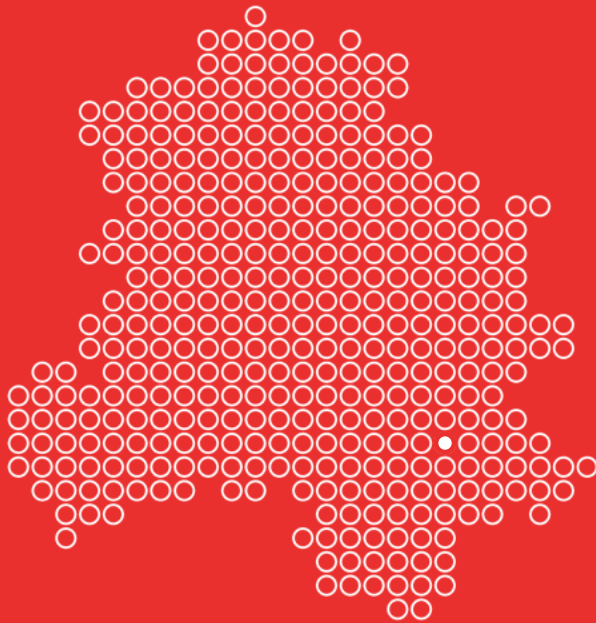




7 PUBLIC SPACE / NZM

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Abstract



7.1 Nizamuddin

Source: Authors

In light of the current development context, where many socio-cultural groups may find themselves next to their least expected counterparts, influencing change towards social inclusion within this nascent group would be a key ingredient in the building of a resilient society.

We study the public spaces of Nizamuddin, where they are subject to use by a variety of groups, who appropriate the spaces according to their own need. Semi-structured interviews have been used to develop an understanding of the dynamics of interaction between these groups. Using a framework of ability, dignity and opportunity the standing and support each group gets in comparison with one another has been evaluated.

Inclusivity is fundamental to utilising the potential of the various groups seen on the site, and public participation emerged as a tool to achieve this by bridging the gaps between what the people want and what the authorities think is needed.

Prologue

A society that has sustainable structure makes sure of its proper functioning by depending on all its members to be active contributing members of the society. Not only should every individual be able to sustain himself but also be able to contribute to the society. Most modern societies are structured in a way that an individual who do well for himself, automatically contributed towards the functioning of the society.

To ensure every individual's participation, there needs to be scope for his involvement. Ensuring this involvement is the key challenge that needs to be faced by efforts targeted at achieving social inclusivity. The primary basis on which one can either include or exclude individuals is to group them under certain attributes. The association of individuals or groups of individuals to a certain identity causes the effect of inclusion or exclusion. Among the most common basis on which people are excluded are gender, race, caste, ethnicity, religion, and disability status. Social exclusion based on such grouping can lead to lower social standing of the individuals in question. This is often accompanied by lower outcomes in terms of income, human capital endowments and access to employment and services. This identity clubbing may sometimes also result in failure to recognize the voice of this body in local or national levels, excluding them from making national or local level decision making.

For every individual of a community, it becomes important for him to feel included within a society. The feeling or perception of inclusion itself would open up new avenues for his participation and involvement within the social structure. Inclusivity as a perception comes with the provision of opportunity, ability and dignity to ensure that every individual is empowered as a valued, respected and contributing member of society.

- **Ability:** The ability of a person talks of the basic requirement of skills to survive. It refers to whether or not the involved parties have the resources to sustain themselves. It might seem as an innate quality of a person to be able to sustain himself, but on closer inspection it reveals that there might be several factors that lead to their disadvantage on this regard and can be anything from malnourishment as a child to bad parenting. The other aspect that is involved is capability building. The capabilities of a present generation can be built through certain societal building techniques that would grant them the opportunity to develop further. (Inclusion Matters, The World Bank, 2013)
- **Opportunity:** ensuring everyone has the accommodations they need to reach and contribute their personal maximum potential. Inequality of opportunity is one of the major factors that plays out in a developing economy. This also results in the non-realization of human potential. It is often assumed that equalizing the supply of services at the beginning of the life cycle will provide individuals with an equal chance of translating their abilities into enhanced well-being. However this fails to hold true in many cases. For example, the child of a daily wage worker, may go to school up till the eighth standard. He is most likely to discontinue his studies as he would realize he is capable of selling physical work to support his parents. This can either be a choice that he makes or is a choice that is imposed on him by his parents. It is important to sustain and manage the older generation and simultaneously provide opportunity at the beginning of the life cycle to equalize chances of translating this new generation's capability into enhanced well-being. (Inclusion Matters, The World Bank, 2013)
- **Dignity:** Whether a group is recognized and involved in the decision making processes of a community, as opposed to being pushed to the margins. Social inclusion is intrinsically linked to notions of respect and recognition when, to their institutions and norms, dominant cultures and processes alternatively the suspect individuals and groups who are considered subordinate, those individuals and groups can either opt out, submit or

protest. Until and unless the society is capable of recognizing the smallest of the social groups, and these groups are enabled to mobilize themselves, it can't be said that each group is treated with dignity. When an individual is cornered with inability and the lack of opportunity, and is forced into a situation where his or her dignity is overridden by need, we have another pressing conflict. (Inclusion Matters, The World Bank, 2013)

Conditions that prove to be a barrier between an individual, and the three enablers of inclusivity are conflicts. **Competition**, with equal opportunities between the same sector, is viewed as a positive force pushing the involved parties to be better. **Conflict**, however, is seen as a negative force, with clambering between various parties due to a lack of opportunity. However, conflict can also be seen as the coexistence of multiple activities taking place within the same place, and the interaction between each can be mutually beneficial, or destructive, based on the attitude and actions taken by the parties involved. (Lehtovuori, 2005) Different actors claim public spaces based on their own interest and values. These differences often lead to conflicts.

In this regard, Public places seem to be hotbeds of activity where Inclusivity can be assessed. Different forces and actors interact (combine, conflict and oppress) in order to determine how a public spaces develops (Cuthbert, 2006; Massey, 2005; Bentley, 1999; Madanipour, 1996; Castells, 1993; Lefebvre, 1991)

It is in these interactions between these different forces and actors, that lenses are created through which problems are understood and solutions are framed within a decision making process.

Public spaces and actors on-site

Public space

The vicinity of the Nizamuddin Station has various points where the activities of the users of the site intersect, and the competition for space is pronounced. Seven of these spaces were finalized based on the amount of overlaps taking place, and the importance of the spaces in terms of infrastructure and community.

Entry from the Sarai Kale Khan side

This is a secondary gate to the station, a point where commuters, coolies (porters), auto and rickshaw wallahs and vehicles collide with the markets and residents of the surrounding colonies. This gate was opened up recently to service the increased footfall of the Nizamuddin station, and was not planned for in the station's design. This is evident in the chaos seen outside the gate, where there is a lack of spatial acknowledgment and allocation for the various activities that are expected of a railway station exit.

Entry from Nizamuddin East

This is the primary gate to the station, where all formal access to the station takes place. In contrast with the Sarai Kale Khan side, it is heavily formalized which brings its own set of conflicts. Until the gate that represents the end of the RPF (Railway Police Force) jurisdiction, there are no hawkers and no rickshaw wallahs in sight, which limits the options available to the commuters coming out of the station.

Bus Stand

Just beyond the RPF gate, freed from the shackle of regulation, a variety of informal activity springs up. Hawkers vending food and goods service this node between the station and the rest of the city, but even this has the shadow of authority and corruption looming over it.

Local Market

The existing Barapullah bridge hosts a bustling evening market, with all kinds of vegetables and domestic supplies catered for. Here people from different strata are brought together by the quality of the offerings, and we consider this to be a successful public space.

Underpass

An underpass connecting the two sides of the station was constructed as part of the development for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. While it was fitted with lights to illuminate the path, they were quickly broken or stolen by delinquents in the area. This has led to the underpass being dingy during the day, and completely dark at night. This fosters an environment of danger and uncertainty.

Rickshaw Stand

In the vicinity of the Barapullah bridge, there is a stand where rickshaws park overnight. Street vending and passenger movement keep the space active during the day that keeps the spaces active, during night, it is desolate. The road adjacent to the Barapullah bridge remains either neglected, unused or unsafe.

Actors

Since we define our public spaces by the activities that take place in them, the actors involved are the ones who feel the direct impact of the inclusivity, or lack thereof, of these public spaces. These spaces reveal to us the dynamics of social interaction that are key to understanding inclusivity. We have identified the major actors based on their prominence and visibility.

The commuters have a contrasting experience between the two sides of the station. While those on the Nizamuddin side have access to pedestrian paths and are dropped off in the peace of a designed drop-off, while who access the station from the Ring Road in the chaos surrounding the entry. Lack of dustbins and presence of dead spaces are chief among their complaints. They do however, like the informal markets surrounding the exit, talking of them as recreational spaces, that make them feel safer despite the congestion caused by these markets.

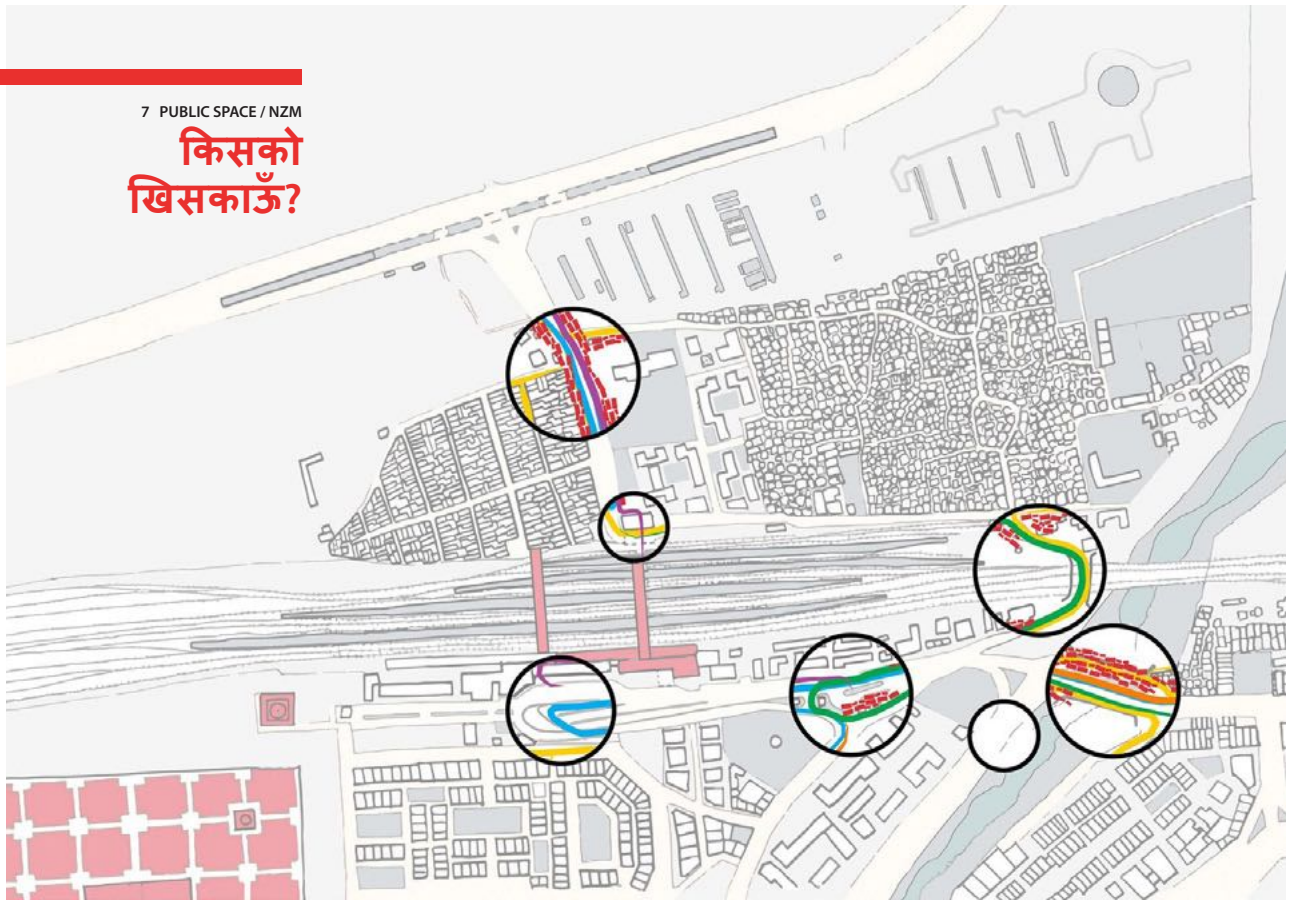
Hawkers have a contentious existence around the station. The actual users of the site appreciate their presence, as they offer food at a reasonable price and make the experience of navigating to and fro less monotonous. The authorities on the other hand, are the antagonists of a hawker's life. A hawker is on the fringes of the law in terms of their right to be vending on the street. Legal recognition for the hawkers, while proposed and talked about, has not taken effect in practice. The hawker lives in a constant state of insecurity, and loses a significant portion of his income to bribes and the institutionalized harassment that is *thekedaari*. The hawker is also an important part of society, the regularity of their interactions leads to familiarity with the residents of the surrounding areas. Many of the hawkers themselves live in the Sarai Kale Khan Basti.

The autowallas have a transitory presence at the station, since they come, drop and pick up passengers and leave. There is a designated auto stand outside the Nizamuddin East entry. There is talk of corruption in the allocation of those slots as well. In the current legal system, the autowallahs have poor representation in terms of their response to anonymous phone complaints. The autowallah likes the presence of hawkers, as it reduces speed of pedestrian flow, and increases their chances of getting a passenger. The narrow road width on the other exit is also a concern, while they're always wary of dropping passengers around dead spaces or ones they know to be populated by local goons.

The rickshawalla faces similar conflicts to the autowalla, but the extents of his movement are more limited, therefore their conflicts are more site-specific. While the rickshaw is the most flexible in terms of its movement of all the modes of public transport, it's always considered the bottom rung of movement and is blamed for traffic jams, and are herded like sheep by the police.

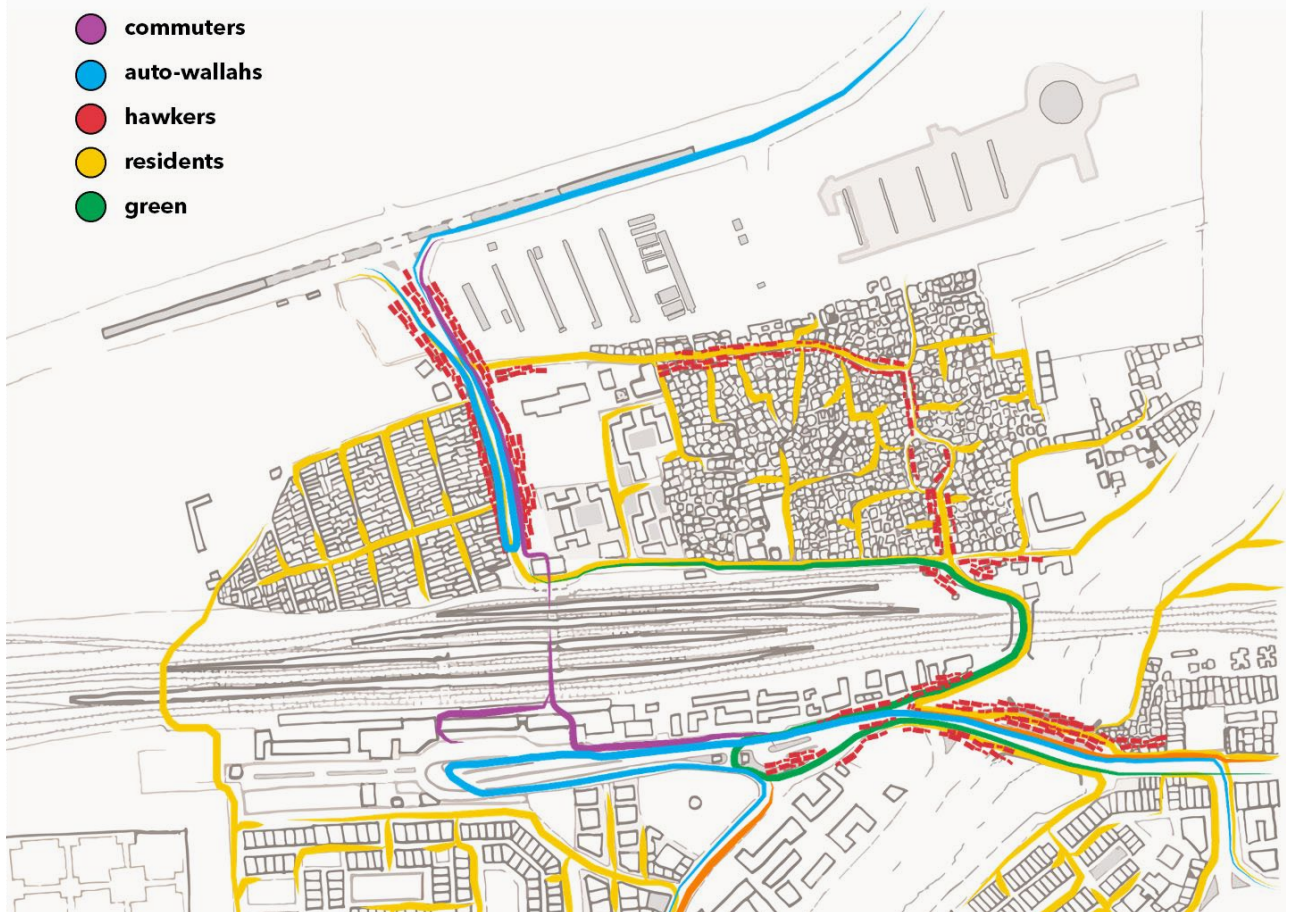
The residents are chiefly concerned with station activity getting in the way of their everyday lives. While the residents on the Sarai Kale Khan side feed off the development that the station brings, they are not keen on embracing it. They are more concerned with hygiene and safety, with many objecting about the intersection of school kids and vehicular traffic. There are three prominent residential colonies near the Nizamuddin Station, being Nizamuddin East, Nangli Razapur and Sarai Kale Khan basti.

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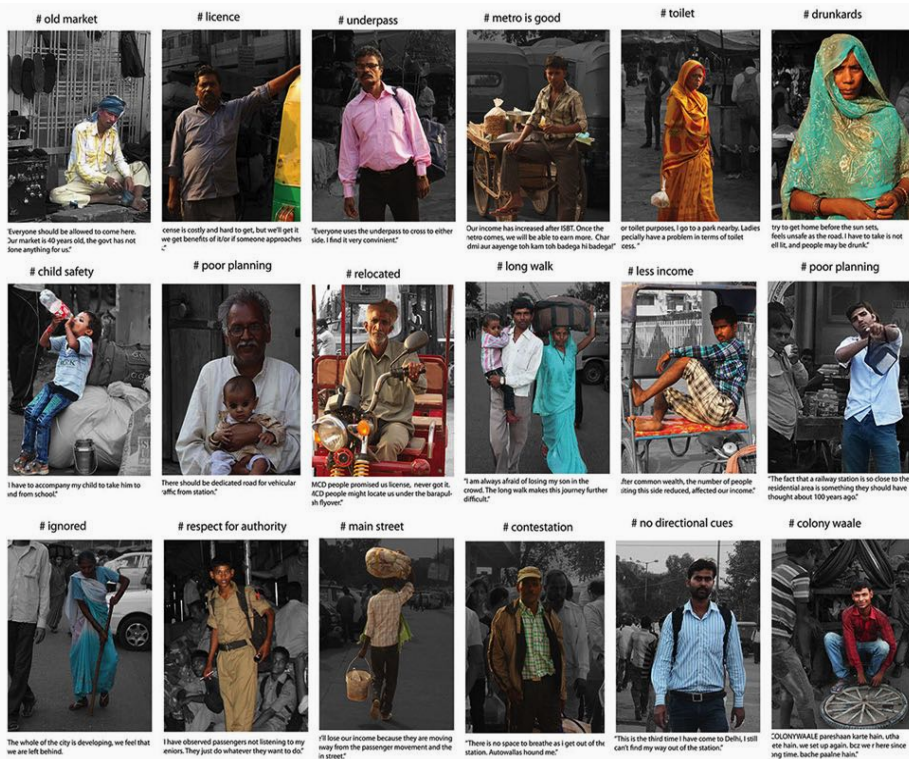
7.2 Selected public spaces

Source: Authors



7.3 Actors on-site

Source: Authors



7.4 Unstructured interviews

Source: Authors

Methodology

Unstructured interviews

There seem to be cycles of recurrent activity, set in periodic cycles. During these cycles different actors come across each other in many a transactions and interactions. During these exchanges arise conflicts. To understand the working of public spaces it becomes extremely important to dwell into this dynamism. This could only be done through extensive observation. However, conflicts can be internalized and invisible. It is important to consider the fact that most of these people have already faced these problems and conflicts for a long time now, and to them it might not seem as obvious. Only through exhaustive conversation with these actors was it possible to assimilate and estimate the nature of these conflicts. Over 130 unstructured interviews were recorded.

Content analysis

These responses are then accumulated and analyzed. This happens through what is called content analysis. This method of analysis uses a mixture of qualitative assessment and linguistics, where keywords or key phrases are identified across the interviews. The keywords are characterized by the kind of data one is looking for. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) In this case, all issues relating to the actors existence in the public space were sifted through. The frequency with which one observed the similar keywords was noted. The geographic area where this keyword arose on the site was also noted. The assimilation of the keywords and tabulating the result of the analysis give much insight into the working, the lacking of the public spaces.

Issue identification

Once the geographical correlation of the keywords is extrapolated, the similar keywords which addressed the same bigger problem were clumped together. Various keywords came together under parameters that were hygiene, safety, authority, markets, space contestation and sense of belonging. These parameters covered most of the problems and issues that were identified in the keyword generation phase.

In another study to attempt understanding as to which problem affected which actor group, the keywords were plotted against the parameters of safety, hygiene, authority, markets, space contestation and sense of belonging on one axis, while on the other were the various actor groups.



 Hygiene	 Safety	 Authority	 Markets	 Space con- testation	 Sense of belonging
# no toilets # no waste disposal # poorly main- tained services	# theft # local goons # delinquents # drunkards	# corruption # no formal ac- knowlegmnt # harassment # hafta # eviction	# opportunity to compete # parking issues # safer spaces # congestion	# station prox- imity # parking issues # commuters # frontage # lack of formal designation	# gujar domination # MCD # familiarity # hawker cum resident
# no dustbins # littering # dust	# theft # dead spaces	# railway authorities # corruption	# recreation # congestion # eyes on street # parking issues	# encroached upon # parking issues # overcrowded	# service harassment # unfriendly to disabled
# no toilets # inefficient gar- bage disposal # dust #commune waste # littering	# poor law im- plementation # unsafe for school kids # road safety # delinquents # drunkards	# no traffic police # RWA	# walkable infor- mal markets # active areas # convenience # eyes on street # parking issues	# no parking space # overcrowding # congestion on roads	# presence of communities # gujar domination
# no toilets # no drinking water	# dead spaces # local goons	# no traffic police # Thekedaar # harassment # legally neglected	# opportunity # active areas # recreation # parking	# opportunity # hawkers # road width # parking	# transitory
# no toilets # no drinking water # dust	# dead spaces # dogs # poorly lit streets # local goons	# traffic police # thekedaar # herded like sheep # harassment # legally neglected	# opportunity to compete # parking # recreation # convenience # safer spaces	# opportunity # hawkers # road width # parking # barred	# gujar domination # presence of communities

Source: Authors

Analysis of key issues

Rickshaw wallah's sense of belonging

The rickshaw walla is an indispensable part of Delhi's urban fabric. He occupies the last rung of the transit system and provides for local transit in a city where pedestrianism is still trying to make a mark with either poor or nonexistent infrastructure in some parts or the harsh and extreme weather.

Being the lowest in both the economic strata and on the social ladder, these individuals fight to find their place in the society. Bhanu, a rickshaw puller from Gorakhpur, gets into a frenzy as he shouts *"Sab rickshaw walon ko hi bolenge! sirf hamari hi galati ho sakti hai"* (Everybody points at the rickshaw puller, its always our fault!) while he is shouted at to remove his rickshaw from the path of an auto rickshaw.

There is a certain lack of dignity of labour, where there seems to be more physical work than the intellect. Their income barely crosses enough to sustain. Most of the rickshaw wallas share a single room with five or six others in the northern fringes of Ishaq Basti. Others still sleep out in the open, many under the roof of their own rickshaw.

There exists an empty plot about 700 meters from the station entry, right below the Barapullah elevated roadway. This is where most, if not all rickshaw pullers park their cycle rickshaws. Most of the rickshaw pullers don't even own their own rickshaw, but instead take it on daily rent. An informally scrawled last name and number at the back of the rickshaw usually tells of the owner who runs the enterprise of renting rickshaws.

On site, the rickshaw wallas seem to have an unspoken hesitance to interact or have anything to do with the gujjar community who reside in pockets of Ishaq Basti. *"Kuch bhi bolte hai to sir jhukke chalna padta hai, Maar peeth kisko khana hai bhai?"* says Dayal Singh, voicing his fear of violence. ("Whatever they say we just need carry on without paying too much heed. Who wants to be beaten up?")

There seems to be a constant disconnect from the society. For this group it is an almost internalized exclusion, where they do not maintain any ties with people of the society but only talk and connect to other daily wage earners or people they transact from. Their relationship with the society is almost too temporal. Having no such ties they are also poorly represented in the community and the society at large. They are presently dependant on Non Governmental organization and bank heavily on the provision of rights by the police. The RPF (Railway Police Force) and the Delhi police have both been observed mistreating, manhandling and abusing rickshaw wallahs. The rickshawallas persistently try to inch their way closer to the exit gate, driven by their need to get hold of a savaari, and the RPF keep beating them back to beyond the RPF draw gate , around 500 meter from the entry gate. The traffic police constantly shepherd the cluster of rickshaw wallas this way and that to accommodate traffic in the area.

The voices of the Rickshaw wallas is unheard for more for the reason that there isn't one than the fact that they are oppressed. After the interviews it became clear that exclusion was largely internalized with individuals not aspiring for more. This presents itself as a serious concern in the upliftment and inclusion of this user group.

Autowalla's relationship with Authority

The autowallah is probably the most visible of the actors on an urban scale. A unique feature of Asian roads, the autos or auto rickshaws ferry people over short and long distances. The prices and tariffs are prefixed according to government mandate and come as a recognized form of public transport. There exists a legal framework within which the Auto rickshaws fall. Uniformed auto drivers, Regulated tariff meters and uniform design of auto pull this community or service providers together. There exists a strong sense of belonging within this community. With such strong legal structure, the auto wallas still complain of the inadequacy of earning a practical living out of the mandated fares. It is common occurrence that most tariff rules are not followed, and the driver asks for excess fare or denies to take on passengers.

There is strong disparity between the traffic police and the auto rickshaws for several reasons, Primarily, the auto rickshaw is a dominant occupier of space on the roads of Delhi. Parking, Dropping stopping and fare discrepancies are common grounds of conflict between these two groups. Near the Hazrat Nizamuddin station, the two exits see different treatments of autos. The western exit is organized and planned, with auto lanes where there is designated space for auto rickshaws to wait till the passengers approach. However, it is observed that the drivers abandon their vehicle in the waiting lanes to go to the entrance to usher the oncoming passengers in an attempt to procure a *savaari*. At the Eastern exit the situation is more chaotic, with no formal allocation of space for the auto rickshaws and a total lack of infrastructure to handle the number of passengers that exit from this gate. Here there is a constant clash between the traffic police and the auto wallas, Be it for issues over accepting passengers from the prepaid booth, or for parking, the relationship remains strained.

Almost all auto drivers at the entrance feel dissociated from the site, and have nothing to do with it apart from coming to pick up passengers of major trains like *Shatabdi*, *Rajdhani* and other trains that come from southern or central states. However, it unfolds that there is unrest among the drivers about the infrastructure and management that surrounds the station. They face harassment from the traffic police over parking and fares. They also express concerns over their weak legal representation in comparison to the extremely rigid framework that they fall under. They also continuously fight for space with private vehicles, hawkers and pedestrians at the station entries.

Hawker Space Contestation

Over 66.7% of the total employment lies in the informal sector in Delhi. It is needless to say that the city's economy rests on the informal sector. The hawkers form an indispensable part of this infrastructure. They operate under Section 321 on the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, which grants them with license to run informal business from temporary stalls and kiosks. However on the site, there lies a large population of hawkers who do not have a *tehbazari* license. These unauthorized stalls and kiosks along with long standing, licensed vendors all operate on the spines that lead to the station entries. At the northern gate the RPF denies permit to set up stalls within Station limits. The hawking starts at the end of the station limits marked by the RPF draw gate. On the eastern exit, however, there are hawkers lined up till the first step of the exit gate.

The hawkers are under constant threat of eviction by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). With the recent beginnings of work on the Delhi Metro and the RRTS line, they face further threat of development. Contrary to expectations, most hawkers are optimistic about the upcoming developments. "Only after the arrival of the metro can we expect some good changes, cleanliness and nice roads" says Guruprem, a vendor who has been vending clothes on the footpaths from more than 28 years with a *Tehbazaari* permit. Though the permit allows

them the right to hawk they still face extortion by local goons, and the police. More so the MCD could decide to displace them by giving them a substitute space which might not be a viable location for vending. Guruprem too was moved from the busy street side to behind a car park, which is now rarely seen by the sea of commuters that flow by.

The hawkers conflict with almost all other user groups on the site with respect to space. Every stall occupies the pavement and any remaining space on the access spine. There is a critical dearth of space for vehicles pedestrians that need to be serviced by the station. Over the course of the interviews, it became evident that most hawkers aspire for permanent accommodation or at least infrastructure that would accommodate them into the scheme of proper functioning at the railways stations. With limited space and the pressure to earn a decent living forces hawkers to even contest between themselves for prime vantage spots which would attract more customers. Every hawker tries to find his space near the entry of the station which has the maximum footfall of passengers. With livelihood completely dependent of the kind of space they occupy and the amount of space they find on the streets, hawkers find themselves dependant on means that are temporary. This adds to their insecurities of being able to earn a living to ensure their survival.

Resident safety

The residential areas that share a boundary wall with the station have been tremendously affected by the presence of the railways station. A burst of commercial activity was of course the first major outcome. Most of the residential areas cater to the people who service in the informal sector in and around the station, be it mainstream services like hawking or even fringe economic activities pertaining to the station. Much of the edges of the residential areas are being rent out as shops, godowns, offices or hotels. *Nangli Razapur* now hosts hundreds of guesthouses, and travel agencies even in the interiors of the residential colony, while *Ishaq Basti* caught amidst all the chaos are long term residents of *Nangli Razapur*, *Ishaq Basti*, *the Sarai Kale Khan* and the DDA housing colony.

There is a blatant lack of infrastructure in terms of public amenities. The present infrastructure is not able to cope with the rate of increase in activity. Schools to the west of the station find themselves islanded by busy roads with no infrastructure to ensure safe crossings for children, The only way to cross the station or the tracks is to use a underpass, which despite being long and unlit, also does not host any activity, making it unsafe for the residents to use. Women in the community claim to use it during the day but never after dark, while many prefer crossing the tracks on the surface itself to avoid the long or unsafe walk through the underpass.

There are no public amenities such as toilets on the east exit, Making it extremely difficult for working women to operate. This forces them to use secluded or isolated areas of the site which, apart from being unhygienic might also be dangerous owing to delinquents and drug users who dominate isolated spaces in the site.

Commuter hygiene

More than 4,00,000 passengers pass through the *Hazrat Nizamuddin* station every day. During the interviews most commuters commented on the hygiene of the platforms itself. The moment they get off their trains they are welcomed with the smell and sights of the tracks of the platform. With passengers defecating even when the trains are halt, this waste finds itself on the tracks that are open to the platforms. Apart from the tracks even as the passengers exit into the commotion of the east entry, Most of the road is unpaved which, during the dry season, is the cause of much dust. The disarrayed hawkers have no proper or formal waste management

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systems. The existing structure for waste management involves a thorough sweeping of the access spine early in the morning. This gets rid of a huge mass of waste, which only goes on to get replenished through the day. Most Hawkers these days, partially out of their desire to stay clean, and partially to the insistence of many keep old tins or tubs that they use as dustbins.

Daily users as well as occasional users both identified this as a major issue. The railways station being a gateway into the city, most commuters aspire to come into more pleasant conditions. The Western exit however is a better experience, with the whole place planned and paved, and the hawkers forced back to a certain setback from the entry, the commuter finds this a preferred exit, But if a passenger needs to travel towards the ring road, Noida or east Delhi, the west gate doesn't seem viable. In this situation they are forced to take the east exit and pass through a lot of commotion before they actually leave the site.

With the nearby residential areas teeming with people and facing severe overcrowding, many residential activities spill out into the open. activities that are considered part of the private realm such as bathing, grooming, relaxing, drying of clothes have become public, which causes a sense of conflict to the commuters. Most people who were interviewed felt a more active role needs to be played by the authorities in the cleaning up of the area. "*logon ke upar chod denge tho kuch hoga hi nahi*" ("left to the people, nothing will happen") says Amit, a daily commuter who travels from here to Palwal every day.

Top-heavy nature of planning in India

The planning process in India has traditionally follows a top down approach. This approach fails to recognize and respond to the needs and wants of the people at the local level as they are completely left out of the decision making process. This results in lack of public ownership of the development processes, leading to their failure. (CEPT, 2014)

The underpass is a failed example of a top down intervention. Though the developing authorities realized the need for infrastructure that connects both the sides of the railway tracks, They did not respond to pedestrian movement and only designed for vehicular movement. Low ceiling height, poor lighting and lack of commercial activity makes the underpass highly unsafe for pedestrians at night. Again a top down intervention failed to recognize the need of public toilets in this area. Due to this the women are forced to used isolated spaces like empty parking lots, unused area under the *Barapullah* elevated road to relieve themselves. This not only makes it unsafe for women but is also a slight on their dignity.

The 74th Constitution Amendment Act called for decentralization of governance, while providing for involvement and engagement of the citizens with governance at the lowest levels. This lead to the adoption of more public participatory processes like *panchayats*, RWAs and Local area plans. But these only partially engage the citizens. The suggestions put forwards by the citizens during the preparation of a development, may or may not be considered in the final draft of the development plan as there are no statutory clause that is binding in this regard. The LAP methodology calls for a more sustained public engagement which can be achieved through a bottom up participatory planning process. But a complete bottom-up approach fails as the citizens are unable to manage the whole process due to a lack of expertise. Therefore, engagement of a group of multi-skilled professionals is essential to ensure the integration of both top down and bottom up approaches. (Roy and Ganguly, 2009)

Based on our interviews it is evident that many users on the site aspire for infrastructure based on their everyday needs and requirements. Different user groups aspire for different infrastructure, it becomes the responsibility of this 'experts' to find a suitable agreeing point where the needs of the user groups are satisfied as well as the needs of the cities are met. While solving the issue of congestion and clogged streets in the surrounding areas of the Nizamuddin Railway Station, a top down intervention resulted in the eviction of informal hawkers from the site. Because of the non involvement of the locals and the passengers who use the Railway station every day, the development authority failed to understand that informal markets a very important part of any transit oriented public space. Such markets create a more dynamic and productive atmosphere. They create economic opportunities for people at the lower end of the economic spectrum and encourage entrepreneurship. They make a safer environment for women and kids by creating more active spaces.

Despite the eviction, the demand called for informal markets. With no space allocated to them, hawkers end up encroaching the footpath and roads further adding to the chaos at the entry of the station. The local market at the Barapullah bridge in contrast, is a successful example of a development process where a development authority collaborated with the local community and recognized the need of in an informal market in the area. By giving formal recognition to the market it also enabled infrastructure development.

Need for public participation

When dominant cultures actively disrespect individuals and groups who are considered marginal, those groups can either opt out, submit, or protest. Public participation can be a way for these groups to vocalize. People are usually the best experts on their own lives. By using co-creation, we create an outcome that combines people's own knowledge about their needs and wants with the designer's expertise. Participation creates a sense of responsibility towards others, and influences decisions or enables individuals to have access to the decision-making process.

Participatory methods help designers to decide in situations where there is a clash between an individual's needs and a cities' requirement. The presence of this method allows the local communities to increase their engagement, ownership and control over the development of their public spaces, and this empowers those that are normally excluded or not represented within planning and design processes. (Calderon, 2013) Also, participatory research encourages rich, creative, and divergent contributions from the public, releasing inhibitions for the designers, and opening up new thinking. Presence of feedback on existing conditions on site gives designer cues to work with, and with them being answerable for their work, encourages more responsibility for the social suitability of the environments they create.

One of the key factors for public participation being fruitful is that the various stakeholders can reach a consensus. Participatory democracy and deliberative democracy are two types of participation that a proposal can incorporate. With participatory democracy, major decisions are decentralized across all sectors of society, so that all the users learn to engage the system in such a manner that they have an influence in the making of all decisions that affect them.

Meanwhile, in a deliberative democracy, citizens negotiate with their representatives over community problems and let their concerns be heard. This approach recognizes that people will need representatives for their needs, but there should be a healthy back-and-forth feedback loop between each other.

Provision for public participation in the 2021 masterplan

In the list of focal points for the Delhi Master plan, the following provision are made for public participation. (MPD 2021, 2007)

- Decentralized local area planning by participatory approach
- Performance oriented planning and development, with focus on implementation and monitoring

Local Area Plans

In 2007, the term Local Area Plans was included in MPD 2021, stating it as a plan for ward/sub-zone. Zonal Plans also stated in their preamble that indication of uses other than residential and facility corridor shall be undertaken at the stage of Local Area Plans.

"Local area plan is by definition a plan based on the local needs and characteristics. Thus, it requires framing area specific objectives" (MCD, 2005).

"Local Area Planning is... for addressing the unplanned and illegal urban development... By combining neighbourhood level data with stakeholder participation... to reform Delhi's entire building byelaw system including procedural, planning and building performance components" (USAID, 2009).

"Local area plan is by definition a plan based on the local needs and characteristics. Thus, it requires framing area specific objectives" (MCD, 2005).

Gaps between theory and practice of participation

Despite the alluring ideas of participation, it faces an uphill battle to combat a variety of pitfalls that come in the way of productive participation. These may be -

- Falling short in involving a sufficient variety of stakeholders in process vis-à-vis the organization of including all members of a community
- Poor quality of dialogue between participants
- Giving priority to some stakeholders over others facilitation
- Favoring politicians, developers or designer preferences over local needs and values
- Time pressure and budgetary concerns for the authority involved

Probably the biggest block is the pressure of arriving at a consensus. This may inhibit the negotiate process and silence those who are marginalized or have dissenting opinions. With increase in diversity of cultures due to migration, the importance of market oriented goals in design practices, decision-making processes in public space projects have become increasingly complex and confronted by conflicts of interests, values, claims and power relations.

Examples of successful participatory design programs

Bhagidari, Delhi

One of the major practices of participatory development is the Bhagidari program run by the Delhi government. The Bhagidari program stands on the shoulders of the developments introduced by the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2001, which gave people the right to ask questions about governance. Through the Bhagidari scheme, RWAs are made aware of local issues such as water saving, payment and collection of water bills, load shedding information and solutions on internal colony sewage systems. In essence, Bhagidari is a victory for effective communication between the users and the authorities.

PRIA, Rajnandgaon and Janjgir (Chattisgarh)

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), initiated a project in Chattisgarh that they intended to be a model for participatory development in India, a showcase on how to avoid the various pitfalls that have been present in the existing development procedures in India. In order to do this, they took the following steps towards capability building.

- Encouraging climate – political support within and outside the implementing agency
- Educational intervention – This helps in enhancing the awareness of the citizens
- Skills building – This involves skills for self-management, technical skills, and collective forums, that act as mechanisms to generate and sustain citizen participation.

Conclusion

"An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d'être which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, re-appropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one."

Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space

Public Spaces keep changing as the actors using them are varied and many. If there is no formal intervention, the actors will keep modifying it to their own needs, a phenomenon known as 'social production of space'. There comes a point when this social production needs to be assessed and made feasible by redirecting it in a direction that both the users and the authorities find satisfying.

Social inclusion tends to occur along multiple axes at once, so interventions that release just one of these axes of deprivation will not unleash the grip of others. It is observed that an excluded group can internalize their recurring exclusion. Once this happens, they do not even bother to try for better outcomes. Exclusion, therefore, can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. (World Bank 2013)

Participation creates a sense of responsibility towards others, and influences decisions or enables individuals to have access to the decision-making process. While top down interventions are needed for implementation, bottom-up approaches give pointers on how to make these interventions actually work. A top down approach is knowledge based, while bottom-up approaches are grounded in experience. Public participation gives us conflicts that will not be evident if a top-down approach is followed. These two approaches can be consolidated using our ability-opportunity-dignity framework, where these three factors can be a litmus test to judge the validity of the solutions that are proposed.

A disparity in the kinds of solutions proposed can be observed at the Nizamuddin station. While the top-down authorities think of macro level interventions of the underpass, but they are not aware of the realities of the site which a prior research using a methodology would give them. The presence of delinquents, and the fact that there is heavy pedestrian crossing between the two sides of the station, has not been addressed sufficiently.

Community-driven development (CDD) is an approach that gives community groups control over planning decisions and investment resources for local development projects. The underlying assumption of CDD projects are that communities are the best judges of how their lives and livelihoods can be improved and, if provided with adequate resources and information, they can organize themselves to provide for their immediate needs. Moreover, CDD programmes are motivated by their trust in people and hence it advocates people changing their own environment as a powerful force for development. (ADB, 2006)

Amidst all this talk of public participation, the definition of participation must also be questioned. Participation can be through voicing your opinion, or it can also be maintaining your silence. Even those who don't know that they have a platform to voice their opinion, are participating with their silence. The gamut of changes that the participatory process aims for include empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions and control the acts that affect their lives. It involves people directly and actively in all stages of the management and decision-making process. (Uganda Project Team, 2007). With the world getting smaller by the day, in the current development context—where confluence of forces would lead to the underprivileged being juxtaposed with the very powerful—influencing change toward social inclusion will be an important piece of the puzzle of creating resilient communities. (World Bank 2013)

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