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Case Study of Road-Widening in Bangalore

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Sanam Roohi

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Introduction

In the past few years, Bangalore, like other metros in India, has witnessed the introduction of many mega projects, often under the urban renewal schemes, that have been rapidly altering the landscape of the city. One such mega-intervention is the road-widening /realignment projects and schemes whereby the existing width of the road is to be increased by demolishing part of properties, mainly private, that fall on either side of the roads slated for widening. Roads are being widened for two reasons in Bangalore – one for decongesting roads and secondly for the purpose of building the metro rail – both based on different compensatory models. The focus of this paper is largely on these road width realignment projects, where the official reason cited is decongesting the city for smooth vehicular movement. This involves multi-pronged interventions - from making roads wider, often from two laned to four or more laned, making some corridors signal free, building flyovers, underpasses and magic boxes. In 2009-10 road-widening and the accompanying compensation model was up against many street level protests across Bangalore. The fieldwork for this paper was done between March 2010 and July 2010, when agitations were at the peak. I had picked three roads as sites for fieldwork. These three roads were Tannery road, Infantry road and Dr. Rajkumar Road, where I spent many days hanging out with locals and shop owners, interviewing them or just talking to them. The first two roads received more ethnographic attention than the third. Besides, some government officials, a government consultant and other city experts including activists were also interviewed. These three areas provided a contrast to each other in terms of the nature of land holdings, profiles of land owners and the politics of road-widening related to it. However, what united them was a strong popular resistance to road-widening . Though such agitations have not completely died down, they have seen a lull over the last two years.¹ The Bangalore Bruhat Mahanagar Palike (BBMP) holds the mandate to undertake such road-widening projects.

Road-widening is among the last of the big projects that remains under BBMP when most of the other big projects, like building flyovers, underpasses etc. have shifted to the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) which works towards developing sites for residential and commercial purposes. The BDA is understood to be financially more stable. Besides these two bodies, there are other bodies that are working towards rebuilding Bangalore's infrastructure like the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) which was registered in November 1993 as a public limited company under the Companies Act, 1956. Since then, the company is functioning as the main arm of the State Government related to urban infrastructure development projects and as Government's interface with external lending agencies.

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The City Development Plan (CDP) prepared by the BBMP under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)² funds stressed on the need for improving road infrastructure as something requiring immediate intervention. It states ‘Roads and Transportation infrastructure is probably the area where the most critical and immediate interventions are required. While the standards of “length” are more or less in order, the problem relates more to the fact that the width of roads is inadequate’³ It also goes on to suggest that ‘... that bus service would be self-limiting and reach saturation at some stage, and that higher quality wide-bodied buses would be difficult to run. Consequently, the importance of having other rail-based systems that use a different or elevated right-of-way, such as a Metro or Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, is therefore established.’

Therefore, plans for the city road and transportation does not stop with widening of the two hundred and sixteen roads in Bangalore that have been on the radar of the BBMP for a couple of years now, but also bringing in the mono-rail, which has been put on a fast track under the present government. After four mono-rail corridors along the periphery of the city was on the fast track, another mono rail proposal - this time, for core city areas -is finding its way into the planners' agenda.⁴ What it also means is the clear overlap between any such interventions and real estate lobby. Experts who were interviewed as part of this research suggest that the mono-rail might end up having the biggest stake in real estate in Bangalore, as the consortium is also asking for the development rights of areas where the mono-rail will run, apart from the government financing two third of the project cost. Apart from this, the high speed rail link network from the city to the International airport at Devalhalli is also on the anvil. This project is proposed to be a Rs 6,900 crore venture, where the Karnataka government would contribute Rs 532 crore by way of land, while Rs 1,040 crore is expected from the Centre.⁵

The government has also been actively seeking other sources of revenue for the city infrastructure projects. For instance in 2010, the government of Karnataka through the Infrastructure Development Department (IDD) had submitted a proposal to get some thirty seven billion dollars from World Bank to implement 150 projects in 11 key sectors in Karnataka under the Sustainable Infrastructure Action Plan (SIAP). Out of the total amount, the largest share of a total of \$ 14,992 is set for the ‘Transportation and Logistics’ sector.⁶ In addition to this the Government of Karnataka has also received a loan of US \$ 216 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and one of the identified agenda (among the 3 other agendas) is to finance ‘Bangalore development’, a basic component of it being supporting the rehabilitation of Bangalore city road network⁷. The Commissioner’s office, BBMP, had prepared a Proposed Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for some 22,000 crore INR, where except for some money set aside for lake and market improvement, the rest is all sanctioned for laying roads, building flyovers, underpasses, railway over/under bridges, pedestrian subways, elevated or signal free corridors, asphaltting of roads etc⁸ - all of which has a potential for land acquisition for road-widening and realignment purposes.

Compensatory Model

How the compensatory model will work out if land will be acquired in these new projects is not well concretised, but The Transfer of Development Right scheme or TDR scheme (explained below) - a non monetary compensation model is to be used as a compensatory tool for some two hundred and sixteen roads proposed to be widened for decongestion by the BBMP; whereas those roads where the properties have been acquired for the metro rail can avail monetary compensation based on the market price. In certain areas, both road-widening for decongestion and building the metro line coincide as in the case of Dr. Rajkumar road (a major road with many medium sized commercial

establishments in the western part of Bangalore) or as speculated to be the case for the imminent road-widening of Tannery road (a congested road primarily made up of petty retail shops). All such interventions are attempts at disciplining the congested and chaotic city traffic to become manageable, what with projections of 40 lakh vehicles to be out on Bangalore roads by this year⁹, the official stance is, that road-widening is a necessity and TDR is the only solution as the BBMP does not have money to pay to thousands of people whose property would be affected. But the relationship between road-widening and TDR also speaks of another emerging area which the officials under-estimate; the concentration of land in the hands of some of these unelected bodies which has the potential to create a land bank in the hands of these bodies in an overwhelmingly expanding city terrain.

These ambitious projects require land and taken together will cut across the whole of the Bangalore Metropolitan Region (see map 1 and 2 below). What it then means is that land acquisition will become imminent and with it the conflicts that arise out of the fear of losing one's land, livelihood and the social networks built over decades. The city has already been witnessing one protest after another opposing road-widening and eviction resulting from it and the fieldwork done in Bangalore suggests that it will be increasingly difficult to convince people to give up their lands for compensation, leave alone TDR. However, the land issue gets complicated when one understand the nature of tenure in Bangalore. Those who have leased, rented or occupied lands may or may not agree for TDR, depending on the nature of their land use. This issue of complex land tenancies is discussed in section 5.

First-Worlding a Mega-city

The mega vision for Bangalore city – to make it globally competitive like Mumbai,¹⁰ an attempt at 'first-worlding'¹¹ – is a post-liberalisation vision and is linked to the boom in the IT sector. But even prior to this boom, the city has been a scene to a vibrant culture of localised but linked economies of small firms that are the source of most number of jobs within the city,¹² unlike the hype of IT and ITeS jobs. The outcomes of these processes of 'first-worlding' – the process of making 'ordinary' cities into world class cities – notwithstanding, Bangalore however has been shown to do exactly the opposite and in reality has ended up perpetually creating and sustaining inequality. Master plans, like the ones prepared by non-representative bodies like the BDA, inherently feel the need to disciplining entire cities in the developing world to that of a functioning of an organism and not as a machine.¹³ This paper argues that TDR and other compensatory schemes on road-widening may actually not work as a grand vision to bypass hurdles for overhauling the traffic scene of the city. It has been more than four years since the TDR scheme was floated, but the complexities of land tenure, local politics and the nature of the city itself has prevented TDR to become a successful compensatory model. Moreover, such a meta planning might translate into further and severe alienation of many disadvantaged groups that are likely to be affected by the road-widening scheme as TDR is inextricably linked with the issue of road-widening which is entrenched in a more complex question of land, land ownership and struggles and claims over it by various groups.

Understanding Road-widening and the TDR in the Bangalore Context

TDR and its Legal Basis

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) means making available certain amount of additional built up area in lieu of the area relinquished or surrendered by the owner of the land, so that he can use extra built up area either him/herself or transfer it to others in need of the extra built up area for an agreed sum of money.¹⁴ The Government of Karnataka felt it necessary to amend the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act 1961, in order to empower the local bodies (Corporations / Planning Authorities) to permit additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the land handed over to them free of cost, whenever such requirements arise – instances can include land required for road-widening, and / or for formation of new roads or for development of parks, playgrounds and other civic amenities etc. As a result the Government has inserted a new section 14B in the K.T.C.P Act 1961 in 2005. It entails that the owner of any land which is required for road-widening for formation of new roads or development of parks, play grounds, civic amenities etc., whose land would be affected in the process shall be eligible for the award of Transferable Development Rights. Such award will entitle the owner of the land in the form of a Development Rights Certificate (DRC), which he may use for himself or transfer to any other person.¹⁵

History of TDR in Bangalore

For any projects in a city to be understood in its entirety, placing it in its institutional and historical context gains significance. Land in India is being acquired for purposes ranging from developing public amenities such as parks, government schools and hospitals to other major projects SEZs and other heavy industries under the land Acquisition Act of 1894. To understand road-widening scheme, the grand vision for the city and why the mechanism would not necessarily be a success, we need to look at Bangalore's history. Since road-widening scheme based on a master plan is prepared by the BDA, and is to be carried out by demolishing properties on either sides of the road in exchange of DRCs under the TDR scheme, the genesis of this tool in other cities is vital. Unlike cities like Mumbai (from where the TDR model institutionally originate in India) and Delhi which have strong master planning components under the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority and Delhi Development Authority respectively¹⁶, Bangalore in contrast has another trajectory of growth – the mushrooming of non planned layouts like revenue and *gram thana* layouts, and their regularization has been a distinctive feature of this city. When development plans are prepared for the city, private properties are often marked for the development of public infrastructure and sometimes these are compensated through DRCs. Unlike in Mumbai though, TDR is inextricably linked with the issue of road-widening in Bangalore, which is linked to a more complex question of land, land ownership and struggles and claims over it by various groups. In Bangalore, the Council does not have enough money to compensate those losing their land; instead it is offering to give them DRCs only, which the owners can use for extra build up area, or trade and make up for their losses. TDR was officially announced only in 2005, and since then, has been portrayed officially as imminent for road-widening projects. Originating in the US, TDR was used to 'protect agricultural lands and heritage structures, while permitting the land owners to use the development potential of these lands on another piece of land elsewhere in the city or even sell it as TDR'¹⁷. In 1991 when the new development rules for liberating land from its earlier stringent zoning regime, were formulated for Mumbai, TDR was introduced formally for the first time in the country when the then Bombay

Municipal Corporation permitted all types of land plots to generate TDR on condition that it could be used only outside the island city, in keeping with the strategy of decongesting the island city¹⁸. Thus, unlike Mumbai, Bangalore, in effect lacks an institutional framework in which schemes like TDR are materialised. Interestingly, however, in the CIP prepared for Bangalore, Rs. 1000 crore is earmarked for such land acquisition, in case the TDR scheme fails to take off but official circuits deny the existence of any monetary compensation for land acquired for road-widening. Roads identified for widening is done by the BDA, which also decides on how wide it should be made. In an interview in April 2010, Mr. Chikkarayappa, chief engineer, Road-widening, had approximated that for the total roads earmarked for widening, it would require four crore sq ft of land for road-widening purposes.

Road-Widening and TDR in Bangalore

The road-widening project gained momentum in 2005 under the then Chief Minister, H D Kumaraswamy's time. The council had identified ninety five roads for widening, twelve measuring twenty eight kilometers to be taken up by the end of 2006 on a fast-track basis. The twelve roads that were to be widened by 30 metres within December 2006 were Bellary Road, Palace Road, Sheshadripuram Road, Nrupathunga Road, Hosur Road, Hosur-Luskar Road, Airport Road, Cottonpet Main Road, K G Road, Race Course Road, Dewanga Hostel and Lower Agaram roads.¹⁹ Since then and five years later, the BBMP has been producing notifications one after the other (the last one that was known at the time of fieldwork being EE/MR/W/PR/58/09-10 dated 02.09.09) which puts the number of roads that stand to be widened at two hundred and sixteen. Two years later, the number of roads to be widened remains the same, although the present BBMP chief is of the opinion that some roads can be dropped from the list.²⁰

Though TDR has been in news since 2005; however, it gathered momentum in 2007-08 with protests marking whichever road it took, barring the ones which were predominantly held by government institutions like Nruptanga Road or Race Course Road or those without multiple tenures like Palace Road for instance. In July 2008, many roads in Bangalore witnessed overnight red paint markings on the compound walls of houses, shops and commercial complexes in the city which created fear among owners that their buildings would be demolished for road-widening. Many middle class activist groups diligently followed the news of road-widening on any notification in newspapers and stood firmly against road-widening and TDR to be given in lieu of land that will be taken for road-widening. Major city newspapers carried reports on how most residents in the city were unaware of the TDR compensation scheme, meant for property owners. Currently some 37000 properties – commercial and residential – are projected to be affected.

Though road-widening projects in some areas of Bangalore have been completed successfully, like in Race Course road, or completed with some protests as in Hosur road, the BBMP website puts the numbers of DRCs issued to forty-eight only.²¹ But Mr. Chikkarayappa rubbished the idea that anyone is opposing TDR. Decisions on road-widening are taken up on an ad-hoc basis by a technical advisory committee. And on the TDR, he said 'ninety percent people are okay with TDR and only ten percent are unwilling to take it in any given instance', a point unproven through the fieldwork. He said he has already received hundred and ninety applications for TDR from Tannery Road itself. He felt TDR is lucrative for bigger holders (though much of holdings in Tannery road, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Avenue road and such roads marked by intensive tenures will be called small to very small) and the little voices of disagreement arise from small holders.

The public notification on the first phase road-widening was for some thirty five roads and was later increased by another forty five roads in the second phase. These roads are part of the inner city where traffic is considered most unmanageable and requiring immediate intervention. Ironically, the whole road-widening agenda was suspended when the municipal elections were announced in early 2010. The then Transport minister assured people that all road-widening activities would be suspended, though later he backtracked on the statement. The activities were however suspended till the elections got over and in April, the suspension was rolled back and the BBMP took up the issue²² with a greater force. With the expansion of BMP to BBMP however, many new roads from different zones – Rajarajeshwari nagara, Bommanahalli, Mahadevapura, Bytarayanapura and Dasarahalli were identified for road-widening taking the total to two hundred and sixteen.

Disruption of Interlinked Economies

The current emphasis on large infrastructure projects like the road-widening, need to be viewed critically and requires a comprehensive analysis of their impact on Bangalore's economy. Barring few of the arterial roads identified for widening, most of it falls under densely populated areas – residential, commercial and also of mixed land use patterns. Avenue road, Chamrajpet and Meenakshi Koil Street are the nerve centres of the Bangalore wholesale and retail economy whereas Lingarajpuram, Hosur road, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Infantry road and Tannery road are classic examples of mixed land use patterns and with the exception of Tannery road have people from diverse income groups holding or renting properties on these roads.

Bangalore has a well-diversified economy in trade, manufacturing (both traditional and contemporary), and a rapidly growing service sector. Though in the past decade IT and ITeS has emerged as a significant though small employer, traditional trade and wholesale markets in the inner city areas, and small scale firms in the central and peripheral areas still remain as major economic and employment nodes. The more traditional economies located within the wholesale trade and retail areas might seem chaotic and their employment and economic output are likely to be severely underestimated, but they have a sophisticated financial and market information system.²³ If a long stretch of road running to 4-5 km is widened, it will impact not only the hundreds who run shops, offices, small businesses, factories and warehouses, but the people employed in those firms, from clerks, salesmen and cleaners - to auto rickshaw drivers, road side hawkers, cobblers, and small food joint owners, who cater to these people and who sometimes employ another set of people and are often an important contributor to household incomes. Therefore, through a multiplier effect, these linked clusters of local economies are sources of livelihood for thousands in these areas slated for road-widening – which are going to disrupt this local system, if the project comes to effect.

Widening of road will cause a rupture to these established links and social networks that have been built over the years, if a shop is closed down or hawkers are pushed out to make way for wider roads for vehicles as in the case of Hosur road. It is understood that firms do not operate alone but as clusters. Clusters in turn are linked with wider urban systems. In Infantry road for instance, which is one of the less dense commercial areas slated for widening, when compared to Avenue road, it has been estimated that there will be more than 2,200 people who will be adversely impacted by the road-widening, directly. To add on to this, studies have shown areas that have roads marked for widening or are already in the process of widening or have other forms of urban renewal schemes in place. Areas like K R Market area, Shivajinagar, Kamashikpalya, Bomasandra, Hosur road, Peenya Industrial area, Yeshwanthpur, Lingarajpuram, Tannery road etc. are excluded from extensive public improvement of basic infrastructure and services. Road-widening or other form of urban renewal

slated in and around these areas are sure to take a substantial part of the land and pull down properties built on it (and in some cases bring the complete structure down), render small holders of land as landless, leave innumerable jobless, force many commercial establishments (and in some cases residential too), to relocate further from the centre of their livelihood and social life, leave tenants and hawkers without access to commercial space and livelihoods. Such a scenario is most likely to be seen in areas like the entire stretch of Tannery road (where shops – mostly rented, and houses are only 14-18 meters in length and post road-widening the length is suppose to shrink to around fifty percent or more). Similarly, many smaller tenants in Infantry road will face a problem akin to the one in Tannery road or Avenue road.

Finally the construction work would go on for a long period of time disrupting access to basic services, thereby further skewing the already dipping development index in most of these areas. The chief engineer's office, however, is more inclined to make the streets congestion free than worry about the local economy. In an interview the chief engineer, road-widening, felt that displacement and loss of livelihood are bound to happen and people with initial hiccups 'will find ways and means to survive, but for these reasons road-widening cannot stop, TDRs would be given and people are willing to take it'.

Will Road-Widening Help in Decongesting Roads?

Apart from the economic costs of such large mega projects, the rationale of road-widening as the only solution for decongesting the city traffic, the resulting disruption of traffic at a citywide level for the long construction /work in progress time, needs to be closely reviewed. The anti-road-widening protests are not just aiming to save properties and livelihoods or saving Bangalore's green cover but also question the official stance of decongesting roads and questioning whether making roads wider, building flyovers and underpasses actually increase the efficiency to reduce transport congestions. Some of the interviewees pointed out that it actually often complicates traffic movements, like in the case of Bashyam circle underpass. Urban activists question the very logic of decongesting cities by widening roads. They emphasize on statistics on new vehicles registration in the RTOs. At this rate, even if all the 100-odd roads in Bangalore (inner city) are widened now, the exercise will have to be repeated in five years as vehicle population increases at the current rate will swell the roads once again and jostle for space in a few years time, therefore widening of roads will then have to be done periodically.

To widen roads for smooth traffic is also to indicate that cars and other vehicles are the only alternative and also in a way legitimize more cars on the roads. These projects, as mentioned earlier have real estate interests around them. Similarly building mono or a metro rail too requires huge land acquisitions and demolitions of property in exchange of some compensatory models. Focus therefore should be on improving other forms of existing public transport – like revitalising bus fleets and working on newer bus routes. Utilisation of existing facilities would be a place to begin with - introduction of more buses, feeder buses from interior parts of the city not well connected to BMTTC routes,²⁴ as well as the introduction of local rail services and circular rail services on existing railway lines, for the city. Though reports suggest that these issues are being taken up by the government, it has not picked steam as much as other capital intensive and controversial projects like metro rail have for instance. Indeed, the extensive survey carried out by RITES that has prepared the Comprehensive Traffic and Transportation Plan for Bangalore (CTTP, prepared on October 2007)²⁵ indicates that the city dwellers take maximum recourse to public transport than use cars or two

wheelers put together. Over 10 per cent also walk and cycle to their destination. The table below is indicative of this:

Distribution of Trips by Mode of Travel

PT	Car	2-Wheeler	IPT	Cycle	Walk	Total
With Walk						
2634471	416304	1845476	726425	139407	523597	6285680
41.91%	6.62%	29.36%	11.56%	2.22%	8.33%	100.00%
Without Walk						
2634471	416304	1845476	726425	139407	0	5762083
45.72%	7.22%	32.03%	12.61%	2.42%	0.00%	100.00%

This finding also perhaps indicate an underlying assumption - the bulk of the public transport relates to a small firm dominated economy, since a large part of Bangalore’s population relies on travel by foot, or using public buses and the most well connected bus routes are the City bus station, Shivajinagar and the Market bus stop. The CTTP puts the total existing road length at 1763.5 Km and states ‘The available right-of-way of major roads is generally inadequate to allow for their major widening. This is a major issue in augmenting the capacity of transport system in Bangalore. This indicates public transport system will have to play a very major role in satisfying the mobility requirements of people of Bangalore as they are the most economic users of the road space.’ This little detail perhaps negates the effort the city planners are putting in to see road related infrastructure, especially the road-widening project which comes at a huge social cost. Therefore, transportation system in Bangalore needs a revision and the planners and consultants need to consider the fundamental characteristic of this city before drawing out plans for it.

An article in the Economic Times, critiquing McKinsey’s report pressing for investment in the built environment and half-step changes in zoning regulations to confront India’s urban challenges, suggests that what urban systems should encourage is rather to increase walkability, as opposed to auto-dependence and pedestrian sheds proposed in the report, where all elements of a neighbourhood are located within a five-minute walk. The author of this article (who happens to be an IAS officer) suggests strengthening of corner stores that is likely to lead to greater retail development and which is also well-connected to the rest of the neighbourhood, something that might just disappear or be completely wiped out in many places, if road-widening project takes off on planners’ intended lines across Bangalore. The article suggests that these neighbourhoods should be connected to one another by relying on grid roads, rather than collector roads, building houses close to the lot line so that people can easily interact with individuals walking on the footpaths, and designing narrower streets to slow traffic and create more neighbourly interaction across the street.²⁶ When roads are to be widened, sometimes up to twenty metres or more, the loss of the ‘neighbourhood’ will become just another casualty in the process.

Understanding the Multiple Complexities that Road-Widening Project Fails to Recognize

Bangalore has a history of multiple ownership and tenancies existing at the same time, as the findings from NIAS-ATREE study on lake has suggested. Indeed, the government sees the whole opposition to road-widening, especially the TDR coming from the tenants. But this study found out that the

Tannery road and Dr. Rajkumar Road associations, whose members are largely owners and not tenants, are agitating to make the TDR a flop. Owners in Tannery road in particular are vocally demanding for compensation for roads taken. Concerns for tenants are not a part of their agenda though the head of the association there explains that they are asking for compensation for all. Occupying land in Bangalore, it emerges does not depend on clear deeds and claims. For instance, one interviewee on Tannery road has a tiny sweet shop which he has rented for Rs. 3000/- but does not have proper documents to show the conclusion of the agreement as it is his cousin's shop. The shops were demolished in front of his shop and he knows his days are numbered. His cousin will take TDR, while he will be dispossessed as his sweet shop will be demolished completely if the road widens. His prime concern is how to continue bringing money back home for his family to survive and as such, he has already started looking for alternatives. On enquiring in a shop at the nearby locality, he was asked to pay Rs. 25000/- as rent. Another old man too has no agreements in his name. The rented kirana shop has been with his family – his father, then his brother and then him – 'for the past forty seven years'. If the road goes seven metres in, as suggested, he will lose his complete shop which is some six metres in length.

Another man interviewed for this research, owns a 30/60 ft site in Tannery road on which stands a three storied building. He explains how shops started coming up in the past forty, fifty years and exploded in the past two decades, with shops becoming tinier and much more in number (through further divisions) – with more people wanting a share from this limited land. He is unwilling to part with a piece of his property, which already stands as a shaky three storied building. He earns rents from the ground floor which has seven shops and the first floor which is commercially rented to a small printing establishment. If the road is widened, the tenants have to be pushed out and he is unwilling to give up his property for road-widening and both TDR and compensation is unacceptable to him. Unlike him, another owner of a property runs his family bakery. He is eager to get compensation but not TDR. Like most owners of property, TDR will not do for him and his stand is to oppose it and seek monetary compensation. Since he has no build-up on his terrace, he wants to convert his ground floor property to a two storied building with the money he might get from compensation, which he can then rent out, but for which he has no money at present. He is willing to let go of a portion of his land. Some shops after demolition will measure 3/4mt in length and it is unreasonable to build anything on top. As the different examples from Tannery Road suggests, tenants are likely to oppose road-widening, while the owners may or may not be willing to part with their land. Local level politics is also trying to pitch land owners against tenants so that the owners can together bargain with the BBMP or Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (in case the metro passes through it as it has been suggested) for compensation (see Appendix-I for more details about Tannery Road widening , the ensuing struggle and the current status).

Infantry road has a concentration of small and medium furniture shops. One particular stretch of furniture shops beginning from Central Lodge is under a private trust which is also a private 'Wakf'. Some twenty shops belong to the wakf and tenants pay rental to it. One such shopkeeper, Abdul Qadir, who came to the place some seven years back paid a rent of Rs. 2000/- as rent per month in June 2010. His uncle had occupied the place for eighteen years before him. Since Infantry road is a prime area, situated at the heart of the city, if any demolition occurs and the structure has to be rebuilt, he fears the rent will go up to minimum ten thousand rupees or much more. His relative has leased another bigger shop for forty lac rupees for four years and he can never imagine accumulating that much wealth to get another shop for lease if they are kicked out of the place. He is desperate that the road-widening should not take place at Infantry road. Khaled Shah, the manager of

the wakf has another story to tell. It was learnt that the wakf is for the benefit of the family (this idea goes against the meaning of wakf which is for charitable purposes) as it's a private trust and decisions that benefit the family will be taken on the issue of road-widening, thereby proving that Abdul's fear is not unfounded. The wakf has twenty thousand square feet of prime property – where on the roadside are furniture shops and in the inside, are many families residing, both Hindus and Muslims residing. He cousin in Chennai prefer the road to be widened and plans to actually build a multi-storied commercial/shopping complex. Many people have shown already shown interest too to buy or rent a space if the complex comes up. The tenants are paying them 'peanuts at such a prime land'. If the road-widening takes place, it would aid the trust to build another floor with the increase in the building's floor area; the rents will also rise substantially.

Many buildings on Infantry road, Meenakshi Koil Street, Tannery Road, Hosur road and many other dense streets in Bangalore jut out and to push those in by seven to eight metres actually will pull entire buildings down in effect. And if construction happens to begin, provided the might of the state is behind it, it is unlikely to finish off anytime soon, making working in those areas impossible till the demolition and tarring of road is over – this would take away many days/months of work and could prove very costly for many offices, shops and other commercial establishments situated there. In places like Hosur road, which is cited as a success story by the BBMP road-widening division as far as the land acquisition for widening and issuance of DRCs are concerned, travelling to from Brigade road towards Hosur road show a different picture – the changing landscape (width of road, green cover, construction work) – all becoming more grotesque as one keeps moving towards Forum Mall and further. Road-widening would also bring businesses and footfall in the areas down drastically as has happened in M G Road where the metro work has made this once shopping paradise into a nightmare for shop keepers and shoppers alike. And relocating their business is not an easy option, say the traders. "A particular business thrives in a particular place because of the patronage of surrounding neighbourhood. It cannot be simply displaced to another place" said one of the shop keepers whose establishment in M G Road suffered because of the metro project. In recent times, footfall to his cafeteria has increased but is still not what it used to be prior to the coming of the metro.

Most of these roads that are dense with different commercial activities, also happen to have a mix of language and religion – Marwaris, Tamils, Telugus, 'urdu' speaking Muslims, Maharashtrians - all living with each other and have developed financial and social networks that is hard to be replaced. This has been a fundamental character for most of the streets in the commercial centres of Bangalore. To widen roads, build flyovers, bring in monorails would destroy the very essence that makes Bangalore different from other cities. Moreover, it has been estimated that if carried out, road-widening could displace three lakh people.²⁷ These above illustrations bring out just the beginning of a possibility of complexities that exists in Bangalore – from issues of tenancies and ownership, to different voices emerging on the same issue, the different kinds of jobs and livelihoods at stake to the way different types of city landscape and architecture (which lends a character to any street) from Bangalore, different land occupation patterns and voices on road-widening emerges at the same time.

Conclusion

The Kasturirangan Report²⁸ that aimed to bridge the gap between the Bangalore Metropolitan Region (BMR) and its governance, suggested among other things, that the review functions of city plans in the hands of BMRDA should move to the elected local bodies (Metropolitan Planning Committee, in this case, which would have representatives from around the BMR region) and, it is

not necessary for the regionally coordinated spatial plan to be referred to the State Government, for formal approval.²⁹ If brought to effect, this would curb the undemocratic nature of plans that are drawn by non-elected bodies and also bring hitherto unheard voices to the fore.

Newer policies and regulatory frameworks by various state apparatus' are drawn without considering the repercussions that it will have on the socio-economic fabric of the city. In the race to make cities comparable to London, Singapore or Shanghai, certain processes are set in motion, which aim making cities like Bangalore efficient and competitive megacities, therefore becoming a magnet to attract huge capital investments from abroad and create dividends for 'all' through a trickle-down effect. These capital-intensive projects may also increase and impact the state's financial burden. Instead, these valuable funds are better invested in improving the basic infrastructure in the severely deficient parts of the city regions like Tannery road, Lingarajapuram, Peenya, Avenue road among others, all earmarked for widening. It is important that public policy of planning and economic development first closely understand these structures and their dynamics before deciding on interventions.

The growth of cities like Bangalore, economically and demographically, call for the expansion of the cities to metropolitan regions as the expansions of cities to metropolitan areas in planning circles are considered as potential for greater resources and better utilization of resources, but studies have shown that it often leads to a weakening of citizen's voice,³⁰ especially the poor. In Metropolitan areas like Bangalore Metropolitan Region, where the periphery has less infrastructure and limited access to the centralised local bodies, this also includes the voices from the periphery. Road-widening in Malleswaram, Sankey road, Avenue Road, Chamrajpet and Tannery road among others, areas which have traditionally been a part of the corporation and therefore with networks within the body, has evoked huge citizen protests than in the periphery, like in Bommanhalli, where such activism has been absent. Such protests are not of even hues and differ in class, caste and religious composition. For example, the protests around Sankey road or Malleswaram are from middle class, upper caste groups, where as those in Tannery road are from among the lower classes of mixed religious and caste compositions. However the pressure used on the government by these diverse groups with diverse interests has made the government to rethink the road-widening in inner city areas but widening of roads in the periphery is considered imminent by government hired experts.

As the Economic Times article referred to earlier suggests, following the works of Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, the ideas that come from a McKinsey type of urban planning (which is what planning in cities like Bangalore depend on for inputs and which are adopted by the city based urban consultants with enthusiasm) is steeped in modernism, which lose out on an India-centric design and planning, decentralisation from below and sustainable zoning regulations.³¹ Therefore traffic engineers and regulators do not endorse narrower streets and overlook sustainability factors the limited possibilities offered by the city, but try and remodel these cities based on the modern western cities with wide roads, synchronised traffics but which might not become a reality as planned codes.

When one talk of roads to be widened for smooth vehicular movement and perhaps better connectivity and therefore greater physical mobility, one tends to overlook the uses and claims that many groups have on streets and roads – for both streets and roads stands on land and common resources at that. Therefore if we try an unfold the issues behind the simple assumption by the state on the necessity of road-widening, implicit within it are multiple issues – from a more everyday issue of survival based on personal and professional networks and livelihood, to a more theoretical one like – who decides on what development should mean, how is this development linked to more

global forces, and how it manifests itself on the ground. We need to understand and question the rationale from which the grand visions of city comes out and ponder if there are alternative rationales that can be more productive.

Notes

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- ¹ The latest of these protests occurred on 25 September 2012. Related news article can be found here: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/restore-mkk-road-say-residents/article3937951.ece>
- ² JNNURM has a website where all the details can be found - <http://jnnurm.nic.in/>
- ³ CDP, prepared by the JNNURM, last accessed on 15 July 2010, can be found here: <http://bbmp.gov.in/images/bbmpjnnur/Vol-1BangaloreCDP.pdf>
- ⁴ See the following to understand the trajectory of the mono-rail in Bangalore: 1. Another mono rail proposal, R Krishnakumar, TNN, Jan 20, 2009, 12.00am IST and 2. <http://www.deccanherald.com/pages.php?id=242863>
- ⁵ High speed rail link to Airport: Govt shortlists five firms, PTI, The hindu, 26 April, 2010
- ⁶ Govt seeks \$8.5 bn from WB, Plans to implement 150 projects in 11 key sectors across the State, Vijesh Kamath Bangalore, June 19, DHNS
- ⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org.in/external/default/main?pagePK=64027221&piPK=64027220&theSitePK=295584&menuPK=295617&Projectid=P079675>
- ⁸ Proposed Capital Investment Plan for Bangalore City (2009-2012), Commissioner's office BBMP
- ⁹ Interview with government hired consultant in May 2010
- ¹⁰ 'Industry' insiders tell me that there are only three Metros in India, Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore
- ¹¹ Shifting Cities: Urban Restructuring in Mumbai, Swapna Banerjee Guha, EPW, Vol 37 (2), 2002
- ¹² Benjamin, Solomon and R Bhuvanewari (2001): 'Democracy, Inclusive Governance, and Poverty in Bangalore', working paper No 26, UK, For 'Urban Governance, Partnerships and Poverty: ESCOR-funded Research in 10 Cities: 1998-2001'. International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, <http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/research/Projects/urban-governance/resources.htm>.
- ¹³ Business Line (2001): 'Karnataka Signs MoU for Urban Governance', July 14, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/businessline/2001/07/14/stories/14146012.htm>
- ¹³ Munshi, Indra (2000): Patrick Geddes: Sociologist, Environmentalist and Town Planner, Economic and Political Weekly. Vol - XXXV No. 06
- ¹⁴ See Barrows and Pregoner's 1975 for some early discussions about the modalities of TDR in American context.
- ¹⁵ TDR rationality is explained in the following file : <http://218.248.45.169/download/engineering/TDR-website%2001.pdf> (last accessed on 29.9.12)
- ¹⁶ For an overview look : http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/resources/seminars/Urbanization_Seminar/Paper_for_EWC_KM_C_Workshop_by_K.C._Sivaramakrishnan_for_web_.pdf (last accessed on 29.9.12)
- ¹⁷ Building Boomers and Fragmentation of Space in Mumbai, Navtej Nainan, Economic and Political Weekly, May 24, 2008
- ¹⁸ *ibid*
- ¹⁹ <http://bangalorebuzz.blogspot.com/2006/07/road-widening-work-set-to-take-off.html>
- ²⁰ See the news report : <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/article3873618.ece>
- ²¹ See http://bbmp.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=614&Itemid=221
- ²² Works on widening roads suspended, Bangalore, Dec 8, DH News Service
- ²³ Benjamin, Solomon. 2008. Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy beyond Policy and Programs. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. Volume 32.3 September 2008 719–29

²⁴ There have been some efforts to improve the public transport facilities and one example is the introduction of Big10 buses which cover 12 major corridors coming in from surrounding suburbs in the city - Hosur road, Bannerghatta road, Sarjapura road, Kanakapura road, Mysore road etc. Not surprisingly, these are also the major IT corridors of Bangalore which has always benefited from preferential policies.

²⁵ The CTFP can be downloaded here - <http://praja.in/en/bangalore-cttp>

²⁶ McKinsey and the modernism trap, Sameer Sharma, Economic Times, 10 Jul 2010

²⁷ Bangalore road-widening will displace 3 lakh, Bangalore, July 11, DH News Service

²⁸ Report of the Expert Committee, Governance in the Bangalore Metropolitan region and the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Bangalore March 2008)The report can be found here : [http://www.kuidfc.com/website/webpage.nsf/8f50067eff32acf3652574190040e0a2/0214c48af06bc65a652574190040ae1a/\\$FILE/Dr.%20Kasturirangan%20Committee%20Report%20on%20BBMP.pdf](http://www.kuidfc.com/website/webpage.nsf/8f50067eff32acf3652574190040e0a2/0214c48af06bc65a652574190040ae1a/$FILE/Dr.%20Kasturirangan%20Committee%20Report%20on%20BBMP.pdf)

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Nick Devas, Metropolitan Governance and Urban Poverty, Public administration and Development, vol 25 no 4, October 2005

³¹ Sameer Sharma, McKinsey and the modernism trap, Economic Times, 10 Jul 2010

APPENDIX I

Snapshots from the ground

Roads	Snapshots
Dr. Rajkumar Road	<p>About 200 people and properties are expected to be affected there. This 5 km stretch of road in northwest Bangalore, from Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Factory Ltd to Prasanna Theatre, has been earmarked by BBMP for construction of a signal-free corridor. The property owners and tenants along Rajkumar Road, led by Citizen's Support Group (CSG) Dr Rajkumar are calling the plan an "urban disaster," and are opposing the road-widening project with the argument that road-widening is unnecessary and illegal. Many of the establishments that operate here are family owned and employed 4 to 5 people who are dependent on the owners for several decades sometimes. The loss of their jobs would mean no income from which they can support their families.</p>
Infantry Road	<p>Infantry road has been one the original 5 roads that had been earmarked for widening in 2004-05 and is also major commercial street housing many traders in Bangalore. Though till date no shop has received any official notice regarding the road-widening and ensuing loss of the front portion of their properties; the shop and property owners had formed a group in 2007-08 to collectively prepare themselves against road-widening. The Infantry Road Welfare Association organised many meeting and protest where NGOs like HasiruUsiru, ESG and ALF (a law firm working with the marginalised groups of the city) organised protests and meetings against road-widening. They warned that if the widening was to be implemented it would cause dire consequences on the lives and livelihood of more than 770 persons. The Association while questioning the feasibility of road-widening, also rejected the basis for TDR, which would be rendered worthless for small furniture shop owners who will have their whole or most parts of their shops wiped out by road-widening.</p> <p>Infantry Road runs parallel to Cubbon Road and Bowring Hospital Road. Owner of a three storied building, with a furniture shop questions the logic of widening the road. He says it will disrupt his business that is settled for decades. "The road is one way with army land on one end and ISRO's one unit on the other, so where would the traffic move too?"</p>

<p>Tannery Road</p>	<p>The BBMP declared in November 2009 that 690 buildings were identified in Tannery road for demolition to pave way for road-widening so that the east could be linked to the outer ring road like other parts of Bangalore and ease the congestion that seems to plague the road. By 3rd December the bulldozers were out and so were the police force, to avoid any ‘untoward incidence’ in an area which has been listed in the police station as a ‘sensitive’ one. Tannery road actually is a portion of the road that is to be widened. It leads to KG halli which in turn leads to Nagavara – the whole stretch measuring some 4.43 km covering around 1500 established shops, as estimated by the Tannery Raod-Nagavara Owners/merchants Association. The demolition of some 13 rented shops due to the road-widening incident at Tannery Road last December was covered by all the leading newspapers as an evil necessity. But these shops are located on the Corporation owned land and pay rent to the BBMP, so demolishing it was possible but moving beyond these 13 shops seems unlikely as the Tannery Road Traders and Merchants Association are demanding compensation and not TDR. The news of a High Speed rail link passing through the road has made them stick to their demands as they expect high compensation for a land that is marked as belonging to category C (or with low real estate value) under the TDR scheme.</p> <p>The most common shops are the kinara shops in tannery road where every 3rd or 4th or sometimes every second shop sells miscellaneous items that make these kinara shops. Yet, they earn enough to survive and work another day. Apart from these, there are jewellery shops and ornament polishing shops, electronic goods shops and their repair shops, all existing to supplement each other! Then there are the small tea shops and samosa joints, dingy, dirty by some standards but relished by its patrons.</p>
<p>K.G. Halli</p>	<p>K.G. Halli is a km ahead of Tannery Road which is slated for widening. Here some people have already demolished their properties, there is a disconnect between the association (that is so active a km away) and shopkeepers here. For instance, Jagdeesh has rented a shop where he sells cloths. His shop is big by the neighbourhood standards. It is some 300 sq ft - 15/20 ft. He knows demolition will happen- it is a matter of time, his shop’s length will shrink by half as 5 metres will go for road-widening. He is a tenant, and he isn’t aware of any Association – may be his owner knows, he concurs. His owner has another shop just behind his shop, which Jagdeesh has also rented for himself for the past 6 months fearing the demolition. He wants either the demolition to stop completely or happen fast – as he can’t afford to pay 8,500/- as rent for two shops where one is laying vacant. If the demolition happens he will break the wall and make his two shops one.</p>

<p>Avenue Road</p>	<p>Avenue Road, which stretches for about a mile from the head office of Mysore Bank (Yelehanka Gate) to Sirsi Flyover (KR Market), is also marked for skywalk! Traders there have refused to accept TDR as it cannot replace the remarkable social and commercial networks they have created on Avenue Road over many decades. Importantly, Avenue Road is full of traders who are not property owners, and thus, will not in any manner benefit from the TDR scheme, as there is no displacement policy for those without property.</p> <p>Avenue road is an important case in point as it has witnessed one of the most sustained and also perhaps successful agitations against road-widening and TDR, by virtue of which its nature of protests need to be understood for this project.</p> <p>In the words of the Avenue Road Trader’s Association, who are opposing the plan to widen their road, ‘Clearly, whosoever conjured up this idea of widening Avenue Road, simply did not have the skills or the empathy to measure up all these issues in the wider public interest. What is the point of putting a high-speed expressway through what is now Avenue Road, if there is no business that can survive? Connectivity is not the prerogative of those who can afford fast moving luxury cars alone – the Constitution protects life and livelihoods more. True connectivity is about making cities vibrant spaces for business, culture, harmony, education, etc. all of which cannot be sacrificed on the altar of high speed roads.’³¹</p>
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