



Migration

Living & Earning

Shelter Meanings

Quality of Life

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Delhi is a city of immigrants.

Most of them have come here after 1946. They came for specific historic reasons, and most of them are now settled. They had some resources, and the policy-makers had the will and resources to settle them. A trickle of such people, with their own resources, still continues, but this does not pose a problem for the city.

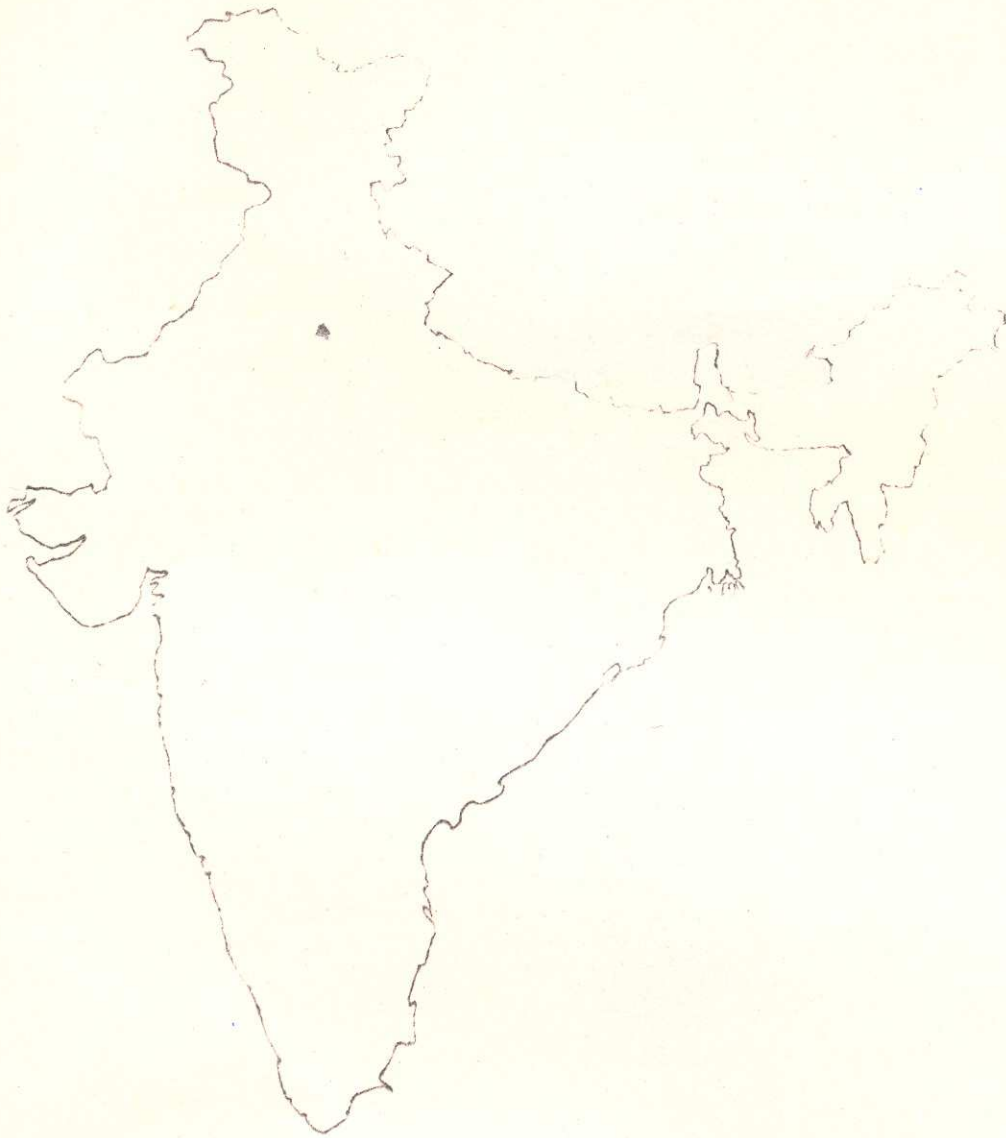
There is another stream of migrants who form a perennial source of supply to the city.

Within this stream three tributaries contribute to the inflow:-

- i. the rural poor, without property or assets, who are pushed out of their habitat and move as whole households.
- ii. other rural poor who move seasonally, year after year.
- iii. younger and semi-literate migrants from villages and small towns who come without their families

These people generally constitute the very poor in rural India. They are landless labour, largely drawn from Scheduled Castes and Tribes, possessing only the traditional skills associated with their castes.

from where?



Those who move out of their rural habitat prefer to move to large cities within their cultural region.

Delhi is a city-state which is at the centre of the region comprising UP, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, HP and J&K. The bulk of migrants, not surprisingly, come from the adjacent states of UP, and Rajasthan where the rate of

urbanisation industrialisation is low. Specifically the depressed rural areas, such as Eastern UP, contribute large numbers.

Yet there are migrants from far-off places, who are a class by themselves, constrained by specific and peculiar circumstances which push them out of their regions



हरिजन बस्ती में सशस्त्र पुलिस टुकड़ी का आतंक **सैकड़ों गांव**
 बिहार के बाढ़ पीड़ितों को राहत देने की अतीव
 आवश्यकता है

struggle **मीनग वाढ से पिरे** backward classes
 backward areas in Rajasthan

तटवर्ती जाध प्र. में भयंकर तूफान से भारी तबाही
 आर. प्र. क्षेत्र को गंभीर खतरा

सैकड़ों लाखों बेघर हरिजनों बढते जलमों की घमनाएं
 बाढ़ से १०२३ लोगों की पुलिस ने ३० हरिजनों को
 रस्ते में बांधकर घुमाया न कानून व व्यवस्था
 की हत्या की हत्या

बिगड़ती हालत
 निदोष जनता पर पुलिस का खूनी जोर-जुलम

Family burnt to death by hands
 Severe drought in Udaipur

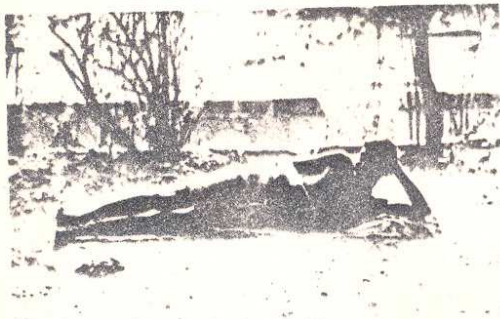
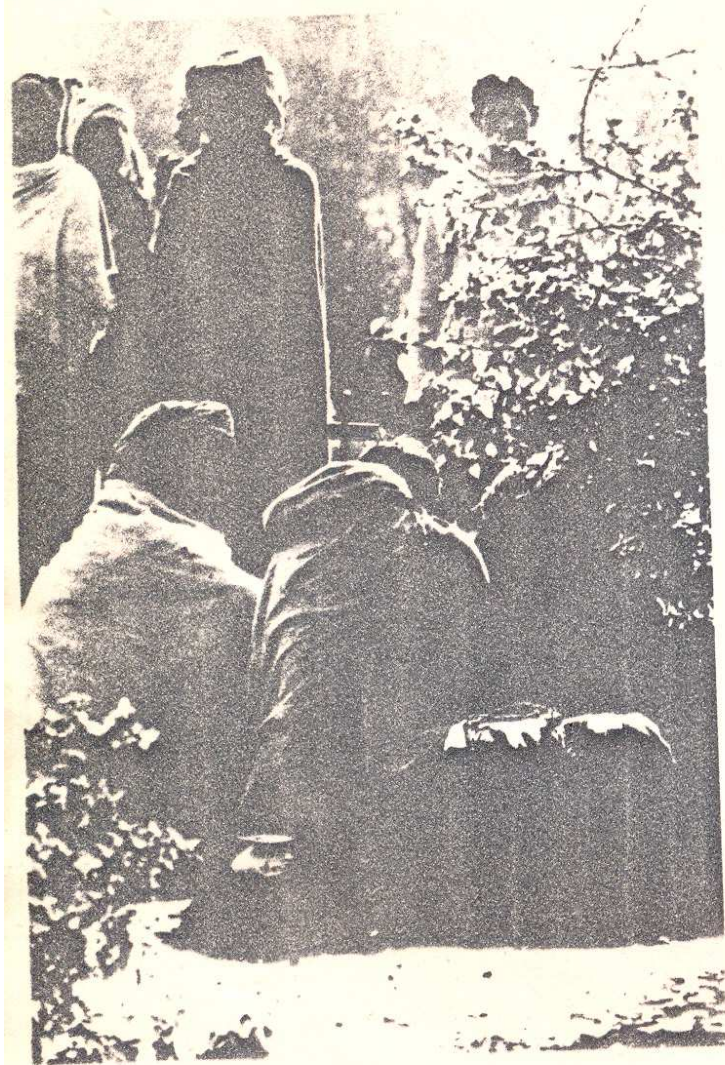
बिफान ...
 बड़ी फसल को भारी नुकसान



Agricultural labour households who are unable to eke out a bare living are motivated to migrate in order to survive, most of them permanently and some of them seasonally. A variety of reasons, both economic and social, cause this condition. The capacity of the poor to fight back for social and economic rights within the given framework leads to an intensification of their oppression.

This forces regular movement out of the villages. Such migration assumes epidemic proportions during periods of drought and famine. In addition, young, single migrants from villages, who are slightly better placed to migrate in terms of their skills and resources, are pulled to the urban centres. They are attracted by the urban way-of-life through exposure to the mass media, their kinship communication networks, and casual contact with the city.

with what?



These poor migrants come to the city, without resources or skills relevant to urban life. They do not have even the social learning necessary to understand the urban world around them. With their traditional skills devalued in the urban circumstance, most of them find that they can only be unskilled labourers. Alienated, they are forced into an unequal struggle against a hostile environment.

Driven by the sheer instinct for survival they manage to find a place only in the lowest rungs of the social and economic order.

They have no capital to help them survive the transition from rural to urban life. During this period of transition the social network of a cooperative rural culture is in a way the only resource they can rely on.



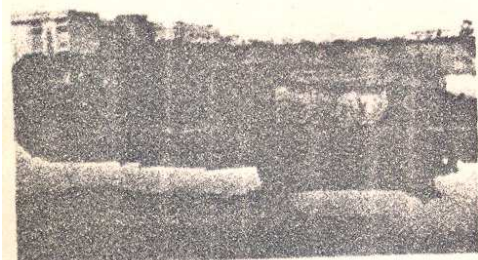
Having come with inappropriate attitudes and values to an alien world, and handicapped by devalued skills, the migrant has to find the means to understand the environment in which he has to operate. Illiteracy hampers the process of surveying the environment.

The migrant's immediate concern is to earn a living and to find shelter. Kinship networks help in locating potential job opportunities and sources of credit. These information networks of the poor provide a highly efficient and reliable system for connecting with the myriad sub-systems of urban life.

The migrant has to learn the ways of life of the city. He needs fresh schooling for socialising him into urban ways—to understand the formal structures of the city as well as its unwritten codes of conduct. The migrant learns through the informal channels about the nooks, crannies and niches in the city system, where, in spite of his handicaps, he can fit in and make a place for himself.

The networks of the poor function like a transitional field where the migrant is equipped to meet the challenge of urbanisation. In the process he changes himself and learns to adapt to the urban way of life.

seeking supports



Driven by the need to retain some control over their destiny, and to operate in a world with which they are familiar, the recent migrants like to be in a little village within the city. They seek to insulate themselves in a world of their own which might be immune from assault by the urban forces. To assure themselves that their familiar identities are not distorted in a situation where they see themselves as besieged, they seek psychological support from their kinfolk. Thus the affinities of caste and kin are reasserted with a vengeance.

But the pressures of urban life drive them into new affinities and styles of life. The economic system of the city compels them to individualise their effort, thus imperceptibly altering the traditional cooperative culture of their rural background.

Simultaneously the traditional caste loyalties metamorphose into new political loyalties. Migrant communities learn the ways of exchanging their political support with welfare measures to ameliorate their condition.

fractionated economy



The place of these very poor in the economy of the city is peculiar.

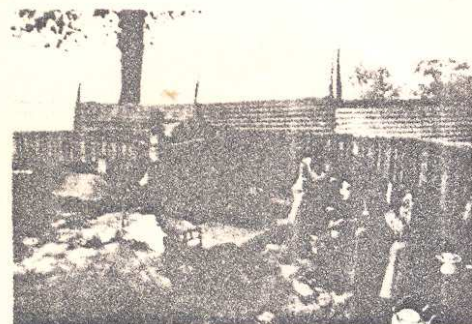
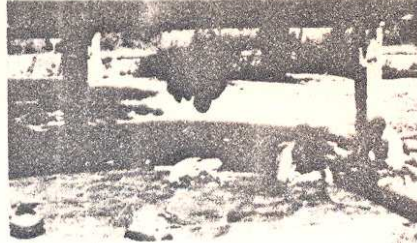
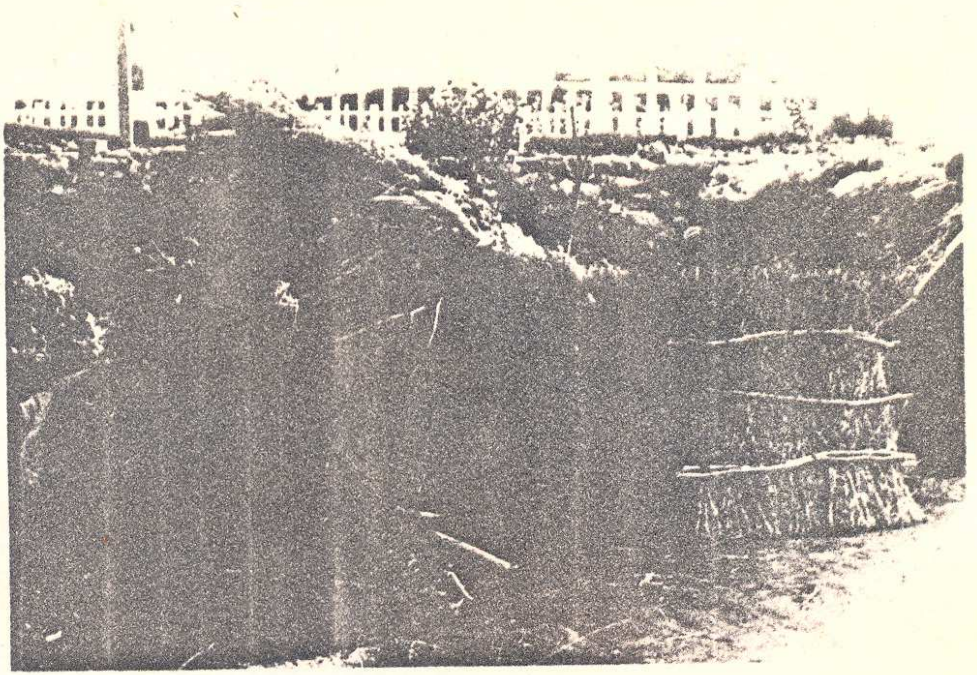
They are a ready source of cheap labour who can be employed whenever needed, without burdening the employers with the liabilities of regular wages and social security payments.

In that sense they are needed, and become essential to the functioning of the peculiar economy of the mixed system of enterprise.

If viewed from a normative angle, fewer people employed on a regular basis could have possibly performed the functions as well. Though the question will remain whether the present economic structure would be able to bear the cost.

A major segment of these poor people are petty traders and producers. They work with the most primitive tools and hardly any capital. The production and retailing is split to the ultimate extent when the earnings at the bottom are at subsistence level.





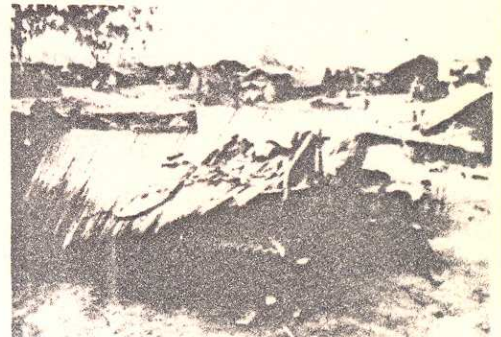
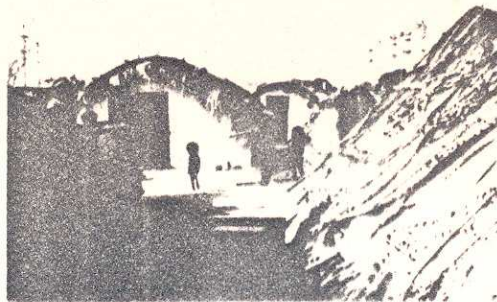
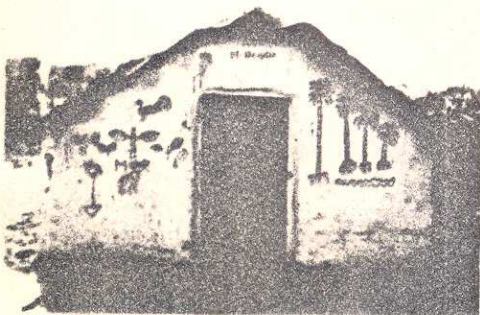
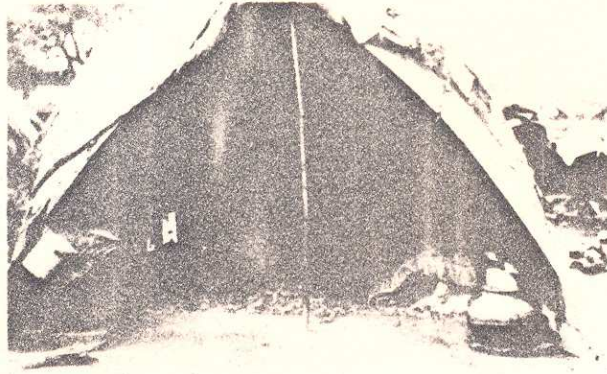
They have no resources to augment their basic human capacity for work. The will to survive has to operate at a level which is really an interface between the animal and human world.

To make a secure shelter they have to find places where they can be left undisturbed. They have to locate materials which are lying around and can be picked up at no cost. Instinctive technologies are devised to suit these materials to their needs. One could draw an analogy with the nesting behaviour of birds.

They have to locate these nests at a distance convenient for foraging to the work areas. These nests have to exhibit the same economy in use of space and materials as we find in nature.

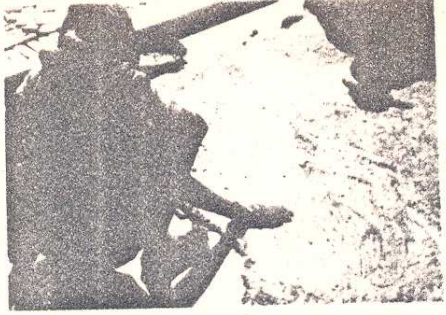
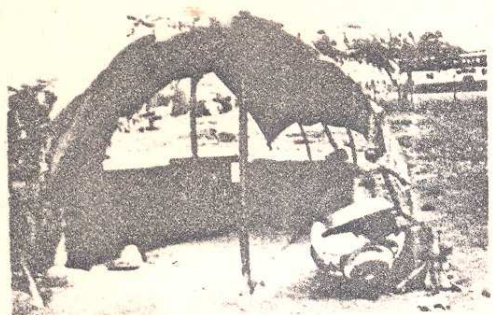
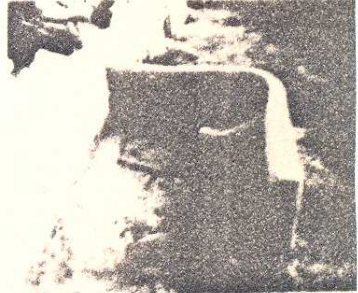
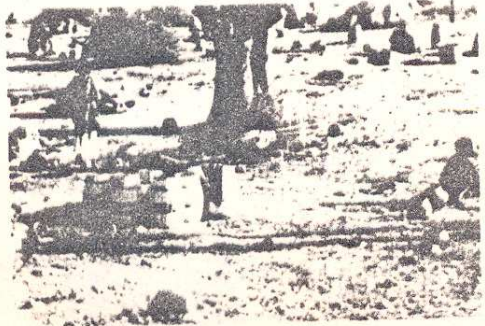
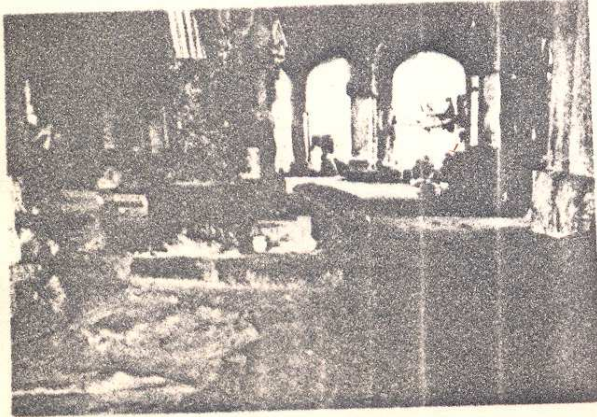
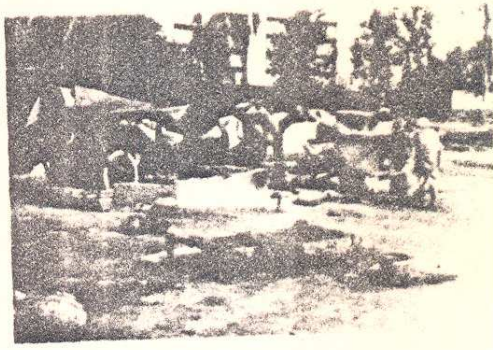
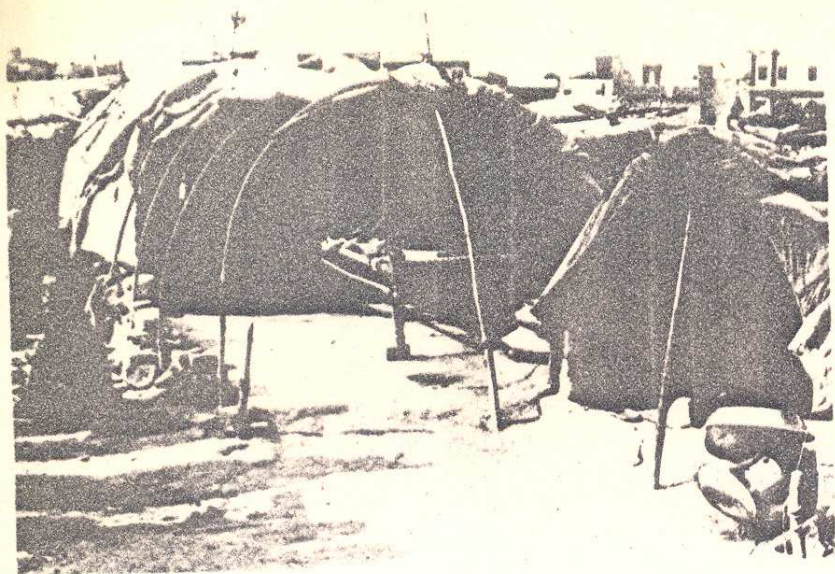
In the hierarchy of needs the security of the nest and provision of water become primary concerns. The human needs which are satisfied by these nests are reduced to the barest minimum.

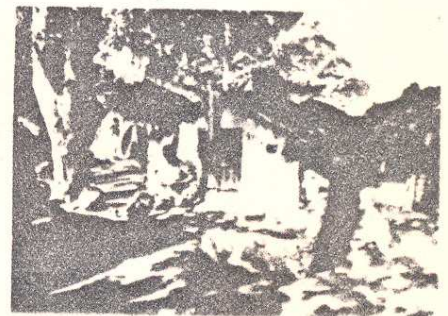
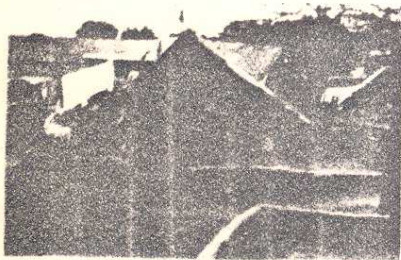
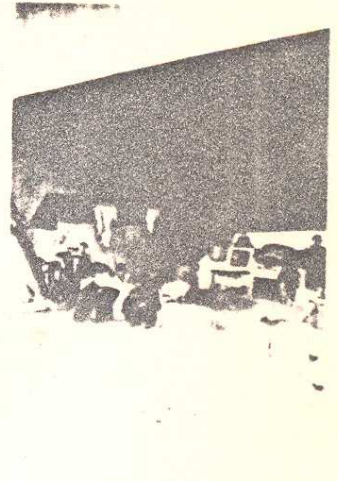
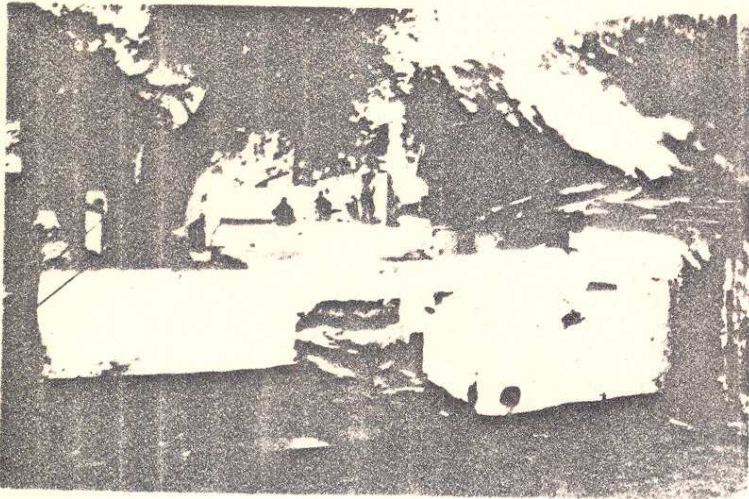
They have as much freedom to build as birds have. But unlike birds they have a cultural learning which enables them to confer a meaning on this shelter.



The patterns of use of enclosed space and the related open spaces are functions of the needs as conceived by the dwellers. Rural people bring with them their own notions of structuring of space. The gradation of privacy

and sociality which emerges from these notions is reflected in the clustering patterns of the spontaneous settlements of the poor. The size and nature of these clusters tends instinctively to reach an optimum in terms of their definition of collective needs.





Inter spaces in these clusters are used as public spaces as well as private spaces. These uses are conditioned by the social perceptions of the community, climatic necessities, the physical constraints of space available, and the economic compulsions of their situation. Not having the necessary capital to buy or rent specialised space for rearing of domestic animals, plying of traditional crafts, petty trading, and production of goods in home-industries, the people naturally use their dwellings and adjacent spaces as work-areas.

The aspect of collective life which demands a major adaptation from dwellers is waste disposal. This has become a specialised and expensive proposition in urban centres. The limited capacity of the civic system to cope with this problem is compounded by the incapability of the poor to pay for these services.

In spontaneous settlements the poor have shown an ingenuity in devising tentative provisions to deal with waste-disposal at the household-level. Collective-level solutions will require the raising of minimum thresholds of community awareness and economic investment of societal resources.

QUALITY OF LIFE



It may be universally accepted that food along with shelter constitute basic necessities for survival. Yet individual differences persist as to the amount of resources that may be allocated to these needs as against other competing needs. The points of trade-off between different perceptions of satisfaction vary from person to person.

Thus even the meagre resources of the poor have alternate uses.

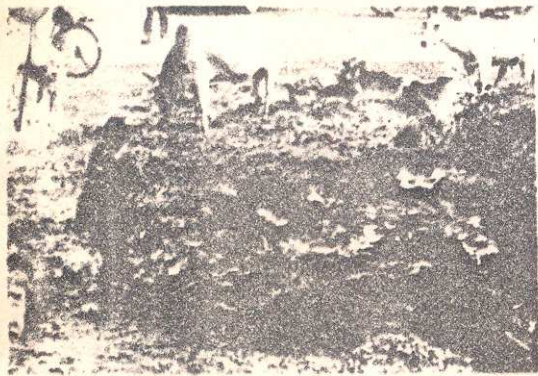
Any real freedom calls for resource distribution in a manner that permits people to allocate resources in terms of their own perception of needs.

The capacity to fashion alternatives for living in terms of differing perceptions presumes an array of resources, not only economic but informational, technological, and organisational. Access to such resources can permit people to fashion individual destinies as well as to change the allocation of values in society.



The capacity of the hereditary poor to participate in real decision-making has been atrophied to such an extent that they have lost their belief in their own selves and in their ability to change the world around them. But lack of resources may not become a total handicap, if consciousness can be raised.

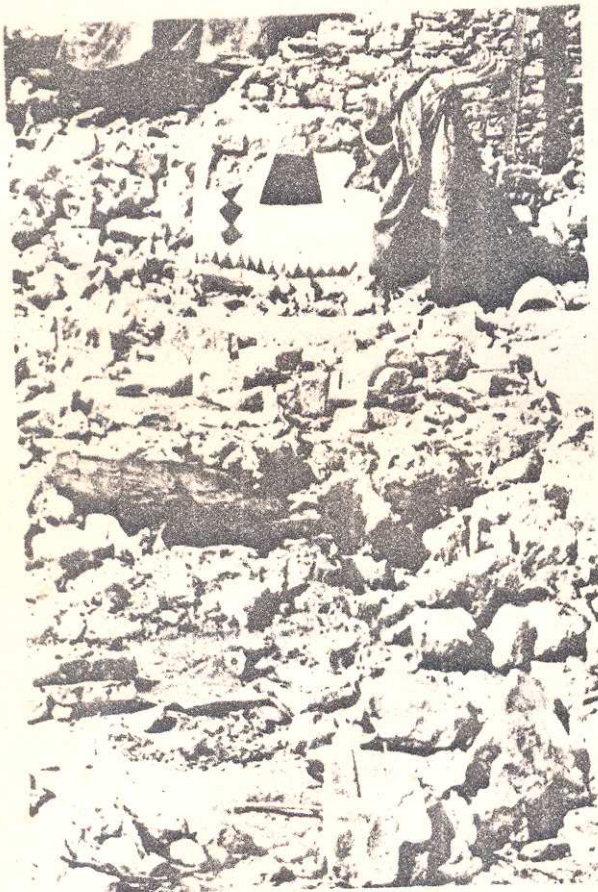
The poor, still working out the adaptation to an urban life, do not have the necessary environmental support to make an orderly transition. Ironically, the city forces them to re-assert their parochial identities for reasons of social security. In the process their capacity to effectively operate in the urban environment is impaired.



Market forces ensure the rapid appreciation of even these marginal lands, leading to capitalisation of the allotments. In a sense this becomes an inefficient method of capital transfer from the state to the poor.

This raises the question whether any housing policy can be devised without reference to issues of social change and the allocation of values.

The task is to devise means for a humane existence for the poor.



Hope lies in building organisations for the purpose of articulating their own interests and values. Given the complex processing involved in making effective demands on the city systems, these organisations need expert services of advocates for their cause. It is in this context that the problem of housing emerges.

The reaction of civic authorities to the spontaneous settlements of the poor range from ignoring their existence to outright demolition.

The alternative of resettlement, constrained by the low market price of land, leads to siting of such colonies on the outer edge of the city.