

# How do we study urban markets spatially?

Anant Maringanti



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**Anant Maringanti**

**Case No 1-0001**

This Case Brief contains:

**Introduction**

The IIHS Case Method

**Case Note**

Summary and the pedagogical imagination of the case

**Teaching Note**

Ways of teaching this case

**Detailed Table of Contents**

The full breadth of material available in the full case,  
including exhibits and archival materials

**Access Information**

Details on how to access the full case

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# Reframing Urban Inclusion

The opening set of cases produced by IIHS represents a focus central to our institutional mission, its teaching and its practice: urban inclusion. Through an on-going collaborative, multi-year research project titled 'Reframing Urban Inclusion', the 30 cases available on the website, [www.cases.iihs.co.in](http://www.cases.iihs.co.in) include original teaching and learning cases commissioned and produced at IIHS through support from the Ford Foundation.

The cases were curated to address a particular set of challenges. The first is pedagogical. IIHS' stated aim is to be part of a global moment to re-think urban theory and practice from India, South Asia and the Global South. These cases are a key curricular and pedagogical intervention within that effort. Distributed through open access modes to encourage widespread, public and diverse forms of use, the cases seek to give scholars and educators in the Global South a new canon to teach with, that begins from and is responsive to place.

The second is more outward facing. India is at a critical moment in its urbanisation. The urban agenda has begun to emerge strongly on the national political register, and questions of how to shape policy agendas from housing to employment, planning to service delivery, are more pressing than ever before. It is our hope that these cases will therefore equally be used by and inform an evidence-based, empirically rich, conceptually grounded and reflexive practice and interface with policy.

Since 2013, the project has brought together leading academics and practitioners from different disciplines to identify and contextualise social and economic realities of Indian cities through the case method. We hope that they will provide new evidence of the possible opportunities and mechanisms for urban integration as well as build a conceptual and empirical foundation for politically, socially, and economically inclusive cities.

The project has three thematic foci:

1. Conceptualising Pro-Poor Planning

Urban planning processes determine access to basic resources such as land, shelter and housing, livelihoods, mobility, and security. Inclusive urban planning is aimed at serving all the citizens of the city, reducing vulnerability and addressing exclusion from access to these basic resources.

Cases in this theme (1) untangle the current state of urban planning and its effects on vulnerability and exclusion, (2) explore how meaningful participation can be more effective in pro-poor planning, and (3) highlight opportunities for, and instances of successful integration across agencies and organisations involved in urban planning.



## 2. Re-visiting Settlement Upgrading

This theme seeks to expand and re-articulate debates on slums in India. The 'slum' is a form of an urban settlement that is situated at the intersection of land markets, new urban political economies, the efficacy of the state as a provider of housing to the poor, differentiated state-citizen relations, splintered urban infrastructure, questions of law, legality and planning, as well as conceptions of urban citizenship.

Cases in this theme (1) explore the processes of settlement and resettlement, paying attention to the market and political forces that shape the outcomes, (2) broaden the scope of settlement transformation from spatial upgradation to impacts on other sites of transformation such as livelihoods and employment, and (3) explore alternative imaginations of 'property rights' and tenure regimes.

## 3. Re-drawing the Picture: Metrics of Urban Inclusion

The dynamics of urban poverty and vulnerability are poorly understood. We know that the security of tenure, spatial coherence of urban infrastructure and service delivery, transit distances between livelihoods and living spaces, socio- cultural identities and social networks play important roles in inclusive cities. However, we have limited statistical data and information on the locational and distribution patterns of urban India.

Cases in this theme (1) examine the use of data in urban decision making and identify potential sites for intervention, (2) provide a more contextual and holistic analysis of urban dynamics, moving beyond sector-wise administrative data collection methods, and (3) emphasise improvements in information and learning from experience for local decision making.

# IIHS Case Method

The IIHS case is a work-in-progress that represents experiments in different forms of creating interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral cases, as well as a diversity of pedagogical environments to learn and teach with these cases. The opening set of cases is, thus, also in a sense, an experiment in form and teaching modes. Given this, we do not claim a singular 'IIHS Case Method' or any one form or definition of a case. Indeed, one of the explicit aims of case development at IIHS is to challenge conventional ideas of what case-based learning is.

How then does a user know how to use cases? Pedagogical transactions will differ from case to case and indeed multiple options will be open within each case. Therefore, in order to aid users, all IIHS cases come with a set of consistent elements that help users navigate through the diversity of form and content. These are:

- **Preface:** Every case begins with an introduction by the case writer that describes their own approach to the case. How did the case writer frame the case? Why did they choose to structure it as they have? What were their intentions in writing the case?
- **Teaching Note:** The second shared case element is the Teaching Note. Here, the case writer lays out their imagination of how they would teach with the case in its current form. They suggest learning outcomes, pedagogical modes, learning environments and assessment frames. True to the diversity of the cases, each of these is particular to the case.
- **The Main Case:** This is the main body of the case—its core empirics, arguments, discourse and data. Across the cases, these come in different forms: PowerPoint presentations, audio-visual material, web interfaces, written text, and data visualisations.
- **Pedagogical Possibilities:** The next element lays out the case writer's suggestions on other ways in which the case could be taught, including in other disciplines or learning environments. These are not as detailed as the Teaching Note but offer a set of possibilities to the user to imagine other uses of the case than those laid out.
- **Case Archive:** The final element of the case is a library of documents—reports to interview transcripts, unedited footage to visual photo libraries—that act as an archive for the case. This repository allows users to also access a host of background and additional information necessary to navigate the larger contexts in which the case is situated.

Each IIHS case—regardless of the diversity of its form—comes structured with these elements. It is our hope that this recognisable framework will enable users to navigate easily across cases with very diverse elements and forms.

# Case Note

This case is a study of the spatial and economic transformation of Bholakpur in Hyderabad, and its emergence as a thriving scrap market. Using participatory mapping, the case identifies the market's trade areas, its key institutions, and the flows of waste and recycled material. This has allowed alternative narratives to emerge, providing rich insights about how resources come together, about everyday negotiations and governance, and also about how communities build critical spatial imaginations. A series of annotated maps, a 'Right to the City' manifesto, and a participatory mapping playbook can help learners map and engage with emerging urban geographies.

The idea is to unpack the place that is Bholakpur using three inter-connected lenses—land, labour and waste. The exercise will be archaeological, where students will make a field visit and, through observing, interviewing and mapping objects or phenomena, find clues to tell a story about the everyday life and transformations of the place. This case note briefly lays out the idea of the Right to the City, and then describes the components and materials of the case.

## Right to the City – A Manifesto *from* Bholakpur

The right to the city was first conceptualised by the French Marxist thinker Henri Lefebvre as a common or collective right to influence the process of urbanisation. Since its inception in the 1960s in the writings of Lefebvre, the idea of the right to the city has also travelled beyond academic writing. The term has become commonplace in the lexicon of the development industry constituted by large supra-national organisations and international NGOs. In this form, the transformations undergone by the idea have eroded its 'original' conceptualisation as a common or collective right, and morphed into something more in favour of the liberal tradition of individual rights. The right to the city in this popular lexicon is construed as individual rights to access basic goods and services, and individual political and civil liberties. This is not to say, however, that the idea has been completely subsumed under the hegemonic discourse. It is evident that the idea, even in its liberal form, has been used instrumentally to mobilise large collective actions by groups of citizens for radical ends. This is the story behind the framing of the City Statute in Brazil and the enactment of the right to housing in South Africa. Thus, our intention is not to call for a return to Lefebvrian origins and to dismiss this rich history of the idea; rather it is to constantly reformulate the idea in light of the present context.

To be sure, the welfarist city of the kind that Lefebvre lived in is nowhere to be found today. Cities, in terms of their constitutions, functions, relations and morphologies have radically transformed. So what is the present context? There are many new words to describe this context: neoliberalism, Empire, neo-imperialism, late capitalism, etc., and each of these words



encompass 'the globe', plastering over all geo-historical differences. Our objective, however, is quite different. Beginning from the local and the particular, we wish to address 'the city' and 'the globe' while preserving the coevalness of spatio-temporal differences.

We begin from Bholakpur, a historic neighbourhood in Hyderabad city. Throughout the twentieth century, it was a major node in the national and global leather industry, and its inhabitants were mostly poor Muslims and Dalits employed therein. Throughout the uncertain history of the leather industry and through its eventual collapse, the neighbourhood and its inhabitants have constantly reinvented themselves. With the diminishing value of the animal skins markets, they turned to other kinds of scrap. Over a couple of decades, Bholakpur became the central node in the city for waste recycling. However, following a massive outbreak of ecodis due to water contamination, this vitality of Bholakpur's economy has come under attack through a variety of discursive tactics. Given our emphasis so far on words, lexicons and discourses, let us first begin unpacking the contemporary discourses around cities and those, in particular, which affect Bholakpur.

The set of 'global' words identified above and their particular theorisations point us to one very valuable insight about the present context, which is the revaluation of spaces, bodies and things by the explicit logic of economic value and productivity. This gives rise to a set of taxonomies which basically classify places within cities as more or less economically valuable, but do so through the foil of other categories, such as legal/illegal, hazardous/non-hazardous, wealthy/middle-class/poor. The problem is not the classification itself, but the ways in which they are reified as discrete zones that relate to each other only functionally. Thus, Bholakpur gets branded as a neighbourhood of the poor, with illegal claims on the land and engaged in activities which are hazardous to the rest of the city. Through a reified taxonomical separation, Bholakpur is isolated and marked as an excess that must be relocated or purged.

But what if we turn this around on its head? What if we use the same taxonomies, but rather than looking at the categories as discrete functional divisions, we see them as co-constitutive? Bholakpur might be marked as less valuable and as waste, but what if we say that waste is the constitutive other of value. That 'value' can only be produced out of waste, or in opposition to waste. Thus, the relation of value to waste becomes one of exploitation and repression. Value must cannibalise waste to expand and reproduce itself. This idea of the city, as co-constituted by different assemblages with specific relations of power, calls for a radical rethinking of the right to the city.

The age of faith in the ideas of class struggle and revolution are behind us. The revolutionary subject of the proletariat is a rare species. The city is constituted predominantly by casual labour—a vast reserve army that is persistently being pushed in and out of the economy, due to the way in which late capitalism is structured. The precariousness of this casual working class is its bedrock and it remains so because the precarious working class is also marked as the city's excess.

In such a scenario it will not do for the right to the city to be an individual right of access to resources and basic liberties. A free individual is powerless confronting the amorphous and

ever-changing 'global' capitalist assemblage. The right to the city must be an idea that might allow for the local to articulate globally. For this, we present the idea of infra-structure. All the places, bodies and things, like Bholakpur and its various constitutive elements, which are marked as waste, are fundamentally an infra-structure to all that is valued in the city. The precarious working class, in Bholakpur and across the world, is the infra-structure to the global capitalist economy. If this infra-structure were to become self-conscious and stake its claim on global resources and demand for the dignity it deserves, then we would actually begin talking about the right to the city.

## Components and Materials

The primary component of the case comprises visual material such as annotated maps and pictures that show the evolution of Bholakpur's neighbourhoods and built environment from 1916 until 2015. These annotated maps (Exhibit 1) further break down Bholakpur's demographics based on income levels, places of trade, community spaces and industries including tanneries and scrap markets. Pictures of scrap godowns (Exhibit 3) and the different types of scrap that make up this market, help learners visualise the industry as it is today.

The second component of this case is the Playbook Field Atlas as noted in Exhibit 2. Made up of Fieldpapers, which are a tool to help create a multi-page atlas of any place in the world, the Playbook aids learners take notes and record observations about the area that they are looking at. Photographs can also be added to these notes to enable a more comprehensive narrative to emerge.

The last component of the case is a 'Right to the City' manifesto based on the idea of the right to the city as a common or collective right to influence the process of urbanisation. This is especially important since the present context of urbanisation has changed with time, and continues to do so. The Case Archive consists of supporting material in the form of video interviews with social workers and traders in addition to reports, papers and essays that help one understand the historical and current context of Bholakpur.

# Exhibits

## Exhibit 1: Map: Places of Trade

### Places of Trade

The neighbourhoods that are predominantly industrial are Mandi Galli and Centre Basthi.

There are also many residential areas with a large number of industrial units such as: Pathan Basthi, Beerban Galli, MIM Galli, Indira Nagar, Tajir Nagar, Siddiq Nagar.

The large markets for scrap. trade are in Bangladesh market

**BHOLAKPUR**  
Places of Trade



## Exhibit 2: Bholakpur Playbook Field Atlas

- The Field Atlas consists of 6 maps. Five of these maps are Fieldpapers, the first Fieldpaper is an aggregate map which marks the areas covered by the remaining Fieldpaper maps labelled A1, A2, B1 and B2.
- Another map has been provided to give an idea of the boundaries of various neighbourhoods/colonies inside Bholakpur.
- The maps display roads in Bholakpur and also some other landmarks and locations which are marked on Open Street Maps. There may be some smaller lanes which are not marked on the map.
- The Fieldpapers display 4 major approach roads into Bholakpur.
- **E1** is Bholakpur Street No. 1 which is opposite the Musheerabad Police Station. This road leads to the Badi Masjid, Mohammed Nagar, Mandi Galli and Centre Basthi.
- **E2** is Bakaram Street No. 1 which is next to the Raja Deluxe Bus Stop. It leads to Indira Nagar, Mahatma Nagar and Gulshan Nagar.
- **E3** enters Bholakpur from the Kavadiguda side and leads to Gulshan Nagar, Indira Nagar, Tajir Nagar and Mandi Galli.
- **E4** enters Bholakpur from the north and enters straight into Centre Basthi and goes on to enter Mandi Galli. This is the best approach road to go to the Bangladesh market and Siddiq Nagar and Ranga Nagar.

### About Fieldpapers:

Field Papers is a tool to help you create a multi-page atlas of anywhere in the world. Once you print it, you can take it outside, into the field, to record notes and observations about the area you're looking at.

Later, you can photograph each page in the atlas, and upload back into Field Papers. These photographs are called "snapshots" on the site. When you upload a snapshot, it's connected automatically to the atlas from whence it came. You can transcribe any notes you made in the field into Field Papers (as points or areas) and share the result with your friends, or download your notes for later analysis.

Exhibit 3: Bholakpur Scrap Plastic Scrap godown





# Teaching Note

## Session I: Faculty Seminars – *Idea of a Place*

The first session will be about how to make sense of bounded spaces, what we call *places* in a world that seems increasingly to be in a state of flux. If all boundaries are breaking down, if everything is connected to everything, what sense do boundaries and identities make? The seminars by faculty members will address this question from different stand points.

Firstly, there could be the phenomenological approach, where the experiences of those who are *placed* there could shed light on the meaning of the boundedness and how they relate to the external world. The other approach could be political economic, where the labour process, circulation of money, distribution of land, connects the local structures to larger global processes.

There could also be a broadly feminist approach that looks at the ways in which class, caste, gender and other identities intersect to structure the place, and how they do so differently for those positioned differently. These are just examples. The basic idea is to provide an inventory of concepts with which the students can begin the task of unpacking and framing the stories they wish to tell.

## Session II: Group Discussion on Methods – *Reading a Place*

The second session will build on the first. Based on the frames selected, the next question to address is ‘How do you use these concepts to find clues to a story?’ What must one be perceptive of? How must one think about them? This also raises the ethical question, ‘How must one conduct oneself in the field?’ What are the codes and norms in play? How can you be perceptive of those first? When does an interview become intrusion? These are the first set of questions.

Secondly, one must take stock of the tools at hand. The Playbook consisting of the Field Atlas and Field Itinerary (non-exhaustive, non-binding list of possible activities) will be introduced to the students. Possible activities will be discussed following which the students will be divided into groups and attached to a resident of Bholakpur (a Field Co-ordinator) who will be their guide.

## Session III: Field Visit in Groups – *Experiencing Bholakpur*

The students will enter Bholakpur from four different approach routes. There could be different strategies by which the students can experience the place. For instance, they could opt for a fully guided excursion where the Field Co-ordinator can take them to a variety of places that they would not find on their own. They could also opt for a partially guided excursion where they touch upon important landmarks and get a sense of the place, following

which they explore it without a guide. All these possibilities are open within the limits of the culture of the place and the privacy of the residents.

#### Session IV: Groups share experiences – *Knowing Bholakpur*

In this session, the students can share their somewhat immediate impressions and observations, and they can be discussed with the Field Co-ordinators and Faculty Members. This discussion helps students situate a host of immediate observations into context and they can relate it to observations by other students.

#### Session V: Facilitated Group Work – *Understanding Bholakpur*

In this session, the groups will split up again and try to structure their story or understanding with help from Field Co-ordinators and Faculty Members. They will conceptualise their presentation, and explore ways to frame it.

#### Session VI: Group Work – *Unpacking Bholakpur – I*

This is time for the groups to prepare their presentations. It could be done with text and visualisations using chart paper, or through a PowerPoint presentation, or through maps.

#### Session VII: Group Presentations & Discussions – *Unpacking Bholakpur – II*

Each group will make their presentation and some time will be set aside for questions and comments from the other students.

#### Concluding Session

The concluding session will be for reflection on the presentations but also on the concepts and methods used. The faculty members can discuss how these concepts and methods can also be used for a variety of other places. The usefulness of unpacking a place to better understand cities, and also to better plan or design them, will be discussed. Taking into consideration the narratives on the ground, rather than applying standard solutions for all places labelled as 'slums', 'environmental hazard', or 'illegal'. If Bholakpur is constituted by a thick web of relationships that extends across the globe and is also a microcosm with its own norms and cultures and community networks, how does one relocate it?

# Accessing the Full Case

The full content of this case is open-access and downloadable at [www.cases.iihs.co.in](http://www.cases.iihs.co.in).

The full content of this case includes the following documents:

## **Folder A: Introduction to the Case**

- Terms of Use and Agreement

- Reframing Urban Inclusion

- IIHS Case Method

- Preface Note

- Teaching Note

## **Folder B: Main Case**

- Maps

  - Annotated Map of Bholakpur

  - Evolution of Bholakpur

  - Map Images

  - Photographs

- Neighbourhood of Bholakpur

- Scrap Markets in Bholakpur

  - Playbook

- Bholakpur Field Atlas

- Bholakpur Field Itinerary

- Images for the Field Atlas

## **Folder C: Case Archives**

- Written Material

  - Essays, Reports and Published Papers on Bholakpur

- Visual Material

  - Short Clips of Interviews with Residents of Bholakpur

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## About the Author

Anant Maringanti is the director of Hyderabad Urban Lab, a multi-disciplinary research programme run by the Right to the City Foundation. A geographer with a PhD from University of Minnesota, he has taught graduate and undergraduate courses at the National University of Singapore, University of Hyderabad and the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, Hyderabad. His research and teaching interests centre on questions of urbanization and globalization from the South Asian vantage point. He is widely published in national and international academic journals on social movements, politics of development and urbanization.

Mariganti's case comes from his extensive experience engaging with and conducting research on Hyderabad. As an evolving experiment in urban research, Hyderabad Urban Lab, has been developing collaborative projects involving media professionals, planners, technologists, academic researchers and legal professionals. These broad based collaborations are key to deepening our understanding of the very large informal economies that underpin contemporary cities.

## About IIHS

The Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) is a national education institution committed to the equitable, sustainable and efficient transformation of Indian settlements. IIHS aims to establish an independent funded and managed National University for Research and Innovation focused on the multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional challenges and opportunities of urbanization. The University is intended to be a globally ranked institution. The IIHS is a proposed network of mother and daughter institutions across South Asia, leveraging on the local and regional knowledge and innovation and linking them to global best practices. Its mother campus, based in Bengaluru, will include academic, research and social infrastructure, student and faculty housing. This campus is expected to set international standards for efficient, economic and sustainable design, operations and maintenance.







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INDIAN INSTITUTE FOR  
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**IIHS Bangalore City Campus:**

197/36, 2nd Main Road, Sadashivanagar, Bengaluru 560 080. India  
T: +91 80 6760 6666 | F: +91 80 2361 6814

**IIHS Chennai:**

Doxa Business Centre, 1st Floor, 37, TTK Road, Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018. India  
T: +91 44 6555 6590/4694 5511

**IIHS Delhi:**

803, Surya Kiran, 19, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110 001. India  
T: +91 11 4360 2798 | F: +91 11 2332 0477

**IIHS Mumbai:**

Flat No.2, Purnima Building, Patel Compound, 20-C, Napean Sea Road, Mumbai 400 006. India  
T: +91 22 6525 3874

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