**The Making of the ‘Rentier’ Jat: Land, Rent and the Social Processes of Accumulation of Capital in South Delhi**

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*Tere Ghar ke Saamne* (1963) a popular Hindi film starring Dev Anand and Nutan, both children of rich, landed *seth*s[[1]](#endnote-2) who are constantly at loggerheads with each other; starts with a scene of a DDA land auction where these two rich elites try to show each other down by making a higher bid. As the film progresses, one realizes that it is the story of the creation of the posh South Delhi localities, with names like Defence Colony and Link Road being dropped in, or scenes with swathes of empty land where bungalows are being planned. Dev Anand, being a dynamic young architect is reposed with the responsibility of designing houses of both the *seth*s, ends up finding the true Nehruvian solution to the problem, that is of designing two identical houses and finally dissolving the long lasting enmity between the two men. It is a film which is enthused with hopes of a very Nehruvian kind – those of ‘Citizens’ of the Modern Nation State unmarked by caste, of a planned Delhi with wide clean roads and of residences which are legally owned.

A more specific marker to situate the film would be the arrival of the Delhi Master Plan 1962. The city was to become modern, with wide roads, big posh houses and residents who drive cars and go to clubs. The film, not simply in terms of the characters, but also the landscape, seemed to have no poor, no riff-raff apart from maybe the servants. This utopia of what Delhi was to become in the early 1960s, in the imagination of the bureaucrats or films like these, was never to come true. The pressures of population, be it because of Partition in particular and migration in general, ensured that the Plan remained a utopia and the Master Plan merely another document which needed to be circumvented, negotiated with or even flouted.

The criticism of Master Plan (hereafter the DMP) as a document of megalomania with little or no connect with reality and how it has in turn complicated Delhi’s governance issues has been in place for several years.[[2]](#endnote-3) Diya Mehra argues how the Delhi Improvement Trust in the colonial times and the Delhi Development Authority with the DMP in place in the years after independence emerged as major players in the land speculation game. In 1959, Government of India notified 34,000 acres of land for acquisition for DDA which was as Mehra puts it, a monopoly land bank.[[3]](#endnote-4) Through Lok Sabha debates, Mehra establishes the rather widespread concern at that time, that the DDA had become an actual speculator of land by earning profits.[[4]](#endnote-5) The decade of the late 1950s and early 1960s, thereby saw massive scale of acquisition of land from villages that used to be outside the cityscape at one point of time. This period of acquisition of land, and its development to create new colonies, shopping complexes and infrastructure, collectively and loosely referred to as ‘South Delhi’ marks a major shift in the life of Delhi. It is the South of Delhi which is considered synonymous with affluence and consumption. The phenomenon of Urban Village therefore, comes to exist in the shadows of the schizophrenic Master Plan, and consequently goes on to create its own dystopias. ‘Urban Village’ is a specific administrative term assigned to the villages which were earlier outside the limits of Delhi. With Partition-induced migration and internal migration to Delhi after independence, agricultural land of these villages were acquired and converted to rich, posh localities of South Delhi, while the residential areas of the villages were retained as it was under the nomenclature of ‘Urban Village’ and the villagers were not displaced. These urban villages today, exist as islands of concrete mess with oddly erected buildings meant for renting out to commercial and residential tenants. They are as much an ‘urban village’ administratively, as much they are in their socio-economic composition. The caste structure and the old organisation have continued in ways that quite make it the ‘village’ that is ‘urbanised’, which will be the subject of my paper – to see how caste and kinship networks have fed into this new form of capitalism and entrepreneurship.

**The ‘Problem’ that is the Urban Village**

I look at a set of population, whose lands were acquired to create South Delhi, mainly the Jats, who call themselves ‘*gaonwalla’[[5]](#endnote-6)* inside the city. They might be rich, but do not necessarily identify with the middle or upper class. What also makes this case specific is that I am not looking at the text book case of primitive accumulation. The older inhabitants, though dispossessed of their agricultural land are never really displaced and that they do not become a part of the reserve army of labour quite contrary to classical Marxist theory, but are nonetheless marginalised. Their residential area or *abadi* demarcated by the amorphous *lal dora*[[6]](#endnote-7) is left untouched in the utopian belief that the villages would continue to live in their idyllic states, perfect ‘harmony’.[[7]](#endnote-8) Of course, none of this was to happen. With their agricultural land taken away and later the shifting of dairies outside the city, they were left with very few sources of income. Land possessed in the urban village, which is exempt from any building bye-laws because the villages predate any such modern laws governing them today, became the mainstay of their livelihood slowly. As the steady stream of migrants from all over the country started pouring in, these urban villages became the very obvious choice of lower middle class for residential purposes. As renting out started seeming like a rather profitable venture, many villagers started to break down their older structures, to make series of cheap ‘one room sets’ in their buildings in places like Munirka and Katwaria Sarai, which were made with the sole objective of maximising the utility of space. This paper attempts to mark out the transformation of a set of people marginalised and dispossessed into a society of petty landlords.

These villages have now become the oxymoron that they have been administratively termed as. The older caste based spatial order remains primarily intact. The sense of kinship and *bhaichara*[[8]](#endnote-9) still exists in convoluted ways of its own. Older generation still sits around the tall concrete structures on their *charpai*[[9]](#endnote-10) smoking *hukka*[[10]](#endnote-11), while the younger one struts around in body hugging t-shirts and sunglasses. The steady presence of a migrant population as tenants within the village too has greatly impacted on the life of the village. The village land in Munirka, traditionally, had belonged to the Jats from the Tokas clan.[[11]](#endnote-12) They had migrated from Behraur district in Rajasthan arguably in the Eighteenth Century. Later, Jats from another clan ‘Rathi’ also came to settle in the village and were given the land on the periphery so that they could offer protection to the Tokas clan from the Muslims. Similarly, the Brahmins and Kumhars, Jatavs and Valmikis also settled in the village. Once land was acquired in the late 1950s, many of them took up jobs through sports quota, or entered the transport business. Shahpur Jat, on the other hand, despite having much less expanse of land, owned much more fertile tracts. Therefore, horticulture was more popular in these villages. The village is dominated by the Panwar gotra of the Jat community. Some of the people from Shahpur Jat cringe at the mention of Munirka because of how they benefitted from the land acquisition because of much bigger land holdings of the village, but were not really prosperous before. Bheem Singh Lambardar of Shahpur Jat tells me, ‘*woh yahan bailgaadi rakhte the, ab yahi hain jo ghar mein 8-8 gaariyan rakhte hain*’.[[12]](#endnote-13) Munirka, as many point out, received compensation in two to three rounds, which was not true for Shahpur Jat.

These villages have attracted different kinds of rent. While Munirka has mainly let out residential and smaller commercial property, Shahpur Jat is host to a dense, complicated garment industry. The dingy inner parts of the village have been rented out to the *karigars*[[13]](#endnote-14), who work on *adda*[[14]](#endnote-15) and sewing machines, while the outer, more spruced up portions of the village have been taken over by the upcoming fashion designers, startups and lifestyle stores. The case of these urban villages, be it Munirka or Shahpur Jat, is that of the logic of village communities facing a transition from an agrarian capitalist system to a system of capital organised around rent which has reorganised social and economic life around this non-productive form of capital. While for Munirka, it has meant a growing number of migrant residents and businesses, for Shahpur Jat, it has meant a mix of migrant *karigars* who not only stay but work there and also in commercial fashion boutiques.

**Landlords, Associations and Property**

The Munirka Youth Brigade, a recently formed group of young men wanting to take up Munirka’s concerns, invariably raises the issues that concern the landlords. It could be about shutting shops by 11 p.m., or fixing gates at the entry points of Munirka or addressing the ‘menace’ that the North East tenants create in the village. The idea of being owners here is rather central. Started by a young man, who clearly has political ambitions, Munirka Youth Brigade initially started off with the tenor of being an organisation of Jat landlords. The thrust on them being an association of young ‘Jat’ men was however toned down because of the presence of men from other communities, but the fact that it is an association of landlords is quite apparent. The invocation of the term ‘youth’ is also of consequence here – that the ‘youth’ are no longer the rural bumpkins but an empowered group who would protect their interests with ‘whatever it takes’. The Jat youth who started this part vigilante part social welfare group, defines Youth Brigade as an apolitical organisation that belonged to people who want to do something for the village.

The first few meetings were aplomb with references to being Jats which diminished rather rapidly by the fourth or fifth meeting. Youth Brigade Munirka, initially started off with clean up drives, had to begin with the first few campaigns in the Buddh Vihar area to come across as a non-jat, apolitical group of youth wanting to simply talk about the issues of Munirka. One of their pamphlet says

Do we ever think of our responsibility towards the place where we are born? Have you made Munirka a better place to live? Do I have any hope from any of my Village men? The answer that you will get from most of us will be ‘Do not have any hopes from me; I’m no agent of change’. Leave apart others we shy away from standing up even for our own cause. My friends, what are we afraid of? What keeps us so passive? Why are we so dead?....’ We just hold on to the old order which is familiar and comfortable ‘*rent aa raha hai ji aane do, khamaka ke pange kaun le*’.[[15]](#endnote-16) But we should remember a day will come when we will not be there and our village will also cease to exist. Can you imagine Munirka not existing? The place which gave you everything! This is our motherland! Maybe we will not be able to see it today but who would answer the questions of our coming generations? The only way is to unite and work for our present and coming generations.[[16]](#endnote-17)

In both the cases, the village, which was strictly divided on caste lines, no longer remains so. One, because of the influx of migrants who live cheek by jowl with their landlords and two, because of land grab within the village. As, it was realised that land within the village can become a lucrative source of income, the Jats who were dominant, made clear incursions within the dalit sections of the village. While Jats say it was their traditional land meant for cattle and stocking grains, the Dalits claim that because they were dominant, land grab was easy for the Jat community. This led to these villages becoming extremely cramped with tall multistoried houses mushrooming everywhere. In collective memory, the image of places like Babulal Chowk in Munirka still remains as a chowk till which point even a truck could get in. The lanes are so narrow today that construction material has to be loaded on to donkeys to take them deep into the village. Secondly, that the Dalits too, despite having much less land, have also emerged as landlords. Traditionally having owned only a residential space, they too have slowly erected multistoried buildings in its place which they rent out. Though mostly the rent in the dalit localities is much lower in terms of both rate and volume, the identity of becoming a landowner has for many been empowering. It is for this reason that a khap panchayat is not possible any longer. It cannot be caste specific form of panchayat especially as the panchayat’s role in mediating economic relations has become more important however ineffectual it may be in the end. The social role of the panchayat has clearly changed.

The tenants of the village talk of arbitrary rents, domination and harassment at the hands of the landlords. Despite the government rate of electricity being Rs. 4 per unit, the standard rates they charge is Rs. 8 to 9 per unit. They increase rents at their whims and fancies and threaten the tenants to leave their premises if the latter protest. Lalitha who runs the Kerala food joint along with Manish and Praveen who are residential tenants speak of similar harassment. Before the last MCD elections, one Keshav Tyagi floated the Rashtriya Shakti Party, which is based on the philosophy of Rajiv Dixit[[17]](#endnote-18) and largely a tenant based organisation for the MCD elections. Tyagi runs a ‘tiffin system’ (he cooks meals for his clients and delivers them to their houses for a monthly charge) also speaks of how the landlords do not treat their tenants with any respect. Thus, when he made his wife stand for elections, a lot of villagers were enraged. However, because of a face-off between Dheeraj Tokas and Barkha Shukla Singh, the Congress MLA for the past many years from the area, a meeting was called and they were convinced that they should withdraw their candidate and support Parmila Tokas. Sharad, who was with Tyagi at one point of time but is now a local activist of Aam Aadmi Party and owns two barber shops in the village, still feels having been betrayed by Parmila Tokas after the last MCD elections. He says, ‘*Ab inke andar ego hai. Paise ka hai jo bhi hai. Yeh sochte hain ki kirayedaar hain, ye kya kar lenge*.’[[18]](#endnote-19)

There are different accounts as to what happened after land acquisition. Most Jats complain that the compensation was measly and there was a decade or two of absolute lull. In contrast, the Dalits of the village say that, post-compensation, nobody remained poor in the village. While a lot of money was squandered away by people, the most popular form of investing that money became again that of investing it in land elsewhere, or into transport business. A fair number of Jat landowners own at least 2-3 buildings in the village today. These buildings however, are justified as being built on traditionally owned land for the cowsheds and preserving firewood which slowly converted into big multistories. Nalin Tokas whose family shifted to Vasant Vihar in 1989, owns a house called Ratan Apartments in the Buddh Vihar area which was completed in 2003 and was constructed entirely for renting purposes. His father owned a general store in the Munirka Enclave, DDA Market, which used to be doing very good business at one point of time. Since the shop had a PCO too, it used to remain open till three in the morning. But as PCOs became an unviable business and the number of general stores multiplied their profits dipped and they had to shut down the shop. They sold that commercial property for 20 lakhs[[19]](#endnote-20), took a bank loan of 50 lakhs and built the Ratan Apartments. They had other businesses like an *atta chakki*[[20]](#endnote-21) and a juice shop too which he mentioned quite flippantly. His grandfather used to own a huge hardware store in the Munirka market which was the biggest store there at one point of time. Later it got fragmented and now one of his cousins runs it, though the shop is much smaller now. Now he has moved away from these businesses and concentrates on the property that he owns in the village right behind the prominent Rama Market. His elder son runs a clinic on the ground floor while he has opened a ‘library’ on the first floor. These ‘libraries’ are one of the new business innovations in the village these days. Meant for students who have rented out a place to stay in the village but do not have a proper workspace, these libraries have makeshift cabins, with plywood acting as partitions between people. Apart from the bare cubicle, you are provided with drinking water as a part of the services. Nalin’s father proudly tells me this is just the start. Nalin has plans to start a business of coaching centres for UPSC aspirants.[[21]](#endnote-22) ‘Something like Vajiram and Ravi..’[[22]](#endnote-23) Saroj Lal, a retired lawyer and a strict Ambedkarite, alleged that the rich landowners like Ram Tokas and several others also occupied vacant spaces within the village and later constructed buildings. A lot of area, which lies in the stretch now referred to as Buddh Vihar, because of the presence of a Buddhist temple, in Munirka having a high concentration of Dalits in that space, has now been captured by the Tokas in this manner. Balram Tokas too talks of growing up in a house close to the main road which is now a part of the market and managed by his younger son. Around 2000, he bought a plot of land towards Pal Dairy and constructed two houses opposite to each other. He stays with his wife, elder son and his children in one of them. The other is put on rent. When I asked him whom did he buy this particular plot from, he crinkled his nose and said, ‘*Yeh jagah toh beta.. Backward classes rehte the. Bahot garibi mein the. Apna bech baach ke kahin chale gaye.’*[[23]](#endnote-24) A dalit resident of the village told me of several incidents of how many dalits have been swindled out of their property or simply bought out by the Jats. While it is true that there are internal differences within the jats, but the moment some issue with the others crop up, they all unite against the ‘Other’. He argues that no force was used by the Jats in terms of buying property from other castes in the Buddh Vihar area. Since often the Dalits would have smaller land holdings that would not be economically viable to distribute among themselves. So many sold their land and went somewhere else. He claims to not know where these people went and how they live by now.

It is of interest here that when rent starts becoming a rather viable form of income and people start breaking down their houses to rebuild new ones which are multistoried with pigeonholes ‘one-room sets’ to scores of people, they did not engage private builders in the process. It was mostly done with individual’s money. But this has not necessarily meant the community is losing control over their piece of ‘land’ as most of the land is bought and sold among people in the village. In Shahpur Jat, it seems there was a decision taken at the Panchayat to not allow the private builders into the system as that would mean a loss of control over their land. Probably this is why potentially inflammable decisions like whether or not to let out houses to people from the North-East in Munirka and not letting the commercial tenants park in the Shahpur Jat parking lot can be taken very easily. In Munirka, however the Jats have themselves worked as private builders. The Jats would approach some economically weaker people in the village and offered them that they could invest in building their houses provided they would let them use one or two floor depending on the levels of investments. This is also one way in which they have spread towards Buddh Vihar. The boom in rent, however, in both the villages was seen only in the post 1990s period. In Munirka, it was the coming of a huge number of north east migrants, who all started renting out places there; in Shahpur Jat it happened because of the saturation of the land market for designers in Hauz Khas Village which made Shahpur Jat a newer hub for new designers. Slowly, restaurants, cafes, bookshops and lifestyle stores have started to come in too, given that Shahpur Jat has become a hub for the Delhi upper middle and upper classes for customised shopping for clothes.

Nilesh Mishra, an editor with Outlook, who lived in Shahpur Jat between 2004 and 2008 tells me how his landlord wanted to sell his part of the house and move out but was reluctant to broach the issue with his father. Soon after, the Panchayat in Shahpur Jat also clamped down with a dictum that his landlord should not sell his property to outsiders. In Shahpur Jat, no such conflation between the RWA and the Panchayats has happened. In fact, there is no authoritative single RWA in the village, but several defunct ones. It is therefore the Panchayat which is the most important community body in the village. The voting still happens through a show of hands. He tells me that the Panchayat still functions as a titular body. There are 21 members in all with one or two members from the ‘Harijan’ community and one or two from the *kumhar* community and that all these meetings take place in the Purana Chaupal.

Balwant Panwar, a member of one of the several RWAs in Shahpur Jat argues that it is very difficult for any such organisation to work within the village. While the families with big important kunba[[24]](#endnote-25), do not feel the need to join in any such endeavour, the several political factions in the village feel that any development work should take place under the aegis of one or the other political party. In Shahpur Jat too, property developers could not really enter because the inflow of outsiders would mean the loss of say of the community itself. ‘*Aur Pata nahi kis caste ke honge, kis dharm ke honge*’.[[25]](#endnote-26) Though some property was sold to outsiders before the escalation of land prices, but they too happened to be mostly relatives of people already staying in the village and lived in the village like other villagers did.

Rajan, who has been running a designer wear showroom in Shahpur Jat since 2000, says how the local villagers felt that their authority was being undermined with new people coming in. The commercial tenants, mostly the designers who had started coming in hoards around early 2000, had formed an association to talk about the concern of Shahpur Jat and deal with the MCD around 2002. Rajan himself was the secretary of the association. The villagers got very defensive and agitated at this step and stopped allowing parking of the tenants for some time. So they dissolved the organisation within six months of starting it because they did not think it was worthwhile to pick up a fight with their landlords for this. He recalls, Panchayats at this time used to happen at No. 5 or the Jungi Lane.

With a final goodbye, Rajan gives me a piece of suggestion. ‘Catch hold of the people at no. 5. They will answer depending on their temper and mood. Most probably, they are going to answer not more than one or two of your questions. They are very aggressive’. In one of the initial days of my fieldwork in Shahpur Jat, I had stopped to talk to the owner of a chemist shop, owned by a Brahmin from the village. After speaking to him, when I asked who else I could speak to, Sharma laughs and says, ‘*Koi bhi aapse baat nahi karega. Yahan sab* *jaat khopdi hain. Jaat khopdi samajhti hain aap*?[[26]](#endnote-27)

 **Dada Jungi Lane: Tracing the ‘Private’ Street**

Number 5 or Jungi Lane in Shahpur Jat is an entire stretch of a lane with buildings on either side, all of which are numbered as various subdivisions of number 5. The two ends of the roads have a gate each with a semi circular board over it saying ‘*Dada Jungi Lane: Yeh aam raasta nahi hai*’.[[27]](#endnote-28) The transformation, or rather the creation of Dada Jungi House clearly is one of the most striking stories of change in the village. The courtyards have disappeared, and so have the *baithaks*.[[28]](#endnote-29) Anything, that was considered wastage of space, has been done away with the rebuilding of these houses. In the much coveted area of Shahpur Jat, Dada Jungi Lane, which claims the highest rent in the area, was at the time of my fieldwork the most ironically telling of the kind of transformation this place has been undergoing. When I was doing my fieldwork, an older structure, in Jungi Lane with Chaudhari Hetram in Hindi inscribed on the limestone door frame was being hammered down to erect fancy showrooms in its place. The coming down of probably the last remnant of the past in this particular family shows how capital instrinsically requires spatial alterations. Angela, who owns a boutique in the DDA market in Shahpur Jat, recalls that she used to come here in 1990s to buy stocks for this company that she used to work for. Suneet Varma, the famous designer used to have a factory in Shahpur Jat those days, which he used to run from one of the houses here.[[29]](#endnote-30) ‘It didn’t used to be like this’, she says. ‘*Bade door door gahr hua karte the*’.[[30]](#endnote-31) She set up her own factory/studio in the year 2000 in Jungi Lane and soon put up a rack to display her designs as she started noticing interested customers around. ‘*Chalte phirte log aa jaate the*’.[[31]](#endnote-32) Later, she opened up a proper boutique. It was still not a garment hub by that time. She started with paying 10,000 as rent for her place in the year 2000. In five years’ time, that rose to 25,000. She tells me that the easiest way in which they doubled their income was by breaking down their commercial property and splitting them into two which meant some amount of investment with much higher returns.

 Chaudhari Hetram was fondly referred to in the village at one point of time as Jungi because he used to be a known wrestler in the area. His grandsons are the owners of the entire stretch now. Jungi Lane commands at least twice the amount of rent as any other showroom in Shahpur Jat. The reason for this is of course the sheer visibility of Jungi lane. The landlords of the Jungi Lane also maintain a strict control of who can access this particular lane. Angela tells me that the gate and board are relatively new, but the landlords, she says, have been roughing up ‘unwanted’ characters for quite some time. Sheetal, who is also a fashion designer working out of Jungi Lane, says that though she is paying much higher rent here, she does not mind it because she ‘feels safe’ here. Despite having to work till very late, and being the only woman amongst several male karigars, she has never felt unsafe or threatened because of the kind of control the landlords have.

The reason why many say that the Jungi sons have been able to develop their own property this way is because of the strongly knit Kunba they have. Many a times, because of being numerically and economically strong, they have been able to mobilise decisions in their favour. Strong Kunbas often act like independent entities which do not need to depend on other bodies or people. It is said, that in the early 2000s, the Panchayat meetings used to take place in Jungi House no. 5. Manish, while recollecting the earlier days of forming an association also remarked that the Panchayat meetings used to take place at No.5.

**Properties of Prejudice**

 The renting business in Munirka, seems to have picked up momentum around early 1980s, most probably around the time of the Asiad. The first tenants to have arrived were the labourers from Rajasthan and Uttarakhand mainly. The accommodation was also not like flats. As a respondent put it, ‘*labour-class type ghar hi the’.*[[32]](#endnote-33) As offices around R.K Puram and markets started opening up, small time clerks and young men working in these shops started renting these houses. With these area becoming more developed, the socio-economic profile of people wanting to rent houses also changed, with which changed the nature of construction. Around the mid 1990s, many of the houses were pulled down and new houses made with scores of ‘one-room sets’. Many recall this period as the time when the people from the North-east – mostly Manipuris – started coming to Munirka to rent apartments in hoards. Ramesh, a villager, who has a small watch and mobile phone repairing shop, laughs and says, ‘*Pehle toh gaonwaalon ko laga ki gaon mein foreigners aa gaye hain. Unka toh kuchh alag hi chalta hai. Aapko rent pe dene se aap bargaining karoge. Who yeh sab nahi karte’.*[[33]](#endnote-34) The feverish competition for land also seems to have begun around this time. The fact that Chaudhary Mahendra Singh decided to bring out a village directory around the year 1999 was perhaps his effort to make sense of the village land ownership pattern after the late 1980s-early 1990s ‘land rush’ in that area. Rent also started escalating around the same period. Hareram, who helped to organise the house numbers started by the then village Pradhan Mahendra Singh Tokas, remarks how the system of house numbers allocated by the government was rendered completely useless as people who built their houses later on, randomly allocated numbers to their units themselves. The only way of finding somebody’s address is to search for the name of the landlord, his father’s name and caste. The lanes and bylanes, seem to create an internal coherence, a life-world that is not accessible to outsiders. It seems to have come to acquire a distinct character of its own, with its matchbox structures, ‘villagers’ who are millionaires and institutions which run with their own peculiar sets of rules and regulations.

 A ‘one room set’ started being rented out for Rs. 3000-3500 in the early 2000s. Today, more than 50 per cent of the tenants in the village are from the north east, mostly from places like Manipur and Nagaland.[[34]](#endnote-35) There have been several panchayats held in order to decide on the issue of the tenants from North East and Africa. There was a move to agree on not renting out property to them within the panchayats. Some villages like Katwaria Sarai already have such an understanding among themselves. It could not work out here as many have incurred heavy loans in the process of building houses and that tenants from the North East often do not negotiate too much with rents, which is why it is easier to charge slightly higher rents from them.

But the animosity towards the North East tenants for having a different culture, whereby the women are considered of being of dubitable moral standards, their food considered putrid has only resulted in a form of spatial segregation which is ordered complicatedly in the lack of clear lines and spaces of inhabitation. The constant allegation against the tenants of the north east is that they are destroying the moral fabric of the village because of the way men and women mix freely, the way they dress, the amount of drinking they do on streets. The beginning of this year, saw several cases of such racially charged incidents in some of the urban villages. Out of these incidents, the most talked about was the Somnath Bharati raid which was in contravention of the legal process into the house of some Ugandan women in Khirki Village on the charge that they had been running a prostitution racket. What ensued was a high-strung drama with the then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal holding a Dharna outside Rail Bhawan. Quickly followed by this was the rape of a minor Manipuri girl in Munirka village by a landlord’s son which hit the news and automatically escalated the animosity already present between the two communities.[[35]](#endnote-36) After a few days of the rape, the village RWA called a Panchayat to discuss the ‘north east problem’. This caused an alarm in the North East community, which hit the headlines as how the ‘Khap panchayat’ in the village had decided to throw out all the north east tenants.[[36]](#endnote-37) Some newspapers also reported that they had accepted to have had a meeting where the decision was taken that the ones who stayed out till late should be evicted.[[37]](#endnote-38) The villagers went on a defense and argued that the meeting was not a Panchayat meeting but a regular RWA meeting. They agreed that the north east issue was discussed but it was merely decided that CCTV cameras will be installed everywhere to catch the ‘real culprits’ and that no discussion on evicting them ever happened. The tenants or ‘outsiders’ from the North East have been branded as trouble makers because of their drunken behavior and for staying out till late. When I mentioned to the RWA pradhan that drinking has been an issue within the Jat communities as well for years; Tokas agreed and says ‘*par hum apne ghar mein, andar baith kar peete hain*’.[[38]](#endnote-39) They argued that being from the village, they usually refer to any community meeting as Panchayat and that Khap Panchayats are caste specific panchayats and cannot be a panchayat of the entire village. It required police intervention to bring the village representatives and people from the north east to the table and a reassurance form the villagers that they would not be evicted from their houses. As some in conversation with me did admit that the meeting did discuss the eviction of the north east community from the village but it was supposed to be a slow process as any sudden decision would immediately mean a slew of cases against them on discrimination in the SC/ST Commission. The RWA had put in 90,000 Rupees for the CCTV funds while Dheeraj Tokas agreed to put in 11,000 Rupees as donation for the same. Quite predictably though, the incident of rape that had taken place less than a week back did not come up in any of the discussions or was simply avoided when I tried to bring it up.

This controversy brought out some interesting insights into the life of these institutions like the RWA. The association was made around 30 years before by Mahendra Singh Tokas, the Pradhan. A philanthropist, he used to feed the poor and animals and set up health camps for the poor and the old regularly as the RWA representative. He had also started a cow protection trust named after his father Desh Ram and got it registered. His close aide, Hareram, who had undertaken many such works with Mahendra Singh before he passed away in 2012. Sharma tells me that Mahendra Singh used to spend at least 2.25 to 2.5 lakhs every month on such social work. When asked about the source of such money, he mentioned that it used to come from rent, interest through money lending and land speculation. He added that he was also a man who did not believe in accumulating money for his coming generations. He was the one responsible for instituting the RWA and registering it.

The RWA therefore, is almost like a modern reincarnation of the older panchayat. Instituted by the then pradhan, it was probably an attempt to gain legitimacy of the state as a recognised body. Voting is only open to all landowning men from all castes. Earlier, voting used to happen through a show of hands, but after a voting controversy in the year 2002, the RWA has resorted to a more formal, secret ballot form of voting. The RWA chairperson is referred to as the Pradhan and the meetings as panchayat. The panchayat therefore, has ended up in quite the flux that urban villages themselves are caught in. Munirka RWA is therefore a quasi modern institution which on one hand is hinged on a semi-legal institution of that of RWA to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the state, and on the other hand is still deeply rooted in older, pre-modern institutional ways of working to hold on to their ‘community’ and ‘traditions’.

So, with regards to this controversy where then villagers argued that it was no Khap Panchayat, they were in a way not entirely false. But the interesting thing about these RWA/ Panchayat is that it can flip to either side as and when required. In the booklet that Mahendra Singh Tokas himself got published in the year 1999, it had a 20 point programme charted out for the RWA. One such point states, ‘*makaan banate samay yadi kisi diwaar par ya kisi bhi tarah ka koi anya vivaad ho toh koshish karein ki seedhe police mein na jaakar association ke pradhan ki sahmati se apas mein mil baithkar suljhane ki koshish ki jaaye aur usme sachhai ka saath de va vivaad ko beech mein adhoora na chhodkar nishpaksh bhaav se faisla karaane ke sahyog Karein jisse kisi nirdosh vyakti ko bevajah pareshani na uthani pade*.’[[39]](#endnote-40) Another such point suggests that in the face of poverty, if somebody is unable to get his daughter married off, then association will help them arrange such weddings. It also organises communal festivals like holi, diwali and gordhan pooja in the village. The members of the committee constantly emphasised on the role of the ‘buzurg’ in the village. These functions or responsibilities of the Munirka RWA have clearly nothing to do with the technical responsibilities of the RWA as suggested under the guidelines of the State.

 Dinanath from the Jatav community in the village, clearly describes the RWA as a caste institution which looks after the interests of the Jats of the village. In the name of wanting to resolve issues internally, they maintain the dominance of the Jats by threatening and dominating over the Dalits and other weaker sections. ‘*Bas Dadagiri ke liye bana rakhi hai*’, he says.[[40]](#endnote-41) He argues how the RWA might not ostensibly come across as a Jat organisation, since there are members of the other communities as well. But the function of the village RWA is to squarely keep political and social privileges of the Jats of the village intact.

However, how clean has been this shift from the Panchayat to the RWA is not very clear. It is probably because of this reason, that the distinctions are not very clear in people’s imagination. Virbhan Tokas, an 80 year old patriarch of this one particular family, spoke of the Panchayat going down and the association taking its place almost in one breath. On pressing him further, he remarked that no form of panchayat that exists today, however on other moments, he would very easily conflate the Association and the Panchayat. How much has the RWA been able to replicate the powers of the Panchayat too is very unclear. It does not command the power that Panchayats could at one point of time even if it wanted to. Social boycott, in terms of ‘*hukka pani*’( stopping of sharing hukka or drinking water from someone’s house) does not work any longer as the kind of dependence within which such social boycott used to function, does not exist. There have been inter-caste marriages amongst many other things, but the current RWA either cannot take these issues up or even if it does, it is not very effective in terms of stopping such things from happening. However, there are other moments when the RWA does come across as a major force. The election of the RWA is no small affair in the village. As voting takes place in the village *Baraat Ghar*[[41]](#endnote-42), older men is their safas, dhotis and sometimes walking sticks, stroll about the place, chatting to people. The RWA elections hold considerable social importance even today.The panchayats have a dubious status under law. Their dictums cannot be understood as final verdict as defiance is much easier in an urban context. Panchayats too therefore have this ephemeral yet strong presence in these villages. Many argue that Panchayats have remained as social institutions which keep alive the kinship relationships across villages. Devendra Sehrawat laughs and says ‘*Shadiyon mein laddoo khaane jaate hain*.’[[42]](#endnote-43) However, like we see in the previous sections before, in moments of crisis the Panchayat emerges as strong institutions and clamp down with indictments of its own and then dissolve back into being spineless social institutions. Panchayats are gravely important not simply the social lives of these villages but also their economic lives.

**Conclusion**

The two urban villages, despite similarities, have quite a few major differences between them which mostly stems from how different forms of capital have made their incursions into these two villages. While both are rent capital, they are still different in nature because in the case of Munirka, it comes as mostly residential form of rent capital while in Shahpur Jat, it is mostly the commercial form which makes its inroads. Even the residential/manufacturing units which dominate the inner lanes of Shahpur Jat, are intrinsically linked with the high end commercial garment industry. Probably, this is why, one does not see the same kind of animosity towards the predominantly muslim karigars who live in these inside lanes of Shahpur Jat. Their presence in the public life of Shahpur Jat is also minimal because of their long working hours which usually lasts up to 12-14 hours.[[43]](#endnote-44) This is again not to imply that the presence of such a high number of Muslims does not draw any disdain from the Jat landlords. One of them tells me, ‘you should come here on a Friday, to see how many Muslims really live in this village.’

The disdain, however is not one sided all the time. Rajan, as he was telling me about the role of MCD in encouraging entrepreneurship says, ‘Minoo Panwar, the current councillor from BJP wanted to collaborate with the designers recently to organise a village fair. Rajan adds, ‘But you know their aesthetic sense. It was a *gaon wala mela*[[44]](#endnote-45) she wanted while the designers wanted a classy affair. It did not work out in the long run’. Angela also, with this disdain in her voice and expression tells me ‘They (jats) are very greedy. Some of them got educated, *par* *inme kabhi class nahi aayegi*’[[45]](#endnote-46). ‘Class’ here is not simply a socio-economic category, it is also a possession. Its amorphous possession or lack of it is determined by what an individual is marked with. Harish, who owns a restaurant here, complains about brawls breaking out on the street, people peeping and staring at his customers from the balconies, which drive his customers away. ‘The people here are uncouth’, he says.

While the trouble on one hand is that of romanticising the past, on the other, the dangers are that of treating the man as purely *homo economicus*; whereby the aspect of being a human is totally dominated by the rationale of the market; of calculations of utility by an autonomous, atomised individual. Mark Granovetter points out that both the ends of the spectrum: imagining a sharp transformation from the premodern to the modern which might not necessarily be true.[[46]](#endnote-47) Granovetter uses two aspects here – trust and malfeasance which often play the most crucial roles in terms of economic transactions. He continues to argue that social relations are mainly responsible for the production of trust in economic life and the concept of embeddedness understands ‘networks of social relations which penetrate irregularly and in differing degrees in different sectors of economic life, thus allowing for what we already know: distrust, opportunism and disorder are by no means absent.’[[47]](#endnote-48) Vinay Gidwani avoids the trap of economism through the aspect of overdetermination which takes into account the fusion of multiple logics.[[48]](#endnote-49) He also argues that behavior in the market is often not limited to economic goals but also at sociability, approval, status and power.[[49]](#endnote-50) The transitions are in a state of inchoate, irregular, sometimes even temporary set of elements and factors working in ways which are vague and momentary at best. I would also not want to see these communities as fixed, ahistorical entities, but rather understand their formations and transformations as deeply modern and as inherently linked to the market.

The coming of hard money with the compensation pouring in allows a regime of property to emerge that was unprecedented. Land gets transformed into a commodity that was now exposed to the vagaries of the free market and, in this particular case, there was a presence of high amounts of liquid money waiting to get channelised in various directions. Property in this process of transformation from embeddedness, becomes implicated in wider power relations, which again in turn, are not quite separated from the social relations. Nicholas Blomley points out how property relations mark the constitution of social life, of selves and bodies too.[[50]](#endnote-51) The identity of the Jats in these villages is that of being the landowners. Many tenants in the Munirka Village complain ‘*woh humein kuchh nahi samajhte.*’[[51]](#endnote-52) They talk of how the landowners treat them as inferior, and often, at their mercy. The identity of the jats here is intrinsically bound with them being landowners.

It is also probably important to understand how specifically violence in the case of Munirka at least, is always kept at the level of liminality, of being palpable, at least towards the north east tenants. There are sporadic cases of violence, ending up in street brawls or scuffles, but violence never takes place having all stops pulled out. But what Shahpur Jat on the other hand lacks unlike Munirka, is any sense of a palpable tension between the different sections of people inhabiting together. The villagers here seem to have reconciled to the presence of men and women from the fashion industry, dressed in ways that are absolutely alien to the cultures of the village. Yet, Shahpur Jat does not see this kind of animosity that the north east community in Munirka experiences. In fact, the relationship between the tenants and the landlords is quite the opposite. Most landlords here claim, ‘I am not like others here, you see. I will help people in whichever way possible. These claims are often corroborated by people like Harish. Harish tells me, ‘I am constantly told how we have the best landlord. He does everything that is in his hand, to help us out.’ Balwant Panwar, one of the few men who claim to be ‘self made’ in the village explains to me why the older generation does not believe in spending like the regular Delhi middle class. ‘*Who kya hai na, ki paisa yahan naya hai. Hum jahan khade hain, yahan unsafety rehta hai. Kal agar makaan gir gaya toh? Strength toh finance ka hi hai main. Paisa udate nahi hain hum, par kisi maksad mein laga dete hain.*’[[52]](#endnote-53) Also the fact that these entrepreneurs running these fashion outlets are renting out only for commercial and not residential purposes helps. However, in maintaining an order of dominance by the landlords and the presence of palpable fear can also be one of the ways in which accumulation is perpetuated. A certain level of dominance, which can be achieved over a community by deploying tactics of racism, does not threaten their source of income, but perhaps only goes on to create scope for more extraction. This is not to imply that the feelings of animosity, hatred, violence is only make-belief and being deployed for instrumentalist purposes by the Jats. The already existing feelings of racism and hierarchy mutually reinforce the process of accumulation, by threatening or arm-twisting their tenants. The fear of violence, caste domination and the process of accumulation in cases like this are therefore, not really adversely related.

In the wake of the controversy on the ‘khap panchayat’ in Munirka on the north east issue, a response was issued by one of the students from Munirka, who runs Munirka Youth Brigade, to the activism of left organisations in Jawaharlal Nehru University campus on the issue:

Hum woh kisaan hai, jinhone Dilli ki pragati ke liye sabse pehle apni bhoomi di. Hum who log hain jinhone sadiyon is pathrili Aravalli ke kathor vaksh ko cheer kar usme pranaad kiya hai. Humne aapko bhoomi di apne swapno ko poora karne ke liye. Humne aapko aashray diya. Parantu aaj hamare hi shanaas par prashn chinh lagaya jaa raha hai. Hum balata thopi hui vikaas ke parinaamswaroop ardh nagariya tatha ardha grameen jaat hain….vikaas ke naam par, nagarikaran ke naam par, swatantrata ke baad jo das tarah ki sanskriti hum par thopi gayi uski baat kabhi nahi karte aap Comrade! Kis tarah ka samajikaran hamare badon ko mila, uski baat nahi karte aap. Dilli ke Jaat dilli ko sabhi ki rajdhani kehta raha, lekin Jaaton ka in sabhi mein kahin bhi saanjha nahi dikha.[[53]](#endnote-54)

Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh argue through their work on Cameroon as to how the ‘Politics of Belongingness’ which goes on to impact on the way contemporary politics is being shaped.[[54]](#endnote-55) The questions of autochthony and its assertions too are not really remnants of the premodern past but rather quite a modern construction which only got its prominence post 1980s.[[55]](#endnote-56) They explain how this issue of autochthony is a direct corollary to the historical movement of the labour market which does not simply operate through not simply freeing up labour but also through compartmentalisation and containment.[[56]](#endnote-57) They explain how freeing up of labour through coercion in the French part of Cameroon was transformed into voluntary labour through the involvement of customary chiefs in the British part of colony.

In the case of the urban villages, the idea is somewhat similar. These institutions which also take the question of autochthony, the identity of the *gaonwalla* seriously, and build the institutions of RWA/Panchayats straddle both modern forms of associations and older questions of autochthony and belongingness which makes possible a form of violence which is also institutional. The presence of north eastern and Africans living cheek by jowl with the autochthonous community might be a matter of ‘*majboori*’ or compulsion as many like to define it, but at the heart of why migrants are often seen as either eroders of culture seems to be linked intrinsically to the idea of accumulation of capital. The palpability of violence in these residential quarters which are not merely residential but sources of earnings and livelihood for money, serves the instrumental purpose of maintaining a certain domination which is institutional, caste and class based and goes on to strengthen the process of capital accumulation. It becomes easier to maintain a system of arbitrary rents and threats of vacating the premises in the absence of a contract. Therefore, the story of capital, in its social life, meanders through institutions like caste, domination and exploitation and exercised through fear, violence and claims of autochthony. In case of the Shahpur Jats, for a section for whom big capital is new, probably also realise how fickle is the nature of money. Flight of capital is therefore not something that is entirely impossible given the rate of gentrification of the city. This does not happen with residential urban villages, the scope of cheap, residential localities are much more constricted and limited in South Delhi, unlike the scope of investments for commercial capital. Therefore, in maintaining the exclusivity of Jungi lane and the high rents that it claims, it becomes imperative to keep it sanitised and off the reach of the ‘unwanted’ who can neither invest nor consume. Capital, especially of the commercial nature, can be volatile, given the speed at which the city spaces are becoming gentrified. As they realise this, they probably feel the need to be pliant towards this kind of commerce.

However, I would also refrain from arguing that the questions of caste solidarity, claims of autochthony and racism are merely being exercised for instrumental purposes. What is important here is to understand how questions of autochthony and belongingness which might be pre-market in their origin, work itself with the logic of capital. The fear of violence, which exists at the level of liminality, rarely flares into a full-blown confrontation. The interest of creating surplus works as much through caste interests, racism and similar aspects as much as it does through the rational choice making abilities of the homo oeconomicus. The curious ways in which capital and community (kinship, caste and the village) reinforce each other exist in the face of land becoming a commodity. The task, however, that remains at hand is to see how rent feeds into finance capital, into investments in land and the black economy of chit funds, to see how this mere accumulation of wealth stops mostly at its accumulation and does not get invested into creating cultural capital of any kind and how fear and violence become the primary nodes around which this circulation is kept alive.

David Harvey, taking from Marx’s conception of rent, attempts at theorising the system of house rents through what he calls the ‘class monopoly rent’.[[57]](#endnote-58) He looks at how urbanisation creates relatively permanent, man-made resource systems which contributes to the high value of land. He talks of a class of professional landlord managers and speculator-developers. Here, he argues that the land passes to speculator developer through landlords. [[58]](#endnote-59) Harvey takes into account how race and ethnicity play a role in this kind of spatial organisation of the city as it helps to maintain exclusive, island like structures. I look at a scenario, where these two separate classes of speculator-developer and landlords collapse into one figure and how social basis of organising a space is constantly being reformulated in its own socially coded ways. This explains how questions of caste, race and kinship manage and control a housing market whereby these institutions themselves emerge as rent seeking in nature.

1. ‘Seth’ is a colloquial Hindi reference to rich men, mostly associated with business, which has lost its currency in contemporary times. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Here, I am referring to the works of David A. Ghertner, ‘Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi’ in Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong (eds.), *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, Blackwell Publishing, 2011, Pp.279-306; Amita Baviskar, ‘Between Violence and Desire: Space, Power, and Identity in the Making of Metropolitan Delhi’, *International Social Science Journal*,Vol. 55(175), March 2003, Pp.89-98; A. Sharan, ‘In the City, Out of Place: Environment and Modernity, 1860s -1960s’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.41(47) November 25, 2006, Pp.4905-4911; Leon Morenas, *Planning the City of Djinns: Exorcising the Ghosts in Delhi’s Postcolonial Development Machine*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, submitted to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, April 2010; Sunalini Kumar, *Planning, Politics and Protest: A Study of Urban Development in the National Capital Region*, Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, 2013 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Diya Mehra, “Planning Delhi ca. 1936-1959”, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 36(3), 2013, p. 371 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Villager [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. The land earmarked for village *abadi* and the agricultural land of the village were duly demarcated in the land settlement of 1908-09 and the *abadi* site was circumscribed in the village map in red ink; therefore the name Lal Dora. It still is in use with Lal Dora as the village residential land and the extended Lal Dora land which was left outside the village as vacant land but has now seen massive mushrooming of buildings. The borders between *lal dora* and extended *lal dora* are extremely amorphous and therefore a source of confusion. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. Delhi Development Authority, ‘Work Studies Relating to the Preparation of Master Plan for Delhi’, Volume III, p.769. It remains a question however, if one should dismiss it as a matter purely of a Utopia gone wrong; or as a matter of intention of the Plan itself, which would want to preserve such pockets in the middle of the city in order to retain spaces for the poor migrants. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Brotherhood [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. String Cot [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. A traditional contraption meant for smoking [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. The story of this migration is extremely sketchy. Munirka was the fiefdom of a noble called Munir Khan which some say had to be given to the Ruddh Singh Tokas, as a form of repayment of debt; while some others argue that the muslims were driven away by the Jats. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. ‘They used to keep their bullock carts with us at one point of time. Now they keep 8-8 cars’. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Artisans [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. Frames meant for embroidering. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. Let the rent keep coming in. Why should I get bothered for no reason? [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. Youth Brigade, Munirka Pamphlet dated 13th October 2013 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Rajiv Dixit(1967-2010) believed in the idea of an economy based on swadeshi and that swadeshi is the only way for an economy that is strong and self reliant. His idea of swadeshi was however not simply limited to economy but also extended to education, medicine and judiciary. See <http://rajivdixit.net/>. Evidently very right wing in many of his ideas, he is also known for having made some preposterously fantastic comments about the Nehru-Gandhi family. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. ‘Now they are egoistic. It can be about money or anything. They think these people are merely tenants, what can they do’. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. Rupees one lakh is equal to one hundred thousand Rupees. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. Flour mill [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. Union Public Service Commission is a Central Government body which recruits civil servants in India. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. Vajiram and Ravi is a popular UPSC Coaching Institute in Delhi [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. ‘This place… the backward classes used to stay here. They were very poor. They sold off their property and went somewhere else’. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
24. Kunba is a unit of kinship ties that spans mostly upto three generations. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
25. ‘And you don’t know what caste they would belong to and what religion they would belong to’ [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
26. Nobody will talk to you. Here, everybody is ‘jaat headed’. Do you understand jaat headed?’ By the term jaat headed, he was trying to mean something like being ‘pig headed’. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
27. ‘Dada Jungi Lane: This is not a thoroughfare.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
28. A covered courtyard kind of a place in the house, where the men would traditionally meet, chat and smoke hukka. Baithaks have traditionally been a marker of social and economic capital as only a certain rich Jat farmers could have baithaks in their houses. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
29. Many famous designers like Suneet Varma and Manish Arora used to have huge factories in Shahpur Jat ehrn they started their careers. As rent started escalating, these bigger factories have now moved to Noida. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
30. ‘ The houses used to be far apart from each other’ [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
31. ‘ People used to come in while casually wandering around’ [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
32. ‘The houses were very labour-class like.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
33. ‘Initially the villagers thought that foreigners had come to stay in the village. Their deal is entirely different. If you are taking something on rent, you will bargain. They don’t do all that.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
34. Jayashree Nandi and Somreet Bhattacharya, ‘Anti-North East Fiat in Munirka, Cops Step In’, *The Times of India*, February 18, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
35. The cases of harassment and molestation of women from the North East are numerous, and not necessarily always from the side of the landlords. <http://www.indlaw.com/guest/DisplayNews.aspx?2C1C0890-3787-45D6-A702-BA7A73F41BEA> [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
36. Jayashree Nandi and Somreet Bhattacharya, ‘Anti-North East Fiat in Munirka, Cops Step In’, *The Times of India*, February 18, 2014. Binalakshmi Neparam, one of the major activists was quoted saying ‘The first panchayat meeting took place on 9th February after the 14 year-old from Manipur was raped. Thanks to media pressure, the rapist was caught. That was a first. At the first meeting, some of the people said that the people from northeast are ‘*gandey log’* (dirty people). Then another meeting was held on Sunday, where they said they wanted to rid of all ‘*gandey log’*. This is similar to the Khirki incident, and they have said that Northeast girls are loose and of bad character’. Shruti Dhapola, Delhi: Munirka’s Campaign against Gandey Log of North East’, *Firstpost*, February 19, 2014. <http://www.firstpost.com/india/delhi-munirkas-campaign-against-gandey-log-of-northeast-1396833.html?utm_source=ref_article> [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
37. Jayashree Nandi and Somreet Bhattacharya, ‘Anti-North East Fiat in Munirka, Cops Step In’, *The Times of India*, February 18, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
38. ‘But we drink inside our homes’ [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
39. Munirka, Document brought out by Chaudhary Mahendra Singh, pp. 8-9 ‘While making a house, if there is some feud over a wall, or any other disagreement, then instead of going to the police, try approaching the association’s pradhan and with his assent try to resolve the matter within. Side with truth and do not leave the discussion midway. Assist in sorting the matter in a disinterested manner so that no innocent person has to go through undue harassment.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
40. ‘That is only a way of purporting their bullying.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
41. Community Hall [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
42. ‘They go to eat sweets at weddings’. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
43. One Karigar tells me how on Sundays, Shahpur Jat is literally empty. That is one day the karigars get an off. The rest of the week they work on their addas from morning to almost late in the night. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
44. ‘Village like fair’ [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
45. ‘They will never have Class’ [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
46. Mark Granovetter, ‘Economic Action and Social Structure: the Problem of Embeddedness’, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91(3), Nov. 1985, p. 482) (Hereafter, Granovetter) [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
47. Ibid. p. 491 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
48. Vinay Gidwani, *Capital Interrupted: Agrarian Development and Politics of Work in India*, University of Minnesota Press (Minneapolis and London) p.185 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
49. Granovetter, p. 506 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
50. Nicholas Blomley, ‘Landscapes of Property’, *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 32(3), 1998, p.573 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
51. ‘They dont think of us as anything’ [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
52. ‘You know what, money is new here. Where we are standing, it is unsafe. What happens if the house falls down tomorrow? The main strength is that of finance. We don’t believe in being spendthrift. We instead like to invest it somewhere’. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
53. ‘We are those farmers, who were the first to give their lands for Delhi’s development. We are the people who for ages have toiled on the hard, rocky soil of the Aravalli and infused life in it. We gave you land so that you could fulfil your dreams. We gave you shelter. But today there is a question mark on our existence. Because of development being thrust on us, we are the semi-urban, semi-rural jats. In the name of development, urbanisation, ten different kinds of cultures have been thrust on us after independence. Why don’t you talk about that comrade? You don’t talk about the kind of socialisation our elders received. The Jats of Delhi have recognised the city as everybody’s capital, but it seems that the Jats themselves have had no participation in the city.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
54. Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, ‘Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging’ In Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (eds.) *Millenial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, Duke University Press, (Durham and London) 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
55. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
56. Ibid. p.180 [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
57. David Harvey, p.241 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
58. Ibid, p.243 [↑](#endnote-ref-59)