

Haldia: Logistics and its Other(s)

What does logistics mean? Oxford English Dictionary attaches the term to military science by relating it to procurement, maintenance and transportation of material, personnel and facilities. Another definition emphasises the concept of coordination of complex operations ‘involving many people, facilities, or supplies’ (New Oxford American Dictionary). The most comprehensive definition, however, seems to be the one employed by the Council of Logistics Management, quoted in the *logisticsworld* website, one that holds logistics to be

“the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient, effective flow and storage of goods, services, and related information from point of origin to point of consumption for the purpose of conforming to customer requirements.” Note that this definition includes inbound, outbound, internal, and external movements.

Neilson and Rossiter in their pamphlet, *Logistical Worlds: Infrastructure, Software, Labour*, as they persuasively argue that

logistics is something more than a system of for searching out and connecting diverse firms and labour forces on the basis of cost and other parameters. Logistics also actively produces environments and subjectivities, including those of workers and labour forces, through techniques of measure, coordination and optimisation. That is to say, it is not simply a socio-technical system that adapts to existing economic and material conditions (5).

Neilson and Rossiter diverge from the first three definitions crucially by emphasising on logistics as something beyond an impersonal chain or system, and by bringing to focus the possibility of a logistical *weltanschauung*. Moving beyond an analysis of chains and networks that revolve around services and materials, this definition opens up the scope for human action, subjectivisation and meaning making. Logistics creates spaces, as does human action. This paper is an exploration of the logistical space of Haldia, to analyse how this port city is created by logistical imperatives, and the way in which it shapes new forms of logistics.

Let me enter into this enquiry with a long quote from the Haldia Municipality website, a quote, that I hope, illustrates both the direction that HDA and the Municipality have taken in the recent years, the notions of a community and space that are inherent in the vision and sculpting of the proposed smart city that Haldia however failed to become.

The Municipality website¹ is a travesty, a jumble of images, graphics and words, featuring little information and a lot of rhetoric. Under the ‘History’ section of the ‘About Us’, the following can be found:

Haldia Municipality took its birth on 9th June, 1997. From a small village, it has today turned up into an industrial town. From merely agricultural land, it has transformed into a land of livelihood based on industrial economy. The developmental manifesto of the Municipality is also changing day by day based on social and economic upgradation. From clayey road to Morum, from Morum to Bitumen, from Morum to concrete roads – changes after changes. From hurricane to electricity, from dry well and a few tube wells to water pipe line connection at household level, from a mere village health centre to sub-divisional hospital and decorated nursing homes, modern dental institute with sophisticated equipment and specialized physicians.

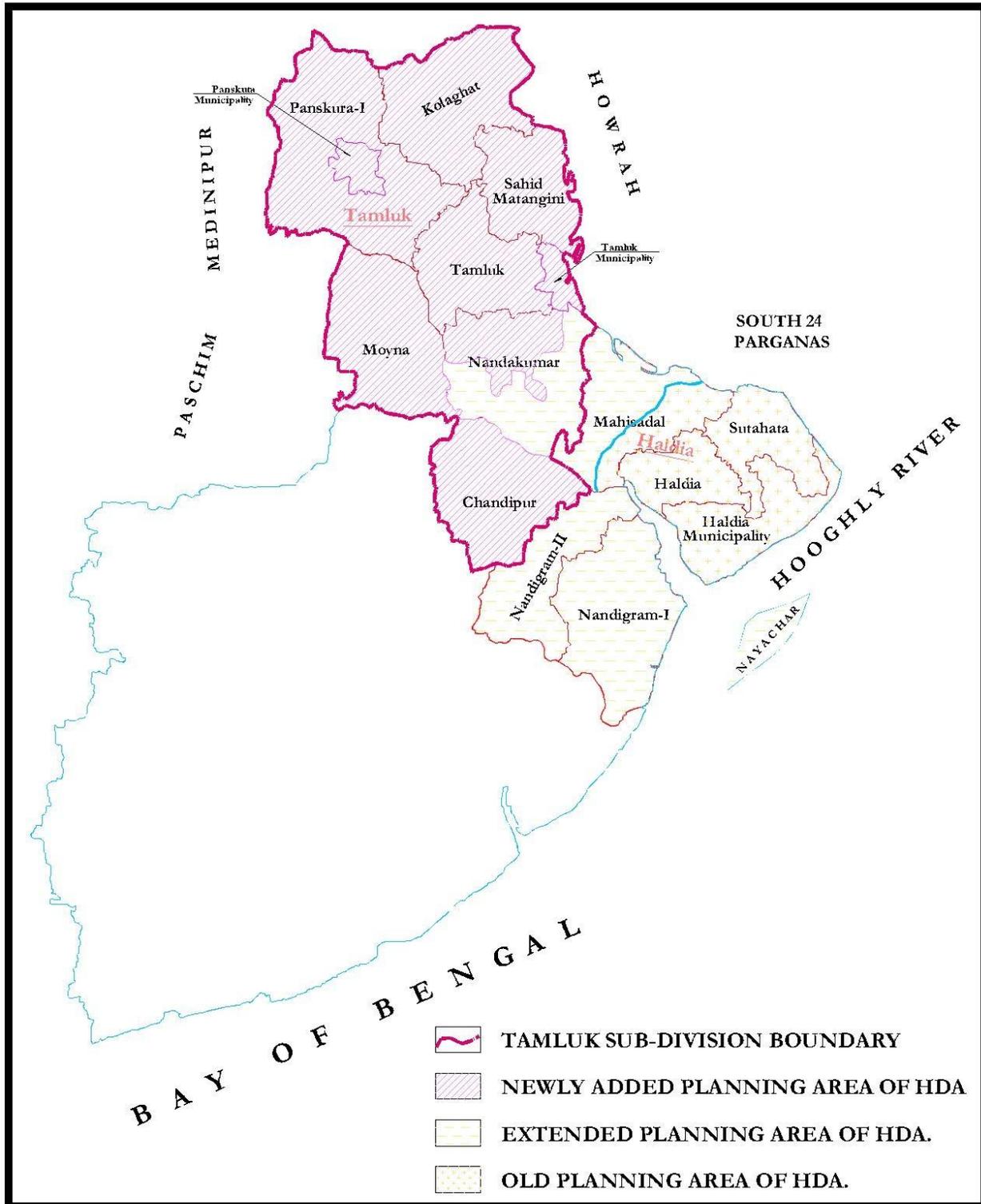
¹ Housed at www.haldiamunicipality.org

The attempt to track the relationship between the space of Haldia, now soon to be a smart city and the Haldia Dock Complex(HDC) needs to be tracked through certain icons and symbols, certain synecdochic figures, that, albeit not claiming representative status, can stand in for the 761 sq. Km² of widely varying, agriculture, occupations, human habitation, pollution level and vegetation. Located near the mouth of the river Hooghly, Haldia is at the same time a city, a municipality, a riverine port and an industrial belt- each standing in for the other, and as the municipality website would have the curious internet visitor believe, each working in complete cooperation with the other to realise its stated vision. This cooperation, or, if one were to term it such, collusion, can be seen from the structure of both HDA and HIDAL. The HDA or Haldia Development Authority, was set up in 1979 for the task of “turning Haldia into a fast track high growth centre for industry”.³⁴ Apart from the existing MP and MLA, and various other bureaucrats, the HDA counts as its board members the Executive Director of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC)- Haldia, the managing Director of Haldia Petrochemicals Limited (HPL) and the Deputy Chairman of Kolkata Port Trust, Haldia Dock Complex. Haldia Integrated Development Agency Limited (HIDAL) was incorporated in 20015, under the Companies Act, 1965, to implement projects sanctioned by various government departments and ministries and to develop and implement infrastructure projects in Haldia region. The key sponsors of this company are also local industry giants, ILFS, Exide, Dhunseri and HPL.

² Haldia Planning Area

³ HDA website

⁴ Other such Urban development centres in West Bengal would include places like Durgapur and Asansol.



Any attempt to map the logistical networks that crisscross Haldia, and quite literally so, in the forms of warehouses, pipelines, roads, trucks, local transport, container traffic, human beings and cattle, has to pay significant attention to the already stated interconnections between the

industry, the Dock Complex and the geographical area, the human actors and their non human interests.

As stated above, the enquiry into this logistical space promising utmost synergy of the industry and the Dock Complex, and complete development of all its stakeholders, will be conducted through certain synecdochic figures. By virtue of its function as a linguistic tool, synecdoche lets parts of something stand in for the whole. At other times, synecdoche is the standing in of the whole for the part. In this paper, certain figures- and here the term figure is applied both for the actual figures: persons, institutions and material conditions as well as for figurations in the public consciousness, reified through acts of reiteration, stand in for Haldia. The figures to be analysed are: Sk. Mujaffar of Five Star Logistics, Renuka Sugar Mill, Jaya the coal pellet maker, Ural India factory and the absent figure of public health. After ten months of sustained ethnography at Haldia with Dock officials, students, union leaders, regular employees of both HDC and various other factories in the area, logistical workers, journalists, college teachers, van drivers, taxi drivers, bus drivers, non teaching staff at several educational institutions, farmers and women and men who inhabit the shanties along NH 41, this paper is an analysis of their accounts, as well as of the existing critical literature on Haldia, HDC, HDA and Haldia Municipality documents, newspaper reports, embedded participation in Haldia as well as in different government initiatives that sought to encourage industry investment, *and* a work of fiction. The method employed is largely visual, trying to develop a way of doing visual ethnography as well as a manner of critical description. This paper moves from a short description of the necessity behind the construction of Haldia Dock Complex, its present history and its contested relation with people living at Haldia, to enquire in turn each of the five figures mentioned above.

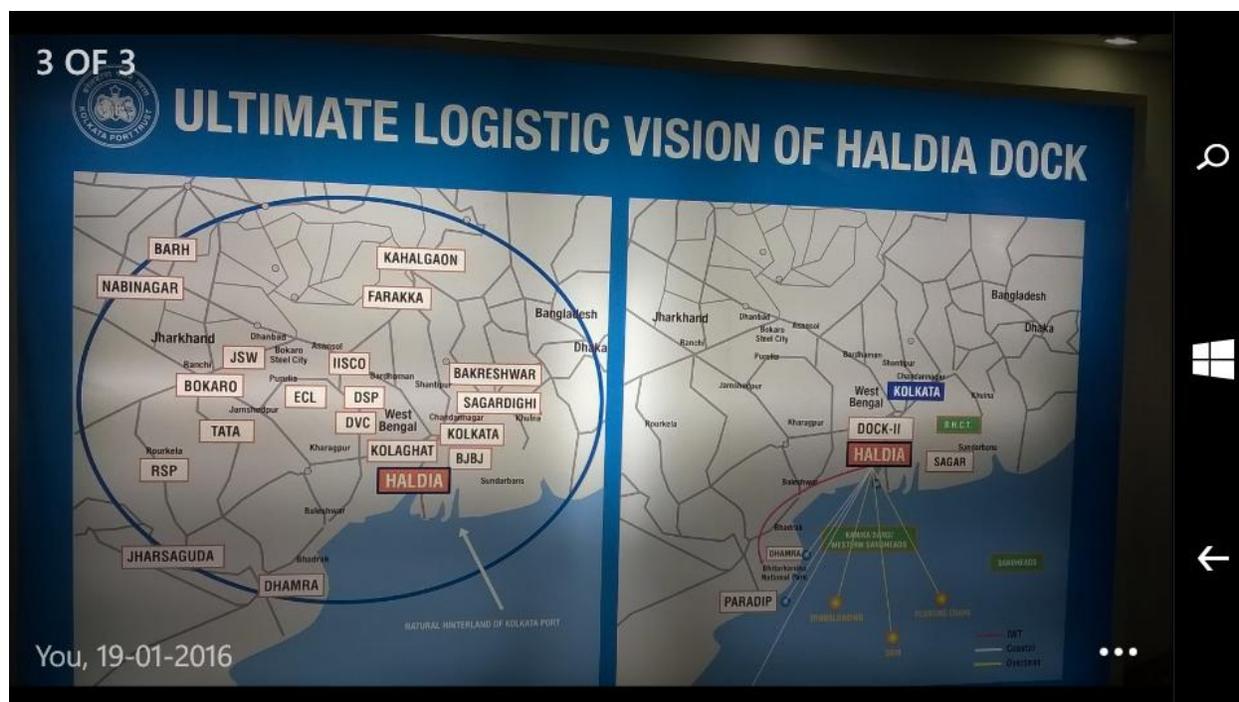


In an article titled “To Reharbour Calcutta”, published in July 1971, P Thankappan Nair outlines the crisis that Calcutta Port was passing through, and points at the measures, both proposed and adopted to rectify that situation. Crisis: other than the decline in economy of West Bengal- the loss of draft due to silting, and the under utilisation of existing dredging facilities (called a “national calamity”), the port had become a pilferer’s paradise- in 1971

reported to have been losing 50-60 lakhs per year, level of efficiency was dubious, there were immense berthing delays. He also went on to say that there were far too many employees: No. Of employees at Calcutta port was equal to the sum of those at Madras and Bombay ports in 1967.

Apart from requisitioning of the Farakka Barrage, the need to continue extensive dredging (with the centre bearing 50% of the costs, the Port Trust 20% and the rest to be borne by the users), Haldia Dock Complex, as part of the then Calcutta Port Trust started operating in 1977. From being first envisioned in the 1950s to having the first assessment studies finding Haldia suitable in the period between 1959-60, the first reasons that recommended Haldia were its locational advantages: there are only two sandbars en route to Haldia, draft is more than Kolkata and could allow vessels longer than 530ft which was the longest allowed in Calcutta. It was free from bore tides which afflicted Calcutta. It was on the western bank of the river which would provide easy railway and roadway connection, without intervention of the river, with the major portions of the port's hinterland which were also the major centres of mining of coal and ore, including iron and manganese. Indian ores had lucrative export markets. A modern port was required as outlet providing facilities for large ore carriers. Similarly, increasing oil import through large oil carriers necessitated a modern and deep drafted oil jetty. The HDA development authority as well as *Haldiar Itibrittya* quote an expert called Gross (1967) who argued that "more than 75.0 percent of the total tonnage of sea-borne cargo all over the world consisted of oil or dry bulk commodities (such as grain, ore, coal, sugar, and fertilizer) and these were carried in ships in which the increased size would lead to a market economy in operating cost". Hence the construction of a new dock system at Haldia, midway between the sea and Calcutta Port, was planned.

In its present state, the HDC has 3 oil jetties, 4 mechanized terminals, 6 multi purpose terminals, 2 container terminals. Other facilities that HDC offers users are: Port Railways with its own signalling system and port owned locomotives, siding area for general and bulk cargo, also for liquid cargo- it offers storage facilities both inside and outside custom bonded area, equipment support, power usage and computer support.



Other advantages advertised by the HDC include rail connectivity and excellent surface transport. The potential for downstream industries in Haldia are also great, especially with the construction of the Haldia Petrochemical, and several multi-national corporations like Mitsubishi, there's Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and various other players- on paper it seems like Haldia is a place where industry and the port system have absolute synergy.

Of course like any other place there are some structural inadequacies: despite dredging the draft never goes up (or should it be down) to the promised number of feet. Haldia being a riverine port, ship movement is dependent on high tide, since the lock gates can only be opened at specific frequencies. This, and there being only a few multi-purpose berths makes waiting for berths pretty long, making ship scheduling an important problem⁵. Even though ships are allotted berths on a first come first served basis, unless other exigencies occur, waiting for berths has been reported as unnecessarily long. However, the death knell for haldia was being rung as early as in 1976, when a commentator in the *Economic and Political Weekly* observed "Like Kolkata port which is dying, Haldia too will die..."⁶

If one were to try and highlight three key areas of concern that emerged during conversations and through an extensive survey of relevant newspaper reports, they would be: draft and dredging, labour unrest and charges of political manipulation. Everyone concerned with the running of the Dock stressed on the importance of maintenance dredging to keep the existing Auckland Channel functional throughout the year. Alongside maintenance dredging, capital dredging that would increase the draft of the existing channels seem unlikely to come by, as dredging is subsidized by the central government and it is alleged that not allotting money for capital dredging would encourage ships to use Dhamra port, a private port (in Orissa, built by Tata Steel, but later bought by the Adani group) from which the current BJP led Central government gets cut backs. Instead, it is also alleged that to bring down subsidies the use of the newly discovered Eden channel is being favoured, even though Eden Channel has merely a .2m

⁵ A problem important enough to become the topic of an engineer's masters' thesis.

⁶ "Still Born"

draft advantage over Auckland. Eden Channel can be used more in the monsoon, when pilotage becomes more difficult due to the constant motions of the sea. Among other means adopted to bypass the draft situation there is a sizable transloading facility whereby cargo is unloaded on Konica sandheads (approximately 70 km from the confluence of Hooghly, renamed as Western sandheads, but the name refused to catch on) and then brought to HDC atop barges or smaller vessels. There are plans afoot to build a deep drafted port facility at Sagar island, with 74% of the expenditure to be met by KoPT and the remaining 26% by the state government.

The General Manager of HDC, Amal Dutta, was keen to direct my attention to this and various other innovations, infrastructural development and outreach programmes undertaken by the HDC. His anxiety to ensure what he deemed to be a fair and impartial understanding and consequent representation of the HDC and its activities could be discerned in his haste to brush aside all negative comments as present in the media. A concerted analysis of media mentions of Haldia, in the past ten months however did not testify to Mr. Dutta's claims of a resurgent HDC. Instead, most of the reports had to do with labour unrest, corruption, and industrial shut down. Unlike Kolkata port, HDC does not draw its labour from the Dock Labour Board, instead, along with its shift towards a partial landlord model (Hill and Scrase 41) whereby some berths are leased to private players, most of the people working at HDC are employees on contract, often subcontracted.

Leaders of the current heavy weight union of the Dock employees (name) would have one believe that post the change of power in 2011, HDC has had all its problems solved amicably and peacefully. Instead, we are faced with the almost- unbelievable story of the spectacular exit of private cargo handler Haldia Bulk Terminals (HBT), from HDC. HBT had claimed that as a mechanised cargo handling operation they were not being given the cargo that they had been promised while KoPT denied any such promise. After protracted negotiations, HBT quit Haldia citing the abduction and threats to life to its employees. The union leaders claimed that HBT wanted a way out after having quoted absurd amounts in their tender bid and the story of their leaving Haldia is just way of ensuring no loss of face.



The ‘duping’ of KoPT by Ripley & Co. is yet another such news from the recent past. Another logistical and stevedoring company, Ripley is supposed to have cheated the government of an estimated 24,500 crores in the past 35 years⁷. According to a Public Interest Litigation filed at Calcutta High Court, it was alleged that in spite of realizing an estimated 300- 500 crore per year, Ripley had not paid any money as royalty to Haldia in 34 years, and paid only about 5000/- as licensing fee for the entire duration. This also made way for the imposing of royalty for cargo handled at Haldia (Rs. 14.77 per tonne of cargo handled) and future implementation of this scheme across the country. However, in less than a year’s time, Ripley founds its way back into Haldia port, in partnership with Orissa Stevedores Limited and Bothra Group. In spite of being major players in port of Vizag and Paradip, both Bothra and OSL chose to work with Ripley, calling it a ‘natural partner’ and in the best position to ‘understand the ground reality in Haldia’ (Saha and Phadikar, n.pag.). Of course, this willingness to share the profits tender is suspicious, and port users fear that the possibility of competitive pricing that was ushered in with the beginning of a tender process, would now not be possible anymore, given that all key players have become one another’s partners. Other conversations in Haldia pointed at the direct involvement of the current MP in brokering the deal, while he is reported in news as their union not being interested in interfering with matters of shore handlers.

It is in the backdrop of this information regarding the contested nature of HDC and its functionaries that I introduce the first of the synecdochic figures that would, in the course of this paper, stand in for the logistical space that is Haldia. This figure is that of Sk. Mujaffar, self proclaimed success story of the development induced by HDC.

A series of the interviews that form the backbone of this paper were conducted in Shramik Bhavan, off Bandar railway station, next to Balaji Hotel. Before the change in political power at the state level, this building had assumed mythical proportions in my imagination as well as in popular discourse around politics in Haldia. It was from this three storeyed building that erstwhile MP Lakshman Seth ‘ruled’ over Haldia. ‘Rule’ of course in this context does not stay confined within the first meaning available with the OED, that of governing, but instead, one that smacks of authority extending beyond and above what is mandated within a democratic set up. A 2007 profile of Lakshman Seth in *The Telegraph* calls him the ‘*badshah*’ of Haldia, while the current TMC strong-man, Ajijul Rahaman, gets referred to as Haldia ‘*Samrat*’ at college functions. I distinctly remember the stories told by students affiliated to Students’ Federation of India (the students’ wing of the CPM) of the strikes planned at Shramik Bhavan, as well as the sound of the gun shots fired near it. But during CPM rule, I never ventured near it, and would probably never had, if not for this project. Flanked by two colleagues in intensifying gloom, my first steps into Shramik Bhavan were met by mosquitoes and a lopsided Lenin. The building had been trashed after TMC victory, even now windows were either broken or boarded up, some electric lines slashed, iron from the grills stolen and paving stones missing.

Several fortuitous encounters later, first chaperoned and later on my own, after college hours, I was being summoned to meet Sk. Mujaffar. Gopal is the caretaker of the building who, came to Shramik Bhavan in 2012, after the Trinamool Congress broke down his home once they came into power in the state. He takes care of the building, not that there is much to take care of, stays with his ‘family’ and does something he refused to tell me, at night, somewhere. Gopal showed me the way, through a room full of clothes and utensils, then couple of dark corridors that opened up into a small unkempt garden and a whole new wing of the building that I did not know existed. Not visible from the road, this L shaped wing was double the size of where I

⁷ “CBI Raids Expose Haldia Port Scam, TMC Men in Dock.”

had just come from, and through couple of more dark corridors, rooms with open doors but no one inside them I climbed up to find a section with fresh paint on the walls, marble on the floor, a brand new collapsible gate, tiles and bright lights. The surprise at finding such a space inside such a decrepit house only helped in mounting my fear, because incongruity, does not merely give rise to laughter, in the correct dose, can also be scary.

It was in this sort of sanctum sanctorum (primarily because if asked to, I would never be able to retrace my steps, but also because the sheer incongruity of this space, comprising four rooms, couple of halls, one kitchen and a bathtub- juxtaposed with the human-engineered and systematic destruction that I had seen, made it sinister) that I met Sk. Mujaffar, owner of Five Star Logistics (an umbrella term I am going to use for Five Star Trading Agency, Five Star Logistics Pvt. Ltd., Five Star Shipping Agency Pvt. Ltd., Five Star Vanijya Pvt. Ltd., Haldia Star Builders, Haldi Chemicals Pvt. Ltd, M. K. Shipping and Chartering Company etc.). Clad in bright white Kurta pajama, this tall man made me eat five and a half sweets, while he proceeded to rattle off phone numbers from memory. Armed with a smart phone that he never picked up, and a note book and pen where he scribbled illegibly, he proceeded to give me an outline of who's who in Haldia, as well as a remembered history of the port and its people.



Sitting in a room flanked by helpers that he ordered around, Mujaffar extended the same feudal hospitality towards me, arranging for a car that would drop me home and then a treat of Biryani for my roommates and I. However, at seven thirty on a Wednesday evening, somewhere at the back of Shramik Bhavan, appreciation of feudal hospitality was the last thing on my mind, I was acutely conscious of the fact that I hadn't met or heard a woman in over three hours, and while I was given to understand certain Trinamool families who earlier lived in shanties now lodged there, as did Gopal, the awareness was acute, and disconcerting.

Everyone I had spoken to till then, in the course of this project, barring Tamalika Panda Seth, had been men. I have met with them at various locations, ranging from the recently refurbished *Apanjon* office to a HDA flat to Five Star godowns⁸ to, as mentioned above, Shramik Bhavan. They have invariably occupied spaces uninterrupted by women. This, in

itself, is not a surprise, as traditionally ports have been male spaces. Nelli Kambouri explains: “It may seem that dock work is stereotypically normalised as masculine only because in the past it required strong hands, but most of all it is the ability to work without having family or domestic care responsibilities that determine the gendered division of labour in the Port”. For people whose lives are centered, whether directly or indirectly, upon the Dock Complex, it therefore is no surprise that spaces would also be coded strictly by gender. In my analysis, I view the space of Haldia city (now, definitely one, a contender in the Smart City project) as a space made and characterised by male labour, big machinery, impossible landscapes, but also, a space that constantly obliterates the labour of women, that go into the making of this logistical space.

The port city, in existing literature, has so far been studied as a city marked by global flows, trying to hold on to its cultural heritage in the face of neo-liberal policies and containerization that threaten to disrupt the very fabric of dock-side existence and as cities straddling the liminal space between negative environmental impact, business growth and economic development. Managerial perspectives are of the opinion that a variety of stake holders are crucial to the dynamic and complex innovation networks that characterise port cities/ areas (De Martino 435). Alice Mah is of the view, in her analysis of the three great ports of the past, Liverpool, New Orleans and Marseille: that in the time of dwindling traffic and business, the global heritages of these ports are invoked by local authorities to shore up tourist activity and by fictional and cultural representation, encompassing the contradictory yet complementing schema of the blue and the black to represent these cities as both exciting and progressive places, but also as places of exoticisation and crime.

The Haldia Dock Complex, reclaimed from erstwhile Doro Parganas, where people seem to have lived in idyllic bliss, fishing and farming, especially bitter gourd, was at the beginning just an oil jetty, commissioned alongside the Haldia Urban Industrial Complex in 1959, the Haldia Dock was built in 1968 and picked up its activities with the commissioning of the Haldia Dock Complex in 1977. The barebones of this chronology do not do much by way of either documenting or describing what happened before, during and after the Dock was built. People who died in the making of this Dock Complex are commemorated in a park bearing the name of the then MP, Satish Samanta. Ethnography pointed at two different directions, one where people benefitting from the building of the Dock go on to own crores of rupees, and the other, in which they are displaced with pittance in the name of rehabilitation package, no land to settle on and no job. ‘Haldia Udbastu Kalyan Samiti’ has been holding sit in demonstrations in front of the office of the Dock Complex, Jawahar Towers, every day, for the past one year. Of course, this dichotomy of development and its unfulfilled promises also cannot claim to capture fully the complexities of this space, or even for that matter, its originary narratives. If teleology is suspect, so are origins, both aligning our analysis ideologically.

But in a moment of completely unexpected poeticism Tamalika Panda Seth, the erstwhile MLA of Mahishadal and Chairperson of Haldia Municipality (the administrative structure of Haldia will be dealt with shortly, delineating the differences between the HDA and the Municipality and their shared vision of growth) recounts the time when if the Port Trust wanted to acquire land, it did so. Was this a nostalgic harking back to the times when the other form of land acquisition, and her and her husband’s summary dismissal from power, could not be thought of? Yes, and no. While ascribing motives to an ethnographic account is the established anthropological practice, the need to read ethnographic accounts as narratives, analysable, is also well established now. TPS spoke eloquently of a man called Subal Das, a technical hand at the port who was reputed to take great pleasure in pulling the roof off houses with his crane,

while the people living there ran out for cover, struggling to collect their belongings. She never met the man herself, but for children like her, living at the exact same space where the Dock Complex now stands, Subal Das was a feared creature, someone mothers told stories about when the children refused to sleep, or when they did not want to eat. It is crucial to keep in mind that this achievement of mythical proportions was aided by his mastery of new technology, the crane. The crane, with its gigantic proportions and ability to destroy, must have been an active component in the children's imaginary. As I will show later, along with containers, cranes and various heavy machinery belonging to the same family, dominate the logistical and visual landscape of Haldia. Their size, coupled with the understanding that they yield great power and can therefore be moved and made to comply only with great mastery and technique, a male domain. Crane-workers comprise a sizable constituency among the Class III technicians in the Dock, the others being electricians, mechanics, welders, etc. The crane and parts of its family, the Carl Mar (that one weigh bridge operator cheekily informed me is after all named after Karl Marx), the fork lift, the loader, the pock land and the ominously named Hydra, are integral to the logistical worlds we try to map here, lifting, shifting, dumping, loading and unloading, levelling, laying and as has been mentioned already- dismantling.



Another figure haunted these dismantled homes, her sighs and howls audible from the distance; haunting abandoned houses that would soon be underneath the Dock in this Doro Pargana. *Doro*, from *dariyā*, indicates that the silted, fertile land that the Dock was laying claim to, was once under water. In these abandoned empty homes, one could hear distant cries

in the evenings, attributed to '*grhalakshmi*', who's been crying for obvious reasons. From the aggressive male who displaced *grhalakshmi*, to the future that would come to be dominated by the self same masculine figures, the logistical space of Haldia is marked by, albeit not overdetermined by the Dock complex.

Sentimental narratives do not start to encompass the ease with which land was acquired by the Port Trust in the 60s and the 70s. There are accusations of malpractice, of dealing with the urban space in a feudal manner. Haldia Dock Complex and the industrial belt (proudly harbouring around 400 industrial units- source, HDA website, having attracted 36% of total investment in Bengal) are inextricably linked with each other in a logistical web, but a web that stretches back to the inception of the port. The Calcutta Port Trust has acquired and continues to hold large tracts of land, later selling parts of it to the various industries including the biggest two, the Indian Oil Corporation and Hindusthan Fertilizer Corporation (now closed). Often it has been accused of not subsidising the license fee, at other times there have been lawsuits. The Port Trust is also engaged in continuous tussle with the local bodies, both the Haldia Development Authority and the Municipality. The interests of both groups are meant to be represented within the structure of the HDA itself, with the Deputy General Manager of the Haldia Dock Complex and directors from the IOC and HPL being members of the HDA board. There are also accusations of not purifying water for the longest time, and, in a stroke of negligence, getting tankers full of water from elsewhere for the inhabitants of the township, and leaving the rest of the city to fend for itself.



Of course, as mentioned earlier, for some, the HDC made them who they are, and in his reminiscences, Mujaffar's past is no less eloquent. He claims to have been working as a *mati kata* labourer when the Dock was being built, having lost all their land and home to the Dock, five brothers of the family were employed by the Dock itself. Since 1977 he became close to Lakshman Seth, initially being part of the INTUC which lost steam 1978 onwards when everyone and their uncles shifted to CITU. He had also become an employee of CPT in 1978, an employment that came to an end when he became a councillor of Haldia Municipality in 2002. Five Star group of companies that Mujaffar runs is one of the biggest shipping and logistics service providers at Haldia, undertaking loading, unloading work as well as supplying labour, containers, trucks, cranes and goddown space. Once he warms up, Mujaffar proceeds to make jokes on the contrast between his past and present: claiming to have carried loads of soil on his head when the Dock was being built, and not being allowed to touch or clean others' cars, he now rides cars himself, connects with ships and has a son who has qualified as a commercial pilot from the Australia? Anyway, I do not wish to sing the paeans to Mujaffar.

Anupam, an employee at Five Star was entrusted with the job of explaining to me what logistics mean. According to him, it means handling the cargo once it comes off the ship, or from somewhere else, and preparing and loading it for its next destination. While human agency determines when how and how many, the most precarious element of this logistical network remains labour. As mentioned earlier, with relation to masculinity of the dock worker, the logistical worker is also almost always unfailingly male: driving trucks, supervising, manually unloading cargo from containers or trucks, shovelling them into sacks, loading the sacks onto the trucks again, guarding the godowns or running the weigh bridge. In this logistical world, women are at best marginal entrants, being employed to clean the warehouses or as itinerant contractual labour, employed to fix some small things, mix cement or lay brick. In the logistical enterprise, apart from a handful few, of supervisory rank or with expert technical knowledge are forever contractually employed, their work determined by the amount and nature of cargo to be handled. Like the Dock, employment at a logistical outfit is also largely based on the ability to be flexible, a male attribute.



People who work at such places are local people, some whose lands have been acquired to build the giant godowns, others who live nearby. In the meantime, with the backing of the existing political power, the agitation of the people displaced by the Dock gathers momentum. In a 2005 interview the then Deputy Chairman of the Haldia Dock Complex, M. L. Meena claimed “we have given jobs to one person per family who had lost their homes and land due to the dock complex. Displaced families were rehabilitated further inland”. Ten years down the line, the forty odd people gathered near the gate of Jawahar Towers, living under a makeshift hut and eating off a communal kitchen, present round the clock, and claiming to represent 800 families are unequivocal in their condemnation of the party that was previously in power, although rehabilitating those few who have been after all given space was done through protracted negotiation between the HDA and the Port authorities, in which it was decided that both the Port and the HDA would give equal amount of land to set up various colonies. Rehabilitation into a colony such as Kshudiram colony or Gandhinagar does not make up for the agrarian land that the families have lost. Colonies, now part of the spiralling urban, can only accommodate homesteads. While the resettlement of those displaced by the Port continues to be disputed, the number of shanties across National Highway 41 continues to increase. People come, build shanties, build small enclosures where they then grow a few vegetables and livestock, build a mosque and a temple, try to cultivate the fallow land around. Their children then start going to the government aided school nearby, the men find jobs repairing vehicles, in stealing or unloading cargo when wagons stop at the signals. The population at other established colonies, SaotalChak etc are also increasing every day. It seems they are not ‘real’ displaced people, coming in to Haldia in search of livelihood, from 24 Parganas and Nandigram.

Port induced displacement, albeit large scale in nature, has not generated significant academic interest in India. Hill and Scrase hold Parasuraman to have authored the definitive study of displacement with respect to the JNPT at Mumbai whereby he showed wide discrepancy between claimed rehabilitation and actual dispossession. In their 2012 study of HDC induced displacement, Hill and Scrase claim

While there have been financial gain and business opportunities for the lucky few, within the Haldia area there has been widespread displacement, dislocation, job losses and a range of other social and environmental impacts felt by the marginal, local population of peasant landowners and contract, migrant (from other districts) labourers (42).

My ethnographic research, coupled with interaction with the agitating members of the landlosers, support Hill and Scrase’s findings. However, Hill and Scrase end their discussion by pointing at the influx of relatively well off people, buying land from the original set of people who had been rehabilitated simply, given the enormous price jump that current day haldia has witnessed. The recent spate of rehabilitations, by both the KoPT and other factories only provide for a homestead to the displaced people, people no longer get back the agricultural land that they have lost, since agricultural land is no longer assured in this designated industrial belt. They however do not comment on the new influx of economically vulnerable people into Haldia, and their research stops short of pointing at the existing forms of political involvement in settlement/ resettlement despite change of government.

During the course of field visits, I rented a car, whose driver, Sashanka Jana is from South 24 parganas. He used to come and visit his maternal uncles till he decided to move to Haldia for good. After five years of living and working here, he has now built a house (of what kind I did not enquire), in the land that the party has given him. Which party, I ask. Trinamool party he

says, after all in this political climate, who else can give him and many others like him the permission to build a house on land that is the HDA's property?

There are two things I wish to explore from this. First, during the heydays of CPM, ICARE, the company run by Lakshman Seth (one that runs Haldia Institute of Technology, Haldia Institute of Nursing Science, Dr. B C Roy Memorial Hospital, Research and Development Centre, Vidyasagar Primary teachers' Training Institute, Haldia School of Languages, Haldia Institute of Management, Haldia Institute of Health Science, Institute of Education, Haldia Law College, Global Institute of Science and Technology, Haldia Institute of Dental Science and Research, Haldia Institute of Maritime Studies and Research etc.), bought 37 acres from HDA for 37 rupees. Haldia Govt. College's land houses one such flourishing colony, but as the ICARE example illustrates, there is a fine line between encroachment and legal occupation. Migration into Haldia is at least two fold, one, people who come from all over India and in the case of Mitsubishi, from the rest of the world, and are housed in townships or other upscale residential neighbourhoods. They, of course are not considered displaced, albeit a significant suspicion continues to remain for the outsiders. However, they are not the targets of AIDS awareness campaigns such as the one in which a rhyme explores the better livelihood option that might bring a male member of the family into a town like Haldia, who might then get involved in unsafe sexual liaisons, thereby endangering the wife who's waiting for him at the village. Like the *grhalakshmi* mentioned above, womanhood is closely tied with notions of home, while the independent and individuated male member goes forth to earn a living. The migrant male, then is not merely someone who displaced existing land equations, as an active sexual subject he also threatens the sexual order. Women are passive, and therefore out of this picture.

The second trope I wish to develop from here is that of land. Haldia Development Authority proudly declares its landbank on its website. After Shubhendu Adhikary became the MP for Tamluk Lok Sabha constituency and hence the chairperson of HDA, the Haldia landscape has been dotted with plaques that he has inaugurated, signalling the beginning or the end of projects such as laying of roads, digging tubewells or refurbishing roads. Haldia Municipality, formed in 1997, from the erstwhile Haldia Notified Area Authority, has as its stated purpose a linear progression from agrarian economy to industrial economy, from clay-ey roads to tarred and then concrete roads, from a small village to a 'smart city'.

Renuka Sugars is a case in point in the logistical space determined by the Dock that Haldia is. At once touted as a masterpiece of logistical planning and a shining feather in Haldia's cap (so much so that it continues to feature in proposed expansion plans of HDC even after it mothballed its operations)⁹, Renuka Sugar Mill had been a constant feature of my life in Haldia. It is right across the road from us, and we have regularly been assaulted by the noxious smells emanating from its chimneys, of course, it took me a while to distinguish the specific sugar mill smell from the other various smells wafting about in the smoglike substance that passes off as air at Haldia, from the fumes generated by the various petrochemical refineries, mixed with the general pollution, other fumes and the suspended particles thanks to the constantly being moved around iron and coal ores.

Interesting however, is the fact that for me Renuka Sugar Mill was as permanent a fixture on the Haldia landscape as the goats trying to get into my classroom or the half clothed children chasing them. Of course, there were some changes, the highway got new lights, the two large dingy by lane became a four lane high road, along with two service roads to boot, the mud got

⁹ Feasibility report, August 2015.

reduced and girls started wearing jeans to college. Also, the Sugar Mill built two pyramidal structures, and we got our first mall, City Centre, Haldia.

One muggy morning last April I woke up to the news that Shree Renuka Sugar Mills was pulling down its shutters. SRSM is part of ‘India’s largest sugar company’¹⁰, a company that ‘clocked a revenue of 6.522 crore in 2013- 14’. This particular mill, albeit not a production unit, merely a refining one, apparently has the capacity to produce 2000 tonnes of sugar per day¹¹, but had not been producing anything for the seventeen months prior to its operations being mothballed, and was instead trying to clear its stock. Two reports, one extensive and the other not, provided several reasons behind this event, but all of these reasons can be broadly divided into two kinds: one, national policies and politics, and two, more regional, but in effect, global chain of events culminating at Haldia Port. Lakshman Seth had cut a deal with the Murkumbi family, owners of many sugar plants across the world, who built their plant in such a place which did not see any sugar cultivation, incidentally, on the same space where Amalsh Tripathy’s grandparents’ house stood. The understanding was that raw sugar would be brought in by ship from Brazil where the company owns large holdings, refined in Haldia and then sold off. The various reasons behind the mothballing of the company include rise of production costs due to higher labour charges incurred at the dock, increased expenditure as shipment could be brought only in small ships, due to the reduced draft at Haldia, fall of sugar prices in the country and increase in import duty for raw sugar. They also mention the state government’s failure to impose VAT on the product has undermined the possibility of the incentive that the plant would subsequently get. However, none of the reports mention the fact that this exceptionally profit making venture has more than made up for the investment that was put into it. With the mothballing of productions, people who had given up their land now have neither a land nor a job. After protracted negotiations with the management, the union claims to have garnered the assurance that when the plant starts operation again, the job losers will be reinstated en masse.

If we continue to believe in the figure of SRSM as concretisation of the logistical flows generated via HDC, the embodiment of these flows are repeatedly seen to be doomed. Factory after factory continues to shut down in Haldia, SRSM was followed by Rohith Ferrotech and had been preceded by the country wide shut down of Hindusthan fertilisers, and was followed by Ural India. By in the space vacated by these figures, certain others raise their uncertain heads.

Having so far enquired into the development of Haldia as a logistical space with well defined hinterland, logistical visions, land allocation pattern and establishment of industry, it is time to look at the ‘other’ of logistics: an informal network also dependent upon the HDC, that makes the most marginal, disprivileged and displaced women continue to be impoverished, yet identify as economic actors within the space of this increasingly precariatized and short lived employment conditions. This section will also, hopefully, explicate, how this other logistics actually phenomenologically constitutes the predominant logistical vision of Haldia. In this section of the paper I enquire into spillages, excesses of the cargo handled at HDC, and their relation, actively aided by human interventions, with the existing logistical framework of Haldia. Through Jaya, a migrant woman who makes and sells coal pellets I ask questions about the difference between male and female labour and their implications for the kind of spaces they occupy, the technologies under their control and the economic viability of their action. A similar case can also be made through the scrap collectors and people involved in a flourishing

¹⁰ ‘jagged Spoon in Bengal Sugar Bowl’.

¹¹ “haldiay Bandho hoye Gyalo Chini Karkhana”

scrap business in Haldia. Further, the filling up of Port and Municipality land with residue generated from Thermal Power plant, and building garages and auto workshops on them point at another form of subsistence eked out by men of Haldia, a subsistence facilitated by and facilitating the existing logistical framework. The last instance of this section is that of the truck manufacturing and assembling firm, Ural, where one reportedly sees the inversion of existing industrialization logic.

Literature suggests a systematic undervaluation of women's work manifested through occupational segregation, discrimination and women's unequal share in family responsibilities (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007). In the rural context, similar observation holds true for the 'invisible' and 'undervalued' contribution of women in agriculture, both as cultivators (refer to the 'feminization of agriculture') and as agricultural labourers (Deere, 2005). Coupled to these are the devaluation of their work, the undermining of their contribution to economic production and the policy lacunae when dealing with women's identity as economic agents (e.g. the identity of 'farmers' (Brandth, 1994). The use of the term labourer here is deliberate, to differentiate between and also to draw attention to the unequal distribution of resource and ownership among men and women, disproportionate to the time and effort that women do put in as part of labour. Here, I liberally borrow from the information and insights generated by researchers working on valuation of women's work to explain the new employments underprivileged, displaced women in Haldia participate in, the nature of this work- poorly paid and never ending, albeit flexible, and these women's construction of their own subjectivities as wage earners, at times, even family wage earner.

Jaya lives in the shanties that have come up around Haldia Govt. College, in land that belongs to the college. The shanties are relatively new, built in the last few years of CPIM regime and developed on the past five years. Jaya's shanty is much more derelict than that of the others, and the reason probably lies in two facts, one: even though a migrant like the rest of the people in the shanties (or, colony, as they call themselves), Jaya's displacement is of a far greater distance than the others, thereby denying her any form of social capital. Among the other, some claim to have come from the other side of the highway, some from Nandigram across the river, some from South 24 Parganas, while some others deny displacement at all, claiming that they have lived here all along. Jaya on the other hand, is from UP. Her husband used to be a truck driver, ferrying goods across the country till he met with an accident, and lost one leg. Since then Jaya is the sole earner for the family. In her own words, "He had taken care of me all these years, now I would have to take care of him, right?" The other reason behind the relatively more derelict shanty that Jaya and her husband inhabit, of course, is because this household is solely funded by Jaya's earnings. The migration from UP to Haldia is not something Jaya wants to get into, however sifting from other similar narratives, it seemed likely that a belief in the 'growth' and industrialization of Haldia, that encouraged many to make the move, also prompted them to settle here.

Women's migration, researchers hold, has to be read differently from male migration, even when the family migrates in its entirety (Pedraza, 1991). Labour of course, forms one of the bases on which this difference can be mapped. One, while men get involved in other forms of labour, especially in the case of rural to urban migration, women's labour continues in the form of cooking, cleaning and washing and care work (Parrenas, 2001). Whatever new identity as participant in the labour force that they might seek to or be forced to adopt, or be denied, the domestic labour continues. Along with this, Lahiri- Dutt and Banerjee- Scrase note, migration to urban spaces usually mean lack of access to the commons- forests and fields that were sources of fodder, fibre and firewood in the villages. In Haldia, we will see below, the

commons have been replaced by a set of common resources that are the result of the logistical structure of Haldia.

Jaya's family now presumably survives on the making and selling of two kinds of 'gul', apart from other possible sources of income that she omitted to mention. The word 'gul' does not have an English synonym indicating perhaps to the indigenous, and very poor contexts within which it continues to be circulated. Roughly translating into 'ball made of coal dust', I am going to refer to it as 'coal pellets'. Used as fuel in small household clay ovens as well as in small eating establishments and tea shops, used even in the canteen of Haldia Government College, where I used to work, a giant sack of these pellets, amounting to 40 kilos sells for rupees 300/-. In early and late afternoon, women can be seen making these pellets, spreading them on plastic mats or torn tarpaulin sheets, gathering them in the evening and stacking them up for further drying the next day (Fig 1).

The manufacturing and selling of coal pellets enables Jaya to identify herself as a wage earner, as one involved in financial transactions by virtue of her labour. But a closer look at the economy and ideology surrounding this other logistics would undermine her self-identification as an economic actor.

IMAGE COAL DUST AND PELLETS ALONG THE ROAD

The coal is gathered from two sources. Coking Coal (used in steel production) and Coal (used in power generation) are two of the highest cargo handled at Haldia Dock complex, at berth 4B and 8, with annual handling capacity of 2 million Metric tonnes and 1.8 Metric tonnes respectively. In August 2015 KoPT also published a feasibility report for the construction of a new cargo handling facility, a jetty at Outer Terminal II, specifically for coal. In the feasibility report, HDC is described as the preferred destination for importers of both coal and Coking coal. This cargo, once off loaded, is transferred onto wagon and trucks.

IMAGE DITCH AND POND

To the left of the entrance gate to the Dock Complex, between the wall separating port land from uninhabited land, and the rail line on which the coal carrying wagons run, there is a drainage ditch that opens into a shallow, yet large pond. Half of this pond is covered in water hyacinths, but the other half has been sectioned off using latticed bamboo partitions. The coal dust and sediment coming out through the drainage ditch gathers here; in monsoon the sedimentation is higher. Women, like Jaya, get into the water and enhance the sedimentation process with their feet, gathering the sedimented coal dust with their hands, and then carry the sediment home, leave it to dry in mounds along the highway. Once it dries a bit, the task of making coal pellets start, making them into balls, drying them and then packing them in sacks.

IMAGE WOMAN ON COAL WAGON

Coal is also sourced by women when the load bearing wagons stop in the middle of fields, waiting for the green signal. Women climb onto the wagons and throw down chunks of coal on the ground, jumping back down as the train starts to move (Fig. ??). Collecting the chunks they go home to break them into coal dust and start the pellet preparation.

Port logistics contribute to the making of another kind of coal pellets as well. When trucks carrying coal cargo stop at traffic signals on NH 41, women from shanties along it, run up to the trucks and start brushing the dust accumulated on the tyres and various crevices of the vehicle onto utensils and buckets. When the traffic is slow, the highway is swept by the same women, the dust gathered and sifted to isolate the coal particles. This also then, produces coal

pellets, that sell at the same price. The only difference between the first kind, gathered from sediments and the second kind, gathered from sweeping is that, the second kind produces less heat.

IMAGE COAL SWEEPERS

In third world countries, the collection and preparation of fuel, alongside cooking, is almost exclusively a gendered task, carried out by women of all ages. In rare instances old men, who are no longer able to participate in remunerative labour, are also part of it. It has also been noted that when fuel becomes more commercialized and technology driven, men's participation in it increases (Dankelman and Davidson, 69).

Fuel is an everyday reality and requirement at Haldia. Apart from the Haldia Thermal Power Plant, which directly uses coal to generate electricity, every other industry in the area also requires large quantities of fossil fuel. In fact, coal forms not only the key component of Haldia's famous hinterland, consumption of coal by industries in Haldia itself merit, as mentioned above, three dedicated terminals at HDC. This coal needs to be loaded on to wagons, trucks, the trains and trucks have to be driven and the coal has to be unloaded- all economically viable tasks that are undertaken by men. However, when the same coal generated fuel is used for household purposes, the procurement of it becomes the woman's task, taking out of it its remunerative potential, and make it part of unpaid domestic labour.

In the case of these coal pellets however, a certain, very low form of income is generated by women, by collecting the source of the fuel- as a free by product of the port's logistical mechanism, changing its ontology from one form of pollutant to another highly polluting fuel through the employment of sheer physical labour, and then by selling it to food and tea stalls.

Two crucial things in this case, the earning from the selling of the coal pellets is abysmally low, and it is termed as earning merely because the labour involved in it is entirely women's labour, attached to other domestic labours. In fact, the same fuel that is sold at a price, is used at home for cooking as well. But it can be done right at one's doorstep, in between cooking, cleaning and care work. Women involved in this piecemeal industry continue to grow more abject in terms of time poverty (see Warren 2003 for the theoretical understanding), but their labour is necessary to feed the men who are value generating parts of the existing logistical framework of Haldia. Male labour, as documented by Hill and Scrase, and narrated by union leaders and witnessed through the shutting down of factories, has been increasingly undervalued, underpaid, and precarious.

Yet another example of women's labour occupying the interstices of Haldia logistics is represented in the next four images. (Figs. ??, ??, ??, ??).



[Woman and child digging into clay with their hands, looking for iron scrap. The Municipality is filling up the empty low land next to the Highway, presumably to build something. Filling up this lowland, or *nayanjuli* (*drainage ditch besides the road*) is extremely regrettable as they host amazing bio-diversity (Chambers, 1990).]



[On the link road connecting City Centre to majushri, these two boys could be seen sifting through a pile of dumped stoned and dust next to the road, one evening, after school. They did not know where the material came from, but informed gleefully that they had managed to earn 300/- the previous day.]

In the first three, we see women and young children digging for something in a heap of clay, and landfill material from iron factories that have now shut down. What they are looking for, is iron scrAp. Collecting one kilo iron scrap would result IN 400/- rupees, but how long it would take to generate one kilo is purely a matter of chance. It depends on the kind of clay or stones one dumper contains, and the scrap content within it.

The fourth image is of a place that trades in scrap metal. Here too, we see a young child and a grown woman, with the crucial difference that they are not digging for the scrap iron, but are on the other side of such labour, on the financially more beneficial side. But further conversation with them revealed that like the commercialisation of domestic fuel production, the moment scrap metal becomes part of a larger economic chain, with tangible returns and profit, men become part of the network. So, these mushrooming scrap businesses are run by men, with women of the family minding the space when men take their afternoon nap.

IMAGE BOYS, WOMEN, OLD MEN SEARCHING FOR SCRAP

IMAGE SCRAP SHOP

IMAGE SCRAP CONTAINER

Scrap metal is one of the more important cargoes handled at HDC. In the financial year 2013-14, HDC handled 140,000 tonnes of scrap while in the financial year 2014-15, it went up to 156,000 tonnes¹².

Once scrap is unloaded in a godown with the help of a Hydra, the containers emptied by tipping them over, men armed with shovels, hard hats and gloves gather them in mountains of scrap before loading them onto a truck or yet another container. The women and children who are also part of the same scrap industry however work in bare feet and hand, sorting through rubbish to find iron scrap.

Haldia Dock Complex's logistical vision as well as the vision for smart city Haldia (an initiative of Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India to improve the overall infrastructure, sustainable real estate, communications and market viability of selected Indian cities) predicts a linear progress from agriculture to industry, from human labour to automation and machines. The interstices of dominant logistical frameworks that have been explored so far, however, point at a feminisation of this 'other' logistics, without enjoying the elementary benefits of a labour. Keeping in place the key requirements of a logistical system, the women who pick up the excess, the pollutants and the impurities of the cargo handled by HDC and its logistical counterparts, the railways, trucks and godowns, are neither bound by contract, nor regularised-or eligible for any kind of benefits .

But the intense labour involved in generating negligible value, and the close association of this labour with domestic work foreclose the possibility of women emerging as viable economic actors in this alternative logistical network.

¹² "Break Up of Traffic in terms of Principal Commodities at KDS and HDC"



A desirable landfill material in Haldia is non-bio-degradable residue from Kolaghat Thermal Power Plant 60 kilometres away. Haldia Energy Limited (a unit of CESC) also produces and sells landfill material. A truckload of material can be purchased for approximately 2000/-, it is then used, like the clay in front of *Sonar Tari*,¹³ to fill up the low-lying land next to the Highway or the link road. It can also be used to fill up the drainage ditch next to roads and build everything on it, from tailoring to butcher shops. Next to highways, where land stretched across the *nayanjuli* and agricultural fields, the filled-up space then is used to either build temporary shacks for vehicles, and more frequently, make shift garages doing repair to large and small vehicles. Unlike Five Star Logistics with its own repairing station, these new repair shops are built on Municipality land, with active help from the ruling party (whichever it might be). They depend on the patronage of the itinerant truck driver for their subsistence, locations near factory gates therefore being more coveted.

Agricultural fields and fallow land then gets entangled into other economies, transforming their value, but also transforming the already fragile eco-system. Relatively well-connected individual men, however, find a way out of poverty and a life beyond agricultural labour, their lives and employments increasingly entangled with that of the Dock Complex.

An act of othering, Beauvoir taught us, is crucial to any self-definition, especially the self-definition of the hegemonic. "...following Hegel, we find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility towards every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed – he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object"¹⁴. Haldia Dock complex was constructed on agricultural land as well as land reclaimed from the submerged regions. The factories however, were and continue to be constructed on fertile land, just a river's width away from Nandigram. Haldia hasn't seen anti-land acquisition movement in the recent past like Nandigram, a mystery novel set in Haldia also remarks on this (refer to). Travelling down to Haldia on a regular basis, the gradual enclosing of agricultural land is a

¹³ Proposed mall at City Centre, but unfinished for the past ten years.

¹⁴ *The Second Sex*.

common site, more common however, than seeing that enclosed land actually turning out a profit making factory. But in the teleology of Haldia, agriculture is definitely the other of rapid, mass scale industrialisation.

Last week, just as we were reading about Nepal's new treaty with China that would now enable her to use China's port, apart from just Haldia port, and the protests in Bihar about the proposed Allahabad Haldia waterway, we also read about this truck factory in Haldia, Ural India. Lack of orders stopped production last November, a total of 44 employees at the plant, some of whom had given up their land for the factory, are at times unpaid, at others they take home reduced pay package. To counter this, newspaper reports suggest (refer to), the employees at the factory with active encouragement from the authorities, have taken to growing bananas, cabbages, cauliflower, beetroots, carrots, beans and other vegetables inside the factory area. This growing of vegetables is part of a more formal economy in which workers leave behind chits detailing what they have harvested for personal use every day, and at the end of the month the chits are balanced against the salary due, if any salary be forthcoming.

The informal- formalisation of this arrangement does not merely indicate a stop gap arrangement, it hints at the unstable terrain that the vision of industrialisation charts. The existence and flourishing of the 'other' logistics at Haldia repeatedly drew our attention to the need for hard, poorly paid, unrecognised labour to sustain the predominantly male workforce that the industrialisation feeds on. This reversal of the logic of industrialisation at Ural India does more, it questions the veracity of that logic itself.

Innovation system enquiry has largely been used in the business environments, and agricultural research and development system study, whenever a large number of related actors comes together to form a human managed system (Klerkx and Leeuwis, 2009). Is it possible to draw an analogy between logistical networks and innovation systems to examine the 'other' logistic network in Haldia. Apart from the 'core' actors, the innovation (system) networks depend on many other peripheral actors in the institutional environment, "whose involvement may not be voluntarily but, rather, predicated by mutual interdependence" (Klerkx et al., 2010). On the other hand, in his structuration theory, Giddens (1984:25) substantiates that "actors and the structures in which they are embedded have a dual relationship, because the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize". The duality is embodied in the fact that actors in the logistic network are conditioned by their environment, and at the same time they change their environment to result in another form of conditioning. In our case, however, the 'other' logistics flourish due to the core logistic network, but fail to surface mutual interdependencies, perhaps due to the unorganized/unrecognized nature of the 'other'. However, the actors of this 'other' logistic network, instead form a system of its own that perpetuates the 'structuration' in the form of a invisible 'other' (logistic network) in Haldia. They seem to manifest the actor-structure duality of Giddens to condition each other. Examination of this observation may form the scope of further empirical enquiry.

The final trope raised in this paper, is one of absence. The absentee is the missing concern with notions of health. Biman Mistri, Deputy General Secretary of Calcutta Port and Shore Mazdur Union, HDC, in his meeting with the delegates mentioned the increased age of the employees at HDC, the increased workload etc. The representative from the INTTUC Union was initially reluctant to acknowledge potential health hazards associated with HDC, till he almost shyly owned up to the chronic bronchitis that his wife suffers from, flaring up every time she is in Haldia. Tamalika Panda Seth mentions the 'patch' on her lungs, from living long twenty years

in Shramik Bhavan at Ranichak. A former Pollution Control Board chairperson remarks casually, “How do you *breathe* in Haldia? The suspended matter is enough to kill anyone”. A study conducted by the Economics department of Haldia Govt. College among the people living in the shanties along NH 41 reported instances of skin disease and respiratory problem in each household, especially among young children. For several years there ne factories were denied environmental clearance, and it has been denied to proposed HDC II at Shalukhali village as well. Both the environmental impact assessment reports of 2015 and “How to Make Haldia Better” proposal prepared as part of the Smart City Project in 2015 are instructive in their recommendations regarding health of the population. In the latter report, ‘pollution control’, ‘good health’ and ‘healthy food’ come under three separate heads. The good health module recommends market monitoring to check colouring or adulteration in food stuff, providing park for exercising and building more hospitals. The EIA 2015 bypasses the question of health completely, dwelling instead on occupational hazards, threats to fire safety and the need to ensure adequate medical facilities. Neither of the two reports acknowledge the profound and irreplaceable impact that industries and port can and do have on surrounding environment. Expressed in language of risk and management, human life and health gets reduced to manageable entities, health stops being an achievable goal for populations, instead prevention and at times, cure take place of right to health. Tharu, Srivatsan and Zachariah show how since its inception, Indian national health policies have been geared towards prevention of diseases, through measures like inoculation and vaccination, and the prevention of epidemics. Health for all, and the social and economic conditions of health have ceased to be an articulated demand since independence. With neo-liberalisation, health increasingly becomes the responsibility of an individual, something to be purchased at a steep price.

At Haldia, around 22.34 percent of the population¹⁵ reside in slums, with limited or no access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation. The slums are typically located along highways, in front of factories and along rail lines. With the rise of biopower, governments have shifted to the regulation of populations through the subjugation of bodies. In Haldia, at least a section of the population is itinerant, migratory, seasonal. The bodies that matter in Haldia are not the ones that register their existence as more than a mere figure in the demographic charts. The absence of health as an articulated concern that so baffled us couple of days ago, therefore is symptomatic of a culture where health is not a public good, where health is not a fundamental right and where the individual is held accountable for her ill health.

Even within institutionally structured preventive and curative health services (the Port hospital or the private medical college and hospital that did not have accreditation till a few years back, certain populations continue to be unacknowledged. The slum dwellers, the coal sweepers, the women who wade into ponds outside factories trying to catch fish, gather mussels and leafy vegetables, the van drivers and rickshaw pullers constitute the most at-risk population at Haldia, without a share in its promised benefits.

¹⁵ Haldia City Census Data 2011