

Housing Options and Mobility of Urban Migrants in India and China



Darshini Mahadevia
Zhiyan Liu
Xiuming Yuan

April 2010



Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University

Housing Options and Mobility of Urban Migrants in India and China¹

Darshini Mahadevia²
Zhiyan Liu³
Xiuming Yuan⁴



Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University

¹ This research has been undertaken with the funding from Asian Scholarship Foundation, Bangkok and the authors express their deepest gratitude towards the ASF for making these funds accessible. Authors would also like to thank Bijal Bhatt, Mahila Housing Trust, SEWA for the field work in Surat and to Pooja Shah and Neelam Chauhan for data collection in Surat.

² Professor, Faculty of Planning and Public Policy, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India. Email: darshini@cept.ac.in / d_mahadevia@yahoo.com

³ Professor, Director, Urban Economy Studies Division, Research Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing. Email: zhyliu@cass.org.cn / citycen@163.com.

⁴ PhD, Senior Researcher, Research Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing. Email: xiumingyuan@yahoo.com.cn

Acknowledgements

The research has been funded by the Collaborative Research Grant of Asian Scholarship, Foundation, Bangkok.

Disclaimer

The comments and opinions in this paper are of the authors and not of the Centre for Urban Equity or CEPT University.

1.0 Introduction

A study of housing for the urban migrants lays out before us the whole gamut of policies related to urbanization as well as on wellbeing of the most vulnerable in a society. The studies of cities in the early phase of industrialization within the capitalist economies such as the United States were captured in the Burgess's model of concentric zone or Hoyt's model of sectors in a city. These were studies of urban geography and not urban policy, which nonetheless described the city form as a consequence of laissez faire policy that resulted in population of same class congregating together to segregate the city on class lines. The developing countries come into their being at a stage in history when public policies have taken a central role in their respective economic and social processes. So, has been the case in People's Republic of China (PRC), referred to as China from henceforth, and India, the only two billion plus countries in the world today and for decades to come in the future. They emerge as a nation state in the same period, China in 1949, as a Socialist Republic and India in 1947 as Secular, Democratic, Socialist⁵ Republic. Both, begin almost on a clean slate, the former ravaged by the war, mired in poverty with more than 90 per cent population living in the rural areas and social backwardness, the latter ravaged by the British colonialism, poverty with more than 90 per cent population living in the rural areas, social backwardness and multi-religious, multi-caste and non-negotiable hierarchy-based social structure. From then on, both the countries have taken-off on very different policy regimes, but, converging today on a single point, rapid economic growth and expected high rate of rural-urban migration for many decades to come. Hence, both the countries will have to face number of challenges of urbanization, one of that being ensuring adequate shelter security to their respective migrant populations.

With an urbanization level of 45 per cent in China, and just about 30 per cent in India, there is a large scope for rural-urban migration to contribute to urbanization process, besides rural settlements upgrading to urban and natural growth rate of population. Hence, concerns of welfare of the migrants and their integration in the urban economy and life style would continue to remain an issue of research as well as policy for next few decades. Among various concerns, that of housing is extremely important because, shelter is considered next only to food and clothing in terms of human priorities. Shelter and shelter security assumes more importance in countries such as India, where, there is no other institutional regime to give a citizenship right to an individual other than a residential address, than in China, where citizenship right is tied to *hukou*, or residential registration. While *hukou* in China, ensures number of entitlements, a residential address in India, does not ensure but at the least opens up access to entitlements, in absence of weak social policies and weaker implementation of these social policies. Independently, shelter ensures protection against elements of nature, violence of society, emotional security, privacy, dignity, a risk-hedging asset, secure environment for children to study, hygienic living and hence good health, and above all wellness of being. Hence, housing security of migrants becomes much more than improvement in basic living conditions in both the countries.

⁵ This term gets added to Indian Constitution in 1975.

Both countries have resorted to very different urban policy regimes, land ownership regimes and migration policies, resulting in very different outcomes for migrants in the urban areas. This paper is a comparative research on housing conditions and mobility of the migrants in urban areas in China and India, based on data collected from one city each in each country; Surat in India and Dongguan in China. The research has focused on (i) identifying the housing sub-markets accessed by the migrants in both the cities and the process of access to the same, (ii) living conditions of the migrants in both the cities by their sub-markets and (iii) contextualizing the housing conditions within the broader policy realm. It was intended to study the housing mobility of the migrants in the two cities, but, the institutional context of only Surat allowed that to be researched. Similar questionnaire were canvassed in both the cities to look at the living conditions and housing mobility of the migrants.

The paper firstly discusses briefly the urbanization trajectories of both the countries and urban policy regimes. This is the content of section 2. It then moves on to discussing the housing policies in both the countries and the changes therein, drawing implications of these on the housing of the migrants, in section 3. Section 4 discusses the brief methodology and findings from the study of migrant workers' housing in Dongguan in China. Section 5 does the same for Surat in India. Last section draws conclusions on the implications of the study on urban studies in both the countries and also for policy purposes in both the countries.

2.0 Urbanization, Migration and Incomes of the Migrants

With urbanization level of about 45 per cent in mid-2000 and an urbanization rate of 4.3 per cent per annum (p.a.) during 1990-2000 (calculated from China, National Bureau of Statistics 2006), there are about 600 million living in the urban areas and another 300 million expected to move to the cities in the next two decades or so in China⁶. It is also argued that if the *hukou* did not control migration, there would have been 300-400 million⁷ more urban residents in China than they are now. The decade of 1980s too registered a very high urbanization rate of 4.5 per cent p.a. In contrast, the natural growth rate of population in China has been just 1.04 per cent p.a during 1990-2000 period (calculated from China, National Bureau of Statistics 2006). Roughly, the net rural to urban migration rate is therefore 3.24 percent p.a. Thus, urbanization is primarily due to migration in China and since the economic reforms in 1978, migration restraints have loosened permitting migrants to move to manufacturing centres, largely located within the eastern coastal provinces. Labour shortage in the urban areas and manufacturing hubs has led to relaxation of migration policies in some cities and provinces. There is a strong recognition in China that migrants contribute greatly to the city and national economy.

In contrast, the urbanisation rate in India has been very low, just 2.75 percent p.a. during 1991-2001 period, at low level of urbanization of 27.75 per cent in 2001. In the previous decade, the rate of urbanization was 3.09 per cent p.a., indicating that

⁶ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2009-08/27/content_8622023.htm (accessed on October 12, 2009).

⁷ See article by Li, Wuzhou, in China Today, source: <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2004/e200404/p26.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

urbanization has slowed down in India since 1980s, inspite of economic growth picking up. It is expected that the urbanization level in India would have reached 30 per cent by mid-2000. Once again in contrast to China, natural population growth rate has contributed more to urbanization process than migration; the natural increase of population has ranged from 51 per cent to about 65 per cent during 1961-2001 period (Sivaramakrishnan et al 2005). Urbanization rate and levels are low in India inspite of no official controls on migration but dictated through large many discouraging policies, like in most countries in the world (UNFPA 2007), no distributive urban policies, exclusionary urban planning and chauvinistic politics. Nonetheless, as per the population census of 2001, there were total 315 million migrants in the country⁸, not necessarily all being in the urban areas.

Based on 1999-00 National Sample Survey (NSS) data, Kundu and Sarangi (2007) show that the rural poor do not migrant easily because of their low capability and inability to overcome institutional barriers. The migration to urban areas is from the top two quintiles of the rural population (Table 1). The bottom two quintiles' share in migrants is much lower than their population share for both, permanent migrants as well as seasonal migrants. The seasonal migrants are largely from the middle quintile and then from the top two quintiles. In other words, poverty is not a key factor behind seasonal migration or to put it other way, the rural poor do not have capabilities for short term mobility. This lays to rest the arguments made in context of urban poverty that it is an outcome of migration of rural poor to urban areas. Hence, the rural population that migrates to urban areas is better endowed in terms of economic resources as well as educational capabilities. This is more true for the long term migrants (denoted as in-migrants in Table 1) than seasonal migrants. Their study also shows that all-migrant household is not poor; just 5.6 per cent among them are poor (Kundu and Sarangi 2007).

Table 1: Migration Source by Consumption Quintiles, 1999-00

Quintile	In-migrants	Seasonal migrants*
Lowest	14.2	13.9
2 nd	17.5	15.1
3 rd	19.2	29.0
4 th	22.9	19.1
Top	26.1	22.8
Total	100.0	100.0

* Those who have gone somewhere for more than 60 days in a year and then returned back.
Source: Kundu and Sarangi (2007: 302).

Regression analysis by Kundu and Sarangi (2007: 304) of poverty level with migration status (in case of permanent migrants) showed that “the rural migrants into urban areas have a lower probability of being poor than the local population. It is however possible that migration itself is the factor responsible for increasing the earnings of individuals, enabling them to go over the poverty line. Alternately, one may argue that it is largely the relatively better off sections who are able to migrate to urban centres since moving to cities requires initial staying capacity and certain levels

⁸ http://www.imfmetal.org/files/08102914241866/Migrant_workers_in_India.pdf (accessed on October 18, 2009).

of skill and, consequently, poverty is low among RU⁹ migrants. Indeed, with modernisation and technology upgradation in many of the urban sectors, the absorption of the rural poor has become increasingly difficult.” The regression analysis also showed that the seasonal migration does not show any impacts in terms of reducing or increasing poverty and that the seasonal migrants not necessarily came from rural poor struggling to survive but also from among the better-off in the rural areas moving to urban areas temporarily when better opportunities come their way.

In India, three types of rural-urban migrants can be observed: (i) long-term or permanent migrants with the intention of settling down in the urban areas, many getting into regular employment but keeping strong links with the native village/ town (ii) seasonal migrants, defined as those who stay in the urban areas for more than 60 days in a year but returning back for some period, mainly returning back during monsoon and going to cities to tide over lean agricultural seasons; and (iii) migrants tied to the employers, who move from one place of employment to other, and about who no estimates are available. Migration is a coping strategy for the rural population. Those unable to migrate and in economic distress in rural areas, as the recent incidents have shown have taken to committing suicide. The last category of migrants has increased after economic reforms.

In China, migrants are considered as an ‘underclass’¹⁰. They are poor agriculture population from less developed provinces of Anhui, Henan and Sichuan, with low level of education. There are estimated 150-200 million migrants in the cities of China¹¹. A more recent estimate by the Office of Migrant Workers in the State Council and the Vice Ministry of Labour and Social Security, has estimated 210 million migrant workers in China in 2007¹². They are registered as temporary residents of the respective city they are in. They are known as floating population. Besides the temporary residents, there are a section of migrants who do not even have temporary registration and may be prone to deportation by the authorities on being detected in the city. The massive remittances sent to their native villages by the migrants is a large and tend to be invested in sometimes business or other productive activities to increase incomes at the source of migration. “According to a survey conducted by the labour and social security department, within 2,600 enterprises in 26 Chinese cities, including Beijing, Tianjin and Shenzhen, migrant workers earn an average 660 yuan per month. This is lower by about 300 yuan than that earned by urban industrial workers.”¹³ A survey of 243 migrants in Fujian province also found that the migrants have low income. The survey showed that nearly 80 per cent of the

⁹ Means Rural-Urban. Endnote by the authors.

¹⁰ See article by Li, Wuzhou, in China Today, source: <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2004/e200404/p26.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

¹¹ See article by Li, Wuzhou, in China Today, source: <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2004/e200404/p26.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

¹² March 4, 2008. Source: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6365964.html> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

¹³ See article by Li, Wuzhou, in China Today, source: <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2004/e200404/p26.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

respondents had monthly income below 1000 Yuan, and 40.7 per cent of them had monthly income of only 500–800 Yuan (Zhu 2007: 71).

On an average, Head Count Ratio (HCR), that is incidence of poverty) among the migrants is 1.5 times that among the local urban population (Table 2). In larger cities, the incidence of poverty among the migrants is far higher than the locals. Table 2 shows that the poverty incidence among migrants is 2.3 times in Beijing, 3.1 times in Shanghai, 3.4 times in Tianjin, 2.4 times in Wuhan, 3.1 times in Nanjing, than the local population, whereas these proportions in Dalian was 1.0, Harbin and Hangzhou 1.1 times etc. In only some cities such as Changsha, Xian, Chongqing, Xiamen, etc., the ratio was less than 1, indicating that the incidence of poverty was higher among the locals than the migrants. In case of the last category, there might have been migration of better endowed migrants (as compared to local population) to these cities.

Table 2: HCRs among Locals and Migrants in Select Cities, 1999

City (1)	Assumed poverty line (RMB) (2)	HCR		Ratio of HCR among migrants to HCR among locals (5)
		Locals (3)	Migrants (4)	
Shenzhen	6,227	0.0	16.9	-
Urumqi	3,026	14.2	54.0	3.8
Jinan	3,017	11.0	39.3	3.6
Tianjin	2,912	3.5	11.9	3.4
Shanghai	3,652	5.8	18.3	3.1
Nanjing	2,972	9.5	29.0	3.1
Shijiazhuang	2,706	5.1	13.3	2.6
Wuhan	2,428	6.3	15.1	2.4
Beijing	3,118	4.6	10.3	2.3
Yinchuan	2,547	11.4	22.7	2.0
Zhengzhou	2,504	11.2	20.5	1.8
Guangzhou	4,221	9.2	15.0	1.6
Ningbo	2,940	3.7	5.7	1.5
Lanzhou	1,676	8.6	12.5	1.5
Taiyuan	1,894	14.9	17.4	1.2
Huhot	2,144	23.0	28.7	1.2
Harbin	1,899	7.1	7.6	1.1
Hangzhou	3,414	7.1	7.8	1.1
Dalian	2,901	14.1	14.3	1.0
Shenyang	2,118	22.9	15.0	0.7
Fuzhou	2,161	3.8	2.7	0.7
Qingdao	3,209	16.8	12.1	0.7
Xian	2,644	27.5	17.9	0.7
Changsha	2,488	8.4	5.0	0.6
Chengdu	2,742	17.2	10.7	0.6
Chongqing	2,612	16.9	9.4	0.6
Xiamen	3,543	8.2	2.0	0.2
All Cities		10.3	15.2	1.5

Source: ADB (2001: 93).

Housing would become a big issue for the migrant labour if they were to stay back in the cities, institutional arrangement permitting it. Different surveys give different results on the willingness of migrants to stay back in urban areas. In a survey conducted by the China Urban Labour Employment and Labour Flow research team, 50 per cent of the floating rural population wanted to stay in the city, and less than 10

per cent expressed a desire to return home¹⁴. But, a study by Zhu (2007: 69) in Fujian province, found that only 20.6 per cent of the respondents had the intention of settling down in the places of destination if they had free choices. In fact, if there were suitable employment opportunities in their hometowns, 68.3 per cent of the respondents would be ready to go home. Further, the study also found that the migrants from within the province had a stronger intention and capability of settling down in their migration destination than those from outside the province (pp. 70). Their lack of desire to settle down in the destination areas was because of their unsteady jobs; 57.6 per cent of them were engaged in temporary jobs, 32.5 per cent of them did not know how long their jobs would last (pp. 71). Their incomes being low, the migrant population were incapable of living an average life in a city and hence were not willing to move their whole family to the city. Data of the National Bureau of Statistics also show that a large proportion of the first-generation migrant workers have gone back to their place of origin after retiring from active economic life and only those with successful business or career remain back in the cities¹⁵. Low income of the migrants also meant that they would find increasingly difficult to get an affordable housing. Given such choices of the migrants in the cities, the housing policies have not addressed the specific requirements of the migrants.

Studies of migrant workers and their living conditions are rare in Indian context. This is because, the rate of rural-urban migration is low and also it is difficult to identify migrants in Indian cities. In contrast, in China, *hukou* system has created a great interest in the wellbeing and integration of migrants within the urban economy on one hand and the rural-urban migration rate is very high and the economic marvel of China in the last three decades is attributed to the contribution of migrants on the other hand, giving fillip to migration studies. Further, the national data system recording migrants is weak in India. In contrast, *hukou* itself has made identifying migrants within an urban setting easier in China. Thus, study of migrants in an urban economy has either focused on specific groups of migrants such as the seasonal migrants (Deshingar and Start 2003) or brick kiln workers, construction workers, domestic workers, etc. or studies of slums wherein there is some information on migrants by their years of staying in the particular city. Also, unlike China, in Indian cities, the migration is permanent to a great extent and the rural migrants come with the intention of staying back in the city. Once their children join them or their children are born in the city, they permanently abandon the idea of returning back to their villages because the children do not want to return back. Hence, the migrants cannot be easily identified in Indian cities.

The three types of migrants in urban India, discussed above, face different types of challenges in urban areas. The permanent migrants, those who eventually get integrated with the urban settings, tend to enter the urban labour market at the lower end as temporary workers, eventually working their way up into the system. Many a permanent migrants come to the urban areas as single male migrants, at young age, and then call their families, once they are reasonably financially, socially and shelter-

¹⁴ See article by Li, Wuzhou, in China Today, source: <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2004/e200404/p26.htm> (accessed on October 16, 2009).

¹⁵ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Dec/153200.htm> (accessed on October 18, 2009).

wise secure. Migrants from some states, in particular from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, do not settle down and would like to return back to their native villages and hence do not bring their spouse or family to the cities. In these communities, female spouses tend not to work. Since female members do not work, it is sometimes not possible to support a family in urban area and hence they do not bring them to the city. The chances of most migrants returning back to their native villages is rare except under specific circumstances such as urban violence emanating from communal polity and regional chauvinism and also slum demolition (Mahadevia and Narayanan 2008).

For seasonal migrants, migration is a coping strategy in India (Deshingar and Start 2003). The temporary migrants move from one work site to another, along with the contractor who employs them. Most of them are in construction sector. Srivastava and Shashikumar (2003) have classified migrants in India into three categories; 'permanent', 'semi-permanent' and 'temporary' migrants, based on how long they are away from their place of origin, the links they maintain, and the likelihood that they will return home. Temporary migrants are unlikely to stay away from their places of origin for more than a few months in a year. Depending on their work availability, the shelter options and conditions vary.

3.0 Housing Policies and Institutional Settings

Both the countries have very different institutional settings as far as migrants are concerned and so do both countries have very different approach to urban housing policies. In China, migration is controlled through *hukou*. *Hukou* is a residential permit system that classifies Chinese residents into urban and rural, with those having urban *hukou* or residential permit, entitled to live and work in cities and access benefits of employment programmes, subsidised housing, public education and healthcare system, social security and all other programmes that urban local governments finance. Besides, in cities such as Beijing, there are special entitlements such as licence to own and drive a taxi. Those with rural *hukou* are entitled to agricultural lands, which those with urban *hukou* are not entitled to. It is not easy to get an urban *hukou* and much more difficult to get *hukou* of large cities such as Beijing. However, some provinces, such as Guangdong, dependent on the migrant labour for their economic growth, have relaxed the *hukou* provisions for sometimes and made availability of temporary *hukou* easier than before. Zhu (2007) has argued that the system of *hukou* alone does not explain temporary nature of the floating population in the cities and there are many other reasons why the floating population do not wish to settle down in the cities.

In India, migration is free; any Indian citizen, whether a rural resident or an urban resident is free to migrate to any part of the country as many times as s/he wants to. Male migration therefore is largely for the reasons of employment and female migration on account of marriage. The citizenship of a place is defined through various documents that a person or a household holds: (i) a ration card – a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card or an Above Poverty Line (APL) card, which has the permanent address of the person/household (ii) An election card, that is a Voter's Identity Card issued to all those above age of 18 for the purpose of voting in elections

held for the three tiers of government, local, state and national; (iii) for those having access to electricity and having electricity meters in their house, and getting an electricity bill, (iv) in urban areas, an Identity (ID) Card issued by the urban local government for those living in slums, based on a cut-off date¹⁶, (v) in urban area a property tax payment receipt, (vi) in rural area land tax payment receipt, and (viii) a letter of identity issued by the local elected representative. Thus, the citizenship definition is very fluid and prone to various negotiations, particularly in the urban settings where the urban poor have to ingeniously negotiate through various local political processes. And, the foothold in urban settings and an entry to climb up the ladder of urban citizenship begins with gaining access to rental housing in an established low income settlement or squatting on a piece of land, mainly public land in a community and then negotiate to get name registered in the urban voting list through getting an urban patron. Then onwards, is the gradual and patient march up the ladder to gain full citizenship through possessing a few of the above mentioned documents. Access to urban citizenship, however, is not so easy in Indian context. There are many hindrances and difficult bumps to overcome. There may be many setbacks such as slum demolitions, displacements on account of communal and regional violence.

The national urban housing policies in both the countries are somehow targeted towards the legal residents of the cities. In China, subsidized public housing is accessible to only those with urban *hukou*. Temporary residents can however purchase a house in a city in the private market, called commercial housing, in case the household can afford it. Thus, better off temporary residents of urban areas are able to purchase a house in the cities. For the low income temporary residents, however, this option is not available. In the recent years, however, some initiatives can be seen. In India, the recent migrants have to make efforts to get the legal identity through procuring any or some of the above mentioned documents, after which, they gain eligibility to access public housing programme; larger a community is to be counted as a votebank, stronger their community leaders are to assist the community to gain legal identity and stronger political mobilisation and the voice the community has, higher are their chances to access public housing programmes. Hence, housing policies in India do not have much to say on the housing access of the migrants, like in China.

In China, recently, there have been some changes in viewing policies related to migrants. To begin with, the highest national policy making body, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), together with other departments have begun to relook at the urbanization policies with the view of assisting the rural migrants settling down in the cities. "There are 140 million migrant workers nationwide, and that figure can increase to 300 million, taking their families into account. If these people can afford to buy or rent an apartment to settle down in cities, the potential for expanding consumption is huge," eventually leading to expanding

¹⁶ A cut-off date is declared in each city to give citizenship right to a slum household. Each city has a different cut-off date.

overall consumption in the economy.¹⁷ This perspective has emerged from the rethinking on sustaining economic growth, which till now was dependent on exports, which needed correction in times of global economic crises. Boosting of internal consumption, through making migrants spend in the urban economy, not just on consumption goods but also on housing, was one of the options available before the national planners. The NDRC has also realised that average urbanization rate for a country with a per capita income of \$3,000 should be around 55 percent¹⁸, which is only 45 per cent, indicating under-urbanization because of migration controls.

Given that the national policy making and implementation system is highly decentralized, the reforms on *hukou* and welfare of the migrants in China would begin from the provinces and cities. Towards this, individual cities have begun reforms. Sample these:

- i) The Construction Department of Henan province has issued new rules that the construction companies that undertook projects in the province must buy insurance for the workers, including housing insurance scheme through which the workers could contribute to a house reservation fund and on doing so for five years be eligible for a housing loan at low interest rate and be able to buy a house in the city¹⁹.
- ii) A professor of Tsinghua University, Beijing, has urged the city of Shenzhen to build a housing project for the rural migrant workers on the city's periphery arguing that the migrants contribute greatly to the city's economy but the cities do not give them anything in return and on the contrary drive them out of the city once their contribution to the city cease. He further states that the migrants not only are the poorest of the urban residents, they have no permanent residence inside the metropolitan areas, they are even not allowed to rent and are forced to live in temporary factory dormitories²⁰ and are not allowed to build their own houses. Because of this, a large section of Chinese society is unable to live a normal family life. He recommends that if the government was unable to afford houses for them, the migrants themselves should be facilitated to do so through ensuring availability of affordable housing²¹.
- iii) There was recognition in China that the need of the hour was to construct low-cost housing to make affordable housing available to the low-income households in the city. This was to be ensured through tax measures, credit

¹⁷ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2009-07/09/content_8402814.htm (accessed on October 18, 2009).

¹⁸ http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2009-07/09/content_8402814.htm (accessed on October 18, 2009).

¹⁹ <http://www.chinacsr.com/2006/06/28/572-henan-province-issues-preferential-housing-policies-for-migrant-workers/> (accessed on June 13, 2008).

²⁰ The discussions with researchers at Tsinghua University, in May 2008 suggested that the migrants were under the control of the employers when they lived in dormitory housing, much in the same way that Fredrick Engels had argued way back in 1872 in the Housing Question.

²¹ http://www.china.org.cn/china/local/2008-04/14/content_14949824.htm (accessed on June 13, 2008).

policy and land supply increase. As a part of this measure, it was also announced by the Premier Wen Jiabao that efforts would be made to improve the living conditions of the migrants in the cities. Among one of the options for this segment, he suggested low-rent housing²².

- iv) The national government issued a document in March 2006, for the first time, stipulating improvement in the living conditions of the migrant workers. The document also required related government departments to intensify supervision to make sure that housing for migrant workers met all state hygiene and safety standards. Since then, many local governments have begun to explore ways to improve low-rent housing for migrant workers. For example, Chongqing municipality has built 36 apartment buildings, which provide low-rent housing for 13,000 migrant workers in Chongqing city proper. Changsha, which had 400,000 migrant workers before the 2008 earthquake, had its municipal government investing in building 618 sets of low-rent apartments, with a cafeteria, library, reading rooms, video rooms, public baths, warehouse rooms for workers to store their tools, personal lockers and steel anti-theft doors at the rent varying from 50 Yuan to 70 Yuan per month²³.

Besides these, there have been recent reforms and setting up of health facilities for the migrants, labour arbitration services for the migrants, education facilities for the children of the migrant households, permitting these children to public schools, insurance policies for the migrants including health insurance, improving working conditions along with introducing paid holidays, legal aid centres, etc. as a part of building a harmonious society.

In short, there were no particular national housing policies for the low-income migrants in the cities before 2007 in China. Generally, the employers build dormitories for them near or in their work premises. The living conditions and facilities were basic and simple. But, following the policy of harmonious development and recognition of important role of the migrants in Chinese economy, researchers, policy makers and government officials began to notice the poor living conditions of this group of Chinese population and then followed the national government policy announcement followed by individual city's efforts in reaching out to the migrants.

The general principles of the housing policy for the migrants are: (i) to meet their essential housing demand, (ii) solving their housing demand step by step and (iii) making the employers responsible for the housing of their employees. Following from this, some regulations have been enacted. These are: (i) provision of housing by the employers to the migrant workers in accordance with the safety standard and accepted sanitation conditions, (ii) building of dormitories for the low-income migrants in the developing zones and industrial garden areas, (iii) creation of a special fund for housing this section of the migrants and contribution of the employers to this fund and

²² http://english.gov.cn/2008-03/05/content_909973.htm (accessed on June 13, 2008.)

²³ Jianhua, Feng (2008): "Rural Roots, City Shoots", Beijing Review, April 3, source: http://www.bjreview.com.cn/quotes/txt/2008-04/01/content_108292.htm (accessed on June 13, 2008).

ensuring that the employers comply through entering into contract with the workers, (iv) drawing up of housing security plan at the city level and including low-income migrants in the plan and (v) issuance of a national government plan in March 2009 to include the low-income migrants in necessary preparation of a city level housing security plan. The case study city of Dongguan has also complied with the national housing policies.

In India, there has not been much of policy discussion on the shelter security of the low-income migrants but this issue is subsumed under the discussion on shelter security for the urban poor. There have been number of proposed housing policies for urban India in the past, but, none formally accepted by the national government. However, recently, National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (NUHHP), 2007 has been accepted by the national government and the state governments are being pursued to make their own policies.

The NUHHP, 2007, has nothing specific for the migrant workers, except that there is discussion on increasing supply of rental housing, which could be for the recent migrants. There is mention of temporary rest accommodation with appropriate toilet facilities on the construction sites, to be provided by the construction companies and the public authorities. There is also mention of need for employer housing. For each of these suggestions some actionable agenda has been suggested. However, there is no mention of the transit accommodation or anything special for the recent migrants.

The NUHHP, 2007 is now supported by two major national programmes: (i) housing under the Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) component of the largest national level urban development programme called Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) launched in 2005 December and (ii) Rajiv Awaas Yojana (RAY), a slum redevelopment programme and affordable housing programme, launched in 2009. Under the BSUP, 995,183 dwelling units have been approved for construction by 15th October, 2009, with the national government contribution of Rs. 128073.2 million²⁴ (US\$ 24335.5 millions²⁵). While the BSUP is for the mission cities, which are mainly the metropolitan cities, state capitals and cities of national heritage importance, for small towns there is another programme named Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) for other urban centres. Underneath this scheme, the national government has approved funding of 464,089 units by 15th October, 2009, with its contribution of Rs. 56920.8 million²⁶ (US\$ 1227.9 million).

The RAY is for in-situ upgradation of urban slums, rehabilitation of displaced slum dwellers due to various urban development programmes, construction of small housing units by private developers with a subsidy of Rs. 50,000 from the national government for house size upto 80 sq meters, keeping 25 per cent reserved for the low-income groups, and tenure regularization in the existing slums so as to give the

²⁴ https://jnnurmmis.nic.in/jnnurm_hupa/jnnurm/BSUP-Status.pdf (accessed on October 20, 2009).

²⁵ At conversion rate of Rs. 46.35 = 1 US\$ on October 21, 2009.

²⁶ https://jnnurmmis.nic.in/jnnurm_hupa/jnnurm/IHSDP-Status.pdf (accessed on October 20, 2009).

slum dwellers tradeable property rights²⁷. There is no specific mention of migrant workers in the policy but, as all other urban policies, is for the poor households.

The housing programmes meant for the low-income populations in the cities in India, are also expected to reach out to the migrants, if they qualify for the programmes. The migrants would qualify for urban programmes if they have necessary documents to prove their urban residency, from among the ones listed at the beginning of this section. If they are unable to provide these documents, in particular a proof of residence in the city slum before the cut-off date, they would not qualify to benefit from these policies and programmes. The entire efforts of the migrants in the cities, in particular in the metropolitan cities goes in establishing their urban citizenship through therefore acquiring these documents.

The comparison of the institutional and policy environment in both the countries shows that both the countries have realised that there was a specific need to address the housing requirements of the migrant workers. However, in case of China, this need has been directly addressed by the policies of the national government and local governments, whereas in case of India, since migrants are not distinctly identifiable group, through housing policies for the low income groups and slum dwellers. Direct approach followed in China recognizes the institutional disadvantage of the migrant workers and the indirect approach fails to recognize the same. The next two sections therefore narrates the housing conditions of the migrants in general in urban China and urban India from the available published data and then from the primary survey carried out in Dongguan in China and Surat in India.

4.0 Life and Housing Status of the Recent Low Income Migrants in China

Literature Review

Official urban housing data in China mentions three categories of housing; public owned housing, commercial housing, and self-owned housing. The public owned housing is the one meant for the present or former employees of the government and various public work-units (*danwei*) or State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). While some of them are renting this housing, some have purchased the same after the change in the housing policy in 1997, permitting purchase of SOE / *danwei* housing by the occupants. Presence of public owned housing is large in the large cities. For example, in Beijing, 42.2 per cent of the households are living in houses that have been purchased from former public-owned housing, 27.5 per cent are renting this housing and 14.6 per cent are continuing to live in public-owned housing (China, National Bureau of Statistics 2006). In Shanghai, these figures are 32.7 percent, 18.5 percent and 14.2 per cent respectively. In Beijing and Shanghai, just 22.3 per cent and 18.7

²⁷ Information partly from http://mhupa.gov.in/w_new/100DayPlan.pdf (accessed on October 21, 2009) and partly from an unpublished document from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

percent respectively of housing is self built, whereas in Chongqing²⁸ and Tianjin, two other national level cities, these figures are 39.0 per cent and 69.7 per cent respectively (China, National Bureau of Statistics 2006). Huang (2004), in a study of housing choice in relation to the government behaviour finds that in the county level city named Jiangyin, 70.59 percent households were living in private housing (in 1997) (pp. 51). Thus, as one moves to second tier and then lower tier of cities, there is more and more self-built housing and private housing. Also, public housing and that built by housing bureau dominates in cities with a strong SOE base and/ or where the public housing bureaus have been active in housing construction. In other cities, households build their own houses or rent from private housing.

Visual reconnaissance in Dongguan shows that the city has largely self-built housing or private housing. Thus, while the privileged able to access formal housing market in the public or private sector in capitalist developing economies such as India and also socialist and transitional economies such as China and Hungary, the poor are into self-built housing in both systems (Bian et al 1997, Zhang 1998, Zax 1997).

In China, migrants live in urban villages in rental housing markets and in this, those whose affordability is low share a room. For example, in Zhejiangcun area on the south periphery of Beijing, estimated 100,000 migrants lived in 1995 (Liu and Liang 1997 from Wang 2004: 70). The rents being as high as the monthly income of the migrant worker working as wage labour and hence they shared a room (Wang 2004: 70). In the same settlement, those in business could afford to rent a room for themselves. Zhang (2001) describes the housing as rural lands subdivided by the farmers and *siheyuan* type housing constructed on them and each migrant, if able to afford, renting a tiny cubicle. Those with families had some family members working out of the home. These were therefore work units as well. Finally, the entire village was demolished.

Migrants in construction jobs live on construction sites in dormitory type housing. In Beijing, 20 percent of the migrants lived on construction sites (Wang 2004: 70), a figure that would have gone up subsequently on account of construction work related to 2008 Beijing Olympics. There is a third housing typology for the migrants, renting former SOE housing. The displaced households from Zhejiangcun eventually shifted to renting in the SOE housing in the neighbourhood (Zhang 2001).

Numerous scholars have also investigated the *hukou* as a decisive factor in housing provision. As temporary residents, migrant workers cannot access the subsidized public housing reserved for permanent urban residents or obtain home mortgages (Wu 2003). Because they cannot rent affordable housing, they often have no choice but to resort to employer-supplied housing or rental apartments located on the urban fringe. Migrant workers' housing conditions are generally inferior to those of local registered

²⁸ Although Chongqing is a national level city, just 27.5 percent of its population is living in urban districts. Hence, the figure of self-built housing is quite large. In urban Chongqing, the situation is different. In 1993, 74.06 percent of the housing stock was work unit housing, another 14.96 percent was housing-bureau housing (low-income public housing) and just 10.98 percent was private housing (Huang 2004: 51).

residents with the urban *hukou*. In addition, Huang (2003) conducted fieldwork in five Chinese cities and found that migrant workers face greater issues of overcrowding, lack of kitchen and bathroom facilities, and structural instability.

Housing benefits to the employees of a *danwei* varies according to their status. Wang (2003) finds that in any public organization, heads received 44 per cent greater benefit in housing (when values are monetised) than the technical staff. Further, this study also finds that the benefits are larger in prestigious units as compared to others. Since, 60 per cent of the welfare benefit in any work unit accrues through housing, the status of the unit and the position a worker is in makes a great difference. In addition, scholars have noted that the *hukou's* close relationship with the work unit (*danwei*) serves as an additional source of disadvantage for migrants. The gap between the employees with urban *hukou* and the temporary residents continue to remain and expand also because the work units continue to subsidize housing units to the employees at a below market price, inspite of the urban housing reforms of 1994 toward demand-based approach. Some *danweis* also make housing subsidies available for home-ownership. In contrast, those outside this welfare scheme have to depend on other methods of accessing housing, which for the migrants is rental market in the urban villages. These urban villages are sometimes categorised as slums. Hence, the State of World's Cities (UN-Habitat 2006: 189) indicates that 37.8 percent of urban population, that is 193.82 million urban residents in PRC, live in slums and that slum dwelling population has registered a growth rate of 2.33 percent p.a.²⁹ when the overall urban population has registered a growth rate of 4.28 percent p.a during 1990-2000.

Though *hukou* has acted as an institutional barrier for accessing urban housing, recent studies have shown that the migrant workers have used informal channels to bypass *hukou* for social mobility. Such studies have not directly addressed the question of housing provision. But, a study by Zhang, Zhao, and Tian (2003) has examined the rise of migrant enclaves (*chengzhongcun*) on the urban fringe of Beijing as example of how migrants have bypassed the institutional barriers to access housing. The migrant enclaves have taken advantage of the institutional limitation, wherein the local governments cannot regulate the land beyond their city boundaries, and hence, the peasants on the urban fringe with rural *hukou* have converted their collectively owned land to finance private housing constructed for renting purposes. These enclaves have survived inspite of the city governments viewing them as 'unregulated housing' fit for cleansing out through various ingenious methods. In particular the migrants from Wenzhou, considered to have smart business acumen, survived the 'cleansing campaigns' of the local government of Beijing (He 2005).

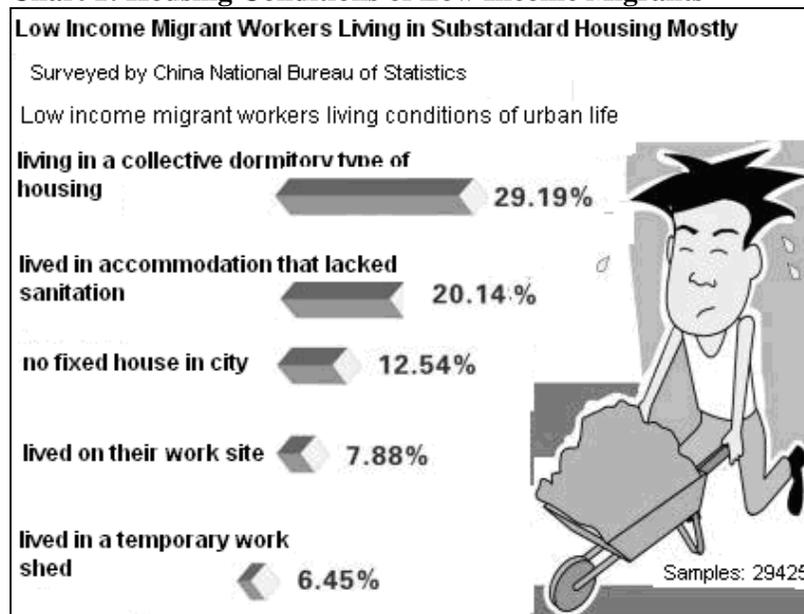
A nation-wide survey on the housing status of low-income new migrants by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2006³⁰, shows that (Chart 1) 29.19 per cent of them were living in a collective dormitory type of housing. Also, 20.14 per cent lived in accommodation that lacked sanitation; 12.54 per cent of them had no fixed house in

²⁹ Excluding the population of Hong Kong SAR.

³⁰ China News, http://www.cnwnews.com/Html/finance_cjzh_gn/2006-10/26/1307322954.html

city, 7.88 per cent of them lived on their work site, and another 6.45 per cent lived in a temporary work shed.

Chart 1: Housing Conditions of Low Income Migrants



Another survey from November 2006 to April 2007 in Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Lanzhou, Xi'an and Bozhou by a research group³¹ shows that 49.2 per cent of the workers were living in dormitories provided by the employers and another 40 per cent of them chose to rent a room. This study also showed that more than 90 per cent of the latter shared rooms with others. Among those who shared a room, 30.4 per cent of them shared a room with 2-4 occupants, 31.9 per cent shared a room with 5-8 occupants and about 20 per cent shared a room with more than 9 occupants.

The construction workers are provided with employer housing. The description of construction worker housing has been given in Chan (2006: 26). "Originally from Sichuan province, Wei Zhang is one of the hundreds of construction workers who arrived in May 2006 to handle the job of expanding Beijing's subway in preparation for the 2008 Olympics. He works a 12-hour shift most days and lives with his colleagues in a dormitory at the construction site, taking his meals in the canteen, and sleeping on his plywood bed along with eight other males in one room. Despite his hard work and tolerance for these conditions, his employer refuses to pay him until the project is completed. When his job is done, Zhang does not know whether he will stay in Beijing. Like many of his colleagues, he will have to leave his temporary home and find another job to sustain himself."

Of the 102 respondents to Chan's (2006: 33) survey, 14.7 per cent stated that they came to know about their current residence through some family member, 18.6 per cent stated that it came from their employer, 13.7 per cent came to know about their

³¹ <http://www.hubeidrc.gov.cn/2008/7-4/10391750573.html>.

residence form the village friends and another 15.7 per cent from their city friends, and a very large proportion, 34.3 per cent from the others such as through internet and advertisements.

Chan (2006: 37-38) gives results of a study by Fei and Guo of 2004 (quoted in Chan 2006), conducted in five cities, including Beijing, with a sample of 2,351 individuals including the migrants as well as permanent residents and found that: (i) majority of migrants (42.7 per cent) only had access to outdoor public toilets while most local residents had indoor toilets for family use (71.4 per cent). Conversely, only 31.1 per cent of migrants have this luxury. (ii) 78.6 per cent migrant workers occupied one bedroom house compared to 19.9 per cent of the local residents living in this small house. (iii) Migrants are likely to live in a single-story house (41.4 per cent) or rented accommodation (33.8 per cent), while most local residents lived in multi-storey building (31.8 per cent) or a privately owned apartment unit (26.8 per cent). This survey indicates relatively poor living conditions of the temporary urban residents as compared to permanent urban residents.

Table 3: Comparing Living Conditions of Permanent Residents vs Migrants, Beijing

	Indicator	Permanent residents*	Migrants**
1	Average per capita useable area (sq m)	19.45	-
2	% sharing dwelling of 10 sq m		10.8
3	% sharing dwelling of 20 sq m		11.8
4	% sharing dwelling of 34 sq m		8.8
5	% households occupying one room	8.3	68.7
6	% households occupying two rooms	59.0	16.7
7	% households occupying three rooms	19.5	14.7
8	% households occupying four rooms	2.1	-
9	% households with private tap water access	92.6	-
10	% households with public tap water for access	7.4	-
11	% households having bathroom + flush toilet	75.2	-
12	% households having bathroom and no flush toilet	16.1	-

* Beijing, Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2000).

** Chan (2006).

Source: Chan (2006).

Table 3 shows the difference in living conditions between the permanent residents in Beijing vis-à-vis the temporary residents, the migrants. The living conditions of permanent residents are far better as compared to the temporary residents. A large proportion of migrants tend to live in single room dormitory type of dwelling units. Only one in three live in a house with two rooms or three rooms, when only eight per cent of permanent residents lived in one room house. It need be mentioned that the living conditions of permanent residents in city like Beijing has improved substantially over time. Further, many migrants living in dormitory type of housing did not have a kitchen and bathing facility and toilets were communal. In some instances, the migrants had to pay minimal fees for the communal bathing facility and flush toilets.

Chan's (2006) study also indicates that occupation of the migrant workers determined their dwelling unit condition through income and status of the *danwei*. As already mentioned earlier, *danwei* status determine the subsidy and living conditions of the workers. In some jobs, husband and wife could not stay together and they would live in their sex's dormitory. Study also found that some employers offered housing as a part of the job benefits. Large prestigious work units were more likely to have more resources to house their employees as compared to the self-employed. Self-employed had almost no access to any job benefits including housing and therefore they had to live in housing paying their own rents. Some jobs require the workers to be on site and hence are provided housing close by, for example, security guard. Study in Beijing also found that the restaurant workers were also offered jobs by their respective employers and this is shared accommodation. Such workers were found to be living farther away from their jobs. It is not mandatory for private employers like restaurant owners to give housing but they did more out of custom and tradition than functional need. Construction workers always lived on the site and were not allowed to keep their family members with them in such housing. For example, a construction worker from Anhui province has brought his wife to Beijing, but, she works as a domestic help and lives on her own while the husband lives on construction site and there is a family reunion once a week if that is feasible. Self-employed workers are more likely to live with their family members and relatives.

Chan's study, interestingly, also finds that there was job specialization related to place of origin. For example, Anhui province provided domestic housekeepers, Zhejiang migrants as garment sellers and Hebei migrants as self-employed recyclers. As already discussed, employment determined their housing and hence one would find concentration of Hebei migrants in urban villages where the self-employed lived and so on. Thus, social networks, more than hukou, played an important role in determining their employment and hence housing. Migrants also directly depend on the social networks to find housing.

Newspaper and journal reports have also described the living conditions of migrants. For example, one report on living in Beijing:

"In a city of fast-rising house prices, the former villages offer affordable accommodation. Rents are as low as 200 yuan (\$25) a month. The villagers of Liguanzhuang, a cluster of shabby single-storey brick houses in the north-east of the city, can afford to sit around moaning. They lost their fields several years ago, but their houses are large by city standards. They have roofed over their courtyards and partitioned their homes into tiny, dark rooms, which they rent out. Conditions in the village are grim. The only lavatories are foul-smelling public ones. But the slumlords are making an easy living..... Instead, scattered villages within cities, often behind walls built to hide their squalor, and old state-owned apartment buildings have filled the gap."³²

Another report of the migrants living in Beijing is of a village named Picun on city's periphery. Picun is a suburb in Northeast Beijing, at 30 km from Beijing downtown. This is a small village, where the working age residents have migrated to Beijing

³² http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9302841 (accessed on October 18, 2009).

down town and the elderly stay back to take care of the house and collect rent from the migrants renting the old *siheyuan* houses. “The ratio of migrant workers to native inhabitants in Picun is 5:1, with nearly 10,000 migrant workers. But it is not the largest migrant workers’ community in Beijing. In Xiaojiahe Community³³, Haidian District, there are 4,000 native inhabitants and nearly 30,000 migrant workers. This is common in Shenzhen and Guangzhou. Many suburban farmers rent their houses to migrant workers, living on the proceeds.”³⁴ A section of waste collectors and recyclers of the city also live in settlements such as Picun and Xiaojiahe. The rate for a 15-square-meter room in 2008 was 120 Yuan per month, and had seen a 100 per cent increase from 60 Yuan a few years back. The rent comes to about 12 per cent to 15 per cent of their monthly income. Thus, migrant workers tend to share a room³⁵.

There is some housing mobility observed among the migrant workers. Wang (2004) illustrates that they first come as floating population or temporary migrants and live in rental accommodation and equates them with ‘bridgeheaders’ as in Turner’s concept. Then they seek special residency permits, the blue-cards that give them some level of formal status in the cities, a move observed in many manufacturing cities/ special economic zones such as Shenzhen, etc. which brings them in Turner’s category of ‘Consolidators’. The third stage is that of ‘Status Seekers’ where they get permanent migrant status that integrates them with the other urban residents. Wang’s (2004) study of Shenyang and Chongqing and Liu and Liyang’s (1997) of Zhejiangcun of Beijing show that only those who are able to purchase permanent residency attain the ‘Status Seeker’ position and these are mainly those in business. The wage labour, whose incomes are low, are not able to attain permanent status and hence do not move into permanent housing.

The literature review indicates that the migrant workers belonging to low-income category tend to live in dormitories provided by the employers; these dormitories do not have good facilities, number of migrants share one room, sanitation facilities are outside the room and are communal, there is no kitchen attached and the workers eat in common canteens, a married couple cannot occupy the same dormitory, there are separate dormitories for males and females. For smaller establishments such as hotels, etc. the employers house their employees in an apartment, but, many employees sharing a room or an apartment with or without facilities, although they are not required to do so. They do so out of custom. Construction workers live on site in dormitory housing. Those who do not get housing from their employers tend to rent a room, which they may share with others. Some of the migrants also bring their families if they live in a rental unit and some of them sometimes also have extended family members living with them. Some also rent a room in former SOE housing. A large number of them rent rooms in urban villages. Lastly, a few of them are able to purchase a house from commercial housing and move up in life, eventually settling down in the urban area. In general, the housing situation of the migrant labour is related to their employment status and large number of them live in the cities without

³³ The first author of this paper has visited this site.

³⁴ <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2008/e200805/p17.htm> (accessed on October 18, 2009).

³⁵ <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2008/e200805/p17.htm> (accessed on October 18, 2009).

any social security as well as housing security, forcing a significant proportion of them deciding to return back to their native areas once their working life ends.

Introducing Dongguan

Dongguan is a city of population 168.31 *yi wan* (10,000), that is 1.68 million, of which 70.42 *yi wan* or 0.70 million or 41.8 per cent population is non-agricultural. In other words, 0.70 million or 704,200 is the urban population of Dongguan. But these are the figures of permanent residents. As per the Dongguan city government site³⁶, there are 1,538,900 registered permanent residents and over 6,400,000 inhabitants, which means that 4,861,100 are temporary residents of the city. Thus, of the total inhabitants of the city, 76 per cent are temporary residents or migrants and 24 per cent are permanent residents or population with residency status (*hukou*) registered in Dongguan city. Dongguan City in Guangdong province is a city formed of migrants.

Dongguan is located in Pearl River delta, between Guangzhou and Shenzhen, on Guangshen highway. Uptill 1985, Dongguan was a county and became a city in September 1985. It gained prefectural city status in January 1988. Today, it administers 32 towns, 546 village committees and 132 neighbourhood committees. The city³⁷ is spread over an area of 2,465 sq kms. The conurbation of Guangzhou, Dongguan and Shenzhen together house about 25 million inhabitants.

The city of Dongguan is known for manufacturing of IT hardware. It produces 15 to 40 per cent of world's motherboards, scanners, kinescopes and micromotors. Besides IT hardware, the city is also known to have largest consumer goods production base; one-fifths of the garments in China are made here in 7,000 manufacturing enterprises with an approximate 1 billion pieces manufactures every year. The city has 3,000 shoe making enterprises³⁸. The city was just a stretch of farmland in the mid-1990s, thereafter, it has become an important manufacturing hub in Guangdong province. First it was manufacturing sector and now IT is dominating Dongguan's economy. To support the IT industries, the city government has promoted development of special zones, IT parks, about which a bit later.

Primary Survey Findings

Dongguan is a city of migrants. This is the reason why we chose this city for primary survey. For our primary survey, our research team visited two construction sites, factories as well as markets to locate the migrant workers. A structured questionnaire was prepared to canvas information on various aspects of their housing conditions.

³⁶ <http://english.dg.gov.cn/POPULATION.htm> (accessed on September 3, 2008).

³⁷ For those not familiar with the city definition in PRC; city is defined as an administrative unit. A province is divided into cities and within a city is the main urban area where there is concentration of population with non-agriculture residency status. Thus, a city in other contexts is an urban area comprising of urban districts in PRC and a city in PRC is an administrative unit formerly called a prefecture. The urban statistics give data of the urban area of the prefectural city over which there is jurisdiction of the city government.

³⁸ Tan, Xingyu (2008): "The Jewel Still Shines – Pearl River Delta and Her Industries", in *China Pictorial*, June, pp. 48-53.

The total sample size was 90, with 30 workers located within the factory premises, another 30 on the construction site and another 30 who worked as self-employed.

Table 4: Demographic Details, Dongguan

Type of migrant	Average age (Yrs)	% Literate	Average years of education
In factory	26.1	100.0	10.1
On Construction site	29.6	90.0	8.5
Self employed	29.6	95.0	10.8
Average	28.4	95.0	9.8

Our study in Dongguan of a small sample shows that migrants are in a very young age group. We find that the average age of the respondents was 28.4 years and that 95 per cent of them were literate (Table 4). Their average years of education were 9.8 years, which is fairly good (in comparison to India, which we will see later on). But, the factory workers were the youngest of all, whereas those working as self employed and on construction site had an average age of 29.6 years. Among factory workers, literacy rate was 100 per cent whereas that among the construction workers was low at 90 per cent. Average years of schooling of the construction workers was the least among the three category of migrant workers in Dongguan.

Table 5: Years of Stay in City, Dongguan

Type of migrant	Years of living in city (no.)				Migration from (%)		
	Less than 1 year	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	More than 10 years	From rural area	From other urban area	With employer
In factory	6	13	9	2	55.6	40.7	3.7
On Construction site	19	7	4	0	83.3	6.7	10.0
Self employed	6	9	12	3	60.0	40.0	0.0
Average (%)	34.5	32.2	27.8	5.5	66.3	29.1	4.6

As anticipated, self employed migrant workers are the ones who tend to stay back in the city. Among 30 respondents, only half were in the city for less than 5 years (Table 5), another half of them were in the city for five years or more. Construction workers were a group where the most recent migrants are found and 19 of the 30 of them had arrived in the last 1 year. We did not check among the self employed as to what work they found in the city when they first came to the city. Thus, either the self-employed in the cities tend to stay back whereas those migrants in the construction and in factories tend to return back or those in the construction and industries when move to self employed status tend to stay back in the cities. It is also possible that those in construction and industries, bring their families to the city, they move out to self-employed status. A study of who or what type of migrants tend to stay back in the cities requires an independent study, which however is not the focus of this work.

Further, a large proportion of migrants, 66 per cent among all, but 83 per cent among the construction workers are from rural areas. Those in the factories and engaged as self employed, are migrants from the urban areas. It appears that the factory jobs in Dongguan, particularly of the workers in our sample, are skilled jobs and hence, migrants from the other urban areas are more likely to get such jobs. Full literacy among the factory workers covered by the survey indicates that these are the better off among the migrants surveyed in Dongguan. It is likely that since Dongguan has

shifted to high-tech industries of late, a large section of migrants in such factories in the city are literate and better educated than other migrants.

Further, literature review has also shown us that the migrants tend to move from one city to another, depending on where the jobs are available. This is also the case with regards to employment in the factories. To be self employed also requires skills and hence, this group of migrants had higher literacy rate than the factory workers.

Table 6: Current Location in Dongguan

Type of migrant	Location (%)				% living in current location after coming to city
	Main city	City periphery	Village in periphery	Village away from city	
In factory	63.3	16.7	10.0	10.0	41.4
On Construction site	43.3	50.0	6.7	0.0	70.0
Self employed	55.0	35.0	5.0	5.0	30.0
Average	53.9	33.9	7.2	5.0	47.1

As far as location of the migrants in the city, about half of them were living in the main city and another one-third on the city's periphery. A sizeable proportion, 7.2 per cent of them, were living in the village on the periphery and another 5 per cent in the village away from the main city. These are likely to be migrants living in urban villages. But, that seems to be the case with the factory workers. In other words, the factories seem to be located outside the main city in urban villages on the periphery as well as away from the city. Half the construction workers are on the city's periphery and another 6.7 per cent in the village in the periphery. More than half the self employed are living in the main city and another 10 per cent in the urban villages, on the periphery or away. Since self employed are the longest staying migrant group in the city, 70 per cent of them have moved to another location or only 30 per cent of them have continued to live in the location where they were living when they came to the city. In contrast, construction workers, with more than two thirds as the most recent migrants (who have come to the city in last one year), 70 per cent of them had not changed their housing since they came to the city. One could say that migrants may not change their house in the first year of their stay in the city. Only once they begin to get a foothold in the city that they tend to shift out of an accommodation or shelter that they got when they first came to the city.

Table 7: Reasons for shifting to current location, Dongguan

Type of migrant	Reasons for shifting to current location (%)				
	Move with new job	Want big house with increase in income	Want big house because family joining	New house cheaper than previous one	Others
In factory	68.2	4.5	4.5	9.1	13.6
On Construction site	42.3	3.8	7.7	3.8	42.3
Self employed	38.9	22.2	11.1	0.0	27.8
Average/ Total	49.8	10.2	7.8	4.3	27.9

Shifting residence within the city is largely on account of change in employment and its location. But, that was more the case with the factory workers, 59 per cent of them having moved from their earlier housing to current one, because they do tend to live in housing provided by their employers, as the literature review showed. Only self employed among them, overwhelmingly and good one-third of them stated that they

moved to their current house because they wanted a bigger house on account of increase in their income or their family joining them. Other reasons were stated by the construction workers, and these are not specified. It is likely that they may have shifted to live in a house shared with known people, as on the construction site they may be sharing the room with co-workers than with the people from same village or same family.

Table 8: Commuting to work, Dongguan

Type of migrant	Average distance of house from work (km)	Mode of travelling to work (no.)				
		cycle	bus	Walk	Any other	No response
In factory	1.9	9	6	11	0	4
On Construction site	0.4	4	3	11	0	12
Self employed	1.4	2	2	9	4	13
Average (%)	1.2	17	12	34	4	32

Table 8 shows that the migrant workers tend to stay very close to their place of employment. On an average, the migrant workers travelled 1.2 km to reach their work place in case they were not living on the work premises. They walked to the work site (34 per cent) or cycled (17 per cent). A large proportion did not respond and they are workers whose work site and house site are the same.

Table 9: Housing Occupancy, Dongguan

Type of migrant	% sharing house	No. of people sharing a house	House shared with			
			Worker of same <i>danwei</i>	Workers of other <i>danwei</i>	With other families	Not sharing
In factory	86.7	5.3	17	4	5	4
On Construction site	90.0	9.0	24	2	1	3
Self employed	20.0	4.8	4	1	1	24
Average (%)	65.6	6.4	50	8	8	34

Largest proportion (66 per cent) of the migrant workers lived in shared house. But nearly all, 93 per cent of the migrant construction workers shared a house and 80 per cent of them shared the house with the workers of the same *danwei*. Among the migrant factory workers, 87 per cent shared a house and slightly more than half shared it with the workers of the same *danwei*. In contrast, the migrants in self employed category, did not share a house and seems are living in a house with their own family. Further, number of people sharing a house/ room was largest among the construction workers, which was 9.0 to a room, whereas it was least among the self employed. This indicates that the self employed would be living in rented dwelling units, most likely with their family members.

Table 10: Housing Tenure and Cost, Dongguan

Type of migrant	House belongs to			If rented then average rent per month (RMB)
	Employer	Rented	Own	
In factory	17	13	0	506.7
On Construction site	24	6	0	283.3
Self employed	0	26	4	520.0
Average (%)	46	50	4	436.7

All but four self employed rented a house and the four owned their own house (Table 10). Renting was the least among those employed as construction workers because 80

per cent of them lived in employer provided housing. Among the factory workers, 57 per cent lived in employer provided housing whereas remaining lived in rented housing. None among the factory workers as well as construction workers owned a house in the city. The rental amount per month paid is quite high; average of RMB 437 per month. The self employed paid the highest amounts per month as rent, RMB 520 whereas the construction workers paid the least monthly rentals.

This indicates that the construction workers have low incomes, and lowest among the migrants, thus prefer to live in employer provided housing. Also, they bear with whatever housing is provided by the employer, including a crowded room, as they cannot afford anything else. They are the most recent migrants and hence also do not have incomes and capability to rent a house. This group of migrants have the least years of education and hence can only get into construction sector. In other words, those with low levels of education enter construction sector on migrating to city. A shelter provided by the employer, however inadequate it may be, is better than not having any and living on the streets.

Lastly, the self employed had the best access to different services. For example, 90 per cent of them had access to toilet and only 16 per cent of them shared a toilet (Table 11). This means that the rest had access to individual household level toilet. Further, 100 per cent of them had access to electricity. But, their houses did not have any heating facility. It is likely that since they lived in a rental housing, large number of them in the urban villages, they did not have heating facility in the house; the owners may not have provided that for their tenants. In contrast, at least 14 per cent of the migrants employed in factories had heating in the winter. But, there were 10 per cent of them who did not have access to electricity, 14 per cent who did not have access to toilets and 60 per cent shared a toilet. The construction workers had the poorest availability of services; 48 per cent of them did not have access to toilet, 68 per cent of those having access to toilet shared it with others, the toilet as well as bath were at a distance of slightly more than 50 meter from their room, and 10 per cent did not have access to electricity. Surprisingly, 7.4 per cent of them had heating in winter. It seems that some of the factory workers and construction workers living in employer housing had room heating in winter, which, the workers living in rental housing have to forego.

Table 11: Availability of Services, Dongguan

Type of migrant	% with availability of toilet	% using shared toilet	Average distance to toilet (m)	Average distance to bath (m)	% with electricity	% with heating in winter
In factory	85.7	59.1	16.1	12.1	89.7	13.8
On Construction site	51.9	68.4	59.8	51.4	89.7	7.4
Self employed	90.0	15.8	3.5	7.0	100.0	0.0
Average	75.9	47.8	26.5	23.5	93.1	7.1

Table 12: Income, Other Benefits, Total Expenditure and Savings Per Month, in RMB, Dongguan

Type of migrant	Monthly income	Other benefits from employers (if any)	Total monthly expenditure	Monthly savings
In factory	1,368.9	300.0	874.6	494.3
On Construction site	1,539.3	784.6	1352.2	187.1
Self employed	3,078.9	-	3169.0	Nil

Average	1,995.7	-	1798.6	197.1
---------	---------	---	--------	-------

Table 13: Household Expenditure Break-up, Dongguan (%age)

Type of migrant	Total	Food	Housing	transport	Education	Other
In factory	100.0	40.5	20.0	2.9	9.4	27.2
On Construction site	100.0	28.7	10.1	7.1	5.4	48.8
Self employed	100.0	22.4	10.0	27.4	9.7	30.6
Average	100.0	26.6	11.7	19.5	8.8	33.5

Self employed had the highest monthly income among the three groups of migrants. But, they get no additional benefits like other migrants. Even if the benefits from the employers were to be included in the income, self employed earned far more than the factory workers, the ratio of income of former to the latter (including the benefits from the employers for the factory workers) is 1:1.8. The ratio of income of self-employed to that of the construction workers (including the benefits from the employer for the latter) is 1:1.3. Thus, to move to self employed status leads to increase in income, this then leads to a shift to rental housing and then finally home ownership in the formal sector. The self employed are not saving any amount although their incomes are high, evidently pointing at their high expenditures (Table 13) on transport and other items, such as health care. The construction workers as well as the factory workers are able to save a substantial amount besides getting additional benefits from their employers. They are able to save more because they are saving on transport and also low them living as single male migrants in the city. The construction workers are spending less on their food as well as housing whereas the factory workers are spending less on other items.

Photo 1: Housing of Construction Workers, Dongguan



Photo by: Xiuming Yuan

This survey of living conditions of the low-income migrant workers in Dongguan matches the general trends observed in other studies that these groups have bare minimum living conditions. A newspaper report summarizes well their living conditions: “Two billion yuan can help build flats in industrial areas for families of migrant workers. The current situation is shocking. I once saw six couples living in

one room. In Dongguan, southern Guangdong, the cheapest flat sells for about 1,000 yuan per square meter, still beyond the reach of the average migrant worker.”³⁹

For the construction and factory workers, some form of shelter available from their employers has reduced their cost of living, although they still spend a substantial proportion on housing. Living on work site has reduced their transport costs and it is possible that the food is available at very low costs on the work site reducing their food expenditure. Among these migrants, those who are able to transit to self employed status have been able to improve their incomes and living conditions and they are more likely to stay behind in the urban areas as compared to the construction workers and the factory workers. The other two sets of migrants are important builders of urban economy, but, they live for long years as temporary residents, not getting absorbed in the urban economy.

Urban housing supply in the socialist days was by the employers, mainly the government and the SOEs. Only those permitted to work in these enterprises qualified for a house. But, with the push in urbanization in wake of economic reforms, low income migrants begun to come to cities. The policy of employer housing continued but in absence of any public policy for the migrant housing, a section of them intending to stay back in the cities went to the rental housing market, largely in the informal sector (in the urban villages and urban periphery). Those self employed able to earn enough, could buy a house from the private commercial developments at locations affordable to them. The rental housing living conditions are not comparable to that in the formal housing. Public housing continues to be for those with urban hukou, but, now the housing demand from the low income migrants is being sought to be addressed through affordable housing policy developed by each city on its own.

5.0 Housing Conditions of Migrants in India

In India, as per population census 2001, 15.0 percent or 42.58 million of the total urban population in India, live in slums (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India 2005: 21). In the metropolitan cities, this proportion was much higher; at 24.1 per cent accounting to 17.70 million population living in slums (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India 2005: 22). In individual cities, the proportion is much higher, Mumbai, 60 percent⁴⁰, Ahmedabad 26 percent⁴¹, Surat 19 percent⁴² and so on.

³⁹ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Dec/153200.htm> (accessed on October 18, 2009).

⁴⁰ <http://www.mcgm.gov.in/forms/Masterdisplay.aspx?slmno=Mzg%3d-wXIpbBtWrGI%3d>

⁴¹ 1998 slum estimate is from Swarna Jayanti Shehri Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) survey and 2001 estimate is from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) as given in Ahmedabad’s CDP (<http://jnnurm.nic.in/missioncities.htm>).

⁴² For Pune, Bangalore and Hyderabad, slum data is from respective municipal corporation documents. See Pangotra (1998).

In India, in the recent times, migrants come and squat on urban periphery. In the earlier times, they tended to get adjusted in the rental housing in the existing slum and low income settlements. These getting overcrowded and lands not being available in the central parts of the city, they begun occupying lands on the city periphery, largely in the city parts where there are industrial areas (Mahadevia 2002b for Ahmedabad, Mahadevia 1998 and Mahadevia and Narayanan 2008 for Mumbai).

There are no separate studies to document / analyse living conditions of the migrant workers in urban India. But, there are large number of studies documenting life and living of slum dwellers (D'Costa and Das 2002, Narayanan et al 2008, etc). We have not presented these here. But, it might be worthwhile describing the conditions of living in slums from the national level survey of housing carried out in 2002. This National Sample Survey (NSS) gives the following description of living conditions in slums in India (NSSO 2004):

1. "A slum was a compact area with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions." (pp. 11)
2. 67 per cent of the dwelling units were permanent in nature and the rest were living in semi-permanent or temporary dwelling unit structures.
3. Only 20 per cent of dwelling units in slum areas had a plinth area of more than 50 sq.m.
4. Per capita floor area available in the slums was 4.6 sq.m.
5. 66 per cent of the slum dwellers lived their own house (that is, self constructed house), which could be illegal as far as the urban laws are concerned.
6. In urban slums, average monthly rent was Rs.352.
7. 15 per cent dwelling units in urban slums had all the three facilities, drinking water, electricity for lighting, and a toilet and 11 per cent had none of these facilities. For other types of dwelling units, these figures were 63 per cent (for all facilities) and 4 per cent (for no facilities). (pp. 47)
8. Only 40 per cent of the slum households had water supply access within their house, when this figure for all other households was 74 per cent (pp. 51).
9. 32 per cent households in slums did not have access to any latrine facility, and this figure for all other households was 16 per cent (pp. 51).

The national level data on housing reveals that the living conditions in the slums are poor and worse than the living conditions of non-slum households. The living conditions in slums improve with age of the slum settlement. Case studies presented in this section later on will give an idea of how the living conditions improve in slum settlements. This is possible because the slum dwellers are free to live in the urban areas if they are able to manage on their own access to semi-legal and then legal housing.

There are micro studies of living and working conditions of the recent or temporary migrants. A study of the migrants in the destination area indicates that the migrants work long hours and often live in accommodation provided by the employer. But, because of the same reason, it is difficult to contact the migrant workers in their

destination area for organizing them for anything. In a sense, these workers are completely disenfranchised⁴³. A DISHA (2002: 45) study also states the same:

“By whatever route they get there, at work sites migrants experience long hours, hard work, harsh conditions, injuries (with inadequate medical help or compensation), and social isolation and humiliation. Water is scarce at work places and encampments and migrants have to negotiate access to it from construction sites or private houses rather than the municipality. Security is another major problem. Most adivasi (tribal) migrants sleep in the open or bivouac under makeshift structures.” This study describes the living conditions of tribal⁴⁴ migrants in the cities of Gujarat state. Mosse et al (2005: 3027) write: “Staying in urban spaces, migrants face harassment, abuse, theft, forcible eviction by the police, or the demolition of their dwellings by urban authorities. The abuse of adivasi migrants is closely related to their lack of identity or dwellings in urban places. Here they stand out as marginal, transitional people. They are subject to prejudice, stigmatised and criminalised, falsely accused of theft or looting, and detained and beaten by police. Migrant women describe fear at night and fitful sleep in exposed places.”

Mosse et al (2005) state that shelter is a priority for the tribal migrants. If the workers are organized or have any institutional support then they get access to shelter. One such group, studied by the authors, was organized by the Bandhkam Mazdoor Sangathan (BMS) (Construction Workers Association), and the latter got them access to municipal land under a flyover for the construction of night shelter. The tribal migrants generally get work in the construction sector, in which, as per Mosse et al's study (2005), the work availability was intermittent and the workers remained under-employed. But, going back to the villages not being a desired option by them, they tend to live in the most miserable conditions and are exposed to harassment in the city. Mosse et al (2005) study also show that the worksites of the tribal migrants are dispersed over the city and have no basic services. Their children cannot go to school, and many of them do come with their families. They do not have access to health centres. The biggest problem these migrants face is harassment, from the local anti-social elements as well as municipal authorities. Sometimes, the municipal authorities may be get involved to set up a 'permanent' shelter for the migrants to control and regulate these moving populations so that they do not litter the pavements, create other troubles, do not throng the railway station and so on. But, there is equally or more strong resistance to giving them any temporary shelter with the fear that such shelter clusters could become permanent settlements in the city.

DISHA's study in Ahmedabad found that 54 per cent of the migrants slept in the open, and 41 per cent in huts built from tarpaulins or jute bags. Factors influencing the choice of dwelling place included availability of open ground free from harassment, water and fuel availability and remaining with members from the same

⁴³ This is from an unpublished report of lessons of nearly two years of work carried out in an action research project by Prayas under the aegis of Dakshini Rajasthan Majdoor Union and Gujarat Ginning and Mill Majdoor Union. The project has been supported by Aga Khan Foundation and Action Aid India.

⁴⁴ Tribals are the indigenous people, having now special status in the Indian Constitution.

village in order to share news, and send remittances (DISHA 2002:16 in Mosse et al 2005). Most other studies (India, Ministry of Labour 1991, Gramin Vikas Trust 2002, Rani and Shylendra 2001, Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003) also have similar description of the deplorable living conditions of the migrant labour in the cities; many living on the footpaths and city parks, without provision of safe drinking water, without basic services, exposed to vagaries of nature, subject to all types of harassment and women in particular subjected to lack of privacy and sexual harassment.

Introducing Surat

Surat is the second largest city in the state of Gujarat and the 10th largest in India, with a population of population of 3.8 million in 2006 and an area of 324 sq km^{45,46}. From 0.47 million in 1971, city's population has increased to 1.48 million in 1991 and has almost doubled in 2001 at 2.8 million. Thus, 1991-2001 population growth rate of the city was 6.6 per cent per annum, when urbanization rate in India was just 2.75 per cent per annum.

Surat is one of the oldest mercantile centres of the south Gujarat region. It is also known as Silk city and now a Diamond city. The city is located on River Tapi and has about 6 km long coastal belt along the Arabian Sea. Surat is located midway on the 500 km long Ahmedabad-Mumbai western railway corridor and as many as forty pairs of express, mail and passenger trains pass through it. National Highway 8 passes within 16 km of the Surat Municipal Corporation boundary and is one of the busiest inter-state trunk routes in the country. The city is a pivotal centre on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai regional corridor. It is on the 225 km long industrial belt, having direct linkages with the industrial urban centers of Vadodara, Ankleshwar and Vapi.

For a long time in history, the city's economy was dominated by indigenous household industries such as *zari* (gold and silver brocade thread manufacturing and weaving or embroidering them on silk cloth). But, with the setting up of the industrial estates by the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) around Surat, in attempt to push industrialization in the state after her formation in 1960, small scale industries developed at a very rapid pace in these estates. One of them is the powerloom industries, firstly located within these industrial estates and then within the residential areas the city. Another small-scale but labour intensive industry is diamond polishing. Power loom and diamond polishing industries are the largest employers of the migrant labour, former employing inter-state and intra-state migrants whereas the latter intra-state migrants. Many of these are single male migrants⁴⁷. Surat's industrial development has been mainly through small-scale industries and this labour is unorganized.

⁴⁵ As per the data from the SMC.

⁴⁶ The limits of both the cities was expanded in 2006, through a state government order, in which the city government had very little role to play.

⁴⁷ From our field work.

Since economic reforms in 1991, vicinity to coast has brought large capital-intensive industries in the periphery of the city. One such area that houses large capital intensive industries such as petrochemical plant, steel mill, gas-based power plant, fertilizer plant, heavy water plant, etc. is Hazira industrial area, now connected through strip development along the highways. Hazira industrial area has developed as a major industrial area of India and has estimated total investment of about Rs. 100,000 million and employment of about 5,500 persons⁴⁸. This region has high skilled workers employed in the industries on one hand and low-skilled and unorganized labour in the construction work in the area as well as casual labour in the industries.

Surat and her region contributes significantly to the national industrial development. It has⁴⁹: (i) 42 per cent of the world's and 70 per cent of the nation's total rough diamond cutting and polishing (ii) 40 per cent of the nation's total polished diamond exports, (iii) 40 per cent of the nation's total man made fabric and 12 per cent of the nation's total fabric production, (iv) 28 per cent of the nation's total manmade fibre production and (vi) 18 per cent of the nation's total manmade fibres export.

Introducing Sample

Three slum settlements were selected for this research. We did not visit the industrial work sites or construction sites to record the shelter situation of the migrant workers. This is because, there is no policy of migrant labour housing in India, and as the literature review pointed out, the living conditions are abysmal. In Surat, therefore, we looked into the living conditions of the migrants within regular settlements. Two of these settlements, namely Apekshanagar and Jai Jawannagar are located on the city's periphery and have similar characteristics, the third one, Nikhalasnagar is closer to the main city, in the area where workers in the diamond polishing units and powerloom units work and reside. The first two house workers with their families whereas the latter have many single male workers. In a sense, the two samples, of China and India, are not strictly comparable, primarily because the process of urbanization is entirely different in both the countries. The sample included 30 households from Apekshanagar, 30 from Jai Jawannagar and 71 from Nikhalasnagar.

Table 14: Demographic Details, Surat

Location of migrant	Average age (Yrs)	% Literate	Average years of education
Apekshanagar	35.7	80.0	6.4
Jai Jawannagar	37.2	93.3	9.7
Nikhalasnagar	37.0	77.5	5.9
Average	36.8	81.7	6.9

The average age of the migrant workers is 36.8 years, which means that they have migrated to the city at a reasonably early age and have settled down (Table 14). The average age is certainly higher than the average age of the migrant worker in China. Although, the rate of migration is high in Surat, we could not find young migrants of

⁴⁸ Surat City Development Plan

⁴⁹ Surat Municipal Corporation web site - www.suratmunicipal.gov.in on 1/11/08

recent origin in the settlements we had visited. It is true that the rate of construction in Surat is far lower than the rate of construction observed in Dongguan, and also manufacturing sector in Surat is not as large as one would find in Dongguan. Further, the industrial workers could be living in industrial estates, which are outside Surat city and hence do not form part of the city. We had expected that Nikhalasnagar, which has large many single male migrants, would have young migrants, which we are not finding in our sample. Hence, one can deduce that very young migrants, in the age 20-30 by themselves are not migrating to city in that large numbers as one would have expected. Hence, in context of India, migrants are of all working ages, and they do come to the cities with the intention of settling down.

Unlike China, however, the migrants' average years of education is low though the proportion of literates is not too different from the situation in Dongguan. This corroborates with the macro statistics in India, given in Kundu and Sarangi (2007) that the rural migrants do come with better endowment level than those who do not migrate. Nikhalsnagar has the lowest literacy rate and the least average years of schooling among the three migrant groups.

Majority of the migrants (78 per cent of them) covered in the survey were living in the city for more than 10 years (Table 15). The largest number of the recent migrants are in Jai Jawannagar, 20 per cent who have migrated to the city within 2-5 years. Almost all migrants to Surat are from the rural areas.

Table 15: Years of Stay in City, Surat

Location of migrant	Years of living in city (%)				Migration from (%)		
	Less than 1 year	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	More than 10 years	From rural area	From other urban area	With employer
Apekshanagar	0.0	3.3	20.0	76.7	100.0	0.0	0.0
Jai Jawannagar	0.0	20.0	6.7	73.3	100.0	0.0	0.0
Nikhalasnagar	2.8	4.2	12.7	80.3	98.6	1.4	0.0
Average	1.5	7.6	13.0	77.9	99.2	0.8	0.0

About two thirds of the respondents continued to live in the settlement where they had first found the house after coming to the city (Table 16). This is inspite of the fact that about 78 per cent of them were living in the city for more than 10 years. In other words, unlike Dongguan, the housing mobility of the migrants is quite low in Surat. Mobility of those living in Nikhalasnagar is the lowest; 75 per cent of them living in the same place since they came to the city. In this settlement, 80 per cent were living in the city for more than 10 years. Thus, unlike Dongguan, in Surat, housing mobility is not so much influenced by years of stay. This could be explained by the possibility of incremental housing by the migrants in urban India, unlike in urban China.

Table 16: Reasons for shifting to current location, Surat

Location of migrant	% living in current location after coming to city	Reasons for shifting to current location (%)				
		Move with new job	Want big house with increase in income	Want big house because family joining	New house cheaper than previous one	Others
Apekshanagar	60.0	90.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	60.0
Jai Jawannagar	60.0	80.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.0
Nikhalasnagar	74.6	22.2	5.6	0.0	22.2	55.6

Average	67.9	55.3	5.3	0.0	15.8	63.2
---------	------	------	-----	-----	------	------

Those who have shifted gave multiple reasons for shifting to a new house. About 55 per cent stated that they shifted to a new house because of the employment reasons, or change in their employment and place of employment. But, a very large number, 63 per cent stated other reasons for shifting, and this is desire to shift to ownership housing. Urban housing studies have shown that the urban poor prefer to have ownership housing, albeit in an informal settlement with no legal land and house ownership title where they can incrementally invest.

Table 17: Number of Times Shifted in the City, Surat

Location of migrant	% age reporting shelter move		
	1	2 to 3	More than 3
Apekshanagar	18.2	72.7	9.1
Jai Jawannagar	20.0	80.0	0.0
Nikhalsnagar	58.8	23.5	17.6
Average	36.1	53.7	10.2

For those who have moved, largest proportion were in the category who had changed their housing two to three times (Table 17). The residents of Nikhalsnagar are the least mobile, only 25 per cent of them had shifted a house since they came to the city and of those who had shifted, 59 per cent had shifted only once.

Table 18: Commuting to work, Surat

Location of migrant	Average distance of house from work (km)	Mode of travelling to work (%)				
		cycle	bus	Walk	Any other	No response
Apekshanagar	6.2	73.3	0.0	0.0	26.7	6.2
Jai Jawannagar	7.2	57.1	0.0	0.0	42.9	7.2
Nikhalsnagar	3.5	69.0	0.0	0.0	31.0	3.5
Average	4.9	67.9	0.0	0.0	32.1	4.9

Compared to migrants in Dongguan, those in Surat travel longer distance to work (Table 18). The average distance travelled to work is 4.9 km. The maximum distance travelled is by those living in Jai Jawannagar and least by those living in Nikhalsnagar. Because the distances are large, they either cycle or use any other means. In Surat, anyone wanting to travel cheap, use shared autorickshaw, which move from point to point, in absence of a reliable public bus system.

Table 19: Housing Occupancy, Surat

Location of migrant	% sharing house	No. of people sharing a house	House shared with			
			Worker of same work unit	Workers of other work unit	With other families	Others
Apekshanagar	23.3	4.71	28.6	0.0	42.9	28.6
Jai Jawannagar	26.7	4.75	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nikhalsnagar	49.3	5.77	22.9	45.7	20.0	11.4
Average	38.2	5.47	36.0	32.0	20.0	12.0

Unlike Dongguan and all other Chinese cities, in India, the migrant workers tend to stay with their own families or with those of the people of their own region or social network. Thus, first of all, sharing of a house with other is lesser of a phenomenon in Surat than in Dongguan, just 38 per cent migrant workers sharing a house in Surat

(Table 19) compared to 66 per cent in Dongguan. Further, number of people sharing a room is far less in Surat than in Dongguan. This however does not mean much because the dwelling unit or the room shared could be smaller in size in Surat than Dongguan. But, what is important is that sharing a dwelling unit is lesser of a phenomenon in Indian cities than Chinese cities. In Surat, sharing could be seen to the largest extent in Nikhalasnagar, nearly half doing so, and most of them sharing the room with workers of the other units and then with workers of the same unit. This is because, Nikhalasnagar houses workers employed in powerloom and many of them are single male migrants from states of North India. Sharing with others could be construed as living with an extended family or with people of one's own caste or region.

Employers are not responsible for the housing of their migrant employees, although, the Inter-State Migrant Labour Act, specifies so. Thus, only 1.5 per cent of our sample lived in employer provided housing (Table 20). The migrants tend to make their own arrangements; in the initial years they rent the place and then move to ownership housing, albeit, as mentioned earlier, in the informal sector. Evidently, owning a house is the most prevalent tenure situation; about 57 per cent of them owning it.

Table 20: Housing Tenure and Cost, Surat

Location of migrant	House belongs to			Monthly rental for rented units (INR)
	Employer	Rented	Own	
Apekshanagar	0.0	26.7	70.0	844
Jai Jawannagar	3.3	40.0	56.7	686
Nikhalasnagar	1.4	32.4	66.2	777
Average	1.5	32.8	57.3	761

Table 21: Housing Tenure and Cost, Surat

Location of migrant	For migrants of more than 10 years				For migrants of less than 10 years			
	House belongs to			Monthly rental for rented units (INR)	House belongs to			Monthly rental for rented units (INR)
	Employer	Rented	Own		Employer	Rented	Own	
Apekshanagar	0.0	22.7	77.3	844	0.0	50.0	50.0	NA
Jai Jawannagar	0.0	30.4	69.6	707	14.3	71.4	14.3	700
Nikhalasnagar	0.0	15.2	84.8	776	4.0	64.0	32.0	700

If the migrants are divided into two groups, those staying in the city for more than 10 years and those who have come within the last 10 years, an interesting, distinct pattern can be seen (Table 21). Among those who have come before 10 years or more, more than 70 per cent are living in ownership housing and among those who have come in the last 10 years, more than half in case of Apekshanagar and more than 70 per cent in the other two slums are renting or living in employer provided housing. In fact, one can see that 14 per cent of those who have come in the last 10 years and are in Jai Jawannagar, are living in employer provided housing. The migrants of more than 10 years pay higher rentals than the migrants of less than 10 years, in case of those who are renting. Because, the rentals tend to be unaffordable, the migrants tend to move into ownership housing, which would then get them an address, stability, Identity Card, access to basic facilities provided by the municipal government as and when that happens, and then eventually an urban citizenship. The tenants have to pay higher

municipal taxes than the owners and hence also, the preference is for ownership housing.

The housing mobility is tied to employment mobility. First of all, three in every five migrant surveyed worked in powerloom units and another 15 per cent worked in other occupations, which include those working in diamond polishing units (Table 22). To note is that 11.3 per cent migrant labour worked as casual labour in Nikhalasnagar, which has reported the lowest literacy rate among the three slum settlements. Also to note is that three in four migrants in this settlement are working in powerloom unit and large number of them share a room, indicating that they are single male migrants. When we did our survey, we found that they are from the states of north India, and many of them do not bring their wife and children with them to the city. Jai Jawannagar has large number of migrants in other occupations, and on our discussion with them, we found that many of them are in the construction sector, working as masons, colouring work, etc. and then in small businesses.

Table 22: Current Employment of Migrant Labour, Surat

Location of migrant	%age working				
	As worker in powerloom units	As worker in dying & printing units	As autorickshaw driver	As casual labour	In others occupations
Apekshanagar	60.0	10.0	16.7	6.7	6.7
Jai Jawannagar	40.0	23.3	10.0	0.0	26.7
Nikhalasnagar	74.6	0.0	0.0	11.3	14.1
Average	63.4	7.6	6.1	7.6	15.3

Table 23: Current Employment of Migrant Labour of Last 10 Years, Surat

Location of migrant	%age working				
	As worker in powerloom units	As worker in dying & printing units	As autorickshaw driver	As casual labour	In others occupations
Apekshanagar	62.5	0.0	0.0	25.0	12.5
Jai Jawannagar	71.4	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nikhalasnagar	84.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	4.0

The recent migrants, that is those who have migrated within last 10 years, have found jobs in powerloom units, in printing and dying units in case of Jai Jawannagar or as casual labour as in case of Apekshanagar and Nikhalasnagar (Table 23). Very few proportion of the recent migrants are in other occupations. This means that when the migrant labour comes to Surat, he finds a job in one of the dominant industry, namely powerloom, dying and printing units, diamond units (we have not covered migrants in this category), etc. or as casual labour. Then, they move on to better occupations, such as driving an auto-rickshaw, skilled work in construction or small businesses. By that, they acquire some assets. And then they move to buy a house in an informal housing settlement with quasi-guarantee of security. Thus, housing and employment mobility go hand in hand.

There is no culture of sharing toilets (Table 24) and nearly all households in Apekshanagar and Jai Jawannagar have individual toilet. In Nikhalasnagar, access to toilet was very poor and it appears that they defecate in open. There is a pay-and-use toilet nearby, as we saw during our field visit. It seems that the residents are not using it. There are no common toilets in the settlement and the access roads in the

settlement are so small that it is not possible to take the drainage line inside the settlement.

Table 24: Availability of Services, Surat

Location of migrant	% with access of toilet	% using shared toilet	% with electricity
Apekshanagar	100.0	0.0	100.0
Jai Jawannagar	100.0	0.0	100.0
Nikhalasnagar	21.1	0.0	91.5
Average	57.3	0.0	95.4

Table 25: Income, Other Benefits, Total Expenditure and Savings Per Month, in INR

Location of migrant	Monthly income	Other benefits from employers (if any)	Total monthly expenditure	Monthly savings
Apekshanagar	3,976	Nil	5,297	-1321
Jai Jawannagar	5,083	Nil	4,748	335
Nikhalasnagar	4,366	Nil	3,277	1089
Average	4,441	Nil	4,049	392

Table 26: Household Expenditure Break-up, Dongguan (%age)

Location of migrant	Total	Food	Housing	transport	Education	Other
Apekshanagar	100.0	44.8	13.5	15.9	7.0	18.8
Jai Jawannagar	100.0	52.4	13.0	11.1	6.4	17.0
Nikhalasnagar	100.0	41.9	16.5	10.3	10.3	21.1
Average	100.0	46.2	14.9	9.8	8.4	20.6

All the migrant workers in Surat did not get any benefit from their employers and hence their income comprised of only what they earned themselves. Apekshanagar households, since they lived with their families in the city and were owning a house as well, could not save anything. On the contrary, as stated by them, their monthly expenditure exceeded their monthly income (Table 25). The residents of Nikhalasnagar saved the maximum. This was because they lived as single migrants and repatriated a significant amount of their income back home to support the family left behind. In fact, 21 per cent of their income was put to other use (Table 26), most probably most of it sent back home.

Compared to Dongguan, migrants were spending higher proportion of their income on housing and food and much lower on other items. Expenditure on transport was also higher by migrants in Surat than in Dongguan. Probably, employer housing in case of construction workers and factory workers had a significant impact on the migrants in Dongguan, lowering their expenditures on housing and transport. This ensured that the workers saved and repatriated the savings back home for the use of family left behind. Since the migrants living in Apekshanagar and Jai Jawannagar have come with their families, their food expenditure is high as compared to those living in Nikhalasnagar and certainly higher proportion of their income was spent on food as compared to migrant workers in Dongguan.

6.0 Conclusions

This comparative study shows that, inspite of very different policy and institutional regime, there is a very high bias against the urban migrant workers in both the

countries. None of them have any strong policy for facilitating or ensuring decent housing conditions for the migrant workers. While *hukou* determines the fate of migrants in China's urban areas, availability of affordable housing and employment determines the fate of migrants in India's urban areas. Further, employment and income determine the access to housing in China as well as India. In both countries, housing for the migrants has been tagged on to the overall urban housing policy and there is no specific policy for the migrants. If migrants can afford to buy, they can procure a house from the private housing market in both the countries. In China, only those who have a particular city's hukou can access subsidized public housing whereas in India, those fulfilling the requirements of urban citizenship (defined by cut-off date and other administrative residency proofs) qualify for subsidized urban housing. Thus, in both the countries, urban migrants' access to housing is restricted.

There are also some dissimilarities between the two countries. Migrants in Indian cities have strong intention of staying back, except migrants from some states of origin, whereas, due to hukou law, migrants in China, in particular the low income ones, prefer to return back to their place of origin. A large proportion of migrants in China get employer housing, particularly those employed in industries as well as construction sites, whereas in India, employer housing is negligible and large proportion of migrants prefer ownership housing. It needs to be mentioned that the ownership housing is in the informal sector. Employer housing in China is on account of government policies as well as high demand of labour wherein housing is offered as an incentive to the workers. Probably, rapid economic growth might bring employer housing in India also. But, that would be only if the industrialization would be labour intensive, and generate demand for labour, which is not the case at the moment in India.

There is also another difference between the two countries. Local governments in China have engaged with the housing policy question for the migrant labour. In India, local governments do not consider housing as their main function and hence leave the task to state level agencies to deal with housing. The housing policies in India have schemes related to slum development and hence there is an acknowledgement of existence of slums in Indian cities. Chinese cities do not acknowledge the presence of slums and hence there are no policies that address the need for incremental housing by the migrant communities.

India can learn from China with regards to employer housing for certain segments of urban labour force. China can learn from India with regards to policies for incremental housing. But, both the countries have to go a long way with regards to ensuring a decent housing to the low income migrant population in their cities, given that both would continue to urbanize rapidly in the coming decades.

References

- Asian Development Bank (2001): *Poverty in People's Republic of China*, ADB, Manila.
- Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2000): *Beijing Statistical Yearbook, 2000*, China Statistics Press, Beijing.
- Bian, Y., John Logan, R. Lu H. ET AL. (1997): "'Working Units' and Commodification of Housing: Observations on the Transition to a Market Economy with Chinese Characteristics", *Social Sciences in China*, 18(4), pp. 28-35.
- Chan, D. (2006): How Migrant Workers Find Housing in Beijing: The role of individual agency in differential housing access and outcomes, unpublished Master's Thesis, Program in Urban Studies, Stanford University. Source: <http://urbanstudies.stanford.edu/programs/documents/ChanThesis.pdf> (accessed on October 21, 2009).
- China, National Bureau of Statistics (2006): *China Statistical Yearbook, 2006*, China Statistics Press, Beijing.
- D'Costa, W. and B. Das (2002): Life and Living of the Vulnerable in Ahmedabad City, in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) *Poverty and Vulnerability in a Globalising Metropolis: Ahmedabad*, Manak Publishers, Delhi, 2002, pp. 179-206.
- Deshingkar, P. and D. Start (2003): *Seasonal Migration for Livelihoods in India: Coping, Accumulation and Exclusion*, Working Paper 220, Overseas Development Institute, London, August.
- DISHA (2002): *The Migrant Tribal Construction Labourers in Ahmedabad: A Study*, (originally in Gujarati, 1994, translated 2002), DISHA, Himmatnagar.
- Gramin Vikas Trust (2002): *Migration: An Essential Component of Rural Livelihoods*, Gramin Vikas Trust, Ratlam.
- He, X. (2005): "Why Do They Not Comply With The Law: Illegality and Semi-Legality Among Rural-urban, Migrant Entrepreneurs In Beijing", *Law & Society Review*, 39, pp. 527-62.
- Huang, Y. (2003): "Renters' Housing Behaviour in Transitional Urban China", *Housing Studies*, 18, 103-126
- Huang, Y. (2004): "Housing Markets, Government Behaviours, and Housing Choice: A Case of Three Cities in China", *Environment and Planning A*, 26, pp. 45 – 68.
- India, Ministry of Labour (2002): Report of the Second National Commission on Labour. Government of India, New Delhi.

- Kundu, A. and N. Sarangi (2007): Migration, Employment Status and Poverty - An Analysis across Urban Centres, *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 27, pp. 299-306.
- Kumar, N. and S. C. Aggarwal (2003): "Patterns of Consumption and Poverty in Delhi Slums", *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 13, pp. 5294-5300.
- Liu, X. and W. Liang (1997): "Zhejiangcun: Social and Spatial Implications of Informal Urbanization on the Periphery of Beijing", *Cities*, 14(20), pp. 95-108.
- Mahadevia, D. (1998): "State Supported Segmentation of Mumbai: Policy Options in the Global Economy", *Review of Development and Change*, 3(1).
- Mahadevia, D. (2002): "Interventions in Development: A Shift towards a Model of Exclusion" in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) *Poverty and Vulnerability in a Globalising Metropolis: Ahmedabad*, Manak Publishers, Delhi, 2002, pp. 80-132.
- Mahadevia, D. and H. Narayanan (2008): "Shanghaing Mumbai: Politics of Evictions and Resistance in Slum Settlements", in Darshini Mahadevia (ed.) *Inside the Transforming Urban Asia: Processes, Policies and Public Actions*, Concept, New Delhi, pp. 549-589.
- Mosse, D., S. Gupta and V. Shah (2005): "On the Margins in the City: Adivasi Seasonal Labour Migration in Western India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, July, pp. 3025-3038.
- Narayanan, H, D. Mahadevia and R. Mathews (2008): "Demolition of Lives and Livelihoods: Mumbai", in Darshini Mahadevia (ed.) *Inside the Transforming Urban Asia: Processes, Policies and Public Actions*, Concept, New Delhi, pp. 415-450.
- National Sample Survey Organization (2004): *Housing Condition in India - Housing Stock and Constructions* (NSS 558th Round - July 2002 – December 2002), Report No. 488 (58/1.2/1), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.
- Office of the Registrar General & census Commissioner, India (2005): *Slum Population, Series -I, Census of India, 2001*, Office of the Registrar General & census Commissioner, India, New Delhi.
- Rani, U. and H.S. Shylendra (2001): Seasonal Migration and Rural-urban Interface in Semi-arid Tropics of Gujarat: Study of a Tribal Village, *Journal of Rural Development*, 20, pp. 187-217.
- Shen, J. (2002): "A Study of the Temporary Population in Chinese cities", *Habitat International*, 26(3), 363-377.

Shivaramakrishnan, K. C., A. Kundu, and B. N. Singh (2005): *Handbook of Urbanization in India: An Analysis of Trends and Processes*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi and New York.

Srivastava, Ravi and S.K. Sasikumar (2003): *An Overview of Migration In India, Its Impacts And Key Issues*, a presented at the Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia, jointly organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Bangladesh, and the Department for International Development, UK, 22–24 June, Dhaka. Source: http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0903/Dhaka_CP_2.pdf (accessed on October 20, 2009).

UN-Habitat (2006): *State of the World's Cities, 2006/7*, Earthscan, London.

United Nations Population Fund (2007): *State of World Population, 2007 - Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*, UNFPA (from the website).

Wang, F. (2003): "Housing Improvement And Distribution in Urban China: Initial Evidence From China's 2000 Census", *The China Review*, 3, pp. 121-43.

Wang, Y. P. (2004): *Urban Poverty, Housing and Social Change in China*, Routledge, New York and Abingdon, Oxon.

Wu, W. (2003): "Sources of Migrant Housing Disadvantage in Urban China", *Environment and Planning*, 36, pp. 1285-1304.

Zax, J. (1997): "Latent Demand for Urban Housing in the People's Republic of China," *Journal of Urban Economics*, 42, pp. 377-401.

Zhang, Li (2001): *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks Within China's Floating Population*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, CA.

Zhang, L., Zhao, S., & Tian, J. (2003): "Self-Help in Housing And Chengzhongcun in China's Urbanization", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27, pp. 912-37.

Zhang, X. Q. (1998): "Chinese Housing Policy 1949-1978: The Development of a Welfare System," *Planning Perspectives*, 12, pp. 433-55.

Zhu, Yu (2007): "China's Floating Population and Their Settlement Intention in The Cities: Beyond the Hukou Reform", *Habitat International*, No. 31, pp. 65-76.

List of CUE Working Papers

- WP 1** *Subversive Urban Development in India: Implications on Planning Education*, by Darshini Mahadevia and Rutul Joshi, December 2009.
- WP 2** *Approaches to the Lands for the Urban Poor, India: A workshop Report*, by Darshini Mahadevia, Rutul Joshi and Rutool Sharma, December 2009.
- WP 3** *Integrating the Urban Poor in Planning and Governance Systems, India: A Workshop Report*, by Darshini Mahadevia, Rutul Joshi and Rutool Sharma, December 2009.
- WP 4** *Land Reservations for the Urban Poor: The Case of Town Planning Schemes in Ahmedabad*, by the Rutul Joshi and Prashant Sanga, December 2009.

Centre for Urban Equity (CUE) advocates a human-centered and equitable urban development paradigm. The activities of CUE are research, policy advocacy, training and capacity building and data documentation and dissemination. The Centre is a National Resource Centre of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.



Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University
Kasturbhai Lalbhai Campus, University Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad – 380009