sanman Koli, 28, Thane) Koliwada community is against slum rehabilitation schemes because builder lobby along with civic officials have done a lot of damage to koli community in past, one of the example is mahul koliwada and masjid bandar koliwada. As per information, these settlements were relocated under SRA scheme long back and from sea edge they have be shifted to the city core in chwal and SRA building which leads to occupational loss to entire community.*

### **Excerpt of SRA:**

1. Social infrastructure and amenities spaces.

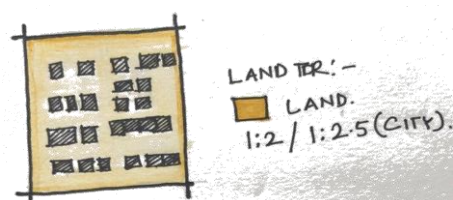
As per DCR 33(10) any project should consider minimum 5 amenities spaces that is as following:

- I. Balwadi, our site requirement is minimum 4 Balwadis.
- II. Health care Centre or outpost, Aaganwadi for kids, skill development centre for empowerment, women entrepreneurship centre, yuvakendra for young crowd or library of size 27.88 sq. m for every multiple tenements or part of 250 tenements. As per calculations mahim koliwada requires minimum 3 anganwadi for small kids of society or other spaces as mentioned above.
- III. Society office for every 100 rehab tenements as per calculation our site demands minimum 6 society offices.
  - i. Fitness Centre like gymnasium, SDC i.e. Skill Development Centre, Women Entrepreneurship Centre especially for housewives, Yuva Kendra for young crowd.
  - ii. A community hall for rehab/tenement bldg. of the Project as a part of the rehabilitation component. The area of such hall shall be 2% of rehab or tenement built up area of all the buildings or 200 sq. m whichever is less.

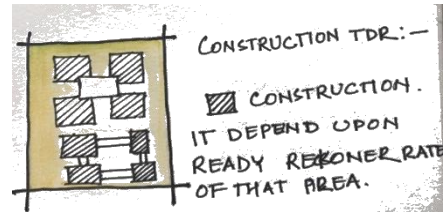
Amenities like Aaganwadi for small kids, health center or small hospitals or outpost, community hall or gymnasium / fitness center, skill development center, women entrepreneurship center, yuvakendra for young crowd or library society office, Balwadi/s and religious structures, social infrastructure like School, Dispensary and Gymnasium or fitness centre run by government Authority or Charitable Trust in the rehab component not calculated to the Floor Space Index (FSI) even while computing permissible FSI on site. (218, 219, Development Control and promotion Regulations 2034, MCGM)

### **Transferable Development Rights (TDR)**

- a. **Land TDR:** Earlier land TDR ratio was 1:1 now considering current real estate values the new DCPR 2034 have given more TDR ratio that is 1:2 for suburbs and 1:2.5 for Town.



- b. **Construction TDR:** As per Mumbai DCPR 2034 Slum Redevelopment Scheme under clause 3.11 of Regulation 33(10) the Construction TDR ratio was 1:1.33 but due to changing economics it has been justified by ready reckoner rate.



Additionally As per new DCPR 2034 Slum Redevelopment Scheme under clause 3.11 of Regulation 33(10) the Construction Amenity TDR shall be increased by 1.35 times the TDR generated as per above formula.

(132, Development Control and promotion Regulations 2034, MCGM)

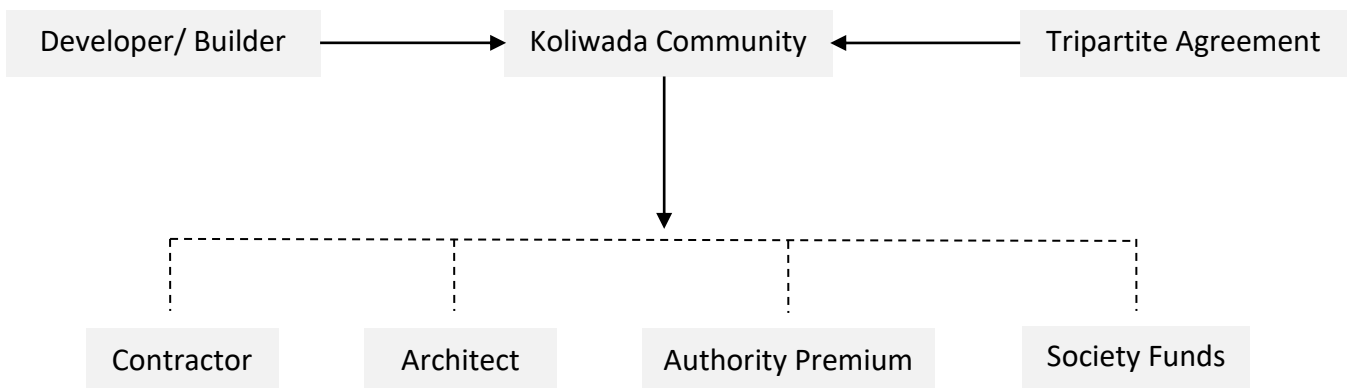
**SRA Deficiencies for koliwada:**

As per DCR 33(10) each qualified residential or residential cum commercial slum dweller shall be eligible to a tenement or project effected rehab of carpet area of 27.88 sq. m (300 sq. ft.)(211, DCPR 2034). In koliwadass the land ownership is of koliwada and they are living in houses with bigger carpet areas and sometime lesser than proposed Slum Rehabilitation Authority carpet areas too.

**4. Proposed Model:**

We propose a participatory model where Government agencies along with builder/Developer will develop a model which will benefit Community more. We are considering SRA policies for the same where the consideration has been given to amenities at the same time the builder/ developer who is giving ready flat/houses to the community will get TDR in return. We are trying to evoke tenement size of 27.88 sq. m. which is constant for every SRA scheme, here we are talking about community improvement and that will happen with appropriate approach.

**Koliwada Redevelopment Model (Participatory Model) - Stakeholder Map for Mahim koliwada Redevelopment Model**



- Preferences should be considered for people of koliwada community.
- Sufficient society funds.
- Same size of carpet area for flats.

Saleable component if any:

- To be decided by the society.
- Rate per sq. ft.
- Types of members.
- Size of unit.

In this model we discussed the role of koliwada community as one of the stakeholder and they are going to be one of the decision maker and will decide the requirement of community in that land.

Developer will advance that land and would build new buildings for koliwada as per norms, rules and regulations but they will not be owner of sale component. In return will get benefitted with TDR.

**Highlights of model/Strategies:**

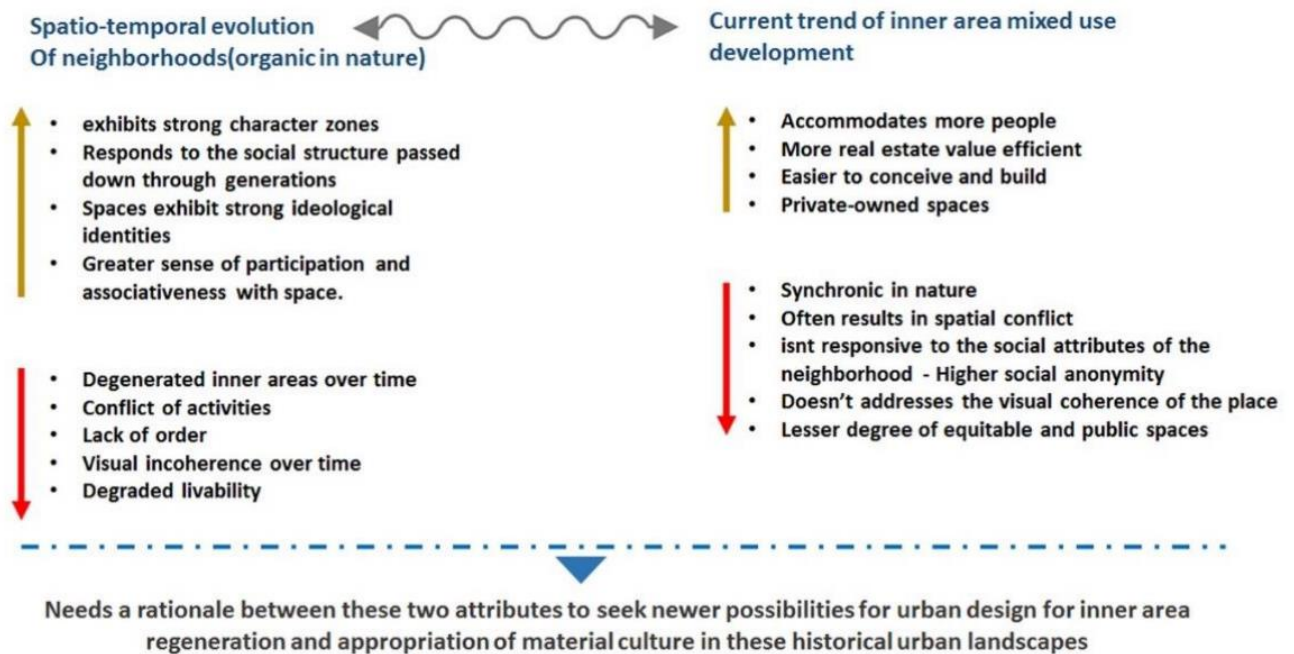
1. TDR benefit will go to developer, Land and Construction both
2. Half Sale Rehab Building would stay with Koliwada for community development fund as society funds and half sale component will go to Developers.
3. Take away from SRA would be social amenity spaces which are provided in DCPR 2034 for overall development of community.

David Harvey in his essay on “excerpts from the conditions of post modernity” discusses about the changing scenario of society when it transitioned from fordist to post-modernist where he says “The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms.

A typical koliwada like Mahim, which witnessed so many phenomenon, evolution of society collectively, triumphs and falls is slowly tending to be diluted in the wake of the mighty urbanism. The “wadas” or the immediate neighbourhood are intense zones of interpersonal exchange and cosmos of negotiation between the elite and the subaltern. They are not manifests of a formal planning or architecture but rather evolved spatiotemporally, whose physical and social dimensions are rather amorphous than crystallized. Phenomenon and processes which pervades these environments may seem ephemeral at the first glimpse like organizing a Ganpati puja on the streets, a cricket match, weddings happening on the public streets between buildings. But at macro level these are sempiternal in nature, with culture these are never ending processes and these very informal events lends a transformative and flexible property to these environments, streets being the most important element of the social setting. The koliwadass are organically developed over time as more people started residing there and creating a territory of participation and grand adjustment! It is interesting to

perceive these microcosms not architecturally but in terms of space which holds high degree of associative values and supporting lives. Temporal articulation and occupation of space that extends beyond the peripheries of their house displays a vibrant image of the everyday life and constituents of it. Single storeyed house typologies dot the street edge and external plinths acts as moderators and transition between the building line and the street edge. They hold immense importance in holding everyday discussions over situation, everyday life and thereby proves to be one of most profound and cardinal morphological elements seamlessly blurring the lines of physicality and culture. The height of buildings and the width of street creates an enclosure of humane scale that is conducive and fosters interpersonal exchange of glimpses and dialogues resulting in highest degrees of participation. Buildings with their appendages like balconies, rocks that almost extend over the streets creates levels of interaction. Juhaani palasmaa says the best interaction happens when all our senses converge

### Understanding the concern



and exactly this happens very discreetly, subconsciously in these environments such that's it's easier to realize what is getting cooked for lunch in the neighbour's house just through smell. The vendor plying on the street announcing his presence verbally echoes around and soon we see women from different floors of the houses converge at the street negotiating over price for buying a commodity. The essence of this informality and everyday spectacle is so profound that it almost pervades and dominates over the everyday social pattern of the individuals, it becomes intrinsic to their life and this amorphous, dynamic human ingenuity blurs all boundaries of a static physical boundary. Here the image and memory of these neighbourhoods is a result of enacted processes very temporal yet sempiternal as opposed to the physical morphology that contains public memory as static or permanent entity.

### Possible Strategies for future sustenance of Mahim koliwada:

Strategies for Urban Development for Mahim should be integrated and manifest of participatory process. Scalable strategies which should be based on local needs and possess

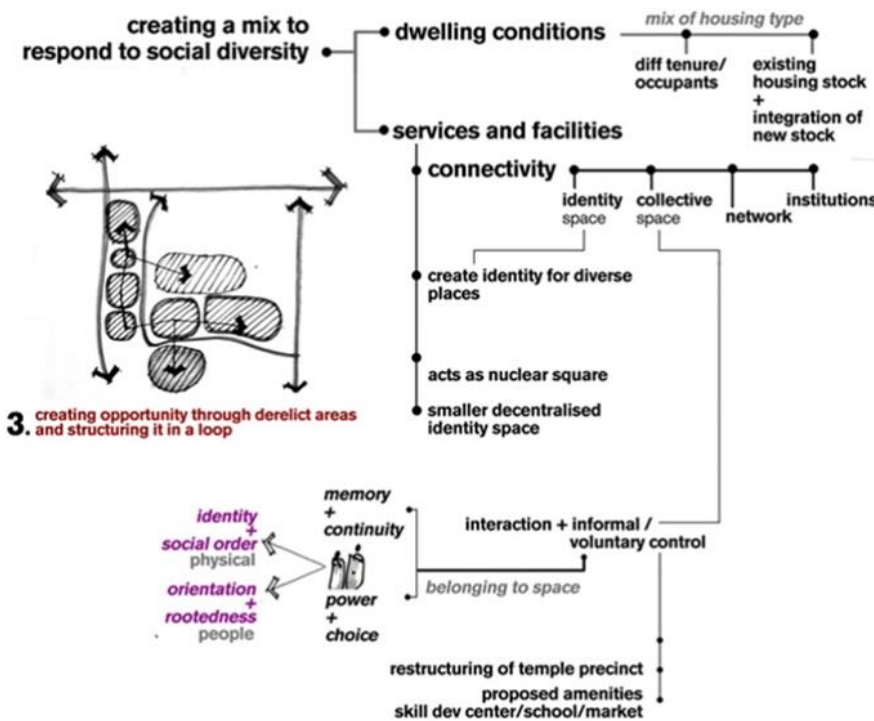
multi sectoral approach. in our study area there are few structures which are liveable in condition, those can be considered for retrofitting. There are total hey 10 G+2 storeyed structure, 3 temples and the fort. Linkages and connections can also be restored along with the trawler jetty and community space. Land TDR ratio of 1:2 which should be given to developer as to develop that land to build structure. Depends on ready recover rate that would go with developer only.

**Vision :** empowering the marginal community and creating a special re-generation model which is responsive socially, physically, economically, ecologically.

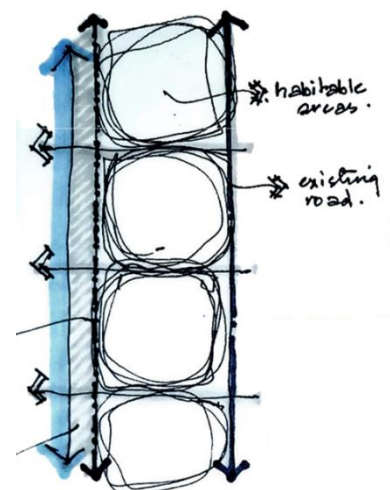
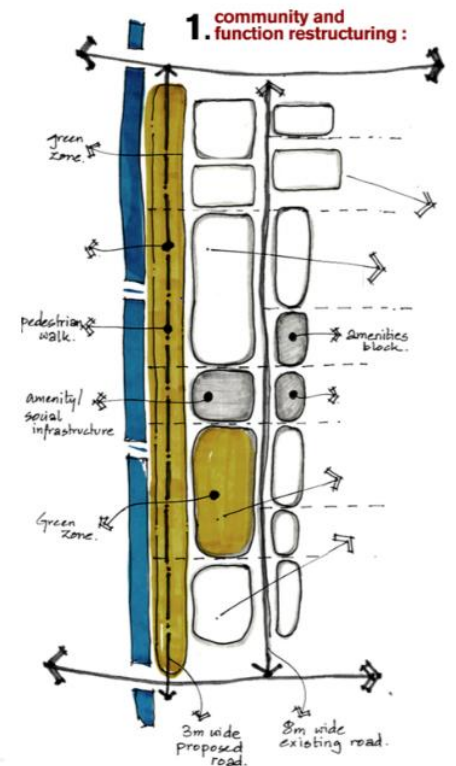
**likely strategies**

1. Affecting porosity and permeability insight and restructuring derelict /overused spaces
2. regrouping and linking areas of opportunity to benefit the various stakeholders
3. create better living conditions for the marginal communities
  - solve squatter and conflict on streets
  - infuse social dignity to women and create choices of

restructuring program would therefore connect the site with the city network and create a community empowerment framework within mentioned attributes



occupation



riparian buffer. **2. making the river edge permeable through increased porosity**



“How we collectively envisage a discourse at present epoch that contributes towards a



**space for ngo,vocational training center,community programmes**

socially sustainable spatial use in such dense areas considered sacred in the city's memory?”

(hegel & zeitgeist,1807).

How urban design plays a role to prioritize and strengthen inclusive social mix through spatial improvisation in these plural-historically juxtaposed quarters of the city? Local, self-evolved knowledge of space that contributed to the appropriation and spatio-temporal organization of these inner-city neighbourhoods is knitted with diverse social structure and multiple economic webs. Evolving and non-constant activity circles catalysed by changing occupational structure creates a conflict of spatial ideology and character leading to degrading physical infrastructure and non-responsive morphological characteristics. The scale of conflicting forces often dominates and contests the self-organizing principles through which these cultural spaces in the core of city evolved over time. Physical landscape having

informal character and a high degree of collective associative values meant to change and is constantly evolving but the solution probably lies in negotiating the effective inter-relationship of urbanism with this physical-socio-cultural setting.

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