

**Incapacity, Indebtedness and Illegality: Everyday Experiences of Poverty and Barriers
to Better Life and Mobility for a Migrant Community in Delhi, India.**

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This thesis contains 98,037 words.

In Loving Memory
Mali Devi and Pratap Kumar

Abstract

This research offers an ethnographic account of what can be learned about poverty and mobility from Bhatu people's biographical narratives and everyday experiences. Historically nomadic and labelled a 'criminal caste' and 'backward class', this migrant community from village Rajasthan now lives in a 'slum' resettlement colony on the margins of Delhi.

The findings show that Bhatu people's experiences are shaped by accumulative, interlinked barriers of incapacity, illegality and indebtedness, which leave them most concerned with meeting their basic needs in everyday life. Influenced by cultural norms, their main opportunities for learning are earning and caring roles through which boys and girls prepare for adult life. However, these apprenticeships leave people unable to apply for government posts, unprepared for the formal job market and unskilled for more regular work with higher earnings. In addition, joint-family living perpetuates hierarchy and dependency between household members. The extreme inequalities of power that result not only feed children's obligations to take on roles and meet responsibilities, but also fuel parent's rights to expect their children to shoulder their roles and responsibilities on top of their own as they get older.

Bhatu people's illegality of status is intimately linked with their caste, class and gender identities. These are in turn the bases for discrimination, stigmatisation and corruption in their interactions with state representatives while accessing places to live and earn. Marginalised and isolated, their reliance on deviant and criminal activity is an expression of the extent of their needs, indicating the variation with which different peoples in India are able to access constitutional rights or pursue societal approved goals. Bhatu people's ways of living and earning are further challenged by substance misuse and dependency, which are escalating particularly among men. The deterioration in health, followed by their premature deaths means women increasingly take on supplementary or sole earning roles while at the same time facing marital estrangement or widowhood. In desperate, often tragic circumstances people in general and women in particular turn to unrelenting community saving and borrowing schemes which attract high interest rates and late payment penalties.

Such struggles lead households spiralling into indebtedness and leave them unable to create and maintain the conditions for life to continue, let alone pursue a better life. Only in a few cases are women and men successful in their pursuit of more subtle, culturally embedded claims to mobility. However, they are only recognised and legitimised within the Bhatu community and frequently challenged in everyday life.

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List of Abbreviations

Backward Class (BC)
Backward Classes Commission (BCC)
Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)
Criminal Tribe (CT)
Delhi Development Authority (DDA)
Government of India (GOI)
Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO)
Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
Jal Board (JB)
Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)
National Capital Region (NCR)
North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL)
New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)
Other Backward Class (OBC)
Planning Commission (PC)
Scheduled Caste (SC)
Scheduled Tribe (ST)

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Chapter One. Introduction

1.0 Researcher interest and perspective

The origin of my interest in poor communities goes back to my undergraduate study, when I first engaged with writings on the sociology and anthropology of Indian peoples. I was particularly drawn to the concept of ‘backwardness’, which is embedded in everyday language and used extensively in academic writing to talk about people and geographical regions in India. My interest grew from my own experiences as a farmer’s daughter growing up and going to school in the northeast of Scotland where I was labelled a *teuchter*, which is a term of disparagement or contempt used to speak about someone deemed uncouth, countrified and ‘backward’.

On entering postgraduate study, I set about exploring the origins and meanings of ‘backwardness’ in the Indian context. I traced the concept back to the first drafting of the Constitution of India (the constitution). The constitution institutionalised the identification of peoples as ‘backward classes’ (BCs). This general classification process subsumed all those already notified as castes and tribes in the schedules attached to the Government of India Act, 1935 (Sharma, 2003). Moreover, it recognised that other backward classes still had to be identified. Under Article 340, a call was made to set up a Backward Classes Commission (BCC) to;

“investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose” (Constituent Assembly of India, 1949).

Almost sixty-five years on, the research conducted and presented in this thesis, continues this call to investigate the conditions under which BCs labour. This remains an essential endeavour, because, despite constitutional provision and the welfare-driven, interventionist approach of the Government of India (GOI), the development of the country since independence has been driven by economic growth. Please refer to Appendix III for a

detailed account of India's development policy history. The benefits of this planned approach are not experienced equally by all its citizens; in fact, inequality has increased in terms of caste, gender and geographical location, leading to calls for faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth (Planning Commission, 2011). Inequality and injustice remain an integral part of the daily struggle for India's BCs, many of whom remain poverty-stricken in the face of failed government policies and practical welfare initiatives, and untouched by development planning led by economic policies. Given these circumstances, the research presented here, endeavours to answer such questions as: For peoples identified as backward classes, is moving out of poverty possible? Is achieving and maintaining mobility possible?

1.1 Research aims

The aim of this research is to provide an ethnographic account of what can be learned about poverty and mobility from the life-story narratives and everyday lived experiences of members of one migrant community, identified and labelled as a 'backward class', living in Delhi. More specifically, it explores people's circumstances of incapacity, illegality and indebtedness, and the way in which these work against them in their pursuit of better lives and mobility.

1.2 Research design and methodology

This ethnographic research was conducted over a twenty month period, in multiple phases, while living in a resettlement colony (the colony) situated on the margins to the north west of Delhi. It was built by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), for the purpose of rehousing *jhuggi* dwellers, who were forcefully evicted from a large informal settlement in central Delhi in 2002.

By way of becoming familiar with the colony and introducing myself to the people, I designed the first phase of research in such a way that would generate quantitative data from census-led interviews. The initial sample was built from 65 core households, whose members refer to themselves as Bhatu, more specifically the Chittori family, are related to each other by kinship and trace their ancestry back to one village in north Rajasthan. A further 63 comparative households were added, drawn randomly from the total flats in the colony

numbering 840, and identified on the basis that members are not related by kinship to the core sample.

These comparative households represent both Bhatu and non-Bhatu people with ancestral ties to Rajasthan, but also other states throughout India including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. Bhatu people constitute the majority living in the colony and their community name is notified in the schedule of castes for Delhi as well as Rajasthan, where the majority migrated from and continue to maintain strong kinship and close caste ties (Sharma, 2003). Bhatu people are also identified in the lists of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) for Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir and Karnataka, which have been and in many cases remain, significant as places with earning potential, as well as having kinship and caste ties (Backward Classes Commission, 1991).

While the data generated from this first phase of research are not the main sources of evidence in this thesis, they make valuable contributions to the understandings of poverty, inequality and mobility presented in Chapter Three, the overall context of the study discussed in Chapter Five, as well as the presentation of evidence on educational attainment in Chapter Six and illegal status associated with ways of living and earning in Chapter Seven.

In preparation for the second phase of research, 20 core and 20 comparative households were identified by random draw from the first phase sample, for the purpose of generating qualitative data from biographic narrative interviews. In addition, a further 19 households were identified, using a purposive sampling frame, allowing me to interview a total of 138 individuals; 63 core and 75 comparative (including 35 Bhatu and 40 non-Bhatu). In an effort to protect the identity and privacy of these women and men, whose experiences are the focus of this thesis, places are kept deliberately vague, pseudonyms used and details disguised.

1.3 A relational theory of poverty and mobility

In planning my research, I was influenced by the findings of ‘backward class’ and human development reports. However, I was also interested in the literature which focused on India, looking in particular at mobility in terms of caste through processes of sanskritisation and the attainment of positions of community dominance. Moreover, I was motivated by the literature

which focused on western countries, looking at mobility in terms of a rise in the service classes. Nevertheless, once in the colony, these theoretical ideas could not help me bring understanding to people's everyday lived experiences.

The relational theory of poverty and mobility which has resulted, is a product of the entire research process; from beginning to end. The theory is relational in the sense that it acknowledges the necessary exploration of the dynamics between people and their environment and between castes, classes, genders and ages in learning about the ways people get into and out of poverty. The relational theory has three dimensions of understanding: firstly, inequality and injustice keep people poor; secondly, coping strategies designed to meet everyday needs become barriers to better life let alone mobility defined in terms of caste and class; thirdly, only a few men and women are successful in pursuing pathways of distinction, that is, more subtle forms of better life and mobility that are claimed and legitimised within the Bhatu community.

1.4 Thesis chapterisation and outline

This thesis is set out in eight further chapters. In Chapter Two, I address a number of ontological and epistemological concerns and discuss the details of the methodological approach to research. I also consider the role of ethics, academic affiliation and research visas in formalising my status as a research student in India and gaining credibility for my work more widely. In Chapter Three, I carry out a literature review guided by understandings and experiences gleaned from Bhatu people's narratives. I explore the ideas of poverty, inequality and mobility from a series of perspectives including economics, anthropology, sociology and development studies. In Chapter Four, I outline the theoretical framework upon which the relational theory of poverty and mobility rests. In Chapter Five, I contextualise the research in terms of the colony; the place and its people, in preparation for the three main data chapters that highlight the accumulative and interlinked character of the barriers to better life and mobility.

In Chapter Six, I begin with an exploration of the experiences of incapacity, which are shaped by a lack of formal education. I then go on to focus on social indebtedness, highlighting specifically, the importance of the gendered division of labour between earning and caring

roles and responsibilities and the significance of the hierarchal and dependent relationships inherent in joint-family living. In Chapter Seven, I highlight the illegality which shapes Bhatu people's lives in terms of deviance and criminality in their ways of living and earning. Then, in Chapter Eight, I look at the experiences of incapacity associated with substance misuse and dependency, before going on to highlight the community embedded ways by which Bhatu people meet financially their everyday needs and longer term obligations. Finally, Chapter Nine brings the thesis to its conclusion. I summarise the findings, reflect on my research journey, raise some policy and practice concerns for development studies and outline opportunities for further research.

Chapter Two. Research Design: Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Approach.

2.0 Introduction

Throughout the research process, I have remained focused on the question of what can be learned about ideas of poverty and mobility from people's everyday lived experiences. In turn, despite many challenges and setbacks, I have striven to learn and build up an empathetic and authoritative understanding of everyday life based on the practice and experience of fieldwork; living alongside the people I selected to study, observing them and encouraging them to tell me about their lives.

This chapter has grown out of my concern to produce reliable and valid findings, which underpin authoritative research and establish the quality, rigour and wider potential of my work and thereby my reputation as a credible researcher. Furthermore, this chapter is shaped by my awareness of the dominance and perceived superiority of holding a positivistic perspective within the academic discipline of development studies, given that it allows for the measurement and generalisation of cause and effect across populations (Clark, 2006). In the following section, I consider the nature of the reality I am studying, and therefore what constitutes acceptable knowledge of this reality, what the necessary and sufficient conditions for the justification of knowledge are in this case and which set of principles and procedures should be followed in the generation of knowledge.

Rather than engaging in a discussion here about the different ways of understanding reality, I highlight the efforts I have put into making the tightest possible fit between the understanding of the reality I have studied, the principles and practices through which I have studied it and the theory influencing and resulting from the endeavour. Producing this fit also extends to emphasising the attention I have given to the systematic analysis of the data and the thorough evidencing of research findings (Bryman, 2004).

2.1 Ontological considerations: What is the nature of the reality I am studying?

The immersion of people in their surroundings is an inescapable condition of existence. The development of a person, their growth and maturation constitutes a process of engagement characterised in terms of the discovery of, negotiation with and movement through their worlds. In so doing, people contribute towards a generative process which ensures that *life* can keep on going (Ingold, 2000).

The reality under investigation in this study is this ‘life’, as it is in the everyday, where people live culturally guided by customs, socially in relation to other people, physically in the environments they live and economically depending on the ways they make and manage money. These ideological and material circumstances vary from person to person and change over time (Ibid., 2005). Therefore, the nature of reality is layered and cannot be considered as something singular, external to or independent of people; people are situated and therefore generate and dwell within multiple, changing realities (Bryman, 2004).

The realities under investigation in this research are always being worked at. Evidence of this work is found when people’s ways of talking are not reflected in their ways of living. The discrepancies constitute two entirely distinct, but interconnected, aspects of everyday reality, managed within the research through an exploration of the relationship between discursive and experiential layers of reality. In this way, I acknowledge the ‘continuity in’ and ‘exceptions to’ custom in everyday life and suggest that these discrepancies provide evidence of people’s influence over, and in many cases, manipulation and change of reality. Therefore, social and physical living is being stretched, and cultural and economic ideals and practices are being tested, augmented and changed (Ibid.).

Those in the colony who find themselves in circumstances that are in any way outside customary norms go to considerable lengths to reconcile any discrepancies. This is achieved by drawing upon already available definitions and interpretations of customs and culturally sanctioned ways of believing, acting and communicating in presenting their lives. Two brothers, for example, married two sisters and were raising their families in the same marital home. In time the older brother fell in love with the younger brother’s wife and justifies taking her as his second wife because “*There is no custom of divorce in my community*”.

Meanwhile, the younger sister justifies her love marriage to her older sister's husband on the grounds that "*My first husband died and according to our custom I am expected to marry his brother*". Yet her first husband is alive, has also remarried and is raising a second family in Rajasthan. It is also customary for new brides to move to their marital home to live with their husband and his parents. However, a young husband is able to justify living with his wife's parents in Delhi thus: "*I am able to access work, childcare and private education which is otherwise missing in my village*".

A young woman tells of how her new husband had been having a long-term affair with his older brother's wife. She felt considerable shame because her marriage with her husband had never been consummated. After frequent beatings and general abuse in her marital home she returned to live with her natal family, telling people "*My husband died in the days after our marriage*". A maritally estranged mother of two daughters living long term with her mother, as she had suffered beatings and been set on fire by her husband and in-laws, says: "*I maintain the relationship with my husband and I want to return to my marital home because I want to have a son*". A young woman who dislikes her abusive, alcoholic husband continues to live with him because "*I have more freedom in my life and can keep status within the community*". Finally, a young unmarried girl runs away with her boyfriend. On her return she explains her actions by saying "*I was not in my right mind at this time*".

In each case, these stories illustrate the differences between norms and practices in people's everyday lives and the ways in which they justify their actions and seek legitimacy for them by drawing on culturally available ways of understanding. In acknowledging some of the ways in which people talk, I am able to illustrate the elaborate and systematic nature of domination and subordination unleashed by custom in this community, acknowledge the collective way in which people's lives are burdened by relentless surveillance and subjected to sanctioning and punishment. However, I am also able to testify to their agency and resistance. They perform deference and consent and cleverly craft public narratives designed to appeal to family and community expectations, while airing hidden narratives to me, a stranger, out of earshot and beyond the direct observation of family and community members (Gal, 1995, Scott, 1990).

2.2 Epistemological considerations: What constitutes knowledge of reality?

In the context of this study, knowledge is the combination of both my individual and collaborative efforts as a researcher to learn through formal academic training and fieldwork (Ingold, 2005, Paavola and Hakkarainen, 2005, Sfard, 1998). In this way, I understand that people share in the process of knowing, rather than taking on board a pre-established body of knowledge. Knowledge lies, not in the heads of academics and respondents, but in the world that they point out to you and the life that they reveal to you. Knowledge is embedded in the process of becoming alive to the world and to life; an aspect of the growth of persons, in the contexts of their involvement with one another and the environment. By engaging with those who are familiar with the place and its people, I had my attention drawn to what the untrained eye would have completely passed over. I had my awareness heightened to a sensitivity that only comes from intimate familiarity (Ingold, 2000).

The process of knowing was grounded in the orientations towards the world which other people provided. I learned to recognise points of significance in an otherwise featureless social and physical landscape and combined these with my own experiences of feeling my way through everyday life while living in the colony. In these ways, knowledge is layered, emergent and perspectival as a consequence of its embeddedness within the multiple and changing circumstances of people over the course of their lives and the process of learning I went through as I moved ever deeper into people's everyday lives (Ibid.). It is also the case that knowledge is undergoing continuous generation, is always incomplete, unfinished and provisional because as long as everyday life continues to be lived, there is more to discover, and more perspectives and experiences from which to learn and understand (Rosenau, 1992).

2.2.1 What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for the justification of knowledge?

I needed to establish a trustworthy way of demonstrating how I know what I say I know. Details of the strategies adopted by way of ensuring the necessary and sufficient conditions for the justification of knowledge are as follows:

Defining clearly the terms of the research endeavour

This research does not involve the pursuit of a universal Truth, separated and detached from the realities studied. Nor does it present the findings in the form of universal laws of cause and effect (Moser, 2006). My intention is rather to produce an ethnographic account in the form of detailed description and empathetic and interpretive understanding from within the realities studied, which was made possible by living and engaging with people and their environment. I have tried to do this by moving and thinking myself into their lives in such a way that the principle of knowing is situated within the relationships people have with each other and their environment and is embedded in my own observations and experiences within this specific context (Audi, 2003, Bryman, 2004, Ingold, 2000).

Ensuring the outcome of the research endeavour is useful and has the ability to make a difference

Richard Rorty (1991) calls for epistemological issues to include questions of utility when it comes to justifying the ways in which knowledge can be acquired and accumulated. Brian Fay (1976) argues for a necessary intimate connection between how knowledge is acquired and its practical utility, in order to encourage reflexivity, critical awareness, emancipation and better life. Furthermore, the disciplines of anthropology and sociology continue to exist in a university system which is increasingly moving beyond its dedication to the production of knowledge for its own sake (Ingold, 2005). This is particularly the case when these disciplines are harnessed in the service of development studies, where an intimate link between research findings, policy and practice are necessarily advocated. Knowledge needs to provide a basis and means through which to highlight voices that are not being heard, to help people help themselves, and to challenge and address ideas and practices of government, which no longer touch people's lives. In the Indian context, this encompasses constitutional rights as well as policies and legislation related to work and education.

2.3 Research design

The most significant way of attaining the necessary and sufficient conditions for the justification of knowledge is by making, documenting, reflecting and evidencing each of the

integral parts of the overall research process. The research has been designed to reflect the distinct character of the human world, and at the same time the variation in human experiences. The research is also designed to acknowledge the significance and meaning of ideas of poverty and mobility, particularly as they pertain to the unique character of the context being investigated.

In September 2007, I began to plan my research by arranging a visit to Delhi. In preparation, I conducted some preliminary research on a number of areas which I could visit once I arrived. At this point, places in Delhi such as Gurgaon and Noida, drew my attention as they were new projects in the extension of the National Capital Region (NCR). Given my research interests in migration, new employment and better life, these areas represented the possibility for new opportunities for employment, an improved quality of life, new lifestyle choices and the chance for households and communities to grow based on new socioeconomic identities.

2.3.1 Pre-research visit to Delhi

I flew to Delhi in mid February 2008. In the first week, I made my formal introductions to students and Professor Rajni Palriwala, who at the time, was the head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi, where I secured an affiliation. I then turned my attention to visiting the areas of Delhi which I had identified as potential sites for research. I began with Gurgaon, which has shown rapid development since the 1990s. It was originally a small village, yet, given its proximity to Delhi, its expanse of undeveloped farm lands and changes to taxation laws, Gurgaon has benefited significantly from private investment – both national and international. Its concept began as a satellite town designed to house Delhi's growing population. However, it now represents the biggest real estate market in India. It is home to corporate executives and multinational companies and has the third highest income after Mumbai and Chandigarh. Furthermore, Gurgaon has an internationally recognised status for finance, IT, call centres and retail. Over several visits, I found little evidence of slum settlements. However, adjoining areas of sectors 5, 6, 12 and 39 have noticeably poorer housing conditions.

Noida's development contrasts with Gurgaon's in that it has been developed over a much longer period, since the 1970s, through a combination of government and private investment.

Noida is now an outsourcing centre for IT services as well as software, automobile and media industries. Noida is also different from Gurgaon in that it is a planned city designed to integrate residency with industry. Marketing luxury, high-quality, 'dream' homes is the speciality here. On visiting Noida, I found straight streets with malls and cineplexes on every corner and little evidence of housing for lower-income groups. According to the Noida Development Authority, there is housing provision for high, middle and low-income groups, including a housing estate of 5000 one-room apartments designed for poor people. However, I was to learn that this housing estate hardly qualifies as urban living, as it is built on less developed land between Noida and Greater Noida.

In contrast with Gurgaon, I was able to see many poorer families living in Noida, with evidence of slum settlements in adjoining sectors of 8, 9 and 10. Moreover, there is evidence of people living in temporary structures associated with the construction of housing, office and retail spaces and infrastructure. For the most part, these are seasonal, often project-specific migrants, who are not engaged in new occupations, nor do they have permanent residence status. They will return to their villages or move on to another site once the current project is completed.

During my first week in Delhi, I also made a less formal acquaintance with a young man named Subhash, whom I met while walking in the city centre. He was particularly interested in knowing where I was from and what I was planning to do in Delhi. He offered to buy me a cold coffee and over an hour or so we shared some of our history. He told me he was a 28-year-old tourist guide working for a tourist office in central Delhi, that his wife had died during child birth three years earlier and that he and his small daughter lived with his parents and younger unmarried siblings - two sisters and a brother - in a poor area of Padmini to the north of the city.

We made arrangements for me to visit his home, which turned out to be a slum resettlement colony. On my first visit to the colony, Subhash met me at the metro station and we travelled there together. As I stepped down from the rickshaw my senses were overwhelmed. A small child was defecating in the street, while others were running around barefoot and naked, and others still wore oversized clothes, were unwashed and had wild shocks of hair and snotty noses. Dirty water and rubbish had built up in the open drains lining each courtyard. Sewage

periodically gushed down the walls from broken pipes creating a bog at the back of each block. These were being browsed simultaneously by cattle and children alike, as if they were rock pools on the beach, and sat in by wild dogs wishing to cool their backsides in the heat of the day. The multi-storey buildings seemed to tower above me and lean in overhead, making tunnels of the narrow street below, which was filled with people moving this way and that way and who gave me a glance, followed by a long stare, before continuing to go about their business. I had found my research site.

2.3.2 Accessing the research site

I subsequently entered the colony officially as a researcher and as a stranger to all but Subhash, who became the ‘gate keeper’ through whom I secured accommodation in the colony and whose extended family history and current circumstances were the catalyst for my research. A series of meetings followed my arrival, between Subhash and community leaders, including the *pradhan*, the head of the community, during which, I had the opportunity to introduce myself and my research and to begin to spread the word to community members that I would be identifying respondents from within the community for participation in my study. I was duly permitted to continue to live and work within the colony.

Despite going on to live within the community for twenty months, in all that time, I was never able to take my position for granted and I was frequently challenged about my intentions and sampling procedures. As a courtesy, but more importantly by way of re-securing my position within the community, I kept elders and the *pradhan* informed of my progress, notifying them as I began and completed each phase of research. However, I quickly understood that these formalities were mere window dressing, and that the real negotiations relating to my position and respondents’ participation needed to take place in the relentless grind of everyday life, as I engaged one by one with each household, and in time, each household member.

2.3.3 Sampling procedure

The research focus and design evolved over time, moving through different stages, before and during, its development and implementation. It began as a case study, building on the

informal discussions with male and female members of the gate keeper's household and in due course his extended family. These discussions were designed to allow me to begin mapping kinship ties onto households and their locations within the colony. However, they also introduced me to the complexities of kinship that arise out of gendered differences in understanding and the tensions between cultural ideals and people's everyday lived experiences.

In this way, the first phase sample was identified, built from 63 core households whose members are related to each other by kinship. The members of these households refer to themselves as Bhatu people, tracing their ancestry back to one village in north Rajasthan. After several months, a further 65 comparative households were added to the study, identified from the whole colony by random draw, on the basis that members are not related by kinship to the core sample. These households represent both Bhatu and non-Bhatu people with ancestral ties to Rajasthan, but also other states throughout India including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

In preparation for the second phase of research, 20 core and 20 comparative households were identified by random draw from the first phase sample, for the purpose of generating qualitative data from biographic narrative interviews. In addition, a further 19 households were identified using a purposive sampling frame. This allowed me to interview a total of 138 individuals; 63 core and 75 comparative (including 35 Bhatu and 40 non-Bhatu). In taking this divided and layered approach to sampling, I have been able increasingly to concentrate the focus of the study on fewer people with each phase.

More specifically, in integrating a comparative component into the research, which makes a distinction between male, female, Bhatu and non-Bhatu everyday lives, I am able to look at whether or not there are meaningful differences in ideas about and experiences of poverty and the orientation towards better life, between men and women, those with and without extended kinship ties and more specifically those with and without extended caste ties. As I will go on to show, these distinctions are meaningful in terms of differences relating to educational attainment, pathways into earning and the extent of deviant and criminal activity in these and in the level of incapacity associated with substance misuse and dependency. Thereby, I have been able to strengthen considerably my contribution to knowledge.

2.3.4 From outsider to insider perspective

The research was conducted in a way that helped me move from the perspective of outsider to insider in relation to the colony, the place and its people. The shift of perspective needed to be earned and this was made possible by living in the community for an extended period. During this time, I embraced the role of newcomer to the colony, inexperienced and overwhelmed, allowing myself to become immersed, to sense what was familiar and strange, easy and difficult and to live with the knowledge that, inevitably, I ran the risk on a daily basis of challenging established customary ideas and practices.

In this way, I became the learner under the ever watchful, penetrating eyes of a community of teachers, eager to watch, prevent and correct my mistakes and in doing so preserve their own continuity (Sfard, 1998). It was important for me to feel what it was like to survive the relentlessness of everyday participation, adaptation and cooperation, and the isolation, pain and despair involved in crossing borders and living in another place with unforgiving surroundings, learning to communicate in a different language and conduct myself in keeping with unfamiliar norms and expectations (Paavola and Hakkarainen, 2005). It was only then, however, that I considered myself worthy of entering into people's lives and gaining an understanding from their perspectives (Bryman, 2004, Ingold, 2005).

2.4 Methodology and method

This important shift from outsider to insider, was enabled by the design and multi-staged implementation of the research, which combined ongoing participant observation with a simultaneous process of identifying respondents and conducting interviews. This combined approach was essential for generating a comprehensive data set, identifying discrepancies in respondent's reporting and differences between what people said and what they did. Such findings are significant in highlighting the tensions between cultural norms and expectations and everyday lived experience, but also in uncovering the character and extent of the 'secret lives' and 'hidden behaviours' of girls and boys as well as women and men. For example, there is evidence of girls engaging in love relationships which lead to elopement and of boys leaving the colony to work and earn, yet, they spend the day going to the movies or watching cricket while drinking and drug taking in the office.

On reflection, I was far more of an observer than a participant in the beginning, with no sense of what I was actually observing. The best way I can explain this experience of watching the colony, the place and its people, is that it was as if I was looking at an onion for the first time. I was completely unaware of the complex, layered engineering involved in holding it together and controlling the nature of what I saw. I was also unaware of the influence my own inexperience and theory-driven ideas were having on that engineering. Only in time; with the progress of my research, the increased ability to communicate in the local language and the changing nature of my engagement with respondents once fieldwork assistants were brought in, was I really able to start sensing and accessing the complexity, layer by layer. Only then, was I able to finally move beyond the confines of my convictions that *all* I was watching was poverty, inequality and injustice.

Participant observation, as an approach to data generation, involved informal engagement with the community and the environment more generally. The need to carry out my own everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes became the basis for observing people going about their everyday activities, along with participating in the ordinary and sometimes not so ordinary duties and events associated with festivals for example. It also included listening to and engaging in informal conversation, paying particular attention to what community members in general spoke about and the way they talked. Participant observation also took me one step further, in allowing me to generate data through informal conversations with residents from neighbouring areas and formal interviews with teaching staff, inside and outside the colony, as well as with local authority representatives of the DDA and North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL), for the purpose of accumulating further perspectives on the colony, the place and its people.

Interviewing within the colony, as a process of data generation, also involved engaging with specific community members identified through the sampling procedures already introduced above. In the first phase of research, I conducted census-focused interviews for the purpose of generating quantitative data about each household's physical, social and economic circumstances. In the second phase of research, I conducted life-story narrative focused interviews for the purpose of generating qualitative data. In encouraging each respondent to talk about their lives, I was able to access the ways in which people report, describe, evaluate and argue about their experiences (Wengraf, 2006).

In keeping with the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM), I started each interview with the same simple question: Can you tell me about your life? I then let each respondent lead the interview and when their narrative drew to a close, I followed up, in turn, on each of the themes which they introduced in their opening narratives. In this way, no two interview narratives are the same, no two have the same variety of themes, or the same depth of exploration. This reflects the differences in people's experiences, but also the differences in the things people are most concerned with in daily life and what they are most comfortable to talk about.

However, as I became more experienced in interviewing, I began to identify several important common themes around which people's narratives about their experiences could be usefully grouped, including indebtedness, illegality and incapacity. These themes have particular significance for understanding poverty in relation to mobility and each is explored in the chapters that follow. Moreover, for the purpose of generating a deeper understanding of the key concepts of poverty and mobility informing this thesis, I also conducted a further set of exploratory questions as part of this phase of interviewing. The theoretical ideas which I was able to generate from these data allowed me to ground a relational theory of poverty and mobility in Bhatu people's everyday lived experiences.

2.4.1 Speaking their language

Success in moving from an outsider to an insider perspective was only finally secured by my increasing grasp of the language. Being an outsider, who could not speak the language, dominated my experiences of living and interacting in the colony in the beginning. The Bhatu community have a common language, with variations along lineage lines, associated with villages in Rajasthan. Non-Bhatu respondents have no common language at all, given that they represent a number of different castes and come from a number of different states. The only language the majority of people have in common is their second language, Hindi. In the interests of maintaining consistency, I decided it was Hindi in which I needed to communicate.

Learning Hindi became one of my earliest concerns. I began formally with a teacher, working in her home in daily one-to-one sessions over a three-month period. During this time, I began

to practise the sounds, and read and write, before starting to string words together into simple, short sentences. However, increasingly, I found that when I practised with people other than my teacher, I struggled to understand and be understood; both pronunciation and the words I was using were a problem. I came to realise that I was learning what people refer to as a 'pure' Hindi, which no one really speaks in everyday life, let alone in the research community. While people deemed my way of talking 'sweet', it was above all amusing and did little to build my confidence and move me forward. I decided to end the Hindi classes, but continued to work with my teacher, whom assisted me in putting together a team who have helped me undertake the transcribing, translating and typing up of my primary data interviews.

From this point forward, I made language development an integral part of my interaction and participation in everyday life within the colony, and my competency grew markedly through the experience of conducting the census and life narrative interviews. My enthusiasm and efforts were there for all to witness and people were increasingly encouraged to interact with me, in what became a two-way learning process. This engagement was important in breaking down barriers, particularly with the women, and building up the relationships of trust upon which my comprehensive data set and the success of my research more generally depended.

I ended up speaking a Rajasthani-Delhi influenced Hindi, combined with a number of Bhatu words and phrases, accompanied, of course, by some of the all-important mannerisms. Having now left the research site, I cannot make claims to any level of formal proficiency; I understand far more than I can speak, and my use of language reflects the pronunciation, grammar and words used within the community. The extent of the vocabulary I have learned can be mapped on to, and is concentrated around, the central activities, problems and experiences arising from everyday life, relating to work and earning, money management, saving and debt, home, lifestyle and socialising, family life, responsibility, birth, illness and death; themes which are central to this thesis and used to reflect an understanding of the ways in which poverty relates to mobility within the colony.

2.4.2 Fieldwork assistants

Everyday communication and data generation within the community began with English and needed to be heavily mediated by people inside, and in time, outside the community, brought in for the purpose of assisting me with translation. This mediation diminished considerably the longer I spent in the community and the further my research progressed. However, if I have any feeling at all that my study is weak, it stems from my inability to speak the language from the start. Not being able to speak freely created a barrier in terms of the time it took me to get to know people individually and develop trust and understanding. This, in turn, influenced how comfortable people were in talking with me, the range of subjects that were up for discussion and the depths to which they were willing to delve once they reached the formal interviewing process.

Not being able to speak the language also brought a great deal of extra work and tension. For one thing, in order to do my work, I was reliant on other people. This felt very uncomfortable, as I have always been very self-reliant. In the beginning, I needed someone from the community to help me with everyday communication and translation and to help me make initial contacts while building the sample and conducting the household census interviews. Soon, I needed someone from outside the community who could help me to conduct the individual life-story narrative interviews. This involved advertising for, as well as interviewing, hiring and firing fieldwork assistants. Each of the five young women I employed was educated to postgraduate level, with one having already worked full time abroad. Two of the three young men I employed were educated to postgraduate level, while one, educated to 10th class, admitted that he had paid money for someone else to write his exam in 8th class and then just paid for the certificate for 10th class; there had been no exam involved.

I had real difficulty in getting several of the fieldwork assistants to commit to the days they would work and then to motivate them throughout the days that they finally agreed to. The benefits of working in the colony in terms of experience and remuneration, were often no match for their leisurely lives of hanging out at malls, restaurants and clubs and spending time with their boyfriends and girlfriends, drinking and smoking marijuana. However, it was their roles in family life that seemed to be by far their biggest responsibility, and therefore,

distraction. The power of the family, and particularly parents and grandparents, to dictate life and how time is spent was a phenomenon I was ill prepared for. The insistent phone calls from mothers and other relatives saw my fieldwork assistants reduced to worried wrecks, forced to leave early and take days off in order to attend to the latest family crisis.

However, commitment and motivation issues, and the extent of roles and responsibilities allocated strictly to individuals along the lines of age and gender within respondent families in the colony, were similarly disruptive to the interviewing process. This was particularly the case for girls and young women, who had specific duties to perform at specific times in the day. People's activities and lives more generally are restricted because of these duties, which, interestingly, no one else seems to be able to perform. Given my observations of fieldwork assistants and people in the colony, and despite the fact that these lives were seemingly being lived literally worlds apart, these obligations are common across castes and classes, and include the educated as well as the uneducated. Expectation is both very powerful and demanding, in that you are given a responsibility and you have to honour it, no matter what. On reflection, the main reason for lost working days was due to these types of instances, where the fieldwork assistant or respondent had to fulfil their daily designated responsibilities or their presence was called for in the name of family.

People are just pulled in so many different directions in their daily lives, and this is only made worse by another commonality that runs across caste and class: people's inability to say no. Everything is met with great enthusiasm in the beginning, but on giving things some thought, people, for whatever reason, change their mind. However, my experience in India was that even with the change of mind, people still did not let me know. I was just left to face an endless stream of missed appointments and failed deadlines. I found this right across everyday life: I placed orders for stationery and books that never materialised; I arranged to meet fieldwork assistants who just never turned up; I set deadlines for the completion of work only to be told by text message that they could not meet them. I would follow up on this by making a request for a partial submission, only to find that they had made no start on the work. I also made several appointments with respondents for interviews, which in the end, just never happened.

These experiences were painfully borne and made me increasingly conscious of the high expectations and exacting standards I was driven by. In the end, the relentless challenges I faced taught me how to ask people for help, the value of maintaining good relationships, no matter what and the paramount importance of being patient. However, they also taught me about my capacity for and the value of perseverance and the strength of belief you can develop in yourself when following ethical procedures in planning and implementing research. I just kept trying and when things did not work out, I just kept going back to the drawing board and starting again.

2.5 Data sources

The key data generated from the research consists of census and life-story narrative interviews, as well as observations of, and informal discussions with, adult members of a total of 128 households. The informal discussions were conducted in a mix of Hindi and English. The formal census and life-story narrative interviews were conducted using native Hindi-speaking fieldwork assistants to translate. Each interview was conducted and digitally recorded, only after details of the research and participation requirements were discussed with prospective respondents and their oral and written consent were given. Recordings were then transcribed in Hindi and translated into English and typed up.

I was present and active in all the interviews, systematically directing the conversation, while at the same time filling in the census scripts, writing notes in interview journals and observing the respondents and fieldwork assistants as they talked. Meanwhile, fieldwork assistants were able to maintain eye contact with the respondents and engage fully with what was being said. In truth, I would not have had the opportunity to generate such detailed data had I been alone. Nor would I have been able to benefit from the regular post-interview discussions I held with my fieldwork assistants (Wengraf, 2006).

Census interviews were conducted at the household level and generally lasted between one and one-and-a-half-hours. The biographical and exploratory interviews were conducted at the individual level and generally lasted three hours, though some were as short as forty-five minutes or as long as six hours, with some being conducted in two or three separate sessions. The census and life-story narrative interviews were generally conducted between the hours of

eight in the morning and eight in the evening. Each of the census interviews were conducted, as far as possible, in people's own homes so that I could watch and experience their circumstances. In this case, less importance was given to who gave the information; as many family members as possible were encouraged to answer the questions and talk with me as a group.

The life-story narratives were, however, as far as possible, conducted with respondents in my own living space and they were asked to come alone. The idea was, to create a controlled, separate, private and supportive space, outside the norms of everyday life, in the hope that the chance of being interrupted would be reduced as far as possible. Only where respondents insisted on being interviewed in their own home, or having someone with them, did my assistant and I accommodate their wishes.

In order to accumulate perspectives on the realities of people's lives, I found myself learning to listen to and talk about extraordinary things in non-reactive and mundane ways during these interviews. I learned to be very matter of fact and to suspend judgment absolutely, to be open and give space for answers, but more importantly, explanations and justifications. I took on the role of the interested and concerned confidante, empathising and supporting. These were all skills which had to be cultivated for the purpose of getting at the layered nature of truth, which I worked hard to instil in each of my research assistants too, as part of their fieldwork training.

2.6 Ethical considerations

Given my long term approach to research, I made two separate applications for ethical approval to the International Development Research Ethics Committee at the University of East Anglia. I was initially granted ethical approval in February 2008 as I prepared to visit India and this covered the first, quantitative phase of research in the colony. Ethical approval was then granted again in September 2009 in preparation for the second and main phase of qualitative research. The second application was justified in that given time had passed, my research focus and thesis title had changed and the original approval was therefore out of date.

During these applications, I gave an overview of the research, including the purpose of the study and the methods used. I went on to identify the risks respondents might encounter in taking part in the research and put forward measures in anticipation of preventing these. I highlighted the importance of introducing myself verbally and in written form using my official letter from the University of East Anglia. I subsequently produced an introduction to research sheet for each respondent, written in the vernacular and detailing the nature of my research interests, the duration of the study, its multiphased character and the level of participation sought. I also emphasised that the criteria for the selection of respondents at each stage would be clearly stated so that people would be left in no doubt as to why they were either included in or excluded from the research. In addition, I made it plain that only those over the age of 18 years would be asked to participate.

All random draws, used in the identification of respondent households, would be carried out in front of community members and documented and digitally recorded for the sake of fairness. Consent was respectfully sought, ensuring that there was no evidence of discomfort or coercion. I was also sensitive to gender relations and the corresponding hierarchy of authority in terms of the husband or father and mother of each respondent when asking them to participate. All respondents were asked to confirm their consent by signing a written consent form before each interview began.

In addition, I reminded respondents of their right to withdraw any or all of the information they gave me, at any time during the interview process, and after that, up until the end date of the research. Issues of disclosure were also addressed, in the form of verbal and written assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Respondents were also encouraged not to worry that there were any right or wrong answers to questions or that they would be judged on their responses. To this end, I was careful in exploring issues sensitively, using people's own words, understandings and frames of reference. Respondents were also assured that they could refuse to answer questions or talk about any issues raised during the interview process, which made them feel uncomfortable. Efforts were also made to secure respondent's information. Hard copies were kept locked in a cabinet and soft copies were stored on a password-protected computer. All fieldwork assistants were also coached in the importance of these ethical procedures as part of their pre-fieldwork orientation and training.

A preventative approach was taken to avoiding risks associated with travelling and day-to-day living, through vaccinations and medical and travel insurance. Furthermore, I demonstrated mindfulness, maintaining a respectful way of living in terms of dress and behaviour in keeping with the cultural and social norms and values of the colony. In doing this, I was able to ward off confrontation and physical harm. It was also clearly stated that no immediate benefit for respondents would result from taking part in the study. In addition, no payments or incentives would be entertained, prior to or during, each phase of the research. However, at the end of the research each household would receive a gift of thanks, by way of showing my appreciation for the time and help they had given me.

2.7 Academic affiliation and research visa

By way of gaining ethical approval and securing credibility for my research, I initially secured and subsequently renewed my affiliation with the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi. This was achieved through Professor Rajni Palriwala, the Head of Department at the time, whose work reflects my own research interests in family, gender and culture in Rajasthan. I initially travelled to India on a tourist visa. However, by way of formalising my status as a research student and gaining credibility for my work, I sought official backing from the Indian High Commission. After an eighteen-month application process, I finally secured a two-year Indian Research Visa. The period of uninterrupted research which followed was crucial in allowing me to settle and develop the language skills and relationships of trust upon which my ethnographic research depended.

Chapter Three. Literature Review.

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the process of building and developing theory, which has involved me bringing my own and others' experiential learning and understanding to bear on a systematic interrogation of some of the most foundational terms of academic discourse as far as development studies is concerned, namely poverty, inequality and mobility. Such terms carry compressed within them a history of past usage, and it is only by unravelling these histories that I am able to assess their appropriateness in reflecting Bhatu people's lived experiences and understandings. The discussion that follows is dedicated to this unravelling process in the form of a review of the literature most relevant to my research. I begin by introducing the idea of poverty, before moving on to explore the relationship between poverty and inequality and then draw the review to a close with a discussion of the literature on mobility. At each point of the discussion, I introduce and reflect upon some of the *most telling* excerpts drawn from Bhatu people's own life-story narratives (Ellen, 1984).

3.1 Theorising poverty

The idea of poverty has important relevance for development studies, and has been subject to wide academic debate and extensive theorising. Over time, a number of important issues associated with defining, conceptualising and explaining poverty have been raised within the academic disciplines of economics, anthropology and sociology. These inform development studies, which in turn, has gone on to raise its own issues and reach its own conclusions. Some of these issues and conclusions have important relevance for my research and inform the discussion that follows.

Economistic and sociological perspectives tend to focus on questions about whether poverty should be understood in absolute or relative terms (Bruce and Yearley, 2006, Pearce, 1992). Absolute poverty is a subsistence and survival conception, with an individualistic unit of analysis and a focus on fixed poverty lines based on the minimum level of calories, income or consumption expenditure needed for a person to survive or maintain life. Falling below this

minimum level identifies people as poor and in carrying out such measurements we are then able to calculate the proportion of a population below the poverty line (Black, 2002).

3.1.1 Insider perspectives: Bhatu narratives on their experiences of poverty

According to my own research findings, whether people are employed in factories or private households and have a monthly salary or earn on the street on a daily basis selling maps or repairing shoes, the average earning amounts to the same; 100 *Rupees* (₹) per day. Although it was never the intention to calculate poverty in such absolute economic terms through my own research, the subsistence and survival conception of poverty was nevertheless regularly highlighted in peoples' narratives and fundamentally shapes their everyday lived experiences and understandings. Several explained:

- *“I don't know the time I will be able to eat”.*
- *“They manage food only one time per day, and only half the size of portion that you need to survive”.*
- *“When earning is low or there is no earning member in the household and there are lots of people to be fed, you often have to sleep hungry”.*

In such cases, experiences of lacking income and therefore having an insufficient calorie intake are all too often evident, whether people are talking about themselves or observing the struggles of others.

Some absolute perspectives acknowledge that poverty should not be seen as a phenomenon linked only to slums in cities, or to low castes, female-headed households, women and the elderly; poverty can be found in all places and among all peoples. However, as I will go on to show in the section which follows, it is the case that these places and categories of people are at a much higher risk and increased vulnerability to poverty (Eatwell et al., 1987). The nature of this risk and vulnerability is evident in people's day-to-day concerns about the basic cost of living. For example, they tell me:

- *“Things are expensive and getting more so; sugar, milk and flour now cost double and I also have to pay an electricity bill”.*

- *“I can’t meet expenses”.*
- *“I am not able to have anything, or not able to sustain anything”.*

In these ways, people’s lives are shaped by the uncertainty and insecurity that comes from the rising cost of living and the increased financial responsibility that comes with now having to pay for things like utility bills.

Some anthropological approaches would respond to the specific nature of such findings by highlighting that peoples’ experiences of poverty cannot be meaningfully understood by measuring only in absolute terms (Barfield, 1997). Official poverty lines systematically underestimate the number of poor, the amount of income needed to survive and the distinct underlying reasons for moving into and out of poverty (Narayan, 2009a). In order to understand the variation in experiences and the extent and nature of risk and vulnerability in people’s lives, we need to turn to the idea of relative poverty. This relational conception has both an individualistic and collective unit of analysis. It encourages us to look at people’s individual entitlement, which is associated with their rights to resources such as places to work and income. In keeping with the absolute conception, a relative approach also allows us to measure the breadth of poverty in terms of the proportion and total numbers of poor in a population (Turner, 2006).

The experience of not having is commonly talked about in Bhatu people’s narratives, particularly when it comes to money, property and lifestyle. For example, at the most basic level, not having access to enough good, regular income because they do not have enough good, regular work is the issue. This situation is made worse due to the distant, insecure, competitive and often illegal nature of the work people engage in, which means they have to pay fines and/or bribes to officials. In people’s narratives the challenges involved in accessing work and the extent to which their incomes are thereby reduced are highlighted:

- *“There is no work for us to do in or around the colony”.*
- *“Too many people here are doing the same work, in the same place”.*
- *“I have no money, I’m not earning enough and I have bribes to pay”.*

In such cases, people are clearly concerned about the shortfall between their constitutional entitlement to earn a living and the reality of their daily struggle to access work that will allow them to eat, drink, dress and live well.

The composition of any given household in term of the number, age, gender and status of its members is also an important related concern in terms of people realising their entitlement to work and earn a living. There are a number of interconnected perspectives from the colony on this:

- *“I am the only earning member for my family, and I am becoming too old”.*
- *“The day starts early and ends late, despite my old age”.*
- *“When people are poor they still have to work a lot, and hard, when they are old and still make little money”.*

In these examples people acknowledge that lone male family members struggle and often only manage minimal earning. In such cases, they face working long hours into their old age in order to meet their daily needs. People also acknowledge the benefits that come from multiple family members working together to meet expenses and improve household circumstances. However, they tell me that opportunities such as these are often missed because:

- *“Siblings are not working together to help everyone in the household”.*
- *“Family members don’t work together to lift up the family”.*

In many circumstances this is because earning members are either increasingly incapacitated or die prematurely due to accidents or illnesses associated with alcohol and drug misuse and dependency.

The implications are that those who are left to pick up the responsibility for earning are often younger, less experienced, less able and less valued for their work. People observe that:

- *“My father does not go for work”.*
- *“Husbands and sons don’t go for work and daughters and daughters-in-law have to”.*

- *“There is a failure of males to listen, earn and achieve, and they are forcing women into work”.*
- *“Younger family members are earning”.*
- *“Children and women are begging and stealing or having to work”.*
- *“My father died and there is now no mature family member making money”.*
- *“I see that women who don’t have a husband face a lot of difficulties because they have small children. You can’t just leave them and go for work, it’s a big problem”.*
- *“In my lineage there are a lot of people including widows and the elderly and whole households with no earning members”.*
- *“My father just drinks and sleeps, his children are hungry but he does not know. My mother has to make sure we are OK”.*

In such cases, men’s failure to meet some or all of their responsibilities creates considerable strain among family members and is changing the very nature of the gender role expectations that shape the relationships between men and women, as well as between parents and their children.

We are able to learn about the specific nature of the economic deprivation shaping people’s lives from these excerpts from life-story narratives. However, we are also able to understand something of the experiences of poverty that come from having no family, or having no sons to earn and no daughters or daughters-in-law to carry out the caring role in households. In this regard, people told me:

- *“I feel very poor, I have no wife, no son or mother and father and I have daughters left to marry”.*
- *“I feel poor because I am a widow, it’s not just about not having money, it’s because I am alone”.*
- *“I don’t have anything, no family or daughter-in-law”.*
- *“We have many problems and I don’t have a son to earn”.*

This experience of poverty is often particularly acutely felt by the elderly, but increasingly by ever younger men who become addicted to alcohol and drugs. Given the drain on income that

comes with feeding their habits or investing in treatments for associated ill health and in some cases rehabilitation, men become increasingly isolated from joint-family living and sometimes eventually from their wives and children.

Some women respond to my question about whether they thought of themselves as poor by saying things like:

- *“I am uncomfortable with the use of the word poor, but I don’t even have a single rupee to make food”.*
- *“I don’t say I’m poor to people, but I feel poor. I cried when I heard my daughter saying that we are poor”.*

Women in general were also more likely than men to highlight the role of other people in helping them manage in difficult circumstances:

- *“Without the help of my brother there is no one, poverty is a shared thing”.*
- *“I look poor, but if I am at all in a good way it is because of my eldest son”.*
- *“Mother keeps helping me, I see my sisters in better clothes, I can’t have this”.*
- *“My husband has bought me nothing after marriage”.*
- *“I was poor when I lived with my mother and father, now I am married and I get whatever I want and ask for”.*
- *“Of course we are poor, we can’t eat two meals easily and we have to go out and work for other people”.*

Such narratives highlight the comparatively higher levels of dependency and the larger extent of reliance on other people which shapes the caring and increasingly the earning lives of women.

The relative perspective on poverty also encourages us to look at the average standard of life that is made possible through consumption. Such considerations allow us to measure the depth of poverty (Eatwell et al., 1987). In this regard, people in the colony talked about the insecure nature of their housing. For example:

- *“We stand on our own two feet, but we can’t afford a house here, so we will have to go back to Rajasthan”.*
- *“We are relying on people here to let us live in their house for free, but we are always aware that we could be thrown out at any time without knowing where else to go. We have always to be especially nice to people, but we always run the risk of things being thrown back in our faces or being threatened with eviction when there is a fight”.*
- *“I think we are the poorest because we live in my mother-in-law’s house, we have no house of our own”.*
- *“I live in a shop space, and our household has debt”.*
- *“There is no one as poor as us, I don’t have a house, I have no money for this. I pawned my jewellery to get money to pay rent for a room and I still have not managed to get the jewellery back”.*
- *“Our experience is of accumulating debts and having to take loans against the house”.*

From these examples, we gain some insight into the sadness and tension created by housing insecurity, as well as by both economic and social indebtedness.

People also highlighted the uncomfortable nature of their living conditions and the undesirable nature of the society they live in:

- *“We don’t have a good house and it’s too small”.*
- *“We have the building, but we don’t have anything in our house”.*
- *“I don’t have things in my house, I don’t have anything”.*
- *“I don’t have a house or good place to live”.*
- *“I would have liked to live in a better environment”.*
- *“Our living standards are low and very dirty”.*

People also gave some insight into the degree to which they are forced to live in the colony. For example, they explained that:

- *“My family is very sad, father has a lot of tension, no house, no land and we are steeped in debt. Where can we go? Where else can we live?”*
- *“People come to live here from outside because the rent is free”.*
- *“Some people want to stay in the colony their whole life because they want to stay with relatives”.*
- *“Women whose husbands have died come here so that the community can help them”.*

In such cases, we learn about the way people’s circumstances of poverty are compounded on the one hand by housing insecurity and alleviated to some extent by squatting close to family and community members.

Such physical discomforts and environmental insecurities form the context within which people also struggle to provide for their children’s everyday needs, let alone invest in their schooling, fulfil their wishes and dreams or aspire to get them married well. Some people explained:

- *“I don’t have money to spend on my children”.*
- *“I can’t give my children things and I can’t give them all the same”.*
- *“I feel poor, otherwise there would be something to give the children, I feel sad because I want them married off well so that they have less struggle”.*

In these cases, we see the ways in which parents struggle to attain a standard of living as well as meet their responsibilities.

There is much to be learned about people’s everyday lived experiences of poverty when taking a relational perspective, in that it makes it possible to identify more than one indicator of poverty and explore the relationship between them. For example, through narrative we learn that:

- *“When all responsibilities are on one person, this puts them behind”.*
- *“People are not going for work, don’t have food and have to ask neighbours for help with food and money”.*

- *“When there is no money you have to work instead of study”.*
- *“People are accumulating debt and having to take loans against their house”.*
- *“Mothers often have ill health or wives and children get ill and you have to face the costs of medicine and hospital treatment”.*

In these cases, we see that people’s experiences are influenced by how many are earning, how many dependents there are, the extent of assets and debts they have accumulated, the level of education they have attained and the health of family members.

The propensity for alcohol and drugs, the ability to earn and dwindling income are also increasingly important interlinked considerations when people talk about their worsening circumstances:

- *“I was in a very good position before I started drinking. Now I take days off work and don’t always earn well”.*
- *“Drug taking makes for a poor life, it’s expensive”.*
- *“Many people are spending regularly on drugs”.*
- *“I have faced a lot of tensions, a lot of problems, I started to drink because of this, and now my children drink and take drugs and they are ready for marriage”.*
- *“We are poor because my husband is an alcoholic and not working”.*
- *“My husband earns money but he is drinking, the money he earns he spends on himself”.*
- *“After drinking, life just goes down and down”.*

As these narratives show, the ability to earn, the amount earned and the amount spent on intoxicants have a profound effect on the lives of household members.

Household circumstances only get worse as earning members’ physical and psychological health deteriorates and desperation leads to increasing violence and rising levels of criminal behaviour. People gave some insight into the nature of the particular vulnerability they face:

- *“Because of drugs and drink my son has become so ill that he can’t eat and can’t go for work”.*
- *“Boys take drugs and then become very dangerous, pickpocketing and stealing”.*
- *“Where men are addicted to drugs, the expense of rehabilitation is 2,000₹ per month, but then they come back home and start again”.*
- *“People are poor when a husband goes mad, leaving small children or daughters to be married, it’s very bad”.*
- *“Where there is abuse and beating in the family, there is sadness and misery and ill health”.*

From these narratives we can see the relative approach to poverty at work. We are able to identify who is poor and understand the complexity of circumstances behind a person’s lack of sufficient income and their inability to afford the standard of living, which a comparative group or average person may have (Black, 2002, Pearce, 1992, Turner, 2006).

In poverty-focused literature, the inability of people to attain an adequate standard of living is often talked about in terms of the poverty gap; that is, the difference between the absolute fixed poverty line or the relative rights to resources and attainment of average standards of living and the actual circumstances of people’s lives. The poverty gap is a measure of deprivation, the depth and severity of which is greater and recovery is slower in India, particularly among lower castes in general and women in particular (World Bank, 2011).

The depth and severity of poverty are most meaningfully explored through the idea of the dynamics of poverty; that is, the movement into and out of poverty (Turner, 2006). Investigating poverty with dynamics in mind involves considering the transitory nature and extent of the stability of poverty, as well as the relationship between the two. In such cases, we acknowledge that the poor of today may not be the poor of tomorrow, next week, next month or next year. Transitory factors include unemployment, seasonal fluctuations in work and ill health. Changes in family composition and circumstances over time associated with births, marriages and deaths also constitute valuable transitory indicators.

In these ways, poverty is intimately linked with the lifecourse, experienced at one or more stages, but the duration is limited by the passage of time. However, evidence from the colony

shows that when poverty at one stage in the lifecourse is associated with the accumulation of debt combined with relying on high-interest borrowing schemes or investing in demanding savings schemes by way of amassing enough funds to pay for a daughter's marriage, for example, it can lead to longer term, persistent poverty (Eatwell et al., 1987, Ritzer, 2007).

For example, while talking about their lives, people make strong links between being poor, having children and the cultural imperative to get them married. People talk about the burden of having many small children, particularly when they are girls:

- *“I didn't think about being poor before, but now I have children, it's very bad and the problems are coming”.*
- *“I feel that I'm poor because I have many small, small children and many daughters”.*
- *“I am a very poor man; you see how many girls I have”.*
- *“I have four unmarried daughters and I am the only earner”.*
- *“There are a lot of problems and expenses when you have many sisters or daughters to get married”.*
- *“I am tense all the time about the marriage of my daughters”.*
- *“You see how many girls I have, some are already married, but we have no money, so moving them to the marital home is not possible”.*
- *“People are poor because of having too many responsibilities and having to save for this”.*
- *“Poverty is part of learning about what it takes to take care of family”.*
- *“It is only after you get married that you are able to live your life and plan your future”.*

From these examples we see the ways in which people anticipate with dread the cost of living associated with raising a family, but also the inevitability of increasing responsibilities and indebtedness as their children grow up and reach marriageable age. Yet there is also the recognition that life can only come from marriage.

The persistent depth and severity of poverty which indebtedness brings, in turn, makes people vulnerable to other otherwise transitory factors already mentioned above. Such complex and

layered vulnerabilities inevitably mean that people are more likely to experience spiralling ever deeper into poverty with each generation, as they struggle to pay off old debts while at the same time accumulating more by way of meeting new obligations (Clark, 2006, Eatwell et al., 1987).

Development-based perspectives make a meaningful contribution to the understanding of these types of severe everyday lived experiences of risk, deprivation and vulnerability which are subsumed under the term chronic poverty. As far as definition goes, the distinguishing features of chronic poverty include the severity of depth, the persistence over extended periods of time or over the course of an entire lifetime, the *intergenerational* transmission of poverty whereby deprivation is offloaded from parents to children and then grandchildren, and where people die otherwise preventable deaths. Such chronic poverty rarely has a single cause. Rather there are drivers of chronic poverty; that is, the circumstances that cause people to fall into poverty, which are hard to escape from. These include the lack of access to assets, and the inability to stave off shocks that are severe and sudden, such as illness where the ability to work is removed and expenditure on treatment includes hospitalisation.

Moreover, there are maintainers of chronic poverty; that is, the circumstances that make poverty persistent and which trap people, including social and geographical exclusion. As found in the colony, low caste stereotypes and discrimination prevail and there is considerable investment of time and money by the already deprived just getting to the places where they can work. Also important are the cultural aspects of poverty transmission, such as the imperative to marry and the lack of educational and skill attainment. Evidence shows that these drivers and maintainers operate and interact in the everyday lives of individuals, households and communities (Clark, 2006).

Understandings about who the poor are and what poverty is, clearly come when people themselves recognise their own conditions as an expression of poverty and when this recognition is integral to the way a person perceives their abilities, their world and their position in it. According to my own research findings, 73 percent of the whole second phase sample talked about themselves or some aspect of their lives and living conditions as being poor. This figure represents 46 percent of the core group and 54 percent of the comparative group who said things like:

- *“I am poor”.*
- *“My family is poor”.*
- *“Our lineage is very poor”.*
- *“We are in a very poor condition”.*

Moreover, men were more likely than women to straightforwardly acknowledge their poverty and talk about it being something known:

- *“It’s obvious; I am always thinking I am a poor man in this world”.*
- *“I am poor, what else do you think I am? You can’t look at me and say I’m rich, life is just about making time pass”.*
- *“I don’t think I’m poor, I am poor. I understand this, I see this”.*

While 79 percent of men and 71 percent of women from the core sample said they were poor, 95 percent of women compared with 73 percent of the men in the Bhatu comparative sample said they were poor. This figure needs to be understood in the context of this particular sample having comparatively larger family sizes (7 household members) than the average (6 household members) in the colony. There are also comparatively more women who are already widowed (6 percent of core and 11 percent of comparative) and who have to go out for work to support themselves and their families (53 percent of core and 62 percent of comparative), or who have male members of working age who are incapacitated (26 percent core and 34 percent comparative).

Only 7 percent of the overall sample stated that they did not see themselves, their lives or living conditions as being poor. In these cases, while there was no significant difference in the numbers of men and women answering in this way, it was the men who were most likely to view their circumstances positively:

- *“I have hands and I can work, I can take care of my family”.*
- *“We stand on our own two feet”.*
- *“I have work, my wife has work”.*
- *“I need to do a lot of hard work to make money, but once I have money it’s OK”.*

- “*I do my best, if I make money it’s fine, if I don’t make money then also it’s fine*”.

In these ways, men highlighted positively and gave value to the practicalities of their own capacities to earn.

The World Bank continues to make a valuable contribution to broadening and deepening perspectives on poverty. In keeping with my own research endeavours, the World Bank has sought the poor’s participation in research and grounded understandings in their experiences. However, despite the meaningful contributions made, the way in which some findings have been written up for publication is problematic. For example, some authors have medicalised the language used to talk about poor people’s circumstances and the role of development research, which is reduced to a process of ‘diagnosing’ and ‘treating’ poverty as if it were pathological (Robb, 1999).

Nevertheless, the *Voices of the Poor* series, another example of the World Bank’s participatory endeavours, while attracting methodological criticism, constitutes an important contribution to the understanding of poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves. Poor people in India were among the first to contribute to this research and their experiences of struggle in everyday life have been documented and published over three volumes. According to the first, people’s definitions of poverty mirror findings in my own research in the colony, in that they uncover multiple, interlocking dimensions of deprivation. For example, firstly, they characterise poverty in terms of material well-being, which emphasises the importance of food security, employment and housing. Secondly, they characterise poverty in terms of psychological well-being, which highlights the significance of voicelessness, powerlessness and a lack of independence.

The data chapters which follow in this thesis, demonstrate that experiences of these types of deprivation leave people open to exploitation, humiliation and ill-treatment, which in turn leads them ultimately to violate social and cultural norms. Also in keeping with my own research findings, are the mixed reviews which schooling receives in the first volume of the *Voices of the Poor*, ranging from being highly valued to being completely irrelevant. Illness and the lack or cost of health care and the associated loss of earnings are also highlighted. Interestingly, having assets in the form of a range of material and social resources which

individuals, families and communities could draw upon in times of crisis rather than income are also important. Moreover, differences in peoples' ability to access these are also highlighted; dependent upon household and community power relations and the variation in status according to gender and age. As in the colony, the absence of basic infrastructure such as roads, transport, water and electricity were also significant in characterising poverty (Narayan et al., 2000).

The findings of the second volume, focus entirely on India and are also of particular interest given the relational conceptualisation of poverty used in my own research. Mirroring the colony, there is a lack of security in everyday life because livelihoods are irregular, seasonal and inadequate, and people have no support, protection or peace of mind. The places where poor people live are also isolated, risky, lack facilities and utilities and are stigmatised. People are hungry, ill, tired and thin in appearance. Gender relations are unequal and fraught with conflict and violence. Social relations more widely are characterised in terms of being isolating, discriminating and abusive, and their interactions with institutions have led to disempowerment and exclusion. People are also constrained due to a lack of information, education, skills and confidence (Narayan et al., 2000a).

The third volume in the *Voices of the Poor* series explores meaningful patterns in the ways poverty is experienced. It acknowledges that who the poor are, and why they are poor, are complex and context-specific and require an understanding of cultural, economic, social and political issues, as well as the role of the physical environment in shaping people's experiences of poverty. One chapter in this volume focuses on India and reports on poverty, which is characterised in terms of malnourishment, migration and indebtedness. Poor peoples, in particular low caste, constitute the largest percentage of the population. Illness and death in families are significant in leading to their spiralling debt and struggle for survival in daily life. Even those who have the means to cope with such shocks are unable to find their way out of poverty because of the irregular and low nature of earning. As found in the colony, people's priorities are livelihood, housing, water and health (Narayan and Petesch, 2002).

By beginning the review of literature with a focus on the different perspectives on poverty, I have shown that a comprehensive understanding can only come from exploring people's own

accounts of their lives and acknowledging their recognition and evaluation of their circumstances. Central to the understanding of who the poor are and the nature of their experiences of deprivation is also meaningfully informed by the way those other than the poor view poor people.

3.1.2 Outsider perspectives on the colony: The place and its people

Throughout my time living in the colony, I made a point of talking to people who live and work in the surrounding areas and who provide services for the people of the colony. The experiences and perceptions these people have about the colony and its residents, not only reflect the deprivation and hardship highlighted in the Bhatu narratives, but also influence the way in which people talk about and interact with Bhatu people.

On leaving the colony, I took an early evening walk along the dusty, broken road and crossed the bridge into perhaps the most affluent area neighbouring the colony. I talked to a peanut seller who had set up his stall at the end of the bridge. He told me; *“I have lived here for twelve years and this is a good area to live”*. Literally a few meters across the dirty water, I pointed back towards where I had come from and asked him what he thought about over there. He said: *“The other side is not a good area to live; it is a small area with small, dirty people”*. By smaller he meant low caste, poor people. I moved on to find a family group of residents sitting chatting, while checking and sorting grains. I asked them what their area was like to live in. One of the ladies informed me; *“This is a good place to live, there are no problems here”*. Her son then went on to add:

“The area over the water is a dull area; the people are not good and they have a problem with their minds; they are warped. Don’t go across the water, you don’t know the area. The environment isn’t good. There are poor people there. Useless people live on that side, here we have good people. We don’t go over there and they rarely come over here, but when they do it is in order to steal our jewellery and mobiles from us and they also use guns to help them steal. They make a lot of mistakes”.

I continued then to walk down a narrow winding street that took me away from the dirty water and out of sight of the colony. As I moved towards the end, the street widened and I saw a group of elderly ladies sitting on a large doorstep soaking up the last of the day's sun. I asked them what it was like to live here, one lady reluctantly said: *"Everything is good here"*. I then asked if they knew anything about the people across the water. They began to talk in unison then, all offering their opinions. One lady told me: *"The people over there are from lower castes"*. Another said: *"Everyone in this area is only from good castes"*. Another reaffirmed; *"The area over the water isn't good, it does not look nice"*.

On another day, in the same area, I came across a man who has lived here for eighteen years. He told me:

"Before there were a lot of problems here because the people from across the water would come and steal, but this has really reduced. Now people from over there regularly come and there are no problems, but we don't go over there. They are lighter, smaller people; lower in terms of caste and class".

A little further on, I spoke to a female shop owner who has lived and worked here for fourteen years. She told me: *"Living here is OK, but over there is not. My shop faces the colony where low class people live. They are mostly alcoholics who drive rickshaws"*. The male shop keeper next door also added: *"This area is a good area to live"*. Interestingly, he included the colony in this, noting that comparatively;

"Mongol Puri is a much worse area. The people living in the flats across the water were living in jhuggies before and they were moved by the Government. I remember they were a bit problematic in the beginning, but now they are OK".

As I returned to the road running along the water side, I had to remind myself that this was still a comparatively affluent area. As I walked towards the industrial area, the road deteriorated from a passable two-way street for cars and carts to a pot-holed trickle track with patches of grass growing out of it. This seemed only to reflect the notable decline in the houses, which became increasingly rickety and sparsely situated - a stark contrast to the grandeur I had just seen. I came across a group of young male teenagers sitting on a

crumbling wall and just hanging out. They were very excited to talk to me when I asked them about what it was like to live here. It seemed that they had lived here for anywhere between seven and fifteen years.

One of them said: *“It’s good, OK, here, but the other side is bad. There are no good people living there, they are beggars and thieves, they steal everything, including your money and phone”*. A couple of the boys remembered how they had watched the colony being built and how things had changed. Another recalled: *“Low caste people got the flats there, they all came and broke the walls so that they could access the dirty water, they use it as their toilet. They come over here and then go and there are no problems. But on this side the society is good”*. I continued to my way and met another young lad who was buying some sweets from a shop. He told me: *“The area, including this part is not good; children are always running around wild, playing and getting into stealing”*.

On another walkabout, I decided to visit the industrial area adjacent to the colony. The streets here are pretty deserted, lined with metals and soaked with any number of chemicals, the toxicity of which literally takes your breath away. What seemed like endless high bricked walls were occasionally broken by a door or gate and I peered in. I was able to speak with an owner of a metal fabrication factory. I asked him if he knew anything about the colony and whether people from there actually came to find work in his factory or in the wider industrial-manufacturing area here. He told me: *“Many men come from the colony to work here, it’s a very good area and they are good workers, they work hard”*.

One day while walking in the relatively poorer area adjoining the colony, I happened upon a group of older men sitting out on the street and I took the opportunity to ask them about their experiences of the colony. One of the men has a vegetable stall at the weekly market and has lived in the area for ten years. He said: *“This is a good place to live with your family”*. I asked him if he had had any dealings with the people of the colony. He told me: *“We were here before them. Everyone who lives in these areas is from outside Delhi, from Haryana and Rajasthan”*. I thought it interesting that in his evaluation he included himself with them. However, he then began to make distinctions: *“The colony is a dangerous area and the police have to keep watch, because there are a lot of robberies. Poor people live there, rickshaw men and sweepers and thieving types of people”*.

A hardware store owner then came forward to give his account, adding:

“I have lived here with my family for twenty-three years. In this area people are OK, but in the colony they are dirty and they stay there illegally. They are labouring types of people. You have to accept these types of people; the lower classes. The government has really helped us by developing the area. Even the people in the colony have been given everything, including light and water. Work is also possible for them here, where there are shops and hotels; they can get jobs easily”.

Another man who has lived here for twenty years and works as a plumber, went on to say:

“The people in the colony may live over there, but they come over here in the night and steal from people. My family have not had any problems living here, but people regularly tell stories about getting robbed on the street and in their homes. But I’m not frightened to live here and there is no problem for my children. The people of the colony target richer people; we don’t have so much”.

On making my way back home to the colony, I entered the street which is lined by small rickety red brick houses with tin roofs, which back on to the colony. The shops and services here are often rendered inaccessible because the streets are broken and full of rubble, and left impassable by pedal rickshaws, motorised vehicles or even on foot because there is frequent flooding by dirty water from the open drains. It is difficult to see how these people’s lives are that different from those lived in the colony. Yet, as I was to find out, people still find ways of drawing boundaries and making distinctions, which justify their elevated positioning.

I got talking to an older lady, who was sitting outside her house on a woven bed entertaining her small grandchildren. Her husband is a shoe shiner and her son a painter. She had moved here with her family ten years ago, just before the colony was built. She told me:

“The government gave them very nice houses, but these people are very dirty. They are also very angry people, they are very different and we feel afraid of them. They are very dangerous people who take drugs and are always fighting

and stealing. They pickpocket from people on the street and they steal from our homes. After these people came to live in the colony, we could no longer leave anything outside or unlocked. In the beginning, we lost our things from inside and outside our house. They took our blankets and TV, wood, gas cylinders and food, even the dried spices”.

On heading to the shops one evening a familiar face pulled up beside me with his rickshaw and offered me a lift. I said I wanted to walk, and as we were going the same way, he continued to pedal slowly alongside me. He told me that his family and home are near Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, that he only came to Delhi for work and that he lives alone in rented accommodation nearby. We then started to talk about my work in the colony and he took the opportunity to raise some concerns and make some observations:

“They are not good people in the colony, there is too much fighting and stealing there. These are all dirty people who attack people like me at night, when it is dark. They know at the end of the day we have money and they want to steal from us”.

By the time you have walked away from the colony towards the main markets and shops which service the area, you start to see very wide multi-storey houses finished with decorative plastering and tiles. I talked with some young girls, who were tending their parents’ shop which sells costume jewellery and cosmetics. Two of the girls were in 12th class and one was in second year of an MBA at Delhi University. I enquired as to the nature of the work people do who live here: *“The people who live here have government service jobs mostly and some have businesses”*. I asked if they knew anything about the colony and its people. One told me:

“Jhuggi people live there, it’s not a good area, people are bad there; they smoke and steal and fight with police. It’s better if you don’t consider going there because they will steal your bag, and there is murder there. It is really not safe for girls”.

From each of these narratives, we see that the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ are drawn time and time again, based on bitter experience, but also stereotypes influenced by misinformation, intolerance and fear. These ways of talking emphasise caste-based positions in terms of people being high or low and big or small and class-based positions in terms of rich or poor. However, boundaries are also drawn on the basis of deviant and criminal activity, where those doing the drawing are the victims. Given the reputation of the colony and its residents, Delhi Police patrol the streets and people control their movements into and out of the area and avoid interaction with the residents as much as possible. Neighbouring residents and retailers alike, with few exceptions, state and justify their positions: the colony is a separate place, with a different type of people who have a poorer, lower, criminalised position in society because of who they are, the way they live, the way they think and the things they do.

As a result of their everyday interactions with new places and peoples, Bhatu people’s sense of deprivation and their experiences of inequality, injustice and conflict have increased. In turn, Bhatu people’s awareness of their low caste and poor class identity and their subordinate position in relation to others has heightened. In response, Bhatu people have increased their desire to draw boundaries around ‘us’ and ‘them’. This is made possible by upholding cultural ideals, norms and practices and economic interests, by way of creating and maintaining the social distance necessary for the formation and defence of their distinct Bhatu identity, which is positively rooted in village Rajasthan.

Interestingly, the perspectives of ‘the rich’ and ‘the poor’ are rarely the same (Latouche, 2007). The recent academic, media and public outrage on the issue of poverty lines in India is an example of why this is; there is a gap between academic and policy debates on poverty and between the perceptions of development researchers and practitioners and common people about what constitutes poverty. Ameeta Motwani’s research findings illustrate this point;

“When asked to identify the poor in their village, villagers in Haryana included someone as poor for not having a house of his own and living on rent. This may come as a shock to a city dweller since many rich persons in the cities do not own a house. The fact is that every adult is entitled to land for a house from the

common (panchayat) land and since self-labour and cheap material can be used to construct a kuchha house, it is rare that a person is without a house in the rural parts of the state. On the other hand, persons belonging to the middle class in cities thought of a person without footwear and those wearing old and dirty clothes as poor. However, it is quite common to find many children in rural areas (belonging to relatively rich households) barefoot and attired in old, dirty clothes” (2012:5).

It is therefore most meaningful to build on these perspectives by defining, conceptualising and explaining the circumstances of poverty using a combination of absolute and relative terms. Such complimentary measures bring material and experiential understandings that not only illuminate, but improve, the accuracy of poverty measures (Turner, 2006). As in the case of my own research, quantitative findings on household circumstances need to be informed by qualitative investigations into the understandings and experiences people have of poverty and the nature of relationships that create and maintain deprivation. In the process, relative poverty can be understood as a measure of inequality (Bruce and Yearley, 2006). In the following section, I discuss the significance of inequality in understanding people’s lived experiences of poverty.

3.2 Theorising inequality

Within the anthropological literature, some authors do not address the subject of poverty at all, choosing rather to focus their attention on inequality (Barnard and Spencer, 1998, Ingold, 2002). The idea of inequality not only informs the conceptualisation of poverty, but also draws our attention to the importance of the nature of the relationships between people in creating and maintaining risk, vulnerability and deprivation. The section which follows explores the origins, patterning and reproduction of inequalities, many of which are unique to the Indian context, and acknowledges their harmful effects on people’s everyday lives (Barfield, 1997, Barnard and Spencer, 1998, Ritzer, 2007).

In India, people may adhere to the constitutional ideals of equality of opportunity, where individuals compete and achieve success judged on their merit. However, in everyday life many have to reconcile these ideals with the realities of caste, class and gender inequalities,

which have a profound impact on people's ability to compete and achieve success in these terms. Sociological and anthropological approaches to understanding inequality usefully acknowledge the significance of the framework of collective life, within which the individual lives and acts, which works to both enable and constrain them in their everyday lives (Beteille, 2002, Giddens, 1979).

Inequalities of many kinds are simultaneously present in India and widely recognised within the literature. Some scholars begin by drawing our attention to the importance of personal factors in creating inequality. For example, differences in: characteristics, such as the lightness or darkness of skin colour; personality, such as the tendency towards being shy or confident and outgoing; and the level of education and skill people attain (Eatwell et al., 1987). However, questions of the best single indicator of inequality in these terms are increasingly outdated, and the importance of relative dimensions of inequality are more meaningfully acknowledged (de Graaf and Kalmijn, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is also argued that should we focus on inequality and nothing else, the findings would constitute nothing more than an understanding of difference. Reflecting concerns with such issues are those scholars who are interested in highlighting the relational factors which work to stratify society (Barnard and Spencer, 1998, Ritzer, 2007). In this way, inequality and hierarchy, as they relate to stratification, are highlighted, allowing us to look at the specific nature of the established social order and the way differences between peoples produce stability as well as mobility (Gupta, 1992).

Different systems of stratification exist simultaneously in society at any given time. Of particular interest to the understanding of poverty in India are the systems associated with caste, class and gender. Accordingly, stratification is the process by which people are taken either as individuals or as part of a community and categorised, ranked and positioned in relation to each other. The process of stratification also accumulates over the lifecourse, beginning in childhood as girls and boys access schooling and continuing in adulthood as men and women take on their respective earning and caring roles. In these ways, stratification is not just a reflection of individual differences, but a characteristic of society, which persists over generations. Stratification is any system of inequality, which not only positions people,

thereby giving some access to resources and not others, but also upholds these arrangements as natural or fair (Macdonis and Plummer, 2002, Ritzer, 2007).

An integral part of this ranking and positioning process is the way people use culturally available standards in order to evaluate each other (Beteille, 2002). Evaluation takes place: firstly, according to people's qualities, which are rooted in caste, class and gender identities; and secondly, according to people's performance, which is rooted caste-wise in the ritual relationship between purity or pollution (Miller, 1975), class-wise in terms of the economic relationship between rich and poor (Gooptu, 2004), and gender-wise in the social relationship between earning and caring roles (Beteille, 2002).

Evaluations are the basis for discriminating between persons and positions and are used to rank them as superior or inferior. Once positioned, this becomes the basis for the way people interact with each other, treat each other and are treated by others (Ibid.). People who are positioned lower are discriminated against and stigmatised by those positioned relatively higher. This, in turn, leads to marginalisation and exclusion and creates conditions of comparative disadvantage and increased vulnerability. Please see the discussion in Chapter Seven for more details.

For the moment, I want to move the discussion on inequality forward by looking at the role which evaluation plays in Bhatu peoples' life-story narratives. For example people say things like:

- *“I see myself as really poor, but there are those here who are in a worse condition”.*
- *“I don't feel good to say it, but there are people poorer than me”.*

In such cases, people's evaluations of themselves in relation to others are clearly a central part of their conclusions. We see on the one hand that while people may acknowledge that they are struggling, they evaluate their circumstances as less poor because they see that there are people who are worse off.

On the other hand, there are also those who evaluate their circumstances as more poor because they see that there are people better off than them. In these cases people state that:

- *“We are very poor, none of the families here are as poor as us”.*
- *“Living with richer people makes you feel poor”.*
- *“Being poor comes from wanting to live like other people and always asking when will we get this?”*
- *“I feel poor because I see people in front of me wearing better clothes and eating better, I feel I should have that”.*
- *“In comparison with others in our family, we know we are the poorest”.*
- *“When I see my sisters in better clothes, I feel that I also want to wear this”.*
- *“Comparatively, when looking at how we eat, drink and dress, we get a sense of where we stand and we are poor”.*
- *“Compared with my relatives, our house is the poorest”.*
- *“When affluent people want something they just buy it, I wish I was like that”.*
- *“I compare my life with the lives of the people I work for and see in their home how they live. They have everything, everyone is happy, has good clothes and we have nothing”.*

Women are far more likely to compare their abilities, circumstances and positioning with others than men. From these narratives, we learn that the inequality that increased vulnerability and disadvantage creates is meaningfully expressed in terms of both absolute lack and relative deprivation (Stewart et al., 2007).

Inequality is also given expression in narrative through relative hierarchies of exclusion. In the relationship between caste and hierarchy, exclusiveness is generated from the evaluation of people’s relative purity and pollution, which in turn is associated with relative social and economic privilege and political power. Privilege and power are associated with the positioning of caste groups in relation to others. Indian society is hierarchally ordered by a broad fourfold *varna* that distinguishes the ritually pure Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, from the ritually polluted Shudras. People classify themselves and are classified by others according to these ideal categories. The subsequent relative positions are given expression at the level of everyday life through distinct caste identities. Regardless of positioning, caste identities are claimed and maintained through adherence to ideals, practices and lifestyles which are always deemed superior to those of the people positioned below (Miller 1975).

There is also a direct relationship between castes and the division of labour in Indian society. Certain occupations are limited to particular caste categories and some occupations are attributed polluting qualities and identified with the pollutability of the castes associated with them. Taking distinct pathways into earning such as shoe shining and recycling has been an important part of Bhatu identity formation in the colony. However, increasingly there is evidence of new pathways into earning associated with the expanding service sector and driven by informal sector earning in Delhi. Nevertheless, high numbers of the same caste remain highly concentrated in a limited number of pathways into earning, which are in turn concentrated in a limited number of geographical areas. The reason for this links the specificity of the opportunities which are economically viable in any given geographical area and the apprenticeship approach to developing the skills and experience for them to be successful in pathways such as tourist guiding (Ibid.). Please see Chapter Seven for a more detailed discussion of pathways into earning.

From such changes over time, we are able to see that castes have become much less sharply defined by purity and pollution as an indicator of rank. Rather, ideas of purity and pollution are increasingly expressive of cultural differences as markers of separation associated with distinct identities. In this way, the differentiation in status, respect and power, which used to be acknowledged between castes, is increasingly experienced within castes and rooted in culturally distinct communities. Therefore, while the evaluation of relative purity and pollution may still provide legitimation for the ranking of caste groups according to their relative superiority and subordination, it can no longer account for the relative ranking of complete castes (Fuller, 2000).

Caste distinctions coexist and are increasingly cut across by a second system of ranking relating to class (Beteille, 2002). The idea of class highlights the growing importance of education, people's earning ability and independence in responding to changing earning opportunities and lifestyle choices in understanding inequality. This is particularly significant where individuals and groups no longer engage in conventional caste-based pathways into earning, where status, honour and respect are increasingly rooted in class positioning. In this way, caste-based loyalties and expectations are increasingly overridden by individuals' endeavours and interests (Miller, 1975).

Education, including foreign language attainment such as English, even if through informal, ‘*on the street*’ learning, the diversification of pathways into earning and an individual’s independence of endeavour, can allow people to breakdown the dominant-subordinate rigidity imposed by caste relationships. This makes status and power increasingly individualistic and the opportunity for individual mobility possible. In these ways, distinct hierarchies, one ritually based and associated with caste, and one economically based and associated with class, have evolved. The latter is increasingly valued more highly than the former. Evidence from the colony shows that families can thereby be completely split in their loyalties; a son who has the potential to earn thousands of rupees as a tourist guide once in a blue moon will be shown greater respect and command more power than his shoe shining brother who struggles to earn 100₹ every day, even when they both drink to excess. Yet both their identities remain rooted in the same caste, which is associated positively with a particular geographical area of Rajasthan. Please refer to Chapter Seven for more discussion on positive identities.

Class is a key sociological concept designed to understand the complexity of societal transformation. It involves recognition of a number of broad groupings, which - like caste - are ranked, and the relationship between them is protectionist, antagonistic and in some cases polarised (Clark, 2006). Class is generally identified by criteria such as occupation; that is, the grading or ranking of occupations (Barnard and Spencer, 1998) and the segmentation of the labour market (Eatwell et al., 1987). However, despite being good indicators of class, occupational positioning and labour market segmentation do not encompass all aspects of class. Other elements such as income and lifestyle choices also need to be acknowledged and explored (de Graaf and Kalmijn, 2001).

Evidence from narratives, shows that people’s evaluations of their everyday lives are informed by both ideas of caste and class. For example:

- “*When we are going to hospital, big (rich) people get seen quickly, small (poor) people like us have to wait a long time and we are scolded and mistreated*”.
- “*We are low caste, and many in my lineage are poor like me*”.
- “*In my caste there are many poor people including widows, old people and households with no earning members*”.

- *“I am in the same position as the rest of the people in my caste; I want to get rich”.*
- *“All low caste people are poor; we don’t get government jobs and always have to rely on luck”.*
- *“A few people here say that they are rich, but they are not really. If they were, why would they want to stay here? They get things because they get good clients, not because they have achieved anything themselves. They are still the same; poor people who have to stay here”.*

Such ways of talking are very important in helping us understand the role which inequality has in shaping experiences, but also understandings of poverty.

Some narratives also show that people recognise that higher caste status or achieving economic success, in themselves, do not necessarily protect them from worsening circumstances and can actually mask experiences of poverty in everyday life. For example some told me that:

- *“Just because you have a TV and fridge doesn’t mean that you are rich. People from any caste can get into a lot of debt, it’s part of the process of getting married”.*
- *“Maybe we have things in our house, but we don’t have regular work, or income and we don’t always have food to eat”.*
- *“When you become poor, people no longer look at you in the same way. So I always try to make things look good and not show anything”.*
- *“Those who are richer in the colony have a tendency not to show that they are. That is why they choose to live here”.*
- *“A lot of Bhatu people are rich, but because of addiction there is a lot of fighting. They may also have things, but you can’t run a house without money. Those without addiction have better houses”.*

In each of these cases, we gain insight into the ways people’s positionality, and therefore their evaluations and experiences of poverty, are increasingly influenced by relationships of inequality, inside as well as outside, caste (Miller, 1975).

In European countries, class is seen as the primary system of stratification, but as we see from the above narratives, in India, class cuts across the much stronger caste system of stratification, which continues to dominate lived experience, particularly for poor people. In this way, people of the same caste are further positioned according to whether they are relatively rich or poor. In itself, the idea of being poor rather than working class is therefore particularly meaningful in helping us understand the relationship between class and inequality and how it shapes people's experiences in India. It points to the mainly unorganised, informal nature of the work poor people engage in and avoids the idea that there is a distinct, stable class formation emerging, where they have shared interests. The term *poor* is descriptive, used to encompass different pathways into earning and the diversity of relationships and working conditions which characterise people's experiences of urban living (Gooptu, 2004).

The category of the poor is also increasingly meaningful in relation to the administration of the state, the dealings of the judiciary and the perceptions and interactions with the middle classes in India. In these circumstances, there is a tendency to identify poor people as if a distinct stratum of society. On the one hand, they share undesirable traits and threaten the fabric of social and environmental life. On the other hand, they are targeted by political parties who all claim to represent them in their search for votes. However, despite attempts to consolidate poor people into a homogenous group, the identity of poor people themselves takes diverse lines associated with physical places, caste, kinship and gender (Ghertner, 2008, Gooptu, 2004). In the section that follows, I explore further the heterogeneity in poor peoples' circumstances by looking at the relationship between gender and inequality in India.

Economists bring understanding to gender issues in development studies by highlighting declining sex ratios, disparities between men and women when it comes to access to and levels of attainment in education, inequality in access to and returns from earning and the differential rights of men and women to draw upon assets. There is also a higher incidence among women of malnutrition and ill health and they suffer disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse and sexual and violent crime outside the home. The intersection of caste, class and gender means that poor, low caste women in particular bear the burden of discrimination, deprivation and disadvantage in India (Deshpande, 2007).

Gender inequality is talked about in terms of disparity and is reflective of the ideas of lack or gap introduced during the earlier discussion of poverty above. Disparity is multidimensional and the intersection between caste and gender adds an important characteristic in understanding experiences of inequality. The subordination of women is understood to have been central to the development of the caste system, which leaves them increasingly constrained the higher their caste position in the hierarchy. The position and subsequent treatment of women under the caste system of stratification sees women positioned the same as Shudras. They are denied religious privilege, access to and attainment in education and restricted in terms of work and reproduction. Moreover women suffer oppression, humiliation, violence and degradation (Ibid., 2001).

As mentioned above, ideas of purity and pollution segregate castes, but they also work to segregate women from men by controlling their movement. For example, any caste or class mobility leads to the withdrawal of women from earning and the public sphere more widely. In this way, a trade-off is recognised in the lives of women between autonomy and material comfort. Higher caste women have a higher standard of living, while lower caste women have greater autonomy (Ibid., 2002).

However, lower caste women's freedom of movement is associated with deprivation. For example, women are often forced into work due to the growing incapacity of male household earners or the increased numbers of female-headed households created through marital estrangement and widowhood. Moreover, they are undervalued for their work in jobs that are understood to be dishonourable and low paid. Widespread sanskritisation, whereby lower castes emulate castes positioned higher than them, also serves to bolster the ideal in lower caste cultural practice that women should be kept at home. Therefore, the above distinction between lower and higher caste women in terms of this trade-off can be challenged at the level of everyday life in the colony (Ibid., 2007).

Anthropological and sociological approaches are critical of poverty measures in their ability to capture the way caste-, class- and gender-based systems of stratification lead to inequalities within and between households. For example, as highlighted above, families can be split in terms of caste (established pathways evaluated in association with caste such as shoe shining) and class (new pathways evaluated in association with learning, income and independence

such as tourist guiding). Moreover, poverty measurement endeavours have led to a focus exclusively on women as the poorest of the poor, with female-headed households being of particular concern. This has meant that some anti-poverty policies and development projects have automatically assumed that women are a homogenous category of vulnerable people with the same interests and priorities (Kabeer, 1997, Lockwood, 1997, Yates, 1997).

However, considerable effort has gone into challenging these generalised assumptions through development-oriented research. For example, in circumstances of estrangement or widowhood, women take responsibility for themselves and their children, and according to some literature, female-headed households are not always poorer. Some women are poorer because they maintain their relationship with their husband and their marital home and some women are poorer if separated (Lockwood, 1997). Evidence from the colony shows that there is no automatic link between female-headed households and poverty because women can have more independence, more decision making ability and access to and control over a full income and other resources that are not drained by a husband's spending on alcohol or drugs (Chant, 1997). For some, this means that both male and female children can access and complete education and overall welfare improves through better nutrition and because domestic abuse stops. In all of these ways, women's lived experiences are shown to diverge in ways that men's do not (Beall, 1997, Rogaly, 1997).

To illustrate this more fully, one young woman from my own research observed: *"Men make money and give it to their mothers first. They keep their mothers and sisters well, but some then just spend anything that is left, leaving their wives and children with nothing"*. In this way all household members do not necessarily benefit or benefit equally from income. Those at the bottom of the household status ladder, such as the wife of the most recently married son, will have the least access to income. According to development-focused literature, there is therefore a range of contexts and complexity of experiences involved in understanding the inequalities between women.

Furthermore, understanding household relations more generally is not always about acknowledging the harmony of interests which exist, but highlighting the contested and shifting nature of power, which generates inequalities. Cultural norms, ideals and practices, in themselves, inform these relations and work to both enable and constrain people. At the same

time, they are often the resources people define, interpret and use in the negotiation of change. Such inequalities are not confined to within households, but extend to women's interactions with community, earning and state institutions. Please see Chapter Seven which focuses on illegality of status, for more discussion of these interactions.

Evidence from the colony, in terms of maintaining relationships and negotiating inequality and change, shows that poverty and inequality are understood to work to disadvantage men as well as women (Kabeer, 1997). Please refer to Chapter Eight for further discussion on the subject of changing masculinities and femininities. Boys may be socialised into earning roles, which give them access to income and networks. However, like women, men are not a homogenous group with shared interests, and their experiences of inequality and poverty can be very different. This variation is shaped by the extent to which they are willing and able to take on and meet their responsibilities. This is not always possible when earning is irregular or low and drained by alcohol or drug abuse (Hart, 1997). These difficult circumstances are exacerbated when male earners adhere to cultural ideals and insist that mothers, sisters, wives and daughters remain at home. Men, in turn, who fail to meet their responsibilities are seen as shirking or inadequate, and are therefore less likely to command the loyalty of their children and more likely to be estranged from their wives (Chant, 1997).

Cultural ideals and practices are often seen to disadvantage girls more than boys when it comes to accessing and completing education. However, while male children may have more access to schooling and higher levels of attainment, they may be no more likely to complete their schooling than girls. This is because a household's financial circumstances may require them to leave school and earn a living. This decision can come from parents or the children themselves. Moreover, the benefits for girls that are seen to come from education are also often treated as if they were self-evident in terms of achieving status and knowledge, raising productivity in work, controlling birth rates and reducing child mortality. This means that the prevailing illiteracy associated with poverty is often seen to be rooted in the failure of the state to invest and provide (Subrahmanian, 1997).

While this may be the case in some places, evidence from the colony shows that economic deprivation and cultural ideals and practices trump such learning. Failure to enrol children in school is often about people's feelings that the education offered is not relevant, representing

as it does westernised, elite ideas. The ways of learning in a community may also be different, localised and based on apprenticeship (Ingold, 2000). There are also uncertainties about the benefits that education will bring in terms of accessing work and higher levels of income (Jeffrey et al., 2008, Yates, 1997). When it comes to understanding girls' access to and completion of schooling, cultural ideals related to female seclusion are also often much less of a concern than the imperative to get girls who have reached puberty married, and thereby retain honour and avoid harassment (Rogaly, 1997). Please see the discussion on learning in Chapter Six for more details.

Gender inequality is also often talked about in terms of the low levels of women's participation in earning. However, the link to cultural ideals and practices cannot be automatically assumed in this case. There is widespread under-reporting of women in work due to the ideal that men should earn. As mentioned above, the work that women do is seen to be dishonourable, the earning is understood to be worth nothing more than pocket money, and so people do not mention it (Ibid.). Pathways into earning are also unequal because they are often ascribed at the level of caste and in turn at the level of gender relations. Therefore, when women do take on a supplementary or full earning role, the types of work they engage in are limited and reflect both their low caste status and caring roles within the household in terms of recycling or housekeeping (Beall, 1997).

In acknowledging the relationships between women, between men and between men and women, we are able to see the limitations of poverty measures and understandings of inequality, in themselves, in capturing the realities of people's lives, their experiences and understandings. Despite the increased visibility of ideas of poverty and inequality, there is recognition of the scant increase in attention given to the realities of the poor and the fact that there is no respect for their priorities and no sensitivity to the nature of their enablements and constraints. There is also no focus on the emasculating contradictions between cultural expectations and economic realities, and no acknowledgement of the female resentment that comes from this. In keeping with the conclusions already reached above, attention needs to be given to the voices of men in relation to women, to their experiences of poverty, which are shaped by caste, class and gender inequalities, all of which interact to generate the relentless, often cyclical and accumulative nature of people's changing fortunes (Kabeer, 1997). Please

refer to Chapter Eight for more discussion on the changing nature of the relationships between men and women.

For the moment, we can see that a discussion on gender inequality informs poverty analysis, but is not reducible to it. Caste, class and gender relations intersect and work to enable and constrain people, forcing them to make painful trade-offs in their everyday lives (Deshpande, 2002, Kabeer, 1997). In the section which follows, I introduce literature on the subject of mobility and discuss the complexities involved in understanding people's endeavours to get out of poverty and pursue better lives.

3.3 Theorising mobility

Whether people labelled as scheduled castes (SCs), with low status in Indian society, can move out of poverty and achieve and maintain better lives is the central question motivating this research. The idea of mobility is very relevant in the context of development studies. Like poverty, mobility as a concept, has undergone rigorous academic debate and extensive theorising in the western context. Yet, an understanding of how and why people move out of poverty and stay out, remains limited and highly criticised for the same reasons as approaches to poverty; people cannot agree on what mobility is (Narayan and Petesch, 2007b). Mobility can be simply defined as the movement or change in a person's or group's position in a hierarchy. There are differences in the patterns of these movements and changes, and a great deal of variation in the rates of mobility across societies (Macionis and Plummer, 2002). In the following section, I review the literature which contributes to an understanding of people's everyday lived experiences of moving out of poverty.

Mobility is addressed in some of the literature as a matter of exploring the life chances of a person, and this is done from a number of perspectives. Economists prioritise trying to understand the impact of individual choices and priorities on these life chances, which they capture in terms of the income and expenditure involved in attaining a standard of living. Positional movement is most widely used in mobility analysis and a meaningful fivefold perspective on measurement has evolved: time dependence, measures the extent to which a person's current position is determined by their position in the past; positional movement, measures the changes to a person's position in terms of the distribution of income; share

movement, measures a person's change in income relative to others; symmetric movement, measures the extent of change across the distribution and finally, directional movement, measures the upward or downward direction of change and the amount gained or lost (Narayan and Petesch, 2007b).

Economics literature also focuses on the drivers of mobility, particular in terms of the persistence in economic status between generations. Analysis involves the continuous monitoring of the influence of a father's circumstances on a son's life chances, for example. Scholars contributing to this field of research endeavour to understand what makes mobility possible. They highlight correlations between income in particular and other variables such as personality traits, education, occupation, health status, the cultural transmission of cognitive skills, the inheritance of material wealth and geographical location. Usefully, this type of analysis explores life as an ongoing process and acknowledges the fluidity and interdependence of the relationships between people, regardless of the imposition of categories such as caste, class and gender (Atkinson, 1970, 1983, Bowles, 1972, Bowles et al., 2005, Bowles and Nelson, 1974, Grawe and Mulligan, 2002, Hertz, 1986, Hertz and Marshall, 2001).

Anthropological and sociological approaches to mobility prioritise qualitative research that focuses on people's membership of hierarchally ordered, discrete categories and the influences between rank of origin and destination. They highlight the role of social relations and cultural ideals and practices in generating enduring inequalities in people's life chances. The process of analysis in these cases, involves identifying boundaries and the extent to which these are challenged or crossed (Narayan and Petesch, 2007b). Scholars who contribute to this field of research endeavour to show that mobility is possible but limited to a minority of people. For the majority, their positions remain unchanged or get worse from one generation to the next. Much is dependent on the extent to which people are able to; adopt achievement ideologies which highlight the role of education and training in the meritocratic pursuit of employment, harness personal capacities to local labour market opportunities, and aspire to achieve (Bourdieu, 1984, Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974, Goldthorpe et al., 1980, MacLeod, 1987, Turner, 1964, Willis, 1977, 2001).

Better life in the colony is rarely defined in these terms. Only a handful of people talked about the success they had seen in others:

- *“People with a better life are sending their children to school”.*
- *“Better life would mean having education, having more education and being able to do office work”.*
- *“People have their own business or get a government job”.*
- *“Success lies in the amount of hard work people put in and being able to invest in more things like property and business”.*

People’s focus, however, was far more likely to be on:

- *“Not being hungry, being able to eat any time in twenty-four hours”.*
- *“You can eat on time”.*
- *“Having good food and drink, eating meat every day”.*

Having such minimal expectations reflects the depth of poverty which grips the everyday lives of many people in the colony. Many also highlighted that better life ultimately comes from:

- *“Making good money”.*
- *“Having money and being able to spend it”.*
- *“Having money in your hands to be able to buy things and pay for them in a lump sum and being able to save”.*

For some, the management of money in such a way that balances earning, spending and saving is the most often talked about component of attaining and maintaining a better life. For others, the focus was on the ability to invest in possessions and the material comfort that comes with increased income:

- *“Having a nice house with everything in it”.*
- *“Having a big house in a clean area”.*

- *“Being able to renovate and decorate your house and live in comfort”.*
- *“Having a change of lifestyle where your food and drink are different, where your clothes are different”.*
- *“We can buy suits and wear them all the time without thinking about keeping them for special occasions in the future”.*
- *“Where living standards are high and you can have a car, motor bike and auto-rickshaw”.*

Having everything is by far the most highlighted feature of attaining a better life. However, some people were concerned to point out the relational aspects of what getting out of poverty might mean:

- *“People do honest work and do good business”.*
- *“People have a sound mind, good personality, they look good, talk well and are made welcome everywhere”.*
- *“People with better lives have a good nature, are different, are good people and have a lot of respect for others. They have feeling to take good care of others”.*
- *“They make and honour promises”.*
- *“You are able to be self-employed, rely on yourself, do festivals in the community and help more people”.*

For these people, they saw positive changes in the demeanour of individuals as well as in the quality of the relationships between people where they had attained better standards of living.

The relational aspect of getting out of poverty was also highlighted in terms of positive changes in day-to-day family living:

- *“People are going out to work when they want, they are living their lives”.*
- *“Throughout the day people can take it easy, rest and pass time well”.*
- *“We can enjoy ourselves and not have to go outside or do anything that we don’t want to do”.*
- *“A wife stays at home and is fed”.*

- *“There are fewer irritations, problems and tensions and more love and affection in families. Men are different when they have a better life; they don’t come home and abuse their wives”.*
- *“If you have good work, then tension is less, you don’t have to think”.*
- *“We would no longer have to always be sitting down and thinking about what we can do”.*
- *“There are no problems, people are happy”.*
- *“When you manage a better life the standard of living and the reason for living has changed. Before people only focus on getting money together for marriages, now thinking about and understanding life has changed”.*

According to these narratives, the very reason for living changes, better life brings with it many freedoms in terms of how people spend their time. They also get relief from the unrelenting physical and psychological struggles that shape the everyday lives of poor people. Such struggles are never very far away. However, even when people do attain a measure of better life, some pointed out that after all:

- *“People may have more money, but they have to get up in the morning and shower and go to work the same as me”.*
- *“There are richer people here, but they live like us, they are not any better. Physical living makes us all the same here”.*

In these ways, the often lofty discussions of better life were brought back to earth and the realities of everyday living.

As highlighted above, in India, the interactions between people are most meaningfully characterised in terms of caste, class and gender. However, each of these are important, but not totalising elements for study, in bringing an understanding of mobility (Appadurai, 1988, Dumont, 1970). This is because caste, class and gender interact further with other elements such as kinship, education and employment opportunities and marriage practices in determining a person’s life chances (Beteille, 1990, 1996, Breman, 1996, Chakrabarti, 2003, Dasgupta, 1986, Jeffrey et al., 2004, Liddle and Joshi, 1986, Ostor et al., 1982).

Caste is a source of emotive debate, being for some the predominant reason why mobility is impossible or limited in the Indian context. This is because, at the level of ideals in everyday life, caste is ascribed and remains a powerful basis for discrimination (Dumont, 1970, Narayan et al., 2009b). However, some authors talk about the ways in which claims to mobility can be made at the level of *varna*. This involves the aspirations of those positioned lower in the caste hierarchy to attain a higher position through a process of sanskritisation. This practice is understood to be widespread among Hindus in India. In this way, the caste system is meaningfully acknowledged as an important source of ideals, practices and lifestyles for emulation, which produce huge variations in cultures between and within castes at the local level (Srinivas, 1966).

Through taking on the ideals, practices and lifestyles of those higher up in the hierarchy, those lower down are able to make claims to new positions. In this way, positions are liable to change, but such claims to upward mobility are highly contested and achievement can be a slow process. In turn, those engaged in claiming a higher position are resentful of the endeavours of those positioned below them for trying to do the same thing. Thereby, the rivalry and conflict that arises out of these endeavours is acknowledged as an integral part of the process involved in translating constitutional provision into reality for low caste people like those in the colony.

Should claims to a higher position be legitimised, sanskritisation produces positional change, but these changes do not affect the overall caste structure. Each *varna* has an associated model of sanskritisation, but the Brahminical model is the most dominant, associated with vegetarianism, teetotalism and places of pilgrimage. The cultural content of each *varna* varies from place to place; particularly the further down the hierarchy caste communities are positioned. An important aspect of this cultural content is the legitimisation for mobility that is contained within it, which includes the inheritance of a genealogical lineage of a caste which is positioned much higher. For example, in the case of Bhatu people, their origin myth is associated with Rajputs of Rajasthan (Ibid., 1966, 1987). Please see Chapter Five for further discussion on Bhatu origin myths and identities.

Rural to city migration is related in important ways to the process of sanskritisation when it comes to enabling mobility. It makes adopting new ways of living and making claims to new

positions easier. In the case of the colony, migration has meant that there is increased variation in culture between sections of the Bhatu caste in terms of lineage, clan and kinship. Westernisation is also an important aspect linking migration and sanskritisation in people's claims to mobility. Urban living provides new opportunities for people with the right skills, such as being able to speak English, to increase their networks and earn a living in a highly monetised economy. As seen in the colony, increased wealth then allows people to invest in housing and land, send their children to English-medium schools and access westernised education and lifestyle choices. In these ways, people in the colony have been able to reconcile their relative wealth and lifestyle choices with their comparatively lower caste position. By increasing the difference between them and others, they have been able to increase their status and command respect. In such cases, community, household and individual mobility have become a source of jealousy as well as aspiration for others (Ibid., 1966).

Residential communities, as in the case of the colony, are often multi-caste, but tight knit, where everyone knows each other and a great deal of life experience is shared. In these circumstances, achieving the status of dominant caste is another way in which claims to mobility can be made. This concept highlights the ways in which caste groups, such as in the case of Bhatu people, are able to use their positioning to exert power and authority over other groups living in the local area. Dominance is claimed on the basis of their strength in numbers, new occupations, new patron-client relations associated with foreigners, speaking English, education and westernised living associated with consumer lifestyle choices (Ibid., 1987).

Dominant castes are also often closely associated with or related to the *pradhan*, the community head. Furthermore, elder members of the dominant caste often form the mainstay hierarchal structure of the *panchayat*, the institution of self-governance which administers justice to its own as well as other caste groups who call upon their services within the community. In the colony, we see that these positions of power and influence increase a community's, household's or individual's sense of power and respect and affect mobility. Dominant castes, such as the Bhatu community, also establish and maintain associations with people of influence such as local politicians and advocates, who become mediation allies in claims to rights directed at state institutions, including the police. In these ways, power and

authority are exercised by members simply by virtue of their caste membership, gaining them access to water, electricity and legal representation (Miller, 1975, Srinivas, 1966).

The more a caste group is characterised by these elements, the greater the likelihood that they will possess dominant status. In this position, a dominant caste acts as the guardian of multiculturalism, and at the same time can become the target itself for emulation. However, as in the case of the Chittori family in the colony, those of the dominant caste most closely related to the *pradhan* and having most family members in the *panchayat*, can also be ruthless, monopolising the benefits from local provision in terms of housing, utilities and services and opportunities for the most lucrative pathways into earning, including access to licenses and permits for business. This creates great hardship for fellow caste members and members of other castes, from which resentment, anger and conflict grow (Srinivas, 1966).

Caste-based mobility has historically also been achieved through administrative processes of the state. For example, SCs have taken advantage of census administration as a means to have their claims to mobility recognised and legitimised. Through this process, people have changed the name of their caste and/or associated surname by choosing the actual or similar-sounding names of existing castes positioned higher up the hierarchy. People have adapted their ways of earning and living accordingly, providing occupations, lifestyles and origin myths in support of such claims. In this way, the census has stimulated both mobility and inter-caste rivalry (Ibid.).

Individuals of lower castes are also given fundamental rights to achieve upward mobility through policies of preferential treatment. Reservation policy, as it is termed in India, is designed to target all BCs, by way of acknowledging at the level of caste, people's 'backwardness'. That is, that their positions of disadvantage in terms of physical marginalisation and economic, political and social exclusion act as barriers to better life and mobility. As highlighted in the introduction of this thesis, BCCs at the national, and increasingly at the state level, have identified people as BCs for this purpose (National Backward Classes Commission, 2005). Please see Appendix III for a more detailed discussion on the impact of reservation policy in India.

Reservation policy has been used to protect their interests by providing reserved quotas in education and government employment and representation and participation in the political process. These, in turn, are understood to provide compensation for past injustices and protect the weak through proportional equality and social welfare, and offer social justice by redistributing material resources and power (Austin, 2003, Bacchi, 1996, Nesiah, 1997, Weisskopf, 2004). However, the idea that it will facilitate upward mobility has led lower castes, such as Bhatu people, to develop a vested interest in becoming formally recognised for their 'backwardness'. They see this as their best hope of attaining otherwise inaccessible education and prestigious, secure and well-paid employment (National Backward Classes Commission, 2005, Srinivas, 1966). Several people in the colony have attained such recognition back in their villages in Rajasthan. Yet, given that many have since migrated to a city in another state, their certificates are no longer valid and they cannot claim benefits as long as they stay in Delhi. Please see Chapter Six for more on the experiences of claiming rights to education and employment through reservation policy.

Reservation policy continues to be supported in its role to bring betterment to people's lives. The stance on reservation in education remains positive, seen to provide an opportunity for peoples from different backgrounds to mix and to provide a basis for healthy emulation as well as moral and economic gain. Moreover, it is understood to help in overcoming the vested interests of employers and increase the opportunities for women. In these ways, reservation is talked about as a matter of national interest, as people develop their skills, confidence and ability to compete (Backward Classes Commission, 1991).

However, the stance on reservation in government employment is markedly different and faces growing opposition. The attainment of even one individual of such a position is understood to have the power to boost the morale of a whole community. By increasing the representation of a community, a feeling of participation in the governance of the country is established. Such people are understood to constitute a huge asset in these posts, given that they have the advantage of first-hand knowledge of the nature of the conditions and struggles which BCs face. Yet, in reality, the sheer numbers of BCs overwhelm the limited numbers of places reserved and render the impact of reservation policy negligible. Concerns also grow about the quality of government services being undermined and that those achieving positions

of authority through merit do not necessarily provide any greater guarantee of being honest, efficient and hard-working.

The current poor performance of the country's administration system is cited as an example. Others argue that BCs may not be any better off, even if they do benefit from reservation policy, given their lack of social and cultural capital (Backward Classes Commission, 1956). There are also concerns about any benefits of reservation policy being skimmed off by already better off BCs. This argument is countered by those who wish to highlight that this 'creamy layer' phenomenon is in any case a normative characteristic of Indian society, which is inherently unequal (Backward Classes Commission, 1991).

In each of these cases, caste members' achievements are in proportion to their abilities, given their positioning of enablement and constraint in pursuing opportunities. An Individual's ability is dependent on their levels of education, earning, and on the degree to which they are independent to pursue new opportunities. Education, earning and independence are related to the way the pathways people take are ranked. For example, in the colony, those who shoe shine and recycle are evaluated below those who do not, and therefore the returns for their endeavour are lower, leaving them less capable of responding to other, perhaps better opportunities. However, such examples show us that mobility is not about an all-encompassing caste system, but the organisation of caste communities, as well as individuals, in relationships which are characterised by domination and subordination and the degree of enablement and constraint that comes from this (Miller, 1975).

At the level of everyday life, manifestations of *varna* have become dispersed and highly variable at the local, regional and state levels. Moreover, while people work hard to maintain their distinct lineage, clan and kinship identities, their positioning in terms of caste is in a constant state of flux as they go about their daily lives, moving from their community-based homes to their places of work or while travelling more widely from city to village areas. In these ways, the meaning and importance of caste, as it relates to better life and mobility, varies greatly according to these changing contexts and is cut across by other relational factors such as class and gender (Fuller, 2000).

These relational factors are usefully discussed by moving the level of analysis from caste to community and the individual. By doing this, I can shift the focus towards debates about the implications of mobility on the formation of classes. Some scholars see that multiple occupational levels accompanied by high rates of individual mobility make it difficult for distinct, stable classes to form. Under such circumstances, class constitutes an analytical category which is not always meaningful at the level of everyday life. There are other scholars who question whether capitalist society can support mobility, let alone establish patterns and raise consciousness to the extent of enabling the formation of stable, distinct, individual identities. Furthermore, those who acknowledge changing rates of mobility see that they have no impact upon the conflictual, often oppositional nature of class formation (Beteille, 2002). Yet, as with caste-based identities rooted positively in certain geographical locations, despite increased individual mobility, they do not necessarily diminish. This is the same for class, particularly when they are rooted in working, or more specifically poor, categories (Goldthorpe et al., 1980).

These contributions do much to help us think about patterns and rates of mobility. However, they do very little to help us understand the everyday lived experiences of what it is like to aspire to and achieve a better life. Evidence from the colony shows that people often see their circumstances of poverty as something that cannot be changed:

- *“I was born in to a poor family, with no education”.*
- *“Conditions living at home with my parents have always been poor. With my experience I got used to it and can’t imagine it differently”.*
- *“My parents were poor and now I am poor”.*
- *“We are poor, even if we got money we would still be the same. I have had that experience; that poverty never leaves you”.*
- *“I am very poor and I have seen poverty since I was young”.*
- *“Wherever I go, the thought of being poor never leaves me. I am always reminded”.*
- *“When you don’t have money, you can’t grow every day, you stay low and in the same place. I can live like this, but who wants to? I don’t want to see my life like this”.*

In such cases, people talk about poverty as a relentless, long-term or lifelong experience and the idea that they could get out of poverty is therefore not a reality they give much consideration, regardless of how much they might want to.

The fixity of such understandings and experiences is often reflected further, when some people talk about their circumstances in relation to the life that God wills for them:

- *“We are poor, this is up to God. Maybe after some time we will become rich”.*
- *“God gives to others. I am not jealous”.*
- *“I don’t think I am poor, it’s only that right now I don’t have good luck. It’s about being lucky”.*
- *“I want to get rich, but my destiny is not like this, but to be poor”.*
- *“People try their best, but things don’t always work out. People don’t know because God decides this”.*
- *“Poverty is not just about finding two meals a day, it’s about destiny, and you will face it. There is no point in dreaming”.*

Some people clearly feel more comfortable to talk about their circumstances in terms of fate, fortune and luck, which allows for the hope that there is at least a chance that everyone is together in this and that they can get out of poverty in time.

Others still, recognise that circumstances can and do change, for both better and worse, with time, as they move through the lifecourse:

- *“Before we were poor, but now we are earning and saving”.*
- *“I am better than before, because then we had jhuggies, no good job or enough money and only my older brother worked. Then we moved to the colony, I grew up and could work myself”.*
- *“I have felt poor, but now in the colony everyone is working, everyone is able to spend on food”.*
- *“I don’t think of myself as poor or rich, high or low, it’s a matter of time; sometimes it’s good, sometimes it’s bad”.*

- *“People ask me what do I have and I say I still don’t have anything. I have had better times, but now I am starting again”.*
- *“It’s my turn now to be poor, but I may come good again. Even rich people, who have everything, lose everything one time in their lives”.*

In such cases, experiences of changing fortunes are integral to the way people make sense of and evaluate their own, and others’, everyday lives and understand the variation in circumstances throughout the lifecourse.

For those willing to contemplate what a better life might mean, men were most likely to downplay the seriousness of their struggles by making statements about the shared nature of what they see as already improved circumstances as a result of the move to the colony: *“Everyone is working. Everyone is able to spend on food”*. Some also acknowledged the important role of perspective in bringing understanding to people’s changing circumstances:

- *“Everyone has their own way of thinking, but to my mind; Who is poor in the colony? Everyone has their own house. If you apply yourself and work, you will earn. You can’t have everything”.*
- *“If I have 1lakh, then 2 lakhs, I would always want more, want to make more. But then I would also spend more”.*
- *“If people know you have money, then you need to spend more”.*
- *“I am poor, my conditions are poor, but you can be a big man from the heart”.*

From these narratives we gain an understanding of the significance of appreciating what you have, recognising the role of individual and collective motivation when it comes to seeking, achieving and maintaining a better life and that this, in itself, can become just another endless competitive struggle akin to ‘keeping up with the Joneses’.

From these examples, we learn that as with impoverishment, betterment in life has its absolute and relational dimensions. Assessment of these is more than simply a matter of measurement at a particular point in time. It can be a matter of measurement conducted over several years or in two or more separate studies conducted at intervals over several decades. Understanding also clearly comes from people’s own perspectives and evaluations of their

experiences over the lifecourse, and the extent to which these are verified by other family and community members. In these ways, mobility becomes a matter for both temporal and historical exploration (Lockwood, 1997, Wengraf, 2006). While some people are moving out of poverty, others are moving in. Mobility tends to be lower where there are deeper inequalities and higher rates of poverty, and the reasons for moving in and out of poverty vary by region. Mobility, therefore, also needs to be understood in the terms that people themselves understand, within the context of the range of coping strategies they use in hard times (Krishna, 2007).

One series of publications entitled *Moving out of Poverty*, brings together temporal, historical and experiential elements in understanding poor people's mobility. This endeavour builds on the *Voices of the Poor* series introduced above, which in four volumes explores how and why people move out of poverty and stay out. Reflecting my own research, the analysis captures the dynamic process of mobility. Findings show that while moving into poverty is a matter of persistent endeavour, and yet remaining poor, moving out of poverty is a matter of a person's own initiative. The problems arise because the initiatives of the chronic poor are different and less effective than those taken by people able to move out of poverty (Narayan and Petesch, 2007a).

As life in the colony shows, the chronic poor face constraints such as the lack of income that would allow them to accumulate assets and limited connections, which they compensate for through hard work:

- “*Expenses are higher than the money I earn. I work hard, but I still have no ability to save*”.
- “*I can eat and drink, but I don't have luxury items and I can't save or plan for the future*”.
- “*Whatever we want we have to wait, there is no money in the bank. If we work hard we have money, only then we save. We can't just go and buy everyday things and we don't have enough money for jewellery or clothes, nothing for ourselves, only the children*”.

In these ways, despite working hard and aspiring to a better life through buying luxury items, having money in the bank, saving and planning for the future, people continue to live in poverty. These long-term poor are more sensitive to shocks, more likely to become further indebted and find that it is much harder and takes much longer to recover (Narayan et al., 2009b).

According to the third publication in the *Moving out of Poverty* series, those able to move out of poverty have benefited from formal banking provision and competitive sources of credit for businesses. Meanwhile, the chronically poor rely on high-interest money lenders (Ibid.). In the colony, community borrowing schemes are the most common source of funds for consumption purposes, such as, meeting everyday expenses or accessing emergency funds for medicines, and longer term health care or funerals. Community saving schemes are, in turn, the most established source of funding for meeting costs associated with marriage and the accumulation of dowry. However, some people explained that the relentlessness of payments and the cost of interest incurred is often preventative until people reach desperation:

- “*I am unable to put money in the savings scheme*”.
- “*I have to save money through the saving scheme and I have to borrow money on interest*”.

Such initiatives, while crucial for everyday life, do not help people move out of poverty in the long term, given that relatively small amounts of money attract high rates of interest and have to be paid back over a short term.

Moving out of poverty also requires people to have self-belief, self-confidence, a sense of rights and the ability to claim them, and the power to control and make decisions. For many in the colony, this was about; “*Having good knowledge, long-term experience, having a vision about how to make progress and grow*”. In turn, moving out of poverty creates self-belief, instils confidence and attracts respect from others, all of which impact positively on aspirations, increase the level of effort and perseverance and the degree of resilience to adversity and vulnerability (Ibid.). People in the colony observed:

- *“I see some people who always want to stay down, they don’t want to strive for something better”*,
- *“I see my family members going ahead, but we are still the same, sometimes I feel we are going backwards”*.

People’s aspirations and individual initiatives are important for moving them out of poverty; driving the motivation and determination needed to succeed. So too, is the context within which individuals live. Families offer support and contribute to the general well-being of household members in good and bad times (Ibid.).

As the narratives and experiences from the colony testify, conflict and separation within households constrain and prevent mobility, while unity and harmony enable it. Family is important for helping with the investment and accumulation of assets and the reduction of debt. While people may not have high levels of aspiration for their own lives, they do for the lives of their children. Many made an association between education and aspiring to a better life: *“Education is a must for children and it needs to be in a private school, but I don’t have the money to pay the fees”*. The younger generation constitutes a source of pride, as parents invest in education in the hope that they will benefit from their children’s success in the future. However, given the lack of enough, regular money, for the majority, this is something unattainable.

In these cases, a family’s ability to invest in getting their children married or giving their dead an elaborate funeral are far more important aspects in the attainment of better life than education, particularly for Bhatu people:

- *“Children grow up very fast, and there is always pressure to give them a better life once married”*.
- *“A better life comes for us when we are able to meet our responsibilities, manage our daughters’ marriages on time and spend big for funerals”*.
- *“People with better life can spend more money on marriage and cremations. There is no rule on how much you should spend, but for good respect you need this”*.
- *“For marriage you can have a big tent, have good food at the ceremony and wear new clothes and jewellery and give good dowry”*.

- “When their grandmother died there was a grand feast and they threw silver coins”.

From such narratives we learn that the attainment of better life is often most about people meeting their responsibilities in a timely manner and thereby earning respectability in the eyes of an ever-watchful community. In such cases, we also see the way in which competition creeps into the picture in terms of having to be seen to be ‘spending big’ or on a ‘grand scale’.

According to the focus given to India in the first volume of the *Moving out of Poverty* series, the main pathways out of poverty highlight the importance of income diversification, which includes new pathways into earning, and self-employed business ventures. Migration is also an important part of this, in terms of individual aspirations and household and community betterment. Migration allows people to combine or exit and replace opportunity structures as a central aspect of livelihood diversification strategies. Having caste status and caste-based networks of connections at the point of destination influences the quality of where people end up living and improves their chances of securing work.

As in the case of the colony, the most successful in making a rural to urban transition are young, unmarried, healthy, educated, English-speaking men with patience and perseverance as personality traits, from dominant castes, who can call upon wide and powerful networks for support. Furthermore, education is recognised as a significant pathway to better life in circumstances where *intergenerational* poverty has prevailed. However, as the experiences of the people from the colony testify, this is only as long as there is provision and access to jobs and people have an unstigmatised place to live (Epstein, 2007, Krishna, 2007, Narayan and Petesch, 2007b).

Despite the value for my own research, of the findings presented in the *Moving out of Poverty* series, the focus of the studies is primarily on rural areas. Urban poverty and mobility are only discussed in terms of migration, which tends to be short-term and remittances-based. No attention is given to people who settle long-term in urban areas. Some literature does not regard urban poverty and mobility in Indian cities, a serious issue for development studies, given the assumed urban bias in the allocation of government funds and the fact that the majority of the population live in rural areas (Rao, 1974).

Poverty and mobility need to be discussed in relation to urban living. It may well be the case that some people are faring better now than they have in the past because they are settled in urban areas and accessing housing, education, employment and services. For many in the colony, seeking a better life began with the physical move: *“You have to leave your parents in the village and go to the city for work”*. However, for them, life after settlement has not been better, but a struggle for survival: *“Our experience is of having to leave the village and come to Delhi to work, but then not being able to survive in the city”*. Evidence from the colony shows, that the majority face an uphill struggle, as the urban infrastructure fails to keep up with growing populations. Informal, insecure, often illegal ways of living and earning have left people deprived and vulnerable. In these ways, it is recognised that, while incidences of poverty may be higher in rural areas, inequality and exclusion are much greater in urban areas (Gilbert, 2002, Rakodi, 2002).

Furthermore, there are larger concentrations of people, vehicles and pollution which make urban living hazardous and injurious to people’s health. The urban poor also face the highest risks due to their ways of living being established in areas with insufficient water, sanitation, drainage and sewerage systems, and high levels of environmental risks associated with open drains, polluted waterways and the dumping of rubbish (Satterthwaite, 2002). In addition, access to education, employment, housing, utilities and services such as healthcare are not just about availability and increasing provision, but also a household’s financial circumstances. For many, substantial provision is accompanied by unaffordability. In these ways, significantly higher incomes and levels of expenditure do not necessarily translate into higher standards of living and better lives in a highly monetised urban centre like Delhi (Rakodi, 2002).

Literature on mobility also recognises that poor people in urban areas have to pay comparatively more than rural dwellers in terms of food and utilities, which are often of poor quality. They also have to pay more for medical attention, while at the same time, receiving worse care in worse conditions. Corruption also falls disproportionately on the urban poor as they pay public servants for services associated with accessing education and earning. At the same time, poor people earn less for their efforts and face barriers to earning because of their lack of education, and the extent of their illegal earning or prevailing ill health. Poverty in the present also costs people their future. People have aspirations, which slowly fade in the face

of their everyday struggles. They turn to fatalism, but their lived experiences show that this is not always all about fate. An unrelenting realism stems from having their optimism crushed and their hopes of a better life betrayed once too often. When people lose hope, everyday life becomes more of a struggle, they begin to self-medicate using drink and drugs, dreams get passed on to children and moving out of poverty becomes impossible (Narayan et al., 2009b, Ramphele, 2006).

3.4 Conclusions

From this literature review and discussion of mobility, informed by the earlier discussions on poverty and inequality, it becomes clear that the focus on poor people's experiences of mobility, particularly at the level of everyday life in urban centres, is limited. Furthermore, there is little or no attention given to the subtleties of individual mobility in terms of respect and power. The chapter that follows introduces the conceptual framework, which outlines a relational theory of poverty and mobility, in preparation for the subsequent presentation of findings, which endeavours to fill these existing gaps in knowledge.

Chapter Four. Theoretical Framework.

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the way in which the research is framed by a series of grounded theoretical ideas, which have emerged from the data generated through fieldwork and been pulled together with existing ideas drawn from different bodies of literature. In taking this approach to theory development, I acknowledge that existing theoretical ideas, either whole or in part, do not bring understanding to Bhatu people's everyday lived experiences in the colony. I needed to establish a dialogue, mediated by me the researcher, which ran from respondent to academic (Rio, 2007). To allow theoretical ideas to emerge directly from the data, which, in turn, I could use to test and build upon existing theories by way of shaping a new one (Bryman, 2004).

In doing this, I demonstrate my understanding of theory as an ongoing process of argumentation, where we learn through our engagement with other people while conducting fieldwork research, during study in academic institutions and in everyday life more generally. In the section that follows, I detail the organic process involved in developing a relational theory of poverty and mobility for this research. An endeavour which has been driven by the detail and complexity of the findings emerging from the data and the tensions between the “abstract philosophical speculation about what human life *might* be like, and our experience of what life *is* like, for particular people at particular places and times” (Ingold, 2005:4).

In this way, I acknowledge fully the necessary role poor people have in informing our understandings of poverty and mobility, which, in turn, must influence policy formation and the design and implementation of poverty alleviation measures in India.

4.1 A relational theory of poverty and mobility

During the main phase of data generation, I conducted biographical interviews, each of which had the dual purpose of encouraging people to; firstly, narrate freely their everyday concerns and lived experiences and secondly, answer questions which explored meanings and understandings of concepts such as poverty and mobility. From these interviews, I learned

that Bhatu peoples' life histories are intertwined, given their shared experiences of following particular patterns of nomadism and migration. Moreover, they now have common involvement in inhabiting a particular place while creating the conditions for life to continue. Differences in their circumstances arise however, in the ways identities have been forged and relationships have unfolded. The variation in people's orientations towards better life can be meaningfully explained relationally, that is in terms of: their positionality, given the inequality and injustice they experience associated with caste, class, gender and age (Ingold, 2000, MacArthur and MacArthur, 2007); their success in negotiating enablement and constraint, given the accumulation of barriers to better life and mobility (Giddens, 1979) and their ability and the extent of their desire to pursue pathways of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

In the section that follows, I address each of these three dimensions of understanding, which shape the relational theory of poverty and mobility. In doing so, I show what I have learned about ideas of poverty and mobility from Bhatu people's everyday lived experiences.

4.1.1 Poverty, inequality and injustice

I wish to begin by outlining the theory involved in bringing understanding to the way poverty, inequality and injustice work to position people in their everyday lives. According to Tim Ingold's *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, people are both physically and socially located agents, unable to live independently of relationships, in that to exist is to already be variously positioned in a certain environment and committed to the relationships which this entails. It is from these sites of physical and social emplacement that people draw the very substance of their own being and through which they contribute to the character of other people, their lives and surroundings (2000).

For example, Bhatu people's positionality is about more than physical occupancy; it is about inhabitation. To inhabit the world is to draw it into a particular focus, and in doing so, create a place. Such places constitute a locus for growth and maturation, a sphere of nurture, within which people create the conditions for life to continue. In turn, inhabiting the world involves movement between places in networks shaped by endless comings and goings. In these ways, "kinship is geography" (Ibid.:149). Furthermore, according to my research findings, in 2002,

it was the idea that Bhatu people occupy space, which motivated the state-led project to resettle slum dwellers from central Delhi to allocated spaces within the colony.

However, it is the idea of inhabitation that has subsequently driven community members to expand their place in the world by moving into unallocated flats and retail spaces, often on lower floors or in different blocks and phases of the colony, to those they were initially allocated. This has allowed many people to access housing, but also create more accessible and comfortable living conditions. This distinction highlights the problem I ran into as a researcher when I started looking for absolutes in living in terms of permanence or replacement. These absolutes are motivated in our ways of thinking as a result of the prevalence of people's rights to and ownership of housing and introduced into people's lives as part of the bureaucratic allocation of housing by the state (Ibid.).

Bhatu people's everyday lives are not lived in such absolute terms. Households are continually engaged in managing the ebb and flow of family members and they make no distinction between village and city living. Moreover, their identities remain tied to village life in Rajasthan. This is regardless of the fact that some of the community members moved to Delhi between thirty and forty years ago or were born in Delhi and subsequently have only ever visited the village for special occasions. In short, people do not associate migration with permanent living; they have not replaced living in the village with living in the city. People explained that they only moved to the city, or continue to live in the city, because this is where they are able to access the work they can do. Life more generally continues to be characterised by movement; the endless comings and goings of people between Rajasthan and Delhi. In highlighting that people inhabit the world rather than merely occupy it, I acknowledge that life and living, rather than being internal to people or places, are actually intrinsic to the relationships between these (Ibid.).

The relational aspect of everyday life, in terms of the interaction between people and place, is therefore, hugely significant in bringing understanding to the ways Bhatu people are positioned, and in turn, what they are able to aspire to and achieve in life. However, the relational aspect of everyday life, in terms of the interaction between people is also significant. This research was initially motivated by questions about peoples identified as 'criminal castes', and 'backward classes': whether for those, such as Bhatu people, with

criminalised, poor and low caste positions in society; Is moving out of poverty possible? Is achieving and maintaining mobility possible? These initial research interests were guided by theories of mobility, which I reasoned through literature, could be associated with people's migration to India's capital city, representing as it does the possibility for new opportunities for employment, an improved quality of life, new lifestyle choices and the chance for households and communities to grow, based on new socioeconomic identities.

However, once I started living in the colony it was Bhatu people's experiences of impoverishment, and in many cases, their unrelenting struggles to survive, which were foremost in their minds. People talked about being poor, "*mein garib hoon*", and having a lot of problems, "*bahut pareshani mere paas*". As my research progressed to the initial census phase, I was able to experience first-hand the nature of their living conditions. Once I started the second phase of research, people were able to elaborate further on their circumstances. At this point, I took the opportunity to develop a number of research questions, which allowed me to explore people's experiences of poverty.

I began my explorations by asking people; Do you think of yourself as a poor person? What is it about your circumstances that makes you feel this? According to their narratives, the most prominent way in which Bhatu people see themselves positioned in Indian society is as poor, criminalised, low caste people. From this position, I also needed to learn about whether or not they actually aspire or actively pursue better lives and mobility. I therefore went on to ask people; What would better life be like for you? Do you feel it is in your hands to achieve this? Do you have a dream for your life? Do you feel it is in your hands to fulfil this?

I found that while Bhatu people aspire to better life and mobility, given the poverty, inequality and injustice that shape their everyday lives, they are prevented from any success associated with larger shifts defined in terms of caste and class. It is the teenage girls and boys of the research community, who are most willing to talk about the challenges they face in life and most able to express a belief in their own abilities to overcome them. As people get older these powerfully enthusiastic, confident and hopeful ways of talking about what is possible are increasingly replaced with accounts of despair and resignation to life as it is encountered.

Under these circumstances, people begin to introduce ideas such as *Kismet*, meaning fate or destiny, into their narratives and the role this plays in determining their experiences. Another related expression often used to talk about what people feel they are able to achieve in life is *karma*, meaning fortune as the consequence of their previous actions (McGregor, 2002). For example, where a man does good things, such as helping others, life is understood to bring good *karma* back to him, perhaps in the form of help from others when he himself is in trouble. However, should a man do bad things, such as not meet his responsibilities, then life is said to bring bad *karma* back to him, perhaps in the form of illness or early death.

There is also a wider recognition among people that what happens and what is possible in life comes down to *Bhagvan*, meaning spiritual being or God (Ibid.). In this way, successes and failures in life are about whether or not God is with a person and what God does and does not want for their life. The universe and the unfolding of everyday life are understood to be ruled by Gods comprising a holy trinity of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer and Shiva the Destroyer. People in the colony believe that the time of destruction controls the present and that this explains the problems they face, particularly in terms of the angry, violent and corrupt personalities they encounter in everyday life. However, “*It doesn’t matter. Slowly, slowly everything will be OK. God will make everything OK. God is watching everything*”, or similar sentiments are often expressed, reflecting the more positive role of Hindu philosophy in people’s understandings. These are important in helping people sustain the hope that out of their struggles can come the possibility of an improvement in their circumstances, perhaps even of a better life.

The most significant source of hope in the Bhatu community is joint-family living. However, these household relationships are fundamental to the positionality of Bhatu people. In line with James C. Scott’s *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, people’s everyday experiences of interaction are shaped by their dominant or subordinate positioning within the household, which shifts and changes depending on their status in relation to others in interactions, at any given time and over time (1990).

Joint-family relationships in the colony are inherently hierarchal and dependent in nature and produce extreme inequalities of power. Hierarchy is created and maintained firstly, through strong *intergenerational* ties between parents and children and *intragenerational* ties between

male siblings, and secondly, through weak conjugal ties between husband and wife. In turn, hierarchy and considerable inequality and conflict can be found among male and female siblings, as well as between males and between females, depending on their differences in age and life stage. Household relationships are also characterised by dependency, through which inequality, conflict and exploitation are perpetuated. This is particularly the case for girls and women, who experience the absence of any independent identity or social existence. For example, while unmarried, a girl's primary identity is as the daughter of her father, once married, she becomes the wife of her husband.

The positionality of Bhatu people, in terms of their inescapable physical and social environment, which is characterised by poverty, inequality and injustice, generate unrelenting constraints. In these circumstances, people's aspirations and motivations, along with any ability to pursue a better life and get out of poverty, diminish considerably or absolutely over time. Then the things that happen in life, such as their ability to earn or the outcome of marriage, are put down to luck being or not being with people and what is or is not written in their destiny. In these ways, I concluded, in keeping with Ingold, that every person is oriented first and foremost towards the continuation of life and that this includes the motivation behind alcohol and drug misuse (as specific examples of the more general need to develop strategies by way of coping with the world) (Ingold, 2000). Please refer to Chapter Three for further discussion on definitions and experiences of poverty.

The problematisation of life in such chronic fashion, forced a broadening in my thinking and a strengthening in my endeavour to ground my theoretical ideas in Bhatu people's everyday lived experiences. While conducting the biographical interview phase of data generation, I was able to identify a number of recurring themes of experience; a lack of formal education and a reliance on learning from family and community members from a young age, a lack of secure, legal jobs and housing, an obligation to take on gender defined roles and meet responsibilities, marriage, marital estrangement and widowhood, women's increased role as main earners, alcoholism and drug misuse and saving and borrowing practices.

I began to see that, taken together, these themes of experience were accumulative and interlinked to the point that they became barriers, impacting sooner or later, on Bhatu

people's pursuits of better life and mobility. The section which follows outlines the nature of these barriers.

4.1.2 Barriers to better life and mobility

This set of themes of experience is associated with Bhatu people having developed strategies by way of creating the necessary conditions for life to continue and coping with the struggles they face in their everyday lives. These strategies are associated with the qualities of intentionality and functionality and people's exercise of care and judgment, as they engage with their high risk, unpredictable and insecure surroundings (Ingold, 2000). However, given the persistence of poverty and the unrelenting struggle to meet everyday needs and longer term family and community expectations, these strategies have become barriers characterised by incapacity, indebtedness and illegality.

The particular meaning of each of these interconnected analytical categories is grounded in the set of themes of experience introduced above and are discussed below in relation to a series of theoretical ideas drawn together from different bodies of literature.

Incapacity

Lack of formal education and substance misuse and dependency

Bhatu people's lives are shaped by a barrier of incapacity, due to the lack of formal education and the deterioration in health associated with alcohol and drug misuse. Incapacity relating to the lack of formal schooling leaves people uninformed about how to look for and apply for work and unskilled for the purposes of increasing variation in the types of work they could do and therefore their ability to access higher earnings. According to Craig Jeffrey et al, people perceive that formal educational attainment is an important investment necessary in accessing the types of government jobs that would bring them status (2008).

However, as in the colony, such investments regularly fail. For the majority of Bhatu people, children's enrolment and subsequent engagement in and outcomes of schooling are more often than not dependent on cost-benefit analysis as to whether, under their own circumstances and in acknowledgement of others' experiences, investment in education is

worth it or not. Whether parents send their children to school and keep them there is still a decision to be made, rather than an obligation to be met. Such decisions are more likely to be influenced by the extent to which people feel they can overcome the cultural, social and economic constraints in their everyday lives.

Incapacity associated with alcohol and drug misuse also prevails in the colony, particularly among male community members. According to Malcolm Gladwell, cultural practice has an important role in shaping the way intoxicating substances affect us. In this way, a deeper understanding of the specific nature of the barrier, which incapacity through substance misuse and dependency poses, is reached by acknowledging that *how much* people consume matters far less than *how* and *why* they consume (2010).

For Bhatu people, the *how* is explained in terms of behaviour learned through the process of socialisation in family, and by extension community life, where a history of using alcohol and drugs as a coping strategy is increasingly characterised by an open culture of consumption. In keeping with Andrea Cornwall's and Nancy Lindisfarne, the *why* of consumption is explored in term of the complex and variable nature of gender identities and relationships and the changing lives of men in relation to women (2004). However, in line with Gary R Brook, the increasing number of Bhatu women supplementing or taking on a full earning role, out of desperation, actually gets interpreted as empowerment within the colony. This threatens men's positions of power and privilege, which they achieve by meeting culturally sanctioned standards and responsibilities (2010).

According to Lynne Segal, the changing roles, expectations and entitlements associated with the loss of positions of power and privilege are leaving men in crisis, the new victims, disadvantaged and suffering from falling levels of confidence, losing out on schooling, jobs, personal relationships and overall health and well-being. In turn, men are responding in self-defeating and self-destructive ways. These reactions are sustained further because men are supposed to hide or disguise their distress (2007).

In keeping with Raewyn Connell, this causes many men to suffer in silence and internalise the pain and shame borne out of their powerlessness to reach the standards, in some fundamental way, by which they are judged in their community. They then channel their

anger into harmful behaviours such as violence and substance misuse, which leads to dependency. These men are thereby deemed dysfunctional and become the targets for treatment and rehabilitation, so that they can get better, reach the standards and ultimately meet their responsibilities (2005). According to Annabel Magee, the relationship between people and place is central to understanding substance misuse and treatment, in that there is separateness in active addiction and the possibility of belonging in recovery (2005). Bhatu peoples' return to ancestral villages in Rajasthan for a drying out period, is by far the most used cultural practice associated with sustained rehabilitation.

Indebtedness

Social obligation and money management in everyday life

Bhatu people's lives are also shaped by a barrier of indebtedness, due to the social obligation inherent in joint-family living, as well as community saving and borrowing schemes, which attract unrelenting late payment penalties and interest. Understanding the social character of indebtedness begins with joint-family living. According to Elisabeth J. Croll, joint-family relationships are the basis for an *intergenerational* contract. The idea that a contract exists is suggestive of the mutual responsibilities of both generations (2006).

However, age and gender hierarchies prevail in the community, meaning that seniority is given precedence, status and authority in Bhatu households. In this way, respect and support for elders comes before everyone else, even the self, and younger generations of children are subordinated to the will and welfare of parents and grandparents. Children are morally obliged to revere and respect their parents and provide for them through taking on earning and caring roles. In keeping with Ingold, these earning and caring roles constitute apprenticeships, where younger, less experienced, individuals learn through a process of revelation and demonstration by older and more experienced members of their family or community. By learning in this way, the apprentice begins to understand the world, in the ways and from the positions, that other people do (2000).

Bhatu people speak about their roles and responsibilities in terms of *seva*. According to the Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary this word contains several important meanings:

“Seva. 1. service, 2. attendance (on); care (of or for a person or an animal); tending. 3. employment, post. 4. worship (as of the feet of a deity; homage. 5. care (of an object: as plants, or the hair). Sevakarna. 1. to serve; to attend (on); to worship; to look after. Sevabajana. 1. to perform a service (properly). Sevaparayan adj. Devoted to or conscientious in (one’s) work” (McGregor 1993:1039).

The everyday lived experience of such service in the Bhatu community, is usefully unpacked in line with Scott’s first chapter entitled *Behind the Official Story*, where he draws the reader’s attention to the nature of ‘Life’ for those in service, using the following quote:

“Servants to their Masters...doing what they are bid...what he commands...think as he would have them [think]...to satisfy him, even anticipate his thoughts. It is not sufficient to obey him, they must also please him, they must harass, torment, nay kill themselves in his Service...leave their own Taste for his, Force their Inclinations, and throw off their natural Dispositions. They must carefully observe his Words, his Voice, his Eyes, and even his Nod...to spy out his Will, and discover his Thoughts” (Ibid.:I).

In these ways, the idea of service is most meaningfully defined as selfless service, which as I go on to show below, lies at the heart of the development of a servile personality that both men and women require to be successful in meeting their responsibilities.

In turn, meeting responsibilities lies at the heart of the contractual ideal, which is anchored in the prosperity associated with joint-family living. However, in reality, it is more often implemented in circumstances of poverty in the colony. In these circumstances, obligation is generated when ideas and practices associated with service are taken and unjustly exploited through relationships that are inherently fraught with inequality and conflict. In these ways, life experience is most usefully understood in terms of shifting dependencies and accumulating responsibilities within unequal, conflictual and exploitative relationships. This is, rather than, the increased individuality, autonomy and equality typically associated with western lifecourses – a statement made in full acknowledgment of the so-called ‘changing

contexts' within India (Gupta, 1996, Hunt, 2005, Jeffery et al., 1989, Jejeebhoy, 2000, Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2005, Vatuk, 1987, Wadley, 1994).

Economic indebtedness comes from the way Bhatu people accumulate debt through the borrowing practices they use, in order to meet everyday expenses, as well as longer term responsibilities. People also get drawn into unrelenting schemes so that they can save the money they need for important events. This includes meeting the increasingly high costs of marriage, associated with buying property for sons and accumulating dowry for daughters. Such borrowing and saving practices demand regular contributions, attract increasingly high interest rates and late payment penalties. In keeping with Croll, in these circumstances, the *intergenerational* contract is being negotiated in support of a robust cycle of care, anchored in family relationships, while saving and borrowing practices, embedded in community relationships, keep people going. These pragmatic strategies are fundamental to Bhatu people's survival and well-being as they do not subsidise government development strategies and welfare initiatives, they are a substitute for them (2006).

Illegality

Deviance and crime in ways of living and earning

Bhatu people's lives are also shaped by a barrier of illegality, due to their ways of living and earning. In keeping with Robert E. Park et al, illegality of status is associated with the hardships they faced in adapting to city living, in terms of the insecurities associated with temporary, followed by overcrowded and unsuitable housing and limited opportunities for earning (1925). However, contrary to Park et al's findings, despite Bhatu people's wide spread migration and subsequent separation and dispersion following eviction from the *jhuggi*, family and caste ties have remained strong; in fact, the only constant part of their everyday lived experiences in the colony.

According to Edwin H. Sutherland, given the strength of family ties, deviant and criminal behaviour is recognised as learned behaviour just like any other, integral to the process of socialisation within the family and by extension the community (1947), and learned through apprenticeship as people engage with their social and physical environment (Ingold, 2000).

Illegality of status, in terms of living and earning, may have developed out of the survival strategies adopted while adapting to the urban environment. However, deviant and criminal activity is also practiced in the defence of a unique Bhatu identity. For example, Bhatu people's sense of themselves as poor and low caste, is also informed by their institutional labelling as criminal and 'backward' at the hands of the state. These labels stigmatised Bhatu people and continue to fuel stereotypes, which reinforce their isolated and subordinate position in Indian society. Ideas of labelling, stigmatising, stereotyping, discrimination, isolation and subordination are central to the work of Howard S. Becker. His findings show that people's experiences of unequal, unjust and conflictual relationships are preserved in policy and law, the enforcement of which, works to shape deviance and crime, as well as the ways society responds (1966).

For instance, Bhatu people's ways of living are rendered deviant because many are squatting in local authority housing. This has come about, mainly, from developments in the 'slum' resettlement law associated with economic and environmental development of the city. Meanwhile, ways of earning attract illegality of status because of the widespread criminalisation of their otherwise legitimate jobs. This has resulted from developments in the licensing laws, which are associated with street vending, driving and the sale of alcohol. Moreover, people's pathways into earning often involve illegal activities like stealing, as in the case of those who do night time recycling, or selling banned substances such as drugs. Furthermore, illegality of status, in terms of living and earning, has led to Bhatu people's widespread engagement in rent-seeking practices with government officials and police, in exchange for the right to live and earn.

In keeping with Pat Carlen, when arrested and charged, Bhatu people are further stigmatised and lose their reputation in family and community life. This can have a very damaging impact on their everyday lived experiences (1983). According to Susan Edwards, this is particularly so for the women who face beatings from their husbands on returning home following an arrest or sentencing that leads to imprisonment (1984).

In highlighting the themes of experience and theoretical ideas behind the barriers to better life and mobility in terms of incapacity, indebtedness and illegality, I usefully inform a number of other discussions important to development studies. For example, the prevalence of child

labour and the influence of compulsory schooling (Bacolod and Ranjan, 2008, Levinson et al., 1996), the household as a harmonious source of stability and ongoing support (Risseuw and Ganesh, 1998) and the insecurity and illegality of work and the role of the informal sector (Mitra, 2006, Sundar and Sharma, 2002). Please refer to Chapters Six, Seven and Eight for more detailed discussion on the barriers to mobility in everyday life.

In the next section, I explore the ways in which people aspire and pursue pathways of distinction, a more subtle type of mobility defined in Bhatu people's own terms, which both men and women can claim and have legitimised within the colony.

4.1.3 Pathways of distinction: Community claims and legitimation

Poverty, inequality and injustice, as well as barriers to mobility associated with incapacity, indebtedness and illegality, shape Bhatu people's lives. Thereby, no evidence was found of the larger sustained shifts highlighted in the literature associated with caste and class, which were seemingly having such a profound effect on Indian society. I needed to meaningfully redefine mobility. According to John and Catherine MacArthur's *The MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status*, theories of stratification suggest a variety of bases for hierarchy (2007). While caste and class are important bases for understanding Bhatu people's position in relation to wider society, there is another community-based hierarchy which allows me to capture Bhatu people's sense of standing in relation to others in the colony.

During the main phase of data generation, I asked respondents further exploratory questions; Are there people in the colony who you feel are poorer than you? What is it about their circumstances that makes you feel this? Are there people in the colony who you feel are richer than you? What is it about their circumstances that makes you feel this? From this exploration of community standing, I was able to establish that, while Bhatu people may not have high standing in Indian society, they recognise achievements on their own terms through actively pursuing pathways of distinction. These more subtle experiences are most meaningfully theorised by pulling together and building upon a number of ideas already introduced above. In turn, they help me begin outlining the dimensions of understanding shaping the relational theory of poverty and mobility.

Drawing again from Ingold, the bases for the pursuit of pathways of distinction in the colony are the earning and caring apprenticeships introduced above. By learning in these ways, boys and girls begin to understand the world, in the ways and from the positions, which other people do. For Bhatu people, this is about actively becoming skilled in a certain form of life associated with taking on gender defined roles, in work life for men and home life for women. Those most successful in attaining a better life and mobility are men and women who actively meet their responsibilities in adult life. In order to do this, men and women both have to nurture a specific disposition (2000).

For Bhatu people this is about developing a personality. According to Airlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart*, the development of such skills requires emotional labour; that is, the management of feelings through creating publically observable facial and bodily performances, designed to influence other people's state of mind (1983). Drawing again upon, and integrating, ideas from Scott here, the development of such a servile personality is premised on the capacity of men and women to provide services for other people (1990) as if they are members of their own family (Hochschild, 1983).

For Bhatu people, personality development is also about the communication and presentation of the self to others, using ways of talking, dressing and behaving. According to Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, people's preferences and appropriation practices, when it comes to consumerism and lifestyle, are closely linked to social positioning and the types and levels of learning they acquire. In many ways, people are socialised into and conditioned by these preferences and practices, which become internalised and embodied (1984).

In these ways, some Bhatu people are able to distinguish themselves from others who share their position, by making distinctive consumer and lifestyle choices, which they use in the communication and presentation of the self to others. For example, women make choices with distinction by the high value of the jewellery and clothes they wear. Men make choices with distinction by drinking western spirits and wearing Levi jeans, which they buy from high street retail shops, rather than from the local street market. For Bhatu people, achieving distinction is about the amount of distance they can put between buying out of necessity and buying out of freedom. It is also about emulating the preferences and practices associated

with people from higher social positions. Ultimately, it is about making claims to social difference in such a way that legitimates mobility (Ibid.).

However, most importantly for those seeking better lives and mobility through pathways of distinction, the apprentice must take the skills of action and personality forward and transform them as they continue to discover and negotiate their surroundings on their own. In keeping with Ingold, for Bhatu people, this is about becoming skilled in perception, developing sensibility through perfecting and mastering a form of life and servile personality by way of actively meeting your responsibilities. Perception is about developing a preparedness that comes from learning to understand the world from the positions and experiences of others, in hearing and watching what takes place in other people's lives as well as your own. Over time, such perceptions contribute in large part to what people believe and therefore what they feel they know. Such experiential knowledge forms a large part of the evidence that people consider when making decisions about their lives (2000).

The success of men and women in taking on their roles and meeting their respective responsibilities brings better life for households. However, the endeavour to develop a servile personality, being prepared for adult life and gaining experiential knowledge over time, brings the status, respect and honour upon which men and women are individually able to make claims to mobility and have them legitimised within the colony. Yet, according to Donald Miller's *From Hierarchy to Stratification: Changing Patterns of Social Inequality in a North Indian Village*, legitimization of mobility is dependent on the shifting, individual and community-based negative or positive estimations of a person's way of living (1975). Please refer to Chapter Three for further discussion on experiences and definitions of mobility.

4.2 In pursuit of mobility: Caring pathways of distinction

Evidence from the colony shows that women pursue pathways of distinction through taking on their caring roles and meeting responsibilities as daughters-in-laws living in their marital homes. Take for example, Pinky, aged 18. She has attained a 7th class pass, has been married for one year and has a small daughter. As she narrates her story, Pinky begins to uncover what actively taking on a role of daughter-in-law can involve;

“In my natal home I am called Preeti, but in my marital home I was given the name Pinky. They changed my name. Why? Because my father-in-law’s paternal uncle’s girl has the same name. A daughter and a wife in the same house can’t have the same name, so they gave me a separate name from hers. They didn’t think it was good for us to both have the same name, they didn’t like this. My father-in-law named me Pinky because he liked that name”.

In having her name changed, Pinky took an important step in socialisation into her marital home. As she continues her narrative, she uncovers the nature of her continued apprenticeship, demonstrating her active role taking, the extent of her preparedness and development of a servile personality in the service of others, whom she must treat as if her own family members. In meeting her responsibilities in these ways, she gains the experiential knowledge, makes claims to mobility and receives legitimation;

“Here, a lot of girls, even after marriage, don’t like their husbands, they like other men. But I never got involved in love relationships because I wanted to love my husband. I was happy with my brother’s choice and I was ready to get married to my husband. I knew some things about marriage, but what I didn’t know, my mother-in-law was very good to tell me. She sat with me and told me patiently what I should do. She never scolded me or screamed at me; Why did I not do this? Why did I do that? Slowly she helped me to understand everything.

My experience in the marital home is different from many girls because my mother and father-in-law are very good. But I also like doing the work, and completing it on time. In this way, I never give any chance for a problem to arise. I try to do everything in the house and they like this. Now I have a daughter, I teach her good habits and because of all these things they tell people I am a very good daughter-in-law. My marital home is from Rajasthan so they like the way I do things and the way I think; I remove the dust from the floor in the morning, because it is auspicious and makes the house peaceful and I wear my veil long for my father-in-law”.

In working hard, providing timely service and observing behavioural practices, Pinky is exercising her agency, and in doing so, has attained a better life and received appreciation, recognition and legitimation for her loyalty. In turn, she also creates opportunities to negotiate with her mother and father-in-law for the things she needs (Kaudiyoti, 1988).

Pinky's story, the most striking of all the narratives I heard, was the only one where the words 'happy' and 'love' were used repeatedly to talk about her very unique experiences of better life, as she adapts to living in her marital home;

"Now I am in my marital home and I have a very good life. I have a mother and father-in-law who give me a lot of love. Before I came to live with them they only had two sons, they never had a daughter to love. Growing up, I never had love from my mother because she died when I was a baby. My father took very good care of me, my brother and sister, but he also died when I was a young girl. My mother and father-in-law are very good to me, they ask me to call them mother and father. In my group, you would never call your mother and father-in-law mother and father. Yet, they like this and they like to call me daughter.

My husband is also very good, by that I mean, since I have come to live in my marital home he hasn't drunk alcohol, he has never been drunk or taken drugs. Since my marriage no one has scolded me, nor have I seen any sadness. I know that so many girls are sad, get beaten, and see many problems. But in my marital house they love me a lot, and I like it here very much. I think it is very good; if I have any problems, they sort it out for me immediately, if I want something they get it for me. It is never a problem. I have a very good experience".

Such wonderful everyday lived experiences are rare indeed, which makes the story which unfolded in the subsequent months following her interview, all the more tragic. Her husband, one year her senior, started getting severe headaches and on *Holi* 2010, he was taken to hospital after a seizure. Within twenty-four hours he was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent surgery to remove it. However, he never regained consciousness after the operation and after a stay of several months in hospital, he sadly died. Pinky's heart-breaking

story testifies of the fragility of everyday life in the colony, and all the more so for the attainment of better life and mobility.

4.3 In pursuit of mobility: Earning pathways of distinction

Evidence from the colony shows, that men pursue pathways of distinction by taking on their earning roles as sons and husbands and meeting their responsibilities, working as tourist guides and shopping commission agents. Take for example, Raju, aged 22. He has a 2nd class pass and remains unmarried. As he got older, he made the transition from shoe shining to tourist guiding. Such transitions are an important part of the earning apprenticeship for Bhatu boys, key to developing a servile personality and central to the development of distinction in ways of communicating and presenting the self to foreign visitors;

“I did shoe shining, but I didn’t like it. It was very dirty and I was very dirty too and I would eat my food without washing my hands. I did this work for two years. My older brother was the only one that worked, he was doing tourist guiding, so I decided to start guiding too, from the age of 12 years. I started to learn English from tourists and my brother helped me. I changed myself a lot. I washed, put clean clothes, I started to wear good clothes and shoes, and started shopping more for modern clothes. I did this so that when foreigners see me they think this is someone with a good personality. Foreigners don’t want to talk with dirty people. They will think then that all I want is money”.

Raju is clearly involved in developing his servile personality and sensibility by ways of influencing foreign clients’ state of mind (Hochschild, 1983). He highlights that ways of talking, dressing and consumer lifestyle choices are central to establishing the relationships of trust upon which Bhatu men depend for making money. By the time Subhash, 8 years Raju’s senior, had moved into commission work, followed by tourist guiding, he was actively engaged in perfecting and mastering these particular forms of life, by providing services for foreign visitors. While Raju highlighted that learning English was an important part of his skill development, Subhash highlights that very particular ways of talking, combined with a servile personality, are equally important in generating trust and thereby ‘catching’ clients;

“To be successful in being a tourist guide you have to learn English. But I also had to change the way I think and learn how to talk to people. When I see a tourist I say Hello, how are you, what are you looking for? Then they will say I’m not really looking for anything. So I say, if you walk this way you will find the market, and I give them directions. If they say I’m not wanting to do shopping, then I tell them they can go to the tourist office and get free maps and information, or organise bus and train tickets. My plan is always just to show that I am only directing them, then they trust me”.

Subhash belongs to the first generation of tourist guides. Comparatively, he is one of the most successful and most experienced in earning through this type of work. He has attained a better life for his family, and status, respect and honour for himself within the community, having met his father’s responsibilities, as well as his own, in terms of everyday needs and raising the finances for his elder two sisters’ marriages. He now holds a position of considerable power and authority as the head of the household.

However, attaining a better life and achieving such positions of influence raises both family and community expectations. Bhatu people then need to be seen to be spending consistently at a specific level. In his narrative, Subhash details the cost of keeping up appearances in the context of preparing to get his two younger sisters married;

“The cost depends on how much people can afford. You can’t put a number on this, because people are different and families have different ideas. Also, sometimes people have money and sometimes they don’t, so have to take credit. But nowadays, for me, I have to spend 3 to 4 lakh rupees for one sister’s marriage and up to 5 lakh rupees if I get the two of them married together. This is good, but for other people it is a little bit lower maybe 1½ to 2 lakh rupees”.

The more a husband or son makes, the more a wife or mother will demand. Higher incomes, once attained, become the expected income. In this way, even those who have attained a better life can still end up struggling to meet everyday expenses at the level to which they have become accustomed. In his narrative, Subhash uncovers the realities of his everyday life, which are hidden away because of community expectations;

“My life is very, very busy, no peace. It’s like I’m labouring for my family. I don’t have a good life to enjoy or to feel good. Sometimes I feel good, but not all the time. Mostly I’m just working, working and working. Life feels heavy, because I have pressure to make money. If I don’t have money then we would not have food and we wouldn’t survive. That’s why I try to work and work so that everything can be better for my family. I have a mother and father, a daughter, two sisters and a brother living with me. I feel that I am managing, not very much, but a little bit. It’s OK.

From such narratives, we find that the attainment of better life and mobility have mixed blessings. Despite Subhash’s plan to spend big on his sisters’ marriages, by way of meeting family and community expectations, and maintaining status, respect and honour for himself, he still talks about the vulnerability in surviving day to day. However, as in Pinky’s case, considerable hardship awaited Subhash and his family, within a few months of being interviewed, when one of his younger sisters eloped with her boyfriend, got married and now lives in her marital home. Despite having never returned to her family or the colony, Subhash and his family have been humiliated and dishonoured.

The risk of facing humiliation and dishonour is something that many know all about. Roshni is 50, has no education and has been widowed for five years. During her interview, she recalls her experiences of prosperity and of coming down to earth with a bump, following the death of her husband;

“I didn’t even have the money for wood for his funeral. I had to take a loan for 5,000₹ to pay for this. I couldn’t ask for anyone’s help, because before we had had so much money, gold and silver when we were selling smack, that people would have talked badly about us. It wouldn’t have looked good”.

In keeping up appearances, people can become trapped, as they either perpetuate or add to their economic hardship and spiralling indebtedness. As if financial concerns were not enough to contend with, constant challenge also comes in the form of family and community legitimization. During my visit to Chittori village in Rajasthan, the ancestral home of the core

research sample, I interviewed Balbir, a 43-year-old, shoe shining father of three daughters, who are all attending school and two sons, who are shoe shining. He evaluates;

“In the city, people make a lot of money, but they don’t have better lives. It is so much more expensive to live there; houses are expensive and so is food. It is dirty and the society is dirty; people spend too much money on drinking and taking drugs. People don’t have honour. They don’t have jobs; they do bad things to make money and cheat people and there is a lot of fighting. That is why I have never left the village and my family would never leave. I make a little money by shoe shining, I come home, eat food and sleep, that is enough. My family lives with honour, we have our own house and good quality food and the water is sweet. My children go to school here and we have good respect”.

In highlighting Pinky’s and Subhash’s everyday lived experiences, I have learned about the ways in which better life and mobility are attainable in the colony. However, along with Roshni’s experiences, I also learn that such achievements are vulnerable and fragile and can be destroyed in a moment. Moreover, from Balbir’s evaluations, I have learned that such achievements also rely on positive acknowledgement and legitimation from kin and community and that they are not always forthcoming.

4.4 Agency and power in the negotiation of better life.

Ideas of hierarchy and dependency are used in recognition of the positions of domination and subordination that shape household relationships (Scott, 1990). However, it is also important to acknowledge that these relationships generate both enablement and constraint in people’s lives, and that everyday lived experiences are shaped, to some extent, by agency and power. The idea of agency brought to this study is taken from Anthony Giddens’ *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. In this work, he argues for the concept of structuration, and in doing so, highlights the ways in which people’s positions work to create, reproduce, alter and change the nature of interaction over time (1979). In turn, by not privileging a dichotomy between structure and agency and exploring the relationship between them, I am able to acknowledge the unequal, unjust and conflictual

nature of the interactions between people and between people and their environment (Scott, 1990).

In the colony, evidence of agency is found in the ways those who are in a subordinate position are treated by those in a dominant position, and in turn, in the ways subordinates respond. For example, there is huge variation in the character of relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. All such relationships require a period of adjustment to each other, and in doing exactly or more than is expected, over a long period of time, a daughter-in-law is able to establish trust, respect and the space to push boundaries. In cultivating such an approach, those who are burdened with obligation are often able to carve out a measure of predictability in everyday life, and in time, gain legitimacy for their own needs and priorities.

Being able to draw upon agency and engage in negotiation with a measure of success, acts as an important safety valve in the face of the brute force and control, which those in a dominant position can exert over subordinates. Engagement in negotiation clearly provides escape routes and spaces for people to challenge exploitation, discomfort and unhappiness. Therefore relationships, while hierarchal and dependent in character, rather than being static, can be shifted from both sides.

For example, husbands or parents do not always get their way against wholly passive, powerless wives, sons, daughters or daughters-in-law. Both men and women manage marital problems through estrangement. That is, periods, short or long in duration, and often repeated, where women take their children and go and live with their own parents. During these periods, people have distance, space and considerable bargaining power to negotiate and renegotiate the terms of their interaction, treatment and needs. Roshni talks about the way she used estrangement to negotiate a better life;

“I have grey hair, not because I am old, but because I have seen a lot in my life and keep thinking about how I can keep life going. After marriage my husband was not a good person. He would get drunk, take drugs and beat me and not let me go back to see my parents. We kept arguing about this and he would always tell me to be quiet, until one day, after about two years of marriage, I took my

child and sat on the bus and went to live with my mother in my natal home in Rajasthan. I stayed with her for three years. My husband kept asking my mother why I would not meet with him and come back to Delhi. He couldn't understand what happened.

I told him; you treat me badly and never let me come to see my parents, so now I am living with them. My mother said, you are sad, you don't like living in your marital home; Do you want to divorce? Nowadays people separate and can get a divorce, but I said no and my husband also said to his parents he didn't want a divorce. After about two years, my husband decided to come and live with me in my mother's house and we lived together there for a year. Then we left together and went back to Delhi and after that we had seven more children quickly - one after the other".

Estrangement is a strategy used most widely by women, but evidence from the colony shows that men also pursue better lives in similar ways. Take for example, Subhash, whose ultimate goal is to get a divorce from his second wife. However, for now he pursues his freedom doing what he can, through a combination of silence and anger, in order to create distance and space for negotiation;

"I have now been married to my second wife for three years and separated from her for two. I have managed to put off living together with her all this time by feeling grumpy. When I'm not talking to my sisters, brother or mother, they understand that I don't want to do what they want. When I feel angry, I like to stay alone. If you are living alone with no responsibility, then you are freer".

Relationships are clearly characterised by struggle and conflict and this can lead to resentment on both sides. This resentment is given expression through the differences between what the dominant and subordinate say and do in the presence or absence of others. For example, an individual may be all attentive and full of praise in the presence of another and all curse and disobedience in their absence. Again, Scott makes a meaningful contribution to understanding here, with his theory of resistance. He talks about the public performance of those who are subordinate, where out of prudence, fear and the desire to carry

favour, their ways of talking and behaving are shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful. He refers to this open interaction in terms of a public transcript (1990).

According to Scott, only in a minority of cases are such interactions telling of the whole story. They are much more likely to be misleading, reflecting the role of accommodation, performance and surveillance in unequal power relationships such as these. The greater the disparity in power between the dominant and the subordinate, and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcripts will take on a stereotypical, ritualised character and give little indication of the experiences and opinions of the subordinate. In this way, the power and control of those in a dominant position is undermined, even when it is actually their wishes that prevail. Resistance is therefore not just a matter of agency, it is also a matter of self-esteem and dignity (Ibid.).

However, like any enduring social process, enablement and constraint can become institutionalised in culturally available and sanctioned ways. In the colony, negotiation is not a matter to be entered into lightly. Negotiating change is often a painful process, involving different strategies adopted over long periods of months, years and lifetimes, which more often than not lead to a dead end... in some cases literally. Moreover, people are often unable to negotiate in such a way that transforms their positions, without meeting with serious challenge, which can involve physical violence. The domination and subordination inherent in custom is elaborate and systematic in nature, leaving people's lives burdened by collective surveillance and subjected to relentless, hard sanctioning and punishment (Gal, 1995, Scott, 1990).

Yet despite the extremity of power that people are able to wield when in a dominant position, their self-interest can be a weakness. For example, a parent needs to be able to get their sons, daughters and daughters-in-law to serve them in their capacity to earn and care, to the best of their ability. The nature of the negotiation in such cases may often be about getting the combination of punishment and reward right; after all an incapacitated daughter-in-law caused through a severe beating is of no use to her household. It can be, that incentives such as praise and respect directed at a new daughter-in-law, particularly if received from people outside the household, work more effectively than punishment. This can, but does not always, encourage the dominant, such as a mother-in-law, to work hard to cultivate a more peaceful

and harmonious environment. In these ways, the extent to which people are able to earn respect, exercise power and command authority are also ever shifting and changing.

There is therefore, no meaningful opposition between continuity and change; they are both integral to a relational way of thinking about mobility. As I have already established, the most important thing for people in the colony is that life should continue, not that it should yield precise replicas of past performance. This endeavour involves a great deal of creative improvisation, making change a naturally occurring variation in an on-going process, which every person engages in as they go about their everyday lives (Ingold, 2000). From my unique perspective as a researcher, I was able to learn about the ways the realities under investigation in this study are being worked at, often by powerful agents, and that the nature of this work clearly reflects a negotiated order (Bryman, 2004).

4.5 Conclusions

In presenting a relational theory of poverty and mobility, I am able to show that all people in the colony are oriented towards creating the conditions necessary for the continuation of life. However, they are not all oriented towards creating better lives and getting out of poverty. It is enough for some, just to be able to overcome their everyday struggles, while in the meantime being able to say “*I am OK, comfortable, everything is OK, I have no problems, no tensions*”.

Incapacity, indebtedness and illegality are outcomes of peoples’ general need to develop strategies, by way of coping with poverty in their everyday lives and at the same time meeting longer term family obligations and community expectations. Together, they constitute accumulative barriers to better life and mobility in the sense of any larger shifts discussed within the literature associated with caste, class and moving out of poverty. In circumstances of poverty and great hardship, success for a woman and her attainment of a better life can come from establishing and maintaining quality relationships within the marital home (Lockwood, 1997). This can be achieved through conceiving, pregnancy, live births and raising healthy male children. Success for a man and his attainment of a better life can come from his ability to go out and earn well for his parents, wife and children and from

being able to save some money. If he can do this without resorting to crime and avoiding the use of alcohol and drugs altogether or at least not to excess, all the better (Chant, 1997).

However, ultimately, mobility only comes from being able to transform the capacities to earn and care in such a way that allows a person to attain the status, respect and honour from which positions of power and authority can be claimed and legitimised. Only then are people seen to have gone forward, taken a pathway which distinguishes them from the others in their low caste, poor class, gender determined and subordinated lives.

Chapter Five. Localised Context: The Place and its People.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter, the first of four presenting data from the colony, introduces the localised context in terms of the place where I conducted my research and the people who are the focus of this study. I begin by detailing my own journey into the colony, offering insights into Delhi's contrasting living conditions, the concept behind The Padmini Project and the physical living conditions of the research site. I then go on to detail the nature of the journeys people have taken to reach the colony and uncover some of the relentless struggles they now face in their everyday lives. I conclude the chapter, by detailing the complex and layered nature of community and family relatedness. As I go on to show, this localised context provides an important basis for understanding the pervasiveness of incapacity, indebtedness and illegality, which are discussed in the next three chapters. In an effort to protect the identity and privacy of the women and men, whose experiences are the focus of this study, places have been kept deliberately vague, pseudonyms used and details disguised.

5.1 My journey to the colony

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, during my first week in Delhi, I made acquaintance with Subhash, whom I met while out walking in the city centre. After this meeting, I did a little research on Padmini and found that, unlike the developments driven by private investment in Gurgaon and Noida, The Padmini Project is solely a government initiative, led by the DDA, which began in the 1980s. Like Gurgaon and Noida, Padmini was designed and built primarily for the purpose of housing Delhi's growing population. However, Padmini is unique, in that it provides housing for all income groups. From my subsequent visits here, I was able to see the mix of residential styles within its sectors.

In addition to residential areas, the project provides infrastructure, services and spaces for permanent and mobile markets to coexist alongside retail showrooms, shops, offices and eateries. I found that while the area has pockets of residential grandeur, it is not in the same high rise style or scale as I had seen in Gurgaon and Noida. Instead, there are bungalows, gated communities and apartment complexes. Moreover, there are many phases of multi-

storey blocks of *janta* housing, designed for middle and low income groups, as well as for government workers and slum resettlement communities. The research site itself is one such phase.

The number of hospitals, schools and local businesses stands out in Padmini, rather than the number of multinational companies, shopping malls and cineplexes - although a new mall and hotel are recently completed additions here. Unlike the satellite townships of Gurgaon and Noida, Padmini is part of New Delhi, met on all sides by other districts. To the north lies Lokhota Bari, with its busy main street and local shops. Nestled behind these, are a mix of steel manufacturing and chemical factories and recycling yards. To the west lies Rampol, predominantly a residential area with small shops lining narrow, often impassable streets, due to overflowing open drains. Here the residences are a mix of red brick, one and two-storey houses, which remain unrendered and finished with tin roofs. However, there are also some contrasting pockets of multi-storey bungalows, clad with stone and tile and finished with hand-crafted plaster and marble floors and staircases. To the east lies Surajpol, where wide roads are lined with multinational retail outlets, malls and institutions of learning. Here the residential areas are characterised by comparatively larger bungalows and terraced, multi-storey houses.

In 2008 when my research began, Padmini was already connected to central Delhi by metro - the Beas-Bambhara section had opened in March 2004. However, the Noida line only opened in November 2009, followed by the Gurgaon line, which opened in time for the Commonwealth Games in September 2010. The more I travelled around, the more familiar I became with the city and the more I was reminded of the inequality I had come to research. I found travelling to the south in the NCR very stressful and exhausting and I resented the auto-rickshaw drivers, who always tried to charge me at least double for a journey. In contrast, in going north, I could travel in comfort, unharassed, by metro and at a fixed price. In addition, as I began to rely on local pedal rickshaw men to help me complete my journeys, I was able to appreciate their familiar faces and smiles and enjoy the trust they showed when they asked me to pay them an amount according to my wishes.

South Delhi has its vast open spaces, wide and smooth multi-lane freeways dotted with chauffeur driven cars, lined with uncrowded, uncluttered, sculpted, cobbled footpaths and

well-kept ornamental roundabouts. It has walled and gated residences with sprawling lawns and garden hoses and holds the promise of uninterrupted supplies of tranquillity, water and electricity. I contrasted this with the adventure, bustle and noise experienced while walking the cluttered and uneven pavements and often impassable, rubble-filled and water-logged roads of Padmini. The open rubbish stores piled high with waste where people, dogs and cattle scavenge, often in violent competition. The discomfort of clammy days and airless nights, when the electricity supply is cut off for hours at a time, and the water supply is dependent on what can be carried in a water pot from the hand pump in the street or in a plastic tub from the tanker and limited to what can be stored in the confines of living space. In this relentlessly challenging and exhausting landscape, I went on to discover my research site.

5.2 Living conditions in the colony

The research site is a resettlement colony, designed for the purposes of relocating and housing a community of migrant and local populations, who had been *jhuggi* dwellers over a thirty year period in a centrally located area of otherwise barren land in central Delhi. The colony offers residence and retail opportunities within more than twenty identical four-storey blocks of *janta* housing. Each flat constitutes a two-room set with a total floor space of twelve and a half square *gaz* (one *gaz* is 33 inches). A smaller wet room with latrine is built into the corner of a larger room designed for cooking and general living. In keeping with the cement block exterior of the buildings, each of the three windows of each flat is made out of slatted concrete, with no glass.

Each flat is accessible via a centrally located stair, which leads to a landing on each floor and a terraced roof that can be accessed through a portal using a metal ladder built into the wall. On the ground floor of each block there is a row of shuttered retail spaces with the same size floor space as a flat. The open courtyard in front of each block has a hand water pump, is lined with trees and bushes and has an open drain running along each of its four sides. These ‘park’ areas are used by men for sitting in circles to play cards and discussing the issues of the day, by women for washing dishes and drying clothes and by children for playing. A steady stream of cows and dogs also come and go regularly throughout the day, exploring the

piles of rubbish and browsing the walls and paths of the colony for stale flat breads and fruit and vegetable peelings, which people leave out for them.

The majority of flats are supplied with electricity either by a 'free' supply via an illegal set of wires, which are crudely attached to a house, telegraph pole or directly from a transformer. Increasingly since 2008, people's electricity has also been supplied through more legal and stable means via meters supplied and fitted by NDPL. These come, however, with the prospect of bills, which are issued on a monthly basis. Moreover, some people have used such developments as an opportunity to make money or share the cost of electricity use, by diverting the supply from one meter to several flats.

In theory, each flat also has a running water supply. The wet room has a pipe and tap, and there is a cistern mounted upon the wall above the latrine. In addition, there is a pipe and tap at the narrow end of the larger living space. However, the water supply is only turned on, for up to an hour, twice a day, and is not suitable for drinking. Therefore, it can only be used to meet the most basic of household needs, such as washing dishes and cleaning floors. Moreover, given that many of the pipes, designed to take the water to each flat, are broken, the water now spews onto the ground and some people are forced to collect it out of desperation, using small pipes which they run into plastic tubs.

Again, in theory, the bulk of the water for drinking, cooking, showering and washing clothes is supplied by the Jal Board (JB). It is delivered by tanker to three separate locations every other day. However, in reality Bhatu people monopolise this water. This is particularly so in the case of the core sample Bhatu, who are most accustomed to bribing the tanker driver, most brazen in mounting the tanker while it is still in motion and most hardened to physically fighting to get what they want. The limited amount of water delivered and the irregular delivery days and times mean that water is always scarce. However, a considerable amount is also lost due to the dangerous frenzy involved in securing it, which includes pouring it from the top of the tanker, often over the heads of the people clambering below, or missing the targeted buckets and ending up on the ground. Moreover, much is lost again because of an elaborate second phase of decanting from larger storage tanks into smaller tubs and back, a method which some people have adopted by way of making the accessing and storing of water possible.

The latrine, wet room and kitchen areas in each flat are also connected to a waste water drainage system. However, many of the latrines have become cracked or broken over time, along with the sanitary stacks which run down the outside walls at the back of each block. This means that waste water from latrines and cooking areas seeps down internally through the floors, and stains the roofs of the flats below and runs down the sides of the outside walls. Given the broken water supply and drainage systems, the scarcity of water and cultural ideas about hygiene and female modesty, the latrines in the flats are rarely used. Men are most likely to use the banks of the stream of dirty water that runs along the side of the colony, while the women use the tree and bush areas lining the roads or at the back of the colony.

Having focused on the details of the physical living conditions in the colony, I now want to detail the nature of the journeys taken into the colony by the people now living there. Their narratives tell of very different experiences, which are analysed below in two stages. The first, focuses on the transitions people made while moving from village to city living and the second, draws attention to the upheaval they subsequently faced after being forcibly evicted from the *jhuggi* settlement and relocated to the resettlement colony.

5.3 Nomadism, migration and *jhuggi* settlement

The majority of Bhatu respondents highlight patterns of poverty, insecurity and hardship in their village lives. They talk about having been born into poor families with many children to feed and low, insecure incomes. They narrate a history of grandparents and parents working, as well as their own role as children accompanying their mothers to work and eventually making their own independent contribution to the survival of the household through farm and construction labour, cleaning and shoe shining.

Many of the respondents now living city lives, were born in their ancestral homes. Some talked about these village dwellings having been permanent structures, single-room houses with walls made of mud, brick and wood. More often though, they talked about the *jhuggies* they had, less substantial shelters made out of plastic sheeting propped up with bamboo. Many people also talked about their growing families and the pressure on their parents to provide for their daily needs, but also to find daughters suitable husbands and pay dowry. Sons also came with their own share of parental pressure because they had to be found wives.

Moreover, given that they would establish their own families while remaining with their parents, rooms providing separate sleeping arrangements needed to be built. Increased earnings were therefore also required, as debts mounted and as the number of mouths to feed increased once wives arrived, followed closely by children.

While a married son, along with his wife and children, would sleep in separate rooms from the rest of the household members, day-to-day living, including gender-distinct roles and responsibilities, were managed as a single household, with all the sons giving their earnings to their mother. Some narratives show however, that this pattern of family living was often fractured once additional sons got married and their wives came to live with them. This was particularly the case in households where one or more sons were already living together with their wives and children. In such cases, elder sons would be asked to leave or choose to leave with their families, and for the first time live, eat and earn completely separate from their parents.

The impact of addictions, accidents or the death of one or both parents, or of siblings or spouses were also important factors, bringing change and demise to households and forcing them to move away from village living. As respondents grew up, the hardship these circumstances brought included lowering incomes, diverting income away from the household and accumulating debt in order to meet expenses associated with medicine, healthcare and funeral ceremonies.

Village living was also increasingly challenged due to the decline in agricultural work in rural areas and the insecure, often seasonal nature of earning opportunities. People responded to this by adopting semi-nomadic lives, travelling to where work was. By way of supplementing income and in time replacing completely agricultural work as it declined, many Bhatu people took their nomadic lives a step further by making it a way of life. In such cases, they travelled throughout India in extended family groups, selling goods.

This was what initially drew Bhatu people to Delhi, as it was the base for their supply of items such as crockery, maps, toys and school blackboards and charts. At this time, they would travel to Delhi with their materials for a temporary shelter and set this up anywhere they could. Over a couple of days they would secure their stock, then pack up and head off

across India to sell their goods, before finally returning home to Rajasthan. This cycle would be repeated over a period of one or more months at a time.

From the early 1970s, changing circumstances led whole Bhatu households to leave Rajasthan altogether and migrate to Delhi, where they made their bases for family living and earning. Initially, city life in Delhi continued to reflect their otherwise nomadic lifestyles. They set up *jhuggies* on land from which they were continually moved on by local authorities. They chose station courtyards and a series of open, undeveloped lands, where they could access water and trains travelling to states throughout India. They would unpack their things in the evening, then cook and sleep, before picking up their things again and continuing on their way in the morning, getting onto trains or trailing the streets of Delhi in order to earn a living.

By the mid-1970s, Bhatu family-group nomadism reduced, as land was found in central Delhi, where they could set up more permanent *jhuggi* settlements. Once these homes were established, men increasingly travelled alone or together with other men on their four-to-six week travelling sales trips, leaving their wives and growing families in the settlement. Interestingly, findings from the study show that while both core and comparative samples of Bhatu adopted nomadic selling throughout India, those of the comparative sample put off settling in Delhi for much longer, between five and ten years in fact, than those of the core sample. They chose states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland on the basis of these being areas where they were able to most cost-effectively access the stock they wanted, such as crockery, or where they were most able to access sustainable earning opportunities, such as recycling. Even today, some Bhatu households in the comparative sample continue this cyclical way of living and earning; only now they have the colony as their base.

In the case of the core Bhatu, Delhi was always central to their nomadic lifestyles and therefore the place where they finally migrated and settled. Furthermore, it was the menfolk of this sample who were first able to stop the nomadic sales altogether. This was because the younger generation of sons were already growing up and beginning to make money on the streets of Delhi by engaging in shoe shining and eventually tourist guiding and shopping commission work. In these ways, they were able to take over the responsibility of earning for

the family from their grandparents and parents. It is the pioneering of this younger generation, in some cases from a very early age, which is the basis of the experience, knowledge and significantly higher earning potential they have today, as well as the comparatively more comfortable lives they are able to lead.

Poverty and insecurity of earning also induced the non-Bhatu people of the comparative sample to migrate directly from other states in India and settle in Delhi for work. However, unlike the Bhatu who arrived in large joint-family groups, the non-Bhatu were most likely to arrive in Delhi individually or with one or two siblings, perhaps even following their brother or father. Unlike the Bhatu community, non-Bhatu were most likely to know people living and working in Delhi and most likely to take homes on rent or live with family members already established in the capital. Women in this group were most likely to have come with parents or with their husbands after marriage.

Once non-Bhatu people settled in Delhi, a number of changes led to the deterioration of their circumstances. Family growth, family breakdown due to arguments or loss of employment, along with the rising cost of living and the increasing rent demands of landlords, have been highly significant in shaping their continuing journeys. Over time, they were forced to move from their owned, rented or other shared accommodation into the *jhuggi* settlement in central Delhi. In many cases, people from this sample told me they bought or rented *jhuggies* there, before being evicted along with the Bhatu community in 2002.

Of the non-Bhatu sample, some also tell stories of having been born and brought up in poverty in Delhi. For example, Poonam, a 60-year-old widow with two unmarried, incapacitated sons, now living in a retail space in the colony, says, “*I see people who come here from other places all over India to live and work and become very successful, but I was born here and didn’t manage anything*”. It is clear from these experiences that people have taken very different journeys to reach the slum settlement in central Delhi. An important aspect of this journey has been their changing status over time. The section which follows, looks briefly at the impact of this on their everyday lives.

5.3.1 Changing status: From migrant to resident and squatter

Migrants account for a growing proportion of Delhi's population, travelling from states throughout India and seeking shelter on open grounds, which provide them with easy access to supplies, work, water and transport. In Delhi, land is owned, controlled and developed under the sole jurisdiction of the DDA. *Jhuggi* settlement in the context of this study, was a gradual, but sustained process, taking place over some thirty years. During the first period of office of Indira Gandhi, between 1966 and 1977, people who had already settled in the *jhuggi* were given rights of residence and citizenship in the form of election cards and ration cards. These circumstances reflect a subsequent change in the identities of migrant communities. In the case of the core Bhatu group, for example, this meant a shift in their status from being temporary 'slum' dwellers to being classified as permanent residents of Delhi, which in turn granted them increased legality and security.

However, despite their long-term residency and increasingly stable existence in terms of employment, living conditions and access to utilities and services such as healthcare and schooling, the *jhuggi* community's identity and status was to change again due to developments in the government's approach to land, housing and particularly slum management. In 1990, the government of Delhi adopted a new slum policy and under these changing laws new discourses emerged in such a way that the *jhuggi* dwellers became identified as illegal squatters.

The land they were settled on was government-owned, DDA-controlled and earmarked as a prime location for office development. For these reasons, people lost their rights and were now seen to be standing in the way of the government-led initiative to have Delhi achieve global city status. In June 2002, DDA officials subsequently entered the *jhuggi* settlement, supported by police and bulldozers, in order to implement their eviction and resettlement programme. In the section that follows, I look at the variation in people's experiences of coping with eviction from the *jhuggi* settlement and meeting the challenges of resettlement in the colony.

5.4 *Jhuggi* eviction and colony resettlement

By all accounts, a deal had been struck between the DDA and the *jhuggi* community representatives, over a number of years leading up to 2002. In ‘exchange’ for moving off the land and allowing for the demolition of the *jhuggies* and the subsequent clearance of the site, people would be resettled to permanent housing. This would take the form of two-storey, semi-detached buildings comprising a ground floor retail space, a first floor living space and a terraced roof above, accessible by a central stairwell (amounting to a total living space of forty-five *gaz* per household) with utilities and services, including a school. In order to reassure the community about the exchange, the DDA invited representatives to the building site to see a completed block of flats. Ironically, this ‘show block’ still stands empty today; the flats it comprises were never allocated.

On the day of the *jhuggi* demolition, this ‘exchange’ was aided by the arrival of trucks to take those willing and able, along with their belongings, straight to the colony. Despite the seemingly long-term preparations leading up to the implementation of this plan, those being evicted were ill-prepared for the move. For many, particularly the non-Bhatu, it was a very sudden experience, which led to a mass dispersion of households and the separation of people from their families and other community members. More generally, people’s initial reaction to the eviction was one of fear of losing their homes and having nowhere else to go and if they did move away, losing jobs that were rooted in the heart of Delhi. While Bhatu men shined shoes or got into tourist guiding, Bhatu women did recycling in the busy streets. Non-Bhatu men laboured for shops and did brisk business in the bustling markets, while the women of this group became machine operators in factories.

In general, the movement of people from the *jhuggi* to the colony was not instant. Many households were forced to sleep on the pavements until alternative arrangements could be made. Some even tried, in their desperation, to move back into the settlement, sleeping on top of the rubble from their broken *jhuggies*. Many families, wholly or in part, went back to their villages or stayed with relatives in other areas of Delhi. Those who could afford to, were forced into shorter or longer term residency in rented accommodation, particularly in areas close to the colony. In reality, only a very gradual resettlement process followed. The colony,

a marginal and undeveloped area at the time, has only slowly been populated through a sporadic flow of people over the subsequent ten years to 2012.

For the majority, arrival at the colony was delayed, in some cases for many years. It took time for people to learn that they were entitled to housing and then to familiarise themselves with the complexities of the bureaucratic process for applying put in place by the DDA. According to many residents, despite the promises made at the time, people were not given the houses in exchange for moving. In many cases, it was only after engaging in the application process that people learned about having to pay for their housing. The DDA demanded 1½ lakh rupees, payable by an initial deposit of 20,000₹, followed by monthly instalments, beginning at the time they moved in, until the outstanding balance was paid. The initial deposit was enough, for those who could afford it, to secure the paperwork needed to present at the colony office for the purposes of being allocated a flat, getting the keys and the ownership documentation.

However, once the DDA noticed that it was taking people a considerable length of time to raise the deposit, in acknowledgement of their difficulties they agreed to let people pay their deposit in two instalments of 10,000₹. In these cases, people were issued the paperwork they needed to present to the colony office after paying the first 10,000₹ so that they could be allocated their house and get their keys. After they paid the second 10,000₹ they were able to secure their ownership documentation.

However, it was only once people were able to amass this money and knew that more people had already moved to the colony, that the majority felt comfortable enough to secure their housing and move in. Initially, people feared the isolation; associating moving to a newly developed area in the middle of nowhere where there were no other people, with considerable danger. Moreover, there were no schools or community centre or places nearby offering healthcare, markets or shops. People told me they had great difficulty in the beginning because they were not familiar with the area and did not know where to find the things they needed. Furthermore, they did not know how to access and use the public transport to take them to places where they knew they could find what they needed.

People's initial fears turned to anger as they recalled the point at which they realised they had been cheated by the DDA, and more importantly, betrayed by their community representatives. The housing they were being allocated was built taller, and the living area two-thirds smaller than what was originally promised. Furthermore, the retail spaces below the flats were only to be allocated to those able to pay a further 8,000₹, and the roof was only accessible to the youngest and fittest, given the extra stairs to climb, the steep iron ladder bracketed high on the wall and the small size of the portal finally giving access to the roof.

Fear and anger increasingly turned to resentment because of the way housing was being allocated on a completely random basis and took no account of caste grouping, family ties or the differing physical capabilities of disabled people or the aged and increasingly infirm. People, who had been able to live in family units within caste-segregated areas while in the *jhuggi* settlement, now found themselves neighbours with strangers from other castes. Close relatives, previously able to live together, found themselves separated on different floors, in different blocks and different phases at opposite ends of the colony. In many cases, the disabled and infirm were allocated flats on the top floors, while the rest of the population, having only ever lived in single-storey dwellings built on flat ground, struggled to cope with stairs. Frustration also grew from having to pay utility bills for the first time in their lives, for a supply of electricity that was frequently unavailable and a restricted flow of water that was unsuitable for drinking.

So, from early on, people experienced extreme discomfort in their new environment. This was compounded by the fact that many had lost their jobs or were forced to invest money in travelling expenses and separate food on the days they travelled for work. The fear, anger and resentment, fuelled by frustration, finally escalated into a serious backlash from within the community towards the DDA. Community members started ripping out electricity wires and meters, cutting water pipes and breaking sanitation stacks. These were then sold, along with anything else they could prise from the infrastructure, including the plastic water tanks from the roofs, so that they could raise some much-needed money. In turn, the refusal to pay utility bills spread to a community-wide boycott of paying the monthly instalments towards the total cost of housing they had been allocated.

This long, drawn out process of resettlement has been shaped by the relationship that developed between the *jhuggi* dwellers and the DDA. In the section which follows, I look briefly at the way this relationship has unfolded over time and continues to be highly significant in shaping the everyday lives and experiences of the people living in the colony.

5.4.1 The migrant-DDA relationship

Interaction between these two parties has been characterised by unequal power relations that were legitimised by the DDA's role in the 'rehabilitation' of *jhuggi* dwellers, who they considered to be squatters. Despite being fraught with tension, the migrant-DDA relationship has been the locus for generating and wielding power for both parties, to different degrees, over time. For the moment, however, an impasse has been reached.

The DDA understands their resettlement program was 'successful'; *jhuggi* dwellers were removed from central Delhi and a huge profit was made in selling the land on to developers. Yet, after ten years, both unallocated and allocated housing in the colony continues to be inhabited while deposits, and in many cases outstanding balances, remain unpaid. The DDA also accepts that forcing people to move away from the colony, would only add to the government's wider problems with other existing slum settlements in Delhi. At the same time, colony residents understand that they have a legitimate claim to housing, given their long-term residency in the *jhuggi* in central Delhi and their subsequent forced eviction. However, they also acknowledge that their outstanding deposits and the extent of their illegal residency, given that they have broken locks and are inhabiting unallocated housing, renders them once again squatters on the DDA's property.

5.5 On-going settlement of the colony

A large number of Bhatu, initially officially identified as *jhuggi* dwellers and evicted by the DDA in 2002, now live in the colony. However, people with and without previous experience of *jhuggi* life, have continued to arrive. Family breakdown or worsening financial conditions are often given as reasons for this. Among those moving in, are relatives of those already living here, who want to join their families and live rent and bill free for some time. In addition, increasingly better off people are also investing in property here, because it is

affordable and has a guaranteed high rate of future return. They do not live in the colony, but visit it periodically to check that their property is in good order. There are also those who have come here to invest in the affordable housing and at the same time to set up a business. For example, there are several catering outlets, daily ration stores and a growing number of schools and tuition centres which now service the colony.

In this section, I have detailed the circumstances of my own and other people's journeys into the colony and given some insight into the physical living conditions. In the section which follows, I begin to reflect upon the social relationships which characterise the localised context for this research.

5.6 Understanding identity through community and family relatedness

While I encouraged people in the colony to talk about caste, they often seemed to understand very little about it. In the cases where they did have something to tell me, their narratives did not always agree. People had their own words, ways of talking, understanding and experiencing, which they wanted to highlight. Through the interview process, I began to uncover the complex and layered nature of Bhatu identity and the way it is intimately bound to relationships both between and within castes. The section that follows analyses the nature of this relatedness.

5.6.1 Community

For the most part, they talked about the relationships between castes in terms of hierarchal positions, using Hindi words such as *niche* and *upar*. This choice of wording highlights that some people are considered low, below or at the bottom in relation to some who are high, on top, or in positions over and above others. Respondents also highlighted the relationships between types of people, using phrases such as *chota log* and *bara log*. Such contrasting distinctions carry connotations of some people being considered small; lesser, subordinate, minor; trivial, insignificant; inferior; or contemptible, in relation to others who are big; great (in prestige, standing), noble, eminent, important; wealthy; influential and educated. Finally, they highlighted the differences between castes in terms of the qualities of people, using words such as *kharab* and *accha*. In this case, they contrasted people who are considered bad,

worthless, inferior, contaminated, corrupt or criminal with those who are good, sound or distinguished (McGregor, 2002).

People were most interested in telling me about their Bhatu identity, that they belong to this caste and that they have their own language and customs. I begin to analyse the nature of this relatedness by using a narrative from Jagmohan, a 53-year-old widower and community elder, who takes a particular interest in the origins of the Bhatu caste. In the following quote, he illustrates the way the meanings of the above words and phrases are interlinked in people's understanding, as he gives his account of some complex developments in Bhatu history:

“Back in the days of Maharana Pratap Singh our caste was Sasodia, we were rulers among the Rajputs. We had a very good level in relation to other castes at this time. However, once we began to be hunted by Akbar we changed our caste name to Bhatu so that we could hide and save our lives. Once we ran away our lives changed, we started to kill animals and beg in order to survive. Then people started to understand that we are small people. Bhatu peoples' position is now very low in relation to other castes. However, in the colony the Bhatu group lives alongside other people such as Dhanak and Bihari. In this case, Bhatu see themselves as at the highest level in the colony. However, given that we do jobs such as shoe shining, begging and selling whisky and drugs, our neighbours continue to see our level as bad and therefore lower than them”.

Jagmohan continues his narration, reflecting on the more recent history of Bhatu people. In particular, he draws our attention to their changing fortunes and the contrasting experiences of village and city life:

“It is important for us to remember our history, because thirty to forty years ago it was a very bad time for Bhatu people. Although it is a little bit better now in city areas, before in the village, people used to say Bhatu people are not good. We couldn't take water from the well, we had to take it either from the place where other people took their shower or from where animals drank. Before we couldn't sit together, we couldn't interact with others or go inside someone's house. There is nothing like that now in Rajasthan or in the colony, not even any

restrictions on eating. Now everyone is able to go together to functions and Bhatu people get more respect”.

Although they are leading largely city-based lives, village life remains important for Bhatu people. Jagmohan clearly recalls his experiences of caste discrimination in the past being rooted in village life. Yet today for many living in the colony, it is their village-based relatives and caste community who are living the better lives and holding the moral high ground, when it comes to honour and respect. Interestingly, on meeting and talking with some of these relatives and community members during my visit to village Rajasthan as part of my research, I found that many agree with the city dwellers. People like Balbir for example, introduced in Chapter Four, remember the dirty *jhuggi* and have seen for themselves the conditions in the colony. Moreover, they know about the dishonourable ways of earning which Bhatu people are undertaking, which they associate with cheating and stealing and being hounded by the police and other officials.

Such narratives tell of contrasting experiences and ideas of what a better life might be. They also tell of a history characterised by caste inequality and discrimination, social and economic injustice and endless struggle to survive. Yet, it is their caste identity, with its origin story and sense of belonging rooted in village Rajasthan, which allows them to make sense of their untouchable and criminal identities of the past and their reliance on illegal activity in the present. Today their reputation precedes them; stealing and selling alcohol and drugs are illegal ways in which money is earned, along with street-based selling, touting and driving, all of which are criminalised under prevailing licensing laws.

Clearly, the relationships between castes remain important for Bhatu people’s identity and sense of belonging. However, relationships within caste, based on brotherhood, clan, lineage and kinship, are also highly significant. The section which follows, continues to uncover the complex and layered nature of identity and relatedness in these terms. During one of my many painstaking explorations of relatedness with Subhash, he said to me: *“If there is any point in anything you do here, this is the biggest point; to understand the nature of the relationships between my people”*. The sheer magnitude of this task is overwhelming when terms such as caste, brotherhood, clan and lineage are used interchangeably in everyday

conversation, and when people have different levels of understanding about where each of these groupings end and the others begin.

As with their understandings of caste, Bhatu people have their own words, ways of talking and understandings based on their experiences. In this regard, they were most interested in telling me about '*the way we do things*'; from the nature of the work they carry out to the Gods they worship, from the ideals and practices in marriage to who takes on the caring and earning responsibilities in order to ensure '*we take care of our own people on our own*'. At the heart of their self-sufficiency in the way they do things is family.

5.6.2 Family

Family constitutes a central social institution, which requires that we reach an understanding of patterns of kinship and residency. In everyday lived experience relatedness is talked about first in terms of '*parivar*', meaning family, which signifies close relations based on blood and marriage ties. In this case, your mother, father, father's father and mother, father's brothers, their wives and children, along with your own brothers and unmarried sisters and wife and children, may be included here. Even if it is no longer the case, the majority of respondents recall at least some of their formative years living together with all of these family members in one extended household unit.

As highlighted earlier, in the past when living in village Rajasthan, people would live in these units. However, there were limits imposed on joint-family living in the village because of the restrictions on land, the expense of building new structures and having an increasing number of mouths to feed, given the insecure, low-paid nature of the work people engaged in. Therefore, married sons with their wives and children often separated into nuclear families, where day-to-day caring and earning was managed in conjugal units.

For many people, extended-family living only really resumed once they settled in the *jhuggi* in Delhi. Many respondents recall their increased comfort and support as extended families thrived to their fullest extent, uncurtailed by land and income. They were able to build more, larger dwellings to accommodate a growing family. However, once people moved to the

colony, extended family ways of living and earning have again been severely curtailed. There are several explanations given for these changes.

For example, many of the people who were living in this thriving joint-family environment at the time of *jhuggi* settlement took advantage of the bureaucratic registration process set in motion by the DDA. Through this eviction and resettlement process, households were able to claim separate nuclear family status for each son already married or of marriageable age. In this way, given the random allocation of housing on arrival at the colony, joint families were not only broken up, but separated in some cases by floor, block and phase.

Other respondents say that it is the limited space in the flats and the increasing number of children, growing children or sons reaching marriageable age, which has subsequently made them change the way they live and earn since moving to the colony. The number of female-headed households is also rising. Estranged women return to live in the colony with their children because it is their natal home. Women who find themselves widowed, with children to support, remain in the colony because it is their marital home. A small, but growing number of respondents also said that they actually prefer to manage day-to-day living and caring in nuclear families, separated from their parents, because of the growing cost of living.

However, as highlighted earlier, questioning whether people live in joint or nuclear families is highly problematic, given that it entails looking for absolutes of living (Ingold, 2000). During the initial stages of my research, I undertook the simultaneous task of identifying and locating the kin, which would form the core of the research sample. I soon came up against difficulties in trying to establish patterns of residency in these terms. I was to discover, the only absolute in living comes in death, as Subhash explained - to my mind - some unusual, but telling circumstances regarding his uncle, who is estranged from his wife and children and lives with another women, with whom he has gone on to have more children:

“My uncle is the owner of the house that my auntie and their children live in. My uncle has lived with his girlfriend since jhuggi time, but sometimes he is going to his wife’s house. This is his family, he is not separate from them, they are together. He lives with all his family together, it’s not about staying separate, it’s

about coming and going! They are all important, they are all the same. He is not dead, he did not die!”.

As reflected, in what became a somewhat irate response, people’s residency is more accurately understood in terms of people being together or being separate, and this is continually changing in terms of both patterns of kinship and residency. For example, when a son marries and breaks away from his parents with his wife and children, this is talked about in terms of them living separately. In time, once his own son grows up and marries, he will live together with his parents, wife and children (Patel, 2005).

Moreover, authors with a focus on family, make an important distinction between the idea of family and the household and the importance of examining the relationship between the two. It is important to note that the realities being studied are more than the physical buildings with their hearths; they are also the social relationships of family, wider relatives and community (Shah, 2005). If we look at who eats from the hearth in the colony, then as reflected in Subhash’s narrative, and in keeping with Ingold’s conclusions, we find that the household constitutes an ongoing stream of comings and goings (2000). In the Bhatu community, food is always prepared at regular times every day, but not always eaten in its entirety. It tends to be shared throughout the day with those who come and go.

As a rule, lunchtime food will be eaten, first by the members present who actually contribute directly towards the household through their caring and earning roles, along with any visitors. Then, throughout the afternoon neighbours and other visitors will be given food, or in some cases even take food, when the household members are not there. The evening meal often works the other way, with neighbours and any visitors eating first, before those contributing directly to the household have theirs. Importantly, in the majority of cases, those eating are always in some way seen as close, whether in terms of relatives or caste community members. In this way, down and out uncles and others considered waifs and strays, such as a daughter-in-law’s brother or a close friend and confidante when growing up, are always able to find food.

There is therefore, no evidence of a ‘naturalised’, unilinear evolutionary pathway, which sees patterns of joint-family co-residency gravitating towards nuclear family living found in the

colony (Patel, 2005). Rather, there is acknowledgement of the developmental process of the Indian family, with its phases of growth and phases of dispersal, which on the one hand acknowledges the aspirations of parents to preside over their household, comprised of their married sons, daughters-in-laws and grandchildren. On the other hand, it acknowledges the considerable difficulties in maintaining residential unity and harmony between brothers and between mothers and daughters-in-law. Incompatibility of expectations and personalities can lead to estrangement, separation and dispersal and are important parts of the experience of family living (Shah, 2005).

At the level of everyday life, people also talk about relatedness in terms of *ristidar*, meaning relative. This brings distance into people's experiences of relatedness in terms of both kinship ties and patterns of geographic settlement. The ideas of *lamba parivar*, translated literally as 'long family' or *bara parivar*, meaning 'big family', reflect the importance of these more distant relatives, which signifies many births spread across a wide geographical area. At this point, it is most appropriate to introduce a village-level of relatedness into the discussion, which is talked about in terms of the *khandan*, meaning patrilineage.

5.6.3 Patrilineage

Subsuming the co-resident family is a larger group referred to as the *khandan*, a patrilineage which constitutes a patrilocal extended family based on blood ties and common descent, traced through a known male ancestor. On this very subject Subhash narrates:

"People in my family remember Kurda Ram. Before that we don't remember anyone. All the people we consider family are referred to as the Chittori family and are descendents of this man. All men in my family are Bhatu and Adwan and this never changes our whole life".

The central focus of this study, the core sample, constitutes a *khandan*, the Chittori Family, a group of males related to Khurda Ram, who settled in a small village to the north east of Rajasthan. Jagmohan provides some important insight into the links between Bhatu caste origins and the ancestral settlement in Chittori:

“Our caste traces its origins as far back as the times of our Gods, the times of Krishna and Vishnu. However, our current generation looks towards Chittorgarh in Rajasthan as the place of origin for our people. In the time of Kurda Ram’s grandparents, we were known as Sasodia people. Maharana Pratap Singh was our king and we were soldiers, and when he died we were hunted, so we ran away from Chittorgarh and slowly we lost everything. Wherever we went we couldn’t say our name ‘Sasodia’, because people would kill us. We were scared for our lives, so we ran to the jungles, to places all over India. Kurda Ram finally led us to settle in Chittori, where we now understand our ancestry lies”.

From this narrative we are given a historical context in terms of time, place and people, which roots *khandan* identity in Kurda Ram, who went on to have three sons who were born and grew up in Chittori. Today, when people talk about family, each of these sons represents a branch of relatedness found within the colony. The patrilineal group includes wives who have married into the blood line and excludes married sisters and daughters. Unilineal descent is paramount and does not disappear once women are married. On the one hand, they remain natal patrilineage members when visiting their parents. On the other hand, they are expected to remain in their marital patrilineage and this can mean that a woman who is widowed, where appropriate, will go on to marry and have children with her husband’s brother. However, where a woman is no longer accepted in her marital patrilineage, she will be accepted back into her natal home in order to negotiate another marriage outside her natal patrilineage (Berreman, 1972).

Patrilineage and residence shape everyday lived experience, because while a woman remains identified with her natal patrilineage, as long as her husband lives, her part in the ritual, economic and social activities of his patrilineage are given priority. Furthermore, on her death, it is her husband’s family who have the responsibility to perform her funeral rites in her marital home. As Vinod, a 25-year-old, unmarried, elder brother of three unmarried sisters tells me:

“The natal home could perform the funeral rites, but they would be making a mistake. It is a matter of respect and honour that they do this, because she is their family member”.

While conducting enquiries into the nature of relatedness in the colony, I realised that while I was trying to inject an historical element into the process by tracing kinship from Kurda Ram, people tended to focus on the composition of their families as they are in the present. This meant that any unmarried girls were written in to the kinship charts, while any already married sisters or daughters were written out. When trying to address this, so that I could have a clearer picture of family over time, I was told frequently; “*Our sisters and daughters once married are not our family*”.

Again, I was meeting challenges from the community with regard to my tendency to think in absolute terms. I needed a change of perspective to appreciate the extent of married sisters’ and daughters’ comings and goings, in relation to both their natal and marital homes. The visitation rights of a new bride was one such perspective from which I could get a good indication of the extent of relatedness that remains once women are married and living with their husbands. When recalling their experiences, older women provided mixed messages: in some cases they never saw their parents again, while others continued to return frequently, particularly where there was marital difficulty. In watching current practices in the colony, it became clear to me that visitation rights are commonplace, granted to daughters-in-law to visit their natal family, with and without their husbands, to attend ceremonies and festivals and for childbirth.

Such practices are understood to be a matter of custom, the source of which lies in the relationships within the Bhatu caste, which are based on *gotra* or *got*, meaning clan. In the section that follows, I look at the significance of clan in bringing understanding to Bhatu identity and relatedness.

5.6.4 Clan

The clan is larger than the patrilineage, constituting a group of patrilineally related males and their wives and children. Each clan is characterised by residential unity, social integration and exogamy when it comes to negotiating and choosing marriage partners. A person must marry outside their father’s and mother’s *gotra* (Madan, 1962). This level of identity and relatedness exhibits a real group sentiment and constitutes the cultural heart for Bhatu people, where beliefs and practices associated with ‘*our religion*’ are located. Jagmohan again

provides us with an historical context and some important insights into the ways *gotra* is connected to other forms of relatedness in everyday life:

“Our gotra, Adwan, came from a man named ‘Ado’ in our Sasodia times. There are many Adwan people who can be found all over India, it is a very big group. However, we are from Chittori and our Adwan gotra is tied to this village in Rajasthan. Your gotra is a sign that you are from a group of people that is bigger than blood. Your village allows you to distinguish yourself from others in that group. Your gotra is also a sign that you are from a smaller group of people than your caste. The Bhatu caste is divided into many different groups, which we use to help understand each other. Caste and gotra touch each other, and although we have three legs to our family ancestry, they also touch each other, we are all related, we are not separate, we all live together”.

Jagmohan’s narrative highlights again the importance of being separate and together in understanding relatedness. Moreover, he provides important insight into the link between *gotra* and family, making a clear distinction between male and female family members:

“As men we remain Adwan all our lives. This is unlike our sisters and daughters, who change to their husband’s gotra at the time when they become members of his family and live in his village. While sisters and daughters are always our sisters and daughters, they are no longer considered family members. Their kinship is temporary because they make the new generations for their husband’s family. Family is only from the male side. The parents and siblings of my mother are not considered to be part of our family. She is the only one given our kinship because she takes our gotra. We have so many sisters and daughters all over India. There is not a state without our family inside. That is why, in order to understand who we are and where we come from, we have to focus on the Chittori family of Adwan males”.

When people in the community talked about *gotra*, I heard phrases such as *“It signifies the closeness of family members”*, and more specifically: *“It’s a good discipline. Otherwise it feels like you are marrying your mother, sister or daughter”*. Through relatedness based on

gotra, people avoid marrying into their father's or mother's clan and at the same time ensure they do not marry out of their own generation, both of which are thought of as incest. Subhash narrates an important story on the subject of *gotra* rule-breaking and provides some insight into the nature of the consequences:

"I remember a man who married his father's brother's widow. This meant that he had married into his own clan and crossed generations. The village members then stopped speaking to the man and his family. One of his sisters didn't like this and paid money for her relations from far and wide to travel and attend a big meeting in Rajasthan. She provided food for everyone and while they were there she made promises that she wouldn't talk with her brother again in her life. This ensured that she wouldn't be outcaste. Her brother continues to live in the village, but he has no rights to attend festivals and functions like marriages and funerals. He also can't sit or eat with anyone. All his family also suffer the same as him, except for his sister, who continues to actively show that she has disowned all of them".

Gotras are rooted in villages inside, and increasingly outside, Rajasthan. Given the importance of these village ties, there are many *gotras* represented in the colony including Adwan, Ershan, Gadgwan and Rishan on the one hand, and Mann, Budwan, Jitan and Mutwan on the other. This distinction between groups of *gotras* draws our attention to the significance of the idea of *biraderi*, meaning brotherhood, another important aspect of identity and relatedness found within the Bhatu caste.

5.6.5 Brotherhood

Larger still than the clan is the *biraderi*, which splits the Bhatu caste into two exogamous groups. According to community members, each brotherhood is traced back to two brothers: Malawat and Biddhuwat. They are the sons of Sahastrababu, a legendary figure from Hindu mythology. In this way, if your father is Mala, your mother will be Biddhu, while you will be Mala and your husband or wife will be Biddhu.

Taken together, relatedness is experienced at the level of everyday life for those in the core sample on the following terms. People are first and foremost Bhatu and this is imposed through caste endogamy. They are then identified with the Mala brotherhood, which requires them to marry a member of the Biddhu brotherhood, by way of ensuring that a person marries far off. They are then of the Adwan clan and Bhatu customs dictate further that marriage is restricted in terms of clan exogamy. This ensures that a person does not marry into their mother's or father's clans, which are tied to village life. After this, relatedness becomes a matter of wider relatives and close family ties associated with the ancestral and territorial rootedness of patrilineal descent, which goes back to Khurda Ram in Chittori, Rajasthan and patrilocal patterns of residence, whereby a new bride leaves her natal household and goes to live with her husband in his parents' home (Berreman, 1962, 1972).

According to the community, when they choose a marriage match, the decision as to who they choose, is for the most part, a matter of connections that already exist between people. These connections, in large part, reflect the complex and layered nature of relatedness outlined above. Rohit, 27 and uneducated, provides some reflection on the process and the way connections in terms of physical location and social relatedness are expanding:

“People are always coming and going, telling each other who has boys, who has girls, ready for marriage. We already know each other and our connections take us to Rajasthan, but people here are also marrying people from Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana. This is because connections were already established with people in Rajasthan, but then people have moved around”.

As a result of people moving around and settling in different places, the geographical area where marriage matches can be found is expanding. At the same time, the strong ties between clan and village are being challenged. However, despite the expansion, one thing that remains unchallenged is the way in which Bhatu identity remains embedded on a number of levels of relatedness in village Rajasthan.

5.6.6 Vocation

According to respondents, one final level of relatedness is important, which further splits the Bhatu caste according to vocational differences that were initially rooted in village life in Rajasthan. Subhash introduces the groups represented in the colony and gives some insight into their initial, but changing ties with village life and their role in providing the ideals and practices associated with creating the necessary conditions for life to continue:

“The Ugnia group is the largest group in Rajasthan. Ugnia are found in Chittori, while Chitawa and Rajgard have a mix of Ugnia and Bhagri. Kanjars can be found in many places. Each group has its own religion and their customs are different. They have their own plan for how to live life and make marriage and funerals. Members of each group had their own type of work before and came from different villages, but now people have all different types of work and they have moved around”.

As this narrative highlights, many people are no longer living their whole lives in the village; they move or migrate and adapt to city life, thereby breaking down both vocational and village ties in terms of these specific groupings. However, evidence from the pattern of *jhuggi* settlement and colony resettlement shows that people in this community have maintained a tendency to congregate. Therefore, such groupings remain an important source of identity and cultural difference. For example, Ugnias are associated with labouring, farming and construction, Narlias are associated with street performance, Kanjars are known for whisky making and drug selling and Bhagrias are associated with shoe polishing and repairing.

In cultural terms, evidence shows that customs and practices associated with marriage differ between them in that cross-cousin marriage can be found among Kanjars but not Bhagri, Narlias and Ugnias. Similarly, an important part of the cremation ceremony for Kanjars is where each person present steps over the body before the fire is set, while Narlias do not. Ugnias take the body for cremation on the first evening after death, while Bhagri wait several days until all relatives from far and wide have been able to come together.

These groupings, with their corresponding villages, vocations and customs are called upon by colony community members in a bid to evaluate, distinguish and distance themselves in either positive or negative terms from each other. For example, I have heard people within the colony say many times: “*We are not the same as them*”, when explaining the relationship between themselves and Kanjars. There are no Kanjars living in the colony; they are associated with other areas of Delhi such as Mongol Puri and Sultan Puri.

It is evident from the way people talk about themselves in relation to others in the colony that there is a hierarchal order between these groups. Subhash’s narrative brings some understanding of the basis for evaluation and the differences of positioning as a result:

“Ugnia, our group, is a strong group, we are at the top level in the colony, we have been the most successful in doing everything like speaking English and getting into tourist guiding and have the most respect. Bhagri have nice respect also, but they haven’t been successful, because they are doing shoe shining and begging. Kanjars have more respect, they are very successful and very rich, powerful people. They have made their money running successful businesses, but they are not good. These people are criminals making and selling whisky and selling drugs. Karelia is also another group, but they are like criminals who make and sell whisky, and they do robberies also”.

From this narrative, we can see that the basis for positioning is success and power in their ability to earn, and the status and respect attached to the type of work carried out. Therefore, jobs which involve illegal means or cheating in order to earn, lose out when it comes to earning respect.

From my observations of the younger generations of boys in the colony, there is evidence that these evaluations and differences in positioning become the basis for interaction between them in everyday life. Even during my participation in these interactions, a significant part of the engagement involved some boys pointing out the ways others look in a negative way and justifying these characteristics on the basis of their group affiliations. In such cases, the sources of difference also include language and ways of speaking, but also differences in

personality and behaviour. For example, Kanjars are renowned for their criminal behaviour and Bhagrias for their lack of intelligence.

The reactions of some boys, positioned lower in the hierarchy, showed me that there is an element of shame attached to such groupings and that people are made to feel lesser, particularly where the Bhagri group members are concerned. This just seems to add to the humiliation which young Bhatu people tell me they already experience in everyday life because of their caste and the ‘criminal’ and ‘backward’ labels they have been associated with over time. Many of these characteristics have become stereotypes which are frequently called upon during light-hearted teasing. However, given the extent of alcohol and drug fuelled interaction found in the colony, these interactions often escalate into more serious arguing and the use of physical violence.

5.7 Conclusions

This chapter is the first of four presenting data from the colony. It has provided a localised context for my research, in terms of introducing the place and the people who are the focus of this study. The chapter opens with details of my journey to the colony, through meeting Subhash, his subsequent gatekeeper role in introducing me to the place and its people and in providing me with cultural orientation and insight. It moves on to trace people’s journeys to the colony, which have not been linear, but long, drawn out, sporadic flows of comings and goings, struggles and challenges associated with poverty-induced nomadism, migration and *jhuggi* settlement, followed by eviction and resettlement under the direction of the DDA.

Physical living continues to be characterised by relentless struggle and challenge. The complex and layered nature of family and community relatedness continues to play a major role in helping people cope as they go about creating the necessary conditions for life to continue. Family and community relatedness is also an important source of identity which remains rooted in village Rajasthan, despite their migration and subsequent years of city living and ever-expanding connections in both social and geographical terms. Family and community relatedness is also the main source of custom, success, power and status for Bhatu people, given the extent of caste-based discrimination and stereotyping associated with criminality and backwardness which still persists in everyday interactions within and beyond

the colony. This context provides an important background for understanding the pervasiveness of incapacity, indebtedness and illegality, which I now move on to discuss in the next three chapters.

Chapter Six. Barriers to Better Life: Educational Incapacity and Social Indebtedness.

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is the first of three, which focuses on what can be learned about barriers to better life and mobility from people's everyday lived experiences. As discussed in Chapter Four, barriers are interlinked and cumulative, and associated with incapacity, illegality and indebtedness. Considerable variation in the patterns of barriers to better life and mobility can be found in and between households overtime.

For the purpose of analysis, however, I begin the discussion by highlighting the incapacity that comes with people's lack of formal educational attainment. The discussion is then moved forward by uncovering the links between incapacity and indebtedness in people's everyday lives. This involves understanding the significance of earning and caring apprenticeships as the main opportunities for learning for children, as they prepare for adult life. Further depth of understanding then comes from highlighting the importance of the household relationships, within which these apprenticeships are undertaken. As I will go on to show, these relationships are hierarchal and dependent in character and produce extreme inequalities of power, and ultimately, social indebtedness.

The chapter is drawn to a conclusion with an acknowledgement that the inherent inequalities generated from joint-family living, feed the obligation that children have to take on roles and meet their responsibilities, and fuel the right that parents have to expect that their children will increasingly shoulder their roles and responsibilities on top of their own, as they get older. From this discussion, we are able to see the ways in which people's experiences, while creating the conditions necessary for life to continue and pursuing better life and mobility, are more often than not shaped by interlinked, cumulative barriers in everyday life.

For now, I begin the discussion by looking at the way people's experiences of incapacity are shaped, to some extent, by their inability to translate formal education into secure government employment, and to a large extent, by their general lack of formal educational qualifications. In building up an understanding of this type of incapacity, I draw upon

people's narratives about their childhood experiences, as well as my own observations of children in the colony, as they go about their everyday lives.

6.1 Learning and formal schooling

In India, two Constitution Amendment Bills pertaining to education, *The Constitution (Eighty-Sixth Amendment) Act, 2002* and *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009*, were brought into force on the 1st of April 2010. Evidence from the colony shows that, such policies remain no more than ideas on paper, which people have barely heard about, let alone been able to act upon. People do not talk about: the compulsory nature of schooling between the ages of 6 and 14 years; their rights to access schools and quality education from the 1st to the 8th class; their responsibilities as parents and guardians to ensure that their children access schools and complete their elementary education.

The majority of the older generation, within the colony, did not have access to education. They explain this as a consequence of having come from a poor background or of the changing nature of attitudes: “*Back then people didn’t need an education*”, or “*Education was not as important as it is now*”. Some of the younger generation still raise similar issues on the importance, and indeed, the relevance of education today. Meanwhile, men and women of all ages agree, that girls are just as capable as boys in the level of education they can attain. They are, however, divided as to its utility, given the ideal that “*Girls don’t go out to work*”, and more specifically as to the means, given the nature of the environment education places them in: society is considered “*dirty*” and men are said to “*have no honour*”.

Of this younger generation, who have completed education status, only 4 percent have achieved 8th class; this percentage represents 5 percent of all males and 2 percent of all females in the research sample. In addition, only 3 percent have attained levels beyond 8th class. This represents 5 percent of males from the core sample, with the highest attainment of 10th class, and 1 percent of core females with the highest attainment of 9th class. Of the comparative sample, 6 percent of males are represented, where the highest attainments include a 12th class, an MBA and a BCom and 2 percent of females with the highest attainment of 12th class.

These findings are in keeping with Bhatu people's own insistence, that historically, they are not educated people and that they are unaccustomed to sending girls to school. However, there is evidence that things are changing with the current generation, despite the core sample still lagging behind. Of the overall sample, 36 percent of males and 24 percent of females of compulsory school age, have had no contact with formal schooling. This represents 51 percent of males and 36 percent of females in the core sample, and a substantially lower rate of 27 percent of males and 10 percent of females in the comparative sample.

Despite the improvements evident within the research community, issues of access, retention and achievement in formal schooling all remain areas of concern. For example, the attitude of people towards education is an important consideration, given that those going to school now are still living in largely uneducated households. Mahavir, a 26-year-old non-Bhatu, educated up to 8th class and father of three young children, tells me about his experiences growing up in a household where he was able to study:

“My mother and father had a grocery shop and had no problem meeting everyday expenses. They gave me an education, but slowly I got into bad company and just wanted to earn. My parents never pressured me to continue in school, so I got my first job, made 500₹ and I was very happy. I always spent the money in the company of friends, gambling on cards. In my next job, I made 700₹ and I continued having a nice life, going to see movies, spending money and helping everyone. I never gave any money to my parents and my parents never asked. I would come home late and my mother would stay up and keep watch for me”.

Mahavir goes into interesting detail about what he was able to do, given that there were no financial difficulties in the household, no pressure to achieve educationally and no expectation that he would support his family once he started earning.

These are exceptional circumstances indeed, given that in the colony, whether or not parents send their children to school and keep them there, are still decisions to be made, rather than obligations to be met. Such decisions are more likely to be influenced by the extent to which people feel they can overcome the cultural, social and economic constraints in their everyday lives.

These constraints are often found hopelessly interlinked in narratives; *“I feel poor because I didn’t manage school... I didn’t go to school because my parents didn’t put me... I had an interest in school, but by the time I reached 15 years of age I just wanted to work”*. Even in the cases where children are sent to school, many associate the deteriorating financial circumstances of their households with the trade-off they have had to make between completing an education and earning. Bablu, 17, and educated up to 5th class, recalls having to leave school before completing his education in order to earn. He also highlights the way he went on to learn through apprenticeship:

“There were some tensions in my house so I left school. I was maybe 11 when I started working in a gift gallery. This was my first job. My friend was working there and he told me to come along. He showed me how to make greeting cards on a printing press. I now have a lot of experience in this type of work”.

In this way, for the majority, children’s enrolment and subsequent engagement in schooling and the outcomes they achieve, will more often than not depend on cost-benefit analysis as to whether, considering under their own circumstances and in acknowledgement of others’ experiences, investment in education is worth it (Jeffrey et al., 2008).

It is also important to add here, that there is no evidence that educational attainment is a point for consideration when arranging marriages in the Bhatu community. More of an emphasis is given to matches being made with *“poor people”* or *“people like us”*. Above all, families need to be seen as honourable, after that a girl has to be beautiful and caring; prepared for looking after her husband and his family. A boy has to be alcohol- and drug-free and earning; prepared for looking after his wife and children. Moreover, older generation females and younger generation males agreed, that educated women would be a source of tension in the marital home.

A bride from the village is desirable because of having led a *“simple life”*, and less education would mean they were *“less likely to make demands”* or at least *“demand less”*. However, females generally pointed out that if they had educated husbands, they would have been *“cared for better”*. Furthermore, younger generation females see the value of education, particularly for women, as they recognise through their own experiences or observing others,

that it is often “*us who are earning*” or “*left to take care of ourselves and raise our families*”, given the high incidence of estrangement and widowhood within the colony. Therefore, education is regarded as a crucial source of learning for girls preparing for adult life.

There is no evidence either, that any formal education attainment is linked to the pathways into earning taken by Bhatu people in the core and comparative samples. Moreover, in the case of the non-Bhatu sample, educational attainment has only been important in shaping the pathways into earning for a small number of people. For example, of those employed in this sample, there is a security guard with the National Guard. Of those self-employed, two family-run businesses have been set up by some of the most educated people in the sample: one has a BCom and runs a food stall with his wife, who has a 10th class pass, the other has an MBA and runs an awning design, manufacture and fitting company with his father.

There is also no evidence to suggest any significant link between educational attainment, better jobs and higher incomes in the overall research community. The people of the non-Bhatu category are more educated and have a higher level of engagement in work where they are regularly employed. However, they actually have similar or less income than the Bhatu, with little or no chance of this changing. The comparatively less educated Bhatu have a concentration of people engaged in what can be described as ‘new occupations’ such as tourist guiding, shopping commission work and auto-rickshaw driving among men and night time recycling among women. Within the colony, it is these occupations, despite their irregularity and respective levels of illegality, that have the greatest potential to bring in the most income.

Low caste communities like Bhatu, who have raised their children in poverty, have much further to strive to be able to meet the norms and values of society, and they lack the means, such as the right contacts and adequate finances, needed to achieve success. The extent of discrimination they experience, also works against them in their pursuit of accessing government jobs through the merit that comes with formal education. Anil, 23, is educated up to 8th class and provides some insight into the complexity of constraints as he sees them:

“I try not to miss the chance to make a better life, but because of being Bhatu, I feel I have less chance. Even if I am a very good graduate, I can’t do everything.”

If I have two friends who are educated to the same level as me, but not Bhatu, and if the three of us apply for the same job, I wouldn't get it, one of them would. Even if I also managed to pay money in bribes, I wouldn't get the job because I am Bhatu".

From such narratives we learn that people are positioned differently and as a result vary in the degree to which they can develop the means to achieve their goals (Cohen, 1955). People's lived experiences of being positioned differently are shaped by societal expectation, community ideals and practices, peer group influence, realities of household needs and individual wants. Being pulled in so many directions leads to confusion from an early age as Raju found:

"I went to school and completed 3rd class. I thought school was about fun when I was there. I didn't understand why I was going. I learned some Hindi, English and Maths. Sometimes I played games and sometimes I studied, but I always felt like I didn't understand. All my friends went, but I just wanted to work".

Although people like Anil and Raju want to pursue better lives and want to be successful, they find it hard to develop the necessary skills when their ways of living and earning, as well as cultural differences in expectation, equip them poorly for conventional pathways. Moreover, given the extent of discrimination and exploitation, even those with educational attainment face multiple constraints.

For example, pathways into earning may be conformist, in that people pursue conventional goals, such as government employment, by societal approved means such as formal education. In the colony, evidence of success in attaining a level of education and accessing government jobs is only found in the non-Bhatu sample. In the case of the core Bhatu sample, success has not been possible. Pooja, 22, is the most educated female in the sample, having attained a 9th class pass. During her narrative, she gave a very detailed account of her experience of applying for government work in Delhi, something which holds considerable status and honour in her community. She highlights the very specific and repeated nature of the discrimination she encountered:

“My sister’s husband told my brother that there was a government position in Delhi. I went for the interview in a very new dress and I wore lipstick for the first time. I have never worn a bindi on my forehead, so no one knew that I was married or that I had any children. The commissioner took the interview. He said I would be working at the reception. But I came to know that the nature of those men is not good. I have made a mistake in disclosing all my problems to them and they wanted to take advantage of me. They said we will give you the job, and a cell phone. I told them that I would have difficulty paying the travel costs, please tell me about the salary. They said don’t worry about the salary. We shall arrange an Indica car for you that will pick you up at your home, take you to work and take you home again.

I also explained about my education, but they said there is no need of it when all I would be doing is coming and going. I didn’t understand them at first, but slowly, slowly I understood; come daily, no one will force you. We are five officers and in two weeks you have to spend two to three hours with every officer. You will earn 10 to 15,000₹. No one will know anything. You have to come with a good personality and we will give you a dress according to your choice. I got surprised, I got confused. I thought, I have to quickly go from there. I used abusive language and thought, it is better to do cleaning work in other people’s houses. I went to two or three places after that, where I faced similar problems. Then all my dreams were shattered. I was heartbroken. I thought, I have to work for myself. That is why I didn’t take further steps to find a government job”.

Ashok, 21, and educated up to 10th class, also talks about his lack of success in accessing government work, despite his capability and awareness of his additional rights, given that his SC status is formally recognised in Rajasthan:

“Because I managed a good education, I thought I would get a government job; a small position in a big office, where I would be paid a salary. Tenth pass is not enough for a higher position, you need twelfth class minimum for that. I have applied for so many jobs in Rajasthan, including Jodhpur and other places. We are from a lower caste, scheduled caste, so we have a chance because of the

reservation quota. But I was never successful. I then moved to Delhi and made applications for the Army and Air Force. I had always liked this type of duty since I was small. I did the fitness test, but wasn't successful with the Army and I didn't manage to pass the written exam for the Air Force. I spent more than 10,000₹ in bribe money trying to apply for these positions, but after this, I haven't tried again. Scheduled caste status isn't with me in Delhi and I don't have the money".

Such experiences lead to status frustration, for those people who cannot reconcile their acceptance of societal approved goals, with their inability to attain them. Due to their lack of success, people like Anil, Raju, Pooja and Ashok feel that they are denied dignity and respectability, and a series of responses develop. For example, in order to survive, many people adapt their pathways into earning in such a way that they become increasingly confrontational. These adaptations still involve the accumulation of skills, but they are channelled into the pursuit of Bhatu people's own culturally approved goals.

In these circumstances, people see themselves as rebelling against and rejecting the conventional goals and means expected in wider society. In taking this type of pathway, people engage in different levels of deviant and criminal behaviour, in order to make money and pursue a better life. This includes paying bribe money to officials, which they see as an investment, enabling them to access the spaces where they know they can work and earn (Cohen, 1955). Issues relating to illegality in people's pathways into earning are discussed further below and again in more detail in Chapter Seven.

For now, I want to turn my attention to the opportunities for learning available for children, who are unable to access and attain any level of education through formal schooling. In such cases, learning takes place through apprenticeships associated with the gender-distinct roles and responsibilities that are embedded in everyday family and work life.

6.2 Learning and apprenticeship

Findings show that the nature of childhood roles and responsibilities differs according to gender, birth order and the changing circumstances of individual households. In general, being a daughter or son constitutes a role through which a person prepares to recognise,

accept and meet their responsibilities in adult life. More specifically, responsibilities are set, in that once allocated, people are bound, temporally, by times of day and more generally according to their age. In literature, role theory is criticised for being too static a basis from which to draw an understanding of the dynamic relationships between men and women. However, from the perspective of people in the colony, sharp gender role distinctions and their associated responsibilities are the ideals by which they live their lives. Ideals to which people aspire, regardless of the extent of divergence from this, which is evident in everyday living, earning and caring (Segal, 2007).

Childhood roles and their associated responsibilities are the basis for learning and involve skill acquisition in terms of earning and caring, physical and psychological preparedness and personality development. As part of the process of creating the necessary conditions for life to continue, people develop these qualities, but not in ways that are ‘passed on’ or ‘passed down’ from one generation to another or imported into everyday life as the content of acquired ‘culture’ or ‘tradition’. These qualities are rather skills that are learned, practised and honed, within settings of everyday life through apprenticeship. In this way, ways of living in the world are drawn into a particular focus for those who are learning, through the revelation and demonstration of those who are more experienced and knowledgeable (Ingold, 2000).

The following section details some of the character of such apprenticeships, as individuals move through the lifecourse and interact within ever wider networks of people, from household and community, to wider society (Cooley, 1922, Mead, 1962).

6.2.1 Family life: Learning and caring apprenticeships

While observing everyday life in the colony, I was able to watch children, both male and female, particularly under the age of 10, involved in a lot of errand running and child care for their parents and neighbours. Boys above this age, continue to have limited household responsibilities, such as going to fetch milk, tea leaves, sugar and breads first thing in the morning and again around five in the evening, and sometimes get involved in helping their sisters or mothers to carry water. However, in the majority of cases, boys have significantly less learning around the home in terms of the number of things they have to do, the number

of times in a day they must do them and the overall time required. Therefore, they are much more likely to be found lazing around the home, hypnotised by a TV or mobile phone or in groups hanging around the colony, walking the nearby streets or in the park playing cricket.

Female childhood is dominated from an early age by the practicalities of everyday family life. Sunita, a 20-year-old, uneducated Bhatu and married mother of a young son, recalls growing up in the *jhuggi* and her very early caring role, where she had to look after her younger siblings, while her father drank and her mother went for work:

“In the jhuggi, I began to understand a little bit; mother doesn’t stay at home. I was alone in the house; my parents left me to care. My brother and sister used to weep. Then, when they felt hungry, I would give them food. I would bring wood, there was no gas. I cooked rice with lentils; I didn’t know how to make chapatti. I served that only and filled their stomachs”.

Even girls, who were able to attend school, recall the role caring played in their young lives. Tinu is 19 and non-Bhatu, educated up to 5th class and unmarried. She recalls experiences of her caring apprenticeship growing up in the *jhuggi* and then in the colony;

“Growing up, I remember going from home to school, from school to home. The rest of the time I played. At the age when I was running and jumping I also used to do household work. My father and mother used to work outside. I had a young brother, so I looked after him and the house”.

Once her household had settled in the colony, Tinu failed to get admission in a school nearby, so that she could continue her studies. At this point, her caring apprenticeship expanded to include accompanying her mother to work, where she did housekeeping for a private household. However, as is the norm as girls approach marriageable age, Tinu’s life has become increasingly anchored to the family home, where she continues to learn, practise and hone her caring skills in preparation for adult life. She explains:

“I have to get up early in the morning to fill all the water containers and cook food. I get my brother ready and send him to school. I then do the household

work; wash dishes, wash clothes and in the evening again cook food. Life is spent doing all these things in the home only”.

This anchoring of life in caring for the household means that girls’ everyday lived experiences of apprenticeship are shaped largely by the time consumed securing water and providing food. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, the bulk of water needs are supplied to the colony by tankers organised by the JB. This means that water has to be secured and carried to the home. In the majority of cases, this is females’ work. Moreover, water use is concentrated in females’ responsibilities such as cooking, washing dishes and clothes and bathing children. While most carry containers to their homes, those with more income and girls available, have devised an elaborate system of multiple phases of decanting water from small tubs into large tanks loaded on the back of a flat rickshaw. These can then be moved and emptied at home using a long length of pipe connected to a motorised pump.

Given the physical struggle involved in accessing the limited supply of water delivered by the JB, many households are unable to secure any or enough to meet their needs. In these circumstances, people are forced to invest both time and money in securing water outside the colony. This may involve paying someone to secure water for them or renting a flat or pedal rickshaw themselves and going directly to the JB. However, regardless of the method, a considerable part of a female’s everyday life is taken up with learning how to secure, carry and manage water. A day only truly begins when water is available in the home. A late tanker means household members are unable to wash, cook and eat and get off to school in a fit condition or off to work early enough to make investing the money in travel expenses worthwhile.

As daughters get older they will have an ever-increasing responsibility to buy, prepare and cook food to household members’ taste and serve meals on time. Given the restrictions on spending, but also time to shop and physical energy to walk and tackle stairs, girls buy dry goods like rice, flour, or cooking oil and fuel in small quantities every day within the colony, every time they want to prepare them. Fruits and vegetables are also available here on a seasonal basis, but are often of poor quality; rotten or insect-infested.

The number of times people eat is often restricted to tea in the morning, followed by a meal at some point during the day. The variety of foods eaten is often limited to milk, lentils, vegetables such as large peppers, potatoes or cauliflower and *chapatti*. The better off manage tea in the morning and early evening and three meals throughout the day that include biscuits, breads and pastries, rice, fruits such as apples, bananas and grapes, vegetables such as peas, okra and squash, and salad made with cucumber, radish and lemon, butter, ghee, yogurt, eggs, goat and chicken. Everything is painstakingly prepared and cooked from scratch as an individual, but more often collective pursuit, where females get together in each other's houses.

6.2.2 Work life: Learning and earning apprenticeships

Earning apprenticeships often begin with children accompanying their mothers to work and eventually making their own independent contribution to the survival of the household. While living in the village, this involved farm and construction labour. However, male children growing up in the *jhuggi* in Delhi, settled into a pattern of starting working on their own between the ages of 5 and 7 years, in low income jobs such as shoe shining and repair. The basis for embarking on such pathways into earning at such a young age was often their experiences of being hungry. Having watched their fathers do this type of work, they did what they could to fill their bellies and thereby reduce the burden of their families. Vijay, 30, an uneducated Bhatu, incapacitated through drug misuse, started working at the age of 5. His story is exceptional, in that he began his working life selling drugs:

“I started working in the jhuggi in front of the wine shop, I would sit there with 1 kilo of drugs in small 10 gram packets and sell them to people for 60₹. Sometimes I slept on the ground there. I didn't know what was happening; people kept telling me how dirty it was. What can you do? I made money and we made food”.

Arun, 28, an uneducated father of four children, incapacitated through alcohol misuse, started working at the age of 7. He picks up the story by highlighting the social, as well as the economic significance, of shoe shining for boys in the Bhatu community in these early years:

“Before, all the young boys went together for work doing shoe shining, we would make 10 to 20₹ and this was enough. Then we would go to India Gate and take a shower in the water. We would pack a little rice from home, and we would go to Shastri Bhavan and pick fruits from the trees. There was also a canteen there where you could buy dosa for 60 paise and sit and enjoy. We would then go walking and play cricket in the park”.

Being able to offer a service such as shoe shining became the means through which these young boys were able to legitimise contact with foreigners and learn and practise English. In doing so, they created the circumstances whereby they could communicate a whole range of needs such as food, clothing, books and schooling and in some cases even seek housing and help with the wider financial difficulties of families, such as paying for marriage. Furthermore, living as they did in the *jhuggi* settlement, in close proximity to where they also worked, these endlessly entrepreneurial boys used this as an ideal opportunity to present poverty to foreign visitors. Vijay continues the story by highlighting the important role shoe shining played in attracting and scamming foreigners in order to earn money:

“As I got older I started shoe shining. Before I didn’t have anything and I would ask the tourists, please can you help me with something; school bag or books? I would also take them to my house and they would give me money. While doing shoe shining I would also talk to tourists about making a small business. I would say to them; Please Sir, can you buy me a shoe shine box? Some said OK, how much? I said only 2 to 300₹. My friend Bunty made and dealt in shoe boxes. But this was our plan; the foreigners didn’t know that we are working together. So I would take the foreigners to see Bunty at his house and they would buy a shoe shine box for me and we would leave. Then when the foreigners had gone, I took the box back to Bunty and we split the money”.

Similarly, today the run-down buildings and sparse living provided by the colony also lend themselves to presenting poverty to foreign visitors. Anil explains;

“Sometimes we take foreigners to our houses, let them meet our family, and show them how we live. We show them the rooms with only woven beds; no television,

and that we make food using only wood. Then the tourists think this is a very poor guy and they give us money for our family”.

Naina, 30, uneducated and widowed also observes that foreigners help Bhatu community members, but puts less emphasis on the desire of the people of the colony to misguide visitors and more on the foreigner’s agency:

“Foreigners give money; they say perhaps this will come in handy for your family. When tourist guides have a good rapport with tourists, then they manage to take them here to the colony. When they come here and see that people don’t have much, they see us cooking with wood, or that we don’t have a house, and they see the poor health of our children. Out of their own concern, they say I will give you things, or a house; they go away, some fulfil their promise but some don’t”.

Ideally, these young men want to establish long-term relationships with foreigners so that they can benefit from additional clientele through word of mouth and regular return visits in the future. Moreover, maintaining these relationships through email and phone conversations, also provides them with the opportunity to access regular financial support, long after the visitors have returned to their own countries.

In contrast to the Bhatu categories, the men of the non-Bhatu sample have a much longer established pathway into earning which begins at a comparatively older age. Between 11 and 14 years, these young boys gain employment with a regular monthly salary. The non-Bhatu approach to earning relies on a level of skill acquisition, which is dependent on longer term training, so that tailors, carpenters, screen printers, billboard painters, household painters and motor mechanics are represented in this sample. As with the core sample, on-the-job apprenticeship is the primary way in which people learn, practise and hone their skills. There is no evidence of formal vocational training among any men in the colony. However, several young girls expressed an interest in training as a nurse through government hospital schemes. Moreover, some have completed periods of formal training over a number of months, and in some cases years, where they have learned dressmaking and beauty parlour work, which they now undertake at home in the colony.

Unfortunately, earning apprenticeships among women are most often associated with deteriorating household circumstances. In such cases, low incomes and accumulating debts are made worse by the incapacity of earning members due to alcohol and drug abuse or marital estrangement and widowhood. Kajal, 40, a working mother of a growing family engages in night time *kabari* work, that is recycling, which in her case goes beyond rag picking to include organised stealing. In her narrative, she details the way in which such pathways into earning are learned through apprenticeship and determined by the way caste and class discrimination are interlinked. She explains:

“I started to work in kabari after my first child was born in the jhuggi. I picked and recycled plastic and metal and I have continued to do this work ever since. What can you do? Some people open a shop in the city so that they can go and sell calendars and posters. But this is not my work, I do kabari. I got into this work because my caste people do it. I started by going and moving around with some of them. I explained to them that there was no money at home and that I wanted to get food, I wanted to get milk for my child. So they said, OK, let’s go, come with us, we will show you what to do. Then slowly, slowly I found my own way, doing it on my own”.

From this narrative, we are able to learn about the way earning apprenticeships arise out of need and desperation. However, apprenticeships more generally, for both men and women, arise out of household relationships which are hierarchal and dependent in character. These relationships produce extreme inequalities of power and ultimately indebtedness. In the section that follows, I look at the ways in which people are obligated through their apprenticeships to take on roles and meet their responsibilities, the lived experiences of which, give indebtedness its social, cultural and economic character.

6.3 Social indebtedness: Obligations, rights and joint-family living

Within the literature, the idea of social indebtedness, particularly in the Asian context, is talked about widely in terms of an *intergenerational* contract. According to some ethnographic research, this contract has been renegotiated and reinterpreted, now characterised in terms of harmonious care and support. It is about a mutual, balanced

exchange based on needs, reciprocal interdependence, with both generations simultaneously or in cycles giving and receiving. These changes are understood to have important consequences for *intra*household relationships. For example, they are less hierarchal in terms of gender and age, leading to a shift in the dominance, status and authority of older generations and therefore flows of resources, which had been primarily from the younger to the older. In addition, entitlements and expectations of care can no longer be assumed or taken for granted. In these ways, there is understood to be evidence for a mutual expression of support for, and investment in, an *inter*generational contract (Croll, 2006).

The findings from my own research seriously challenge the above conclusions. For example in the colony, I found that indebtedness is embedded in cultural norms associated with the moral obligations of children to revere and respect their parents and provide for them through taking on earning and caring roles. The idea that this is a contract suggests the mutual responsibilities of both generations. However, age and gender hierarchies prevail, meaning that seniority is given precedence, status and authority in the Bhatu community. In this way, respect and support for elders comes before everyone else, even the self, and younger generations of children are subordinated to the will and welfare of parents and grandparents. This contractual ideal, anchored in the prosperity associated with joint-family living is more often implemented in circumstances of poverty in the reality of Bhatu people's everyday lives.

According to the literature, there is evidence of a direct correlation between the degree of parental support provided for children and what children, in turn, provide in terms of support for their parents in their old age. Therefore, experiences of neglect in old age often have their origins in the lack of parental support and/or lack of the allocation of resources to children at an earlier age. However, it is this degree of parental support which helps to secure the sense of obligation in the younger generation. In circumstances of economic hardship, characterised by irregular, low earning and widespread ill health and death associated with substance misuse, this has serious consequences.

It may be the case that people are unwilling to meet and therefore shirk their responsibilities. However, it is also the case that people are often unable to provide for their children's everyday needs, let alone their wider responsibilities, associated for example with education

and marriage. As I will go on to show, the idea of contract is challenged at the level of everyday lived experience in the colony, because it needs to be implemented through ideas of obedience, obligation and duty in the pursuit of piety and honour and not based on reciprocity in meeting mutual needs. Moreover, the contract is ascribed through birth, not arrived at through consent.

In Bhatu households, the extreme inequalities of power generated through the *intergenerational* approach to living, work to transform force into *adhikar*, the rights of those in a dominant position, and agreement into *majaburi*, the obligation of those in the subordinate position. In these ways, an individual's obedience in taking on roles and meeting their responsibilities is a matter of duty. The idea of duty has at its core, feelings of loyalty and gratitude, which are fostered in children towards their parents, based on the mother having born and fed them (caring role) and the father having provided for them (earning role).

Subhash gives an account of the source of loyalty and gratitude he feels towards his mother:

“I don't believe my father is a good person, but I know my mother is a very, very good person. I love my mother very much and I learned a lot about what it is to be good and have respect because of her. This is because she gave her whole life for her family; she didn't do anything for herself. She gave all her life for her children. That is why I don't care for a son, because their lives are all about drugs and drinking. What do they give back to their family? Nothing”.

Mahavir highlights further, the ways in which loyalty and gratitude to his mother interlink with the expectations of being a son, as well as an older brother, and the mixed feelings this creates when things do not go according to family and community expectation, and when other family members pick up the responsibilities:

“My father is not a bad person, but he had a drinking problem. Slowly, slowly he became an alcoholic and even now he still keeps drinking and behaves in a bad way. Therefore, my mother has never seen happiness and I want to see her happy with my children. When I was younger, I didn't give my parents a good life. Now

I want them to have peace, but I can't give them a high life. What I should be doing, my sisters are doing, and I feel bad. During festivals like Diwali, somehow I was always short of money. At Rakhi I would never give my sisters anything, but no one complained. My sisters and mother actually help me and my family now, with toys for my boys and I feel bad about that too".

We learn from such narratives that loyalty and gratitude feed the obligation that children have, to take on roles and meet responsibilities, and fuel the right that parents have to expect that their children will increasingly shoulder their roles and responsibilities, on top of their own, as they get older. In these ways, people come to experience indebtedness in its social form, which is generated and channelled between parents and children in the natal home: firstly, because of parents' desires to create and maintain the conditions necessary for life to continue, and in doing so, provide a better life for their children; and secondly, because of children's desires to give their parents better lives, and in turn, to create and maintain the conditions necessary for the lives, if possible better lives, for their own children.

The ease with which this two-way system of social indebtedness is perpetuated in everyday life, is evident in the ways people talk about their experiences of a particular pattern of residence, which is dominated, at least in theory, by joint-family living. Ranjit, an uneducated 48-year-old, who has both his children and grandchildren living with him and his wife, talks about the importance of joint-family living for parents and children in terms of sharing both caring and earning responsibilities:

"As parents we think about all living together with our family. Our youngest son sees the older brother's wife come into our house and thinks that he will do the same. He wants everyone together. When you have small children you need to be together. Our children take care of us and we take care of the children".

From such narratives we learn about the everyday experience of social indebtedness which exists between parents and children. However, an understanding of social indebtedness can only be fully reached, when acknowledging the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law in the marital household. Rani, 43, educated up to 10th class and mother of two educated teenage children, becomes very emotional during her life-story narrative, and

by the end very tearful, as she talks about her own experiences as a daughter-in-law and her hopes for her future as a mother-in-law:

“I know that my daughter-in-law might want to live separately with my son when he gets married, but I wouldn’t like that. I want all of us to be together. I hope that my son and his wife will serve me well and give something back to me. I have served so many people throughout my life, whoever has asked, I have given help; spending money on people, taking care of people, solving problems for people. So many people, in so many situations and places, have treated me like I was their servant. That is why, I want my son to get married and for my daughter-in-law to give me good service”.

Rani’s sobbing, and the details of her heartfelt narrative, underline the obligation behind the experience of providing selfless service, while taking on her caring role and meeting her responsibilities. Moreover, her narrative highlights the hope behind the rights she will hold in her future role as a mother-in-law. Furthermore, we get a feel for the exploitation and sense of injustice generated by household relationships, which are inherently hierarchal and dependent.

6.4 Institutionalisation of social indebtedness through marriage

The workings of indebtedness can be illustrated most fully by acknowledging the role of *samaj reetirevaj*, meaning group custom, in institutionalising rights and obligations in everyday life. As I have shown in Chapter Five, custom is harnessed by the research community in a powerful bid to maintain distinct identities and create cultural and social distance in terms of: *jat*, meaning caste; *biradari*, meaning brotherhood; *gotra*, meaning clan; and *khandan*, meaning patrilineage. Moreover, these customs have an important part in creating and maintaining the relationships of hierarchy and dependency, which are so integral to the way people create the conditions necessary for life to continue. It is the ideals and practices associated with this end, particularly those surrounding *shadi*, meaning marriage, which are the focus of the discussion that follows.

At the level of ideals, the onset of menstruation signifies a girl's physical maturity and her ability to marry and reproduce (Garg et al., 2001). At the level of experience, the age of the onset of menstruation varies, but brings about a family's increasing concern to secure husbands for their daughters through an arranged marriage. Jyoti is 23, educated up to 8th class and mother to two sons. She evaluates:

“People think girls are a burden; when she starts to grow they think about her skin colour, how smart she is. What will be required to get her a match for marriage? Will we have to have a lot of money, or will we have a lot of takers? There are none of these concerns with a boy; he is a boy – he will get a girl. The parents of the girl just come and look at a boy and leave again without the need for negotiation. This environment is powerful and talk is powerful”.

The nature and extent of their concern is also influenced by the degree of anxiety associated with unattached sexuality. An important element of arranged marriage, is that the bride be a virgin. Therefore, love relationships, elopement and loss of virginity are linked with the loss of family involvement and community support, all of which threaten or destroy family honour and the parental success that accompanies arranged marriage. Ravi, 18, educated up to 6th class and elder brother of three sisters, talks about the nature of his growing concerns to protect his sisters' honour, while upholding his responsibilities:

“The area where we live here isn't good. My sisters are ready for marriage and I have a fear when they go outside they will be followed. Any of my friends know these are my sisters, but they don't think about this. If any of my sisters already have a boyfriend, then it's not good, because if you love someone, then how can you go for marriage with someone else? They may not be ready to get married to the boy my parents choose and my parents will be upset, and this is a big problem. That is why we can't live here as a family, we plan to go back to Rajasthan. I have a responsibility to get them married. If we go back, their life starts there, they will come to know about our customs and make their own families. I don't face the same worries there as I do in Delhi”.

In the majority of cases, love relationships are not tolerated. Such circumstances attract dishonour, putting the couple at risk and endangering their lives. Anil provides insight into the way both thought and action are motivated by group, and more specifically family custom:

“My little sister ran away from the colony with a non-Bhatu boy. We are Bhatu people from Rajasthan and our marriage depends on the arrangements made by our parents - not like my sister has done, doing things by herself. It’s a very big shame for me, I didn’t eat, I didn’t come down from my house for one month. She is the youngest in our family, she used to call me when I was coming home from work and ask me to bring chocolate. I liked this, I felt good, but now she has made me feel very upset because she has a love relationship. I have to find them, give them poison and kill them both. This is because my father, my grandfather, everyone uses this rule. She doesn’t have the power to break this rule, no one does. It brings shame and no one wants this. So many families have had this experience, she ran away because she saw others do this.

I spent a lot of money making police cases and trying to find her in different places. We went very deeply into finding Shanti, we gave a lot of money and none of us went for work. My mother was crying every day, she tried to commit suicide by jumping from the terrace and going to the river. Then Shanti phoned my mother and told her she wanted to meet. “I have seen you in my dream”, she said. My mother arranged to meet them at the railway station. I took a big knife with me and I said if you don’t come back I will kill you both. This is very serious, this is a big shame, not just for one or two months, but for my whole life I have to carry this shame, if she doesn’t come back. I was ready to go to jail for this, because I have seen where my family has come from and the struggles we have come through to reach a good level”.

In such circumstances, girls dishonour not only themselves, but their families. They also damage their own, as well as any other sister’s marriage prospects, and force their family members to face relatives and community members as dishonoured people. This means that a girl’s family is extreme in its response to love relationships and elopement, as in the case of

Shanti, spending considerable time and money filing police cases, searching for the runaways and exacting revenge upon the family members of the boy involved.

However, Anil then goes on to tell me that his younger brother recently ran away with his girlfriend. Not only is she a non-Bhatu, she has been married before and is now divorced:

“Now my brother also did a bad thing, but he is good from the heart. He ran away with his girlfriend. Now he has not contacted me after what happened with Shanti. He is thinking I am a very angry person, that I will kill him because he did this. I really hope he will contact me soon and come back, but the trust with him is now broken. But he is a grown man, he will find his way back, I don’t need to find him”.

From Anil’s continuing narrative we find evidence of double standards, which mean he has a very different take on what is happening in the case of his brother and what this means for his family. Evidence of this contrast is found in the amount he wants to say, the detail he feels comfortable to go into and the lack of concern he has with damage limitation in managing his own and his family’s honour.

The presence of such misdemeanours in a person’s life, their characteristics such as beauty and skin colour, evidence of their interest in and endeavour to take on a caring role in the home for girls and an earning role for their families for boys, all impact on their marriage prospects. Physical and psychological health is also important. Any ‘impairment’ deemed outside the cultural norm attracts penalties. These can extend the length of time that families have to look for a suitable match and in the case of a girl, the amount of dowry offered by her natal household, which will then accompany her to her marital home when *goana* is performed.

Goana is the point after marriage at which a bride begins to live with her husband in his parents’ home. This practice, marked by a series of ritual observations, is performed by many couples on the same day they are married. However, in many cases, sons and daughters are married as children. Therefore, a period of time, perhaps several months or years, will have to

pass until an agreement is reached, between the natal and the marital homes, that a husband and his wife are mature enough to start living together.

Age is, therefore, far from the only consideration when making a match. Yet, people still make a strong correlation between; the younger the female, the less the concern with honour and subsequently the less the value of dowry required. The intersection of these issues has variable consequences for the way in which a girl views herself and how others view her, and the strength of her voice in shaping her marriage choices and experiences. Kiran, 26, uneducated and unmarried, has permanent facial scarring as a result of burns from the application of skin whitening cream. In her narrative, she gives some indication of the nature of the time-bound situation she finds herself in:

“I want to get better before marriage; I would rather look nice first so that my husband doesn’t marry me just out of pity. These days marriage is about choosing, and people like light skin. But because I look like this, I am attracting bad looking people and bad offers. I have said no a lot and my parents support me. But if I keep saying no, there will be a day when my house can no longer keep me”.

The intersection between the right of parents to choose the marriage partner and the obligation of children to get married is also highlighted in such narratives. Vinod tells me about the circumstances surrounding a recent match in the colony:

“A girl’s family has come to the colony to see a boy for their daughter. They are from Rajasthan, the girl’s father has died and there are four more brothers and four more sisters to get married. They have looked very far; Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, but they couldn’t find a boy because the girl is 25. The reason they have chosen this boy is because they know he has a good family who has respect, but he is an alcoholic and takes drugs. They think that if they get him married to her then the girl will change his mind”.

From Vinod’s observations we are able to see where mounting family and community pressure to get sons and daughters married, meets being too old or having undesirable traits

and unwanted behaviours, such as those associated with alcoholism and drug misuse. In such circumstances, matches are made with practicality and considerable compromise in mind. Suresh, 47, is an uneducated widower and father with two unmarried daughters. According to him, the elder of the two is ready for marriage, but was born with learning difficulties. In his narrative, Suresh highlights the particularity of his concerns and the practicalities involved in finding a match:

“I have to get my daughter married, but it’s hard. She has a small mind, her personality is bad and her face isn’t good. No one will want her. Who will like her? If she is ready I will need a lot of money. Everything is possible if you have enough money”.

There is also a tendency among Bhatu in the colony to pair off those with any form of psychological or physical impairment with life partners with similar difficulties. Kavita, 36 and non-Bhatu, is educated up to 9th class, worked full time before getting married five years ago and now has a young son going to school. Remarkably, Kavita has achieved these things even though an accident as a child left her with one leg amputated just under the knee. During her interview, she recalls her thoughts and experiences at the time when her parent’s began to look for a match for her:

“I was 25 or 26 when my family first talked to me about marriage. They suggested that I marry someone like me; a disabled person. I said to them; how can I do that? If he is the same we can’t take care of each other. My parents talked about arranged marriage and I had two proposals before. The first boy was handicapped by polio, but I didn’t want to get into this type of relationship where the men have their own problems. Yet my parents kept insisting that this was the right thing. But I just kept saying no. Then the second one didn’t happen either, the boy had burn marks on his hands and arms and his income wasn’t regular because he was a painter and only had money when he was able to sell his work. I asked him; if you are serious about marriage then how will we live? He said that he is dependent on his father. I then said no because I would have been dependent on his father too. I was now out of choices and on my own. But I

preferred this. I was very clear about this; only to have someone I like and who likes me. I followed my own way of thinking”.

From such narratives on the preparations for marriage, we get a sense of the ways in which the rights of parents and the obligations of children interact and what this means for people's everyday lived experiences of living in households, where relationships are inherently hierarchal and dependent. Marriage, with all its cultural ideals and practices, forms the foundation of households and therefore constitutes the basis for creating the conditions necessary for life to continue. Men were the most likely of all the respondents to highlight this, using the phrase “*Without a wife there is no life*”. On analysis, this phrase has several important, interlinked meanings; marriage is the only culturally accepted way of producing children; male children are the only way of ensuring the life of a lineage and life is only fully realised through the companionship of earning and caring roles which marriage makes possible.

These interlinked meanings draw our attention towards the significance of the ritual and ceremonial stages of marriage and *goana* in particular. In reaching this point, a new bride takes on her role as wife and begins to meet her responsibilities. In doing so, however, she only makes her claim to adulthood and marital home status, residency and support. Her claim will only be realised when she conceives and gives birth to a healthy child. The expectation is that she will have a boy within the first year of living with her husband in the marital home. Santro, a 25-year-old, uneducated mother of three children, is estranged from her husband who is incapacitated through drug misuse. She tells me about the obligation to marry and have children in relation to her idea of better life:

“Neither can we think that there will be no marriage, or that a girl can stay with her parents. It's not possible anywhere. Marriage is compulsory. Most of the girls feel that they don't need a child either; we want to live a better life. We want to wear good clothes and eat good food. We want to live life comfortably. There are many girls who do abortions or take medicines because they don't want to give birth to a child early. We have seen the world and know that some women don't have children, but if a girl doesn't give birth to the child in our society, then that woman is not called a woman. Everyone says that a woman not wanting children

is wrong; that she wants only to pass the time, wants only to enjoy herself. We feel very bad for this kind of woman. In our society, they say to women without children: Why? Do you not like your husband, should you be living with someone else?”

Such narratives clearly illustrate the ways in which the obligations to get married and have children are experienced by women. However, Subhash provides some important male insight from his experiences of being widowed, married for a second time and continuously pressurised by his family to have children, particularly a son:

“Marriage is not always a good thing because once you are married and have a wife, you have to make children. If you are living alone with no responsibility, then you are freer. When I got married, I had a lot of pressure from family to have children. All my family members were talking and pushing. I tried many times to say no, but it didn’t work, they still put the pressure on. There was also pressure to have a boy child; they kept telling me that I had to make sure my name would continue. This is your son and he will bring more children and people will say you are his father, their grandfather, their great grandfather and people will remember you for a long time in history and everyone will know you for a long time in the future. I don’t like this, I don’t agree with this idea. This doesn’t matter to me; once I am dead I don’t mind if they remember me or not, I will be dead and I won’t know what is going on here. I don’t care, it’s a crazy idea but it’s very powerful also; it’s culture”.

During their interviews, women in general, were most likely to say that they felt no pressure to have children quickly or to have a boy. However, the narratives of those taking a long time or unable to fulfil these obligations or indeed those experiencing not being wanted themselves as children, were far more telling. Women said that failing to conceive, have a live birth and subsequently raise a child, particularly a male child, often meant that they found themselves in a very insecure position. They suffered beatings and continual harassment from family and community members and were made to carry considerable guilt. In such circumstances, some found themselves replaced with a second wife, forced out of their marital homes and given their situation; they were unable to marry again. Along with

those failing to give birth and raise a child, women who fail to conceive have been found to go on to commit suicide.

Jyoti talked about her own mother having had a long history of depression and how she had committed suicide following the birth of successive daughters. Her father also died shortly after, due to illness associated with drug dependency. In her narrative, Jyoti recalls growing up with her sisters and her experience of being thought of as a burden:

“There was no one to look after us, no routine and no security in getting food. When you don’t have anyone, all the fingers point at you. The moment girls are born people start mourning. People think about carrying forward the lineage, but the daughter always goes to her marital home. So parents don’t invest in girls, because there is nothing to carry forward. In TV serials we see there is equality between boys and girls. But in the reality of our lives, at the end of the day, we will have to do what our parents and in-laws want. As a mother, I would feel better if I had girls, but society doesn’t think like this. People celebrate like anything when a boy is born. It’s an obsession. It’s wrong, because boys are often useless. Girls are the ones looking after their families more than boys. Girls feel the pain of their parents, have emotional understanding, and keep providing. But there is still a tendency to believe that boys will stay, but it doesn’t always work that way”.

Sangita, 24, an uneducated, estranged mother of two daughters, highlights the insecurities of childless marriage and her experience as a second wife unable to raise a son:

“After twelve to fifteen days of being in my marital home I saw a photo of what looked like my husband with a woman. As time passed, I was able to talk to people in the neighbourhood and they told me the whole story. My husband had been married before, there were no children from this first marriage and now his first wife is dead. She had gone down to the river to take a bath and drowned. I have had three pregnancies, two daughters and the third, a boy, didn’t survive. Part of me is sad, but I feel relieved that he doesn’t have to go through this life. Every time I had a baby my husband would leave because he didn’t want to take

care of our daughters. He drank a lot, beat me and threw kerosene over me. My mother-in-law also threatened me and frequently beat me. They threw me out. I always ran to the woods and then to my mother in Delhi with black eyes and my body all beaten”.

Having a child allows a woman to prove her reproductive capability and have her marriage legitimised. But having a son also allows her to ensure that the name of her husband and the patrilineage of her marital household will go on. Thereby, a woman secures her position as an adult in her marital home. This achievement not only brings relief to her and the members of her marital household, but also to the members of her natal household, because until she arrives at this point, they will fear her return.

6.5 Social indebtedness through coercion and violence

Failure to meet familial and community expectations and do one's duty is a matter of dishonour. Acknowledging the role of a series of coercion practices are therefore important in bringing depth to the understanding of the experiences of social indebtedness. Coercion is used to both motivate and demotivate people into or out of action. It involves patience, in that there is general acceptance in people that problems cannot always be resolved quickly and that if they can live with and tolerate their problems, then in time, slowly, everything will be OK.

Coercion practices may start with a mother instilling guilt, by bringing up an issue of concern in general conversation and calling upon her role as a mother having brought her child into the world and perhaps having suffered in her struggle to bring them up. However, should this not yield the desired result, in time, in some cases many years, coercion practices will be stepped up. This escalation in force can be felt both in terms of the increase in the number of people involved and in the severity of sanctions. In such cases, siblings, uncles and aunties, and community elders can be called upon to attend privately or publically held meetings designed to intimidate the individual through the threat or actual use of violence, as well as isolation, and in extreme cases, alienation practices.

Anil provides insight into the way he used violence to coerce his sister into taking on her role and meeting her responsibilities:

“I managed to catch her and take her by the hair into the rickshaw. I took a room in a different place away from the colony and took Shanti there and I beat her using many wicket sticks. She was crying, I was also crying; she is my small sister. But she was at fault. She said that she was sorry and that she was ready to do whatever we want for her. I will go wherever you want, I am ready for this; a handicapped or blind man. It is my fault, I was stupid, I was wrong, I will not do this again. But even now that she is back home we don’t know if she will stay. My wife and mother are always watching her now like security guards”.

Subhash provides important insights into his own experiences of intimidation and the relentless and dynamic escalation of force, where his mother and other family members, persist in pushing for what they want, while he, in turn, opposes and resists in the only ways he can; through anger and violence:

“My mother and father arranged my first marriage. I understood about marriage, because I learned from watching my family. I was 26 or 27 and before this I never had the feeling to get married, but everyone was pushing and talking and fighting. By this age, I had already tried to say no to marriage with different girls for more than ten years. Finally, the family said; for how long do you think you can say no? You have to go for marriage. I was happy with the marriage, but it didn’t bring me a much better life, it was OK. I am married, I have a wife, then we started to have children and a different feeling was coming; more responsibility now that I am not alone.

In the end, I made children to keep other people happy, but my wife died at home during the delivery of our daughter. She had a problem, too much bleeding. I felt bad, upset, especially for my daughter because she was left alone without a mother. I stayed away from work for about two months, but slowly, slowly I had to start working again because I am the only one in the family who works and

makes money for food. Then my younger sisters took care of my daughter. My wife's family have remained close and still give me respect.

After two, two-and-a-half years I got married again. Even before this, I started having pressure to remarry from my family. Again, it was my mother in particular who started this and then my daughter's grandmother started asking who will look after my daughter. Everyone who was related and close to me and my daughter started to pressurise me. I kept saying no, no, no, there would be no problem, I could take care of her myself and my sisters and mother take care of her when I am at work. Then people started saying, once your sisters get married or your mother dies, then who will look after her? I believed I would spend my life alone now, I even believed this before I was married the first time. In the end I agreed, but I married for the sake of my daughter, not for me.

The second marriage was again arranged by my parents. I wasn't happy about this second marriage. I wasn't feeling good at this time and liked to be alone and stay alone. They chose my second wife because she is from my first wife's family; her uncle's daughter. Under these circumstances, it is good to get a wife who is as close as possible because she would feel like a mother. If it was a far relation or a different family they would have bad feelings about my daughter. For me, the second marriage is nothing special. I don't feel very good, just more responsibility is coming, and again more pressure for children, and to have a boy. My second wife had another girl and my parents said to us; just try again. I said no, no, I don't like this idea for a son. This for me is from God, he decides to give a daughter or son, it's not in our hand to make sons or daughters.

I have now been married to my second wife for three years and separated from her for two. I managed all this time to put off living together with my wife by feeling grumpy. When I feel angry, I like to stay alone. I'm not talking to my sisters, brother, mother or wife, and in this way they understand that I don't want to do what they want. I don't know what will happen in the future, but for now my wife is living with me because my grandmother has died. People are using this opportunity to still push to get us to live together and put pressure on us to try for

a son. Now I think I have the power to make things the way I want, but it all depends on money – if I have money, then I can do many things to make a change. The reason why I can't change things now is because I am poor. I have to stay here; I don't have the power to run away from this place, because I don't have money. First is money, you can't say that money is not important; if you have money you can do many things.

Divorce is also possible, everything is possible in my group, but it is a process and it takes a very long time. It also takes a lot of trouble. It is not easy to get a divorce, you have to struggle to provide proof to the police, to make a record and go to court, these kinds of things. The acceptance and support of the group then depends on the reason for the divorce and the nature of the proof. People don't all argue and fight for the same reasons. There are many good and bad reasons, but some people, like me, don't have reasons; they just want a divorce. They just keep arguing and fighting, end up in jail and go to court. I'm even beating my wife and ready to go to jail for this if it means I will get a divorce”.

Clearly, there are pressures on both women and men to conform to norms and practices, which serve to maintain relationships of hierarchy, dependency and control. Yet, from these narratives, there is also evidence that people are resisting, negotiating and changing relationships in a bid for their freedom. However, while women like Kavita are achieving what they want, men like Subhash, as yet unable to succeed, illustrate the close links between the social and economic indebtedness they are confronted with. Issues relating to the economic indebtedness which is preventing people from being able to create the conditions necessary for life to continue, as well as pursue a better life and mobility, are discussed further in Chapter Eight.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter has looked at the way people's experiences of incapacity are shaped by their lack of formal education and access to government employment. Therefore, opportunities for learning in childhood remain embedded in gender-distinct roles and responsibilities, which are associated with earning and caring. In these ways, learning is a matter of apprenticeship

through which boys and girls prepare for adult life. Such apprenticeships are undertaken in households where the relationships between people are characterised by hierarchy and dependence. In this environment, extreme inequalities of power are produced, which work to transform force into the rights of the dominant and obedience into the obligation of the subordinate. People's lived experiences of such inequalities give indebtedness its social character. Therefore, people's experiences of creating the conditions necessary for life to continue, as well as pursuing better life and mobility, are often shaped by interlinked, cumulative barriers in everyday life. In the chapter which follows, I go on to discuss the barriers to better life and mobility associated with people's ways of living and earning.

Chapter Seven. Illegality in Ways of Living and Earning.

7.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to look at what can be learned from people's everyday experiences about illegality of status as a barrier to better life and mobility. More specifically, I locate a discussion of deviance and crime within an exploration of the complexity of living and working relationships and detail the circumstances within which deviant and criminal identities are forged and behaviours are learned.

I begin by highlighting the way illegality is grounded in the ways people have adapted to city life. I go on to explore the links between illegality and caste, class and gender identities, and the way these have become bases for discrimination and marginalisation, when it comes to accessing places to live and earn. I then discuss the ways in which illegality of status and identity and relationships of inequality, injustice and conflict are generated and maintained through Bhatu people's interactions with the state in terms of citizenship, policy enactment, legislation enforcement and the criminal justice system (Chatterjee, 2004, Corbridge et al., 2005).

During the discussion, I engage with a number of theoretical debates on illegality. I also seek new perspectives on how we think about, define and understand deviant and criminal behaviour and the ways these impact upon people's ability to pursue better lives and attain mobility.

7.1 Illegality, environment and adaptation to city living

In this section, I explore the significance of the link between illegality and physical environment, by looking at the changes in people's ways of living associated with forced migration from Rajasthan and subsequent settlement and resettlement in Delhi. In bringing understanding to this link, I engage with the prominent idea of social disorganisation found in the literature, which is associated with the process of urbanisation; that is, the planning, growth and development of cities into zones, each of which come to take on distinctive social

and economic characteristics, to which people have to adapt their ways of living and earning (Park et al., 1925).

Moreover, according to Park et al, these areas constitute places of transition, parts of the city, often slum in nature, which are identified with migrant populations. Such zones develop compounded social problems associated with adapting to city life, such as poverty and hunger. People are highly mobile, settlement is transitory, and thought to contribute to a greater tolerance for differences and the impersonal and fragmented nature of relationships along caste, class and gender lines. These transitional places may hold the promise of greater freedom and opportunity, but they are also characterised by the breakdown in norms and values associated with deviant and criminal behaviour.

As discussed in Chapter Five, Bhatu people settled as migrants in a series of centrally located areas over a thirty-year period, before being evicted and resettled, by the DDA, to the purpose-built colony on the margins of Delhi. They initially chose centrally located areas close to railway stations and markets because they were open and free, convenient for work and food, water and electricity were easily accessible. Mali, a 48-year-old working mother with an incapacitated husband recalls:

“Kuttack Road was a very good place to stay. We got water from the station and you could go anywhere from there and everyone worked. There was a market nearby so we could sell maps and do shoe polishing and repairs”.

However, this type of settlement created very serious challenges for Bhatu people from the outset. Such zones only provided opportunities for temporary living and brought people into periodic conflict with local authorities. This meant that adapting to city living was characterised by continual comings and goings, and involved having to cope with frequent harassment. Roshni recalls her early experiences as a young unmarried girl living with her parents:

“We lived in the railway station on the footpath at Sadar Bazaar. But the police wouldn’t allow us to stay. They would come and beat us, break our homes and always tell us to leave. There was no settlement there, we just had to come here

after work in the evening, put some bricks together and cook, then spread out a mattress and sleep. In the morning we then packed up everything and carried it with us as we went in search of work. It was very difficult for us to get two meals a day. We had to live like this for more than a year”.

In time, a much larger, more central space became available and news soon spread among an increasing number of family and caste members that they could settle there. Roshni continues her narrative detailing her experiences of settlement after returning to Delhi from Rajasthan as a married woman:

“I returned to Delhi with my husband and we stayed on land in the centre. A market had been demolished and cleared, so we were able to have a place to stay. People from my family and caste were among the first to come here. We had been looking for an empty place, before this we had no proper place to stay. But even here we couldn’t settle, sometimes the police would come and break the jhuggi, then we would build it again. Each time they came we really put up a fight, lay down in front of their jeeps. The children would pick up handfuls of stones to throw at them. We told them we are always going here and there, but we are poor and there is nothing for us in Rajasthan; no work, no rain, where can we go when we are hungry?”

Rocky, a 39-year-old, uneducated, incapacitated father of five growing children, recalls one particularly difficult experience while his family were trying to settle and adapt to city living in this new space:

“Police came with big trucks and forced us inside without our things. They said that we were not allowed to settle here and that they were taking us to another place. They drove for a long time; it seemed that they were taking us round and round so that we didn’t know where we were going. It was night time and dark, we were scared and our children were crying. Finally, the police stopped driving and allowed us to get down from the trucks. They told us to stay here and that if we came back to Delhi, we would be arrested. Then they just went away, leaving us in the middle of a jungle area with nothing, no money. We were scared and

cold and huddled together. We didn't know what to do; we just sat there until the light came. Only after a few days we managed to find our way and got back to Delhi".

Despite their illegal residency, given their poverty-stricken circumstances, people always returned and rebuilt their *jhuggies*. Their persistence was eventually rewarded when the government gave them rights of settlement and residence as part of the *Garibi Hatao* strategy, which influenced the PC's fifth five year plan for economic development from 1974 to 1979 (1974). Please see Annexure III for more details. Mali recalls the process which unfolded:

"For a long time the government had been trying to clear this jhuggi. It was only made final when Indira Gandhi sent someone from the government to ask us to come together. She told us that the area in central Delhi where we had started to settle was the place we should all move to now. She was the one who made it possible for us to settle in Delhi. She took a strong stand for us".

There is therefore, some indication of a welcome turnaround on the government's part and this positive change was accompanied by a new found legal status. Roshni provides some insight into what these changes meant for their everyday lives as poor people:

"Eventually, once Indira Gandhi gave us rights of residence, the police accepted us and we were able to stay. We were able to clear the area and divide the land for every household using bricks. This meant we could make our identity cards, get ration cards and be considered for voting cards".

However, their legal residential status was to prove short-lived. In 2002, the slum clearance project set in motion by the DDA, re-categorised thousands of residents as illegal squatters for eviction, resettlement and rehousing. Harphool, now 65 years old, is educated up to 10th class and was a prominent leader of the Bhatu community at the time of the resettlement. He recalls the process that unfolded, from his perspective as mediator between the DDA and *jhuggi* residents:

“The DDA conducted a survey of the jhuggi, then after three to four months they came back and presented their plans to us. At this point, we realised that other houses were being built for us. Members of parliament came with the DDA and told us that we were getting proper houses in an open space with water and electricity. They advised us, it would be better for us to take this opportunity because our jhuggies were going to be broken and pulled down. The DDA had sold the land where our jhuggies were to a contractor who was now going to be developing the area, building shops and offices. They were now telling us that this wasn’t our land, that we were living here illegally and that we would have to move. People were starting to become agitated. In order to reassure them, the DDA invited me and other group representatives from the jhuggi to go and view the houses being built”.

Mali picks up the story:

“The DDA had wrong things in their minds when they talked about moving us out of the settlement. We were not illegal, these were not slum settlements. We owned the land, it was given to us by Indira Gandhi in writing and we were then told we could build our own houses on it. We could never be pushed out. Once she did this, everything changed; we lived there for more than twenty years. We were no longer living in shelters made of bamboo and plastic; we built brick houses with strong wooden roofs. These were not movable properties, these were not temporary shelters, they were permanent structures, built on our own land.

So again the police started making all of us uncomfortable, asking us to move. The DDA took our names and started handing out tokens that would give us the right to get a new flat here in the colony. But they were also asking us for 20,000₹, so we said no, we can’t move, we don’t have this money. But then police and military men came with bulldozers and started breaking the houses. In twenty years we hadn’t moved, they kept saying this was a jhuggi, a slum, but this was our home, our houses. But they kept insisting and forced us to go”.

A widespread scattering of family and caste members resulted from this organised, large-scale eviction process. In the days that followed, only a few took advantage of the trucks arranged by the DDA, to take households and their belongings, straight to the colony. In most cases, resettlement was delayed, in some cases by several years. This was due to the marginal, and largely uninhabited nature of the colony, which people feared in the beginning. Subhash highlights the deprivation and particular nature of the hardships his family faced on moving to the colony:

“I spent twenty years in the jhuggi, so having to move made me feel very different; I cried at the time. The colony was a very strange place in the beginning. OK, the DDA gave us a flat, but it was empty and the area was just open land, there was nothing here. There was no transportation, no market to buy food. It was summer time, I continued to go for work, but it was very hard because I had to find my way by different transport, I had to find money just to get to the centre and because it was very hot there were no clients”.

People also delayed their arrival at the colony because of the difficulty they had in pulling the money together for the deposit. Suman was already widowed and living with her parents and four young children at the time the *jhuggi* was broken. She talks about what happened to her family:

“We cooked and slept on the pavement in front of the jhuggi at first; we had nowhere else to go. After about two months we started renting a room close to the colony for 300₹ per month. Many of my caste people were already living in this area. It wasn’t long after this that we had to move altogether to the colony; we couldn’t afford to keep paying rent. Once in the colony we stayed illegally in a shop until we could get the money together for the deposit for a flat. We managed only slowly, it took two years, but even after giving the deposit we still continued to live in the shop because the space in our house was too small and my children were growing”.

Suman’s narrative starts to uncover the ways that the housing provided by the DDA for these poor, low caste people did not match their needs, let alone their dreams (Gilbert, 2002). The

flats are small, overcrowded and inaccessible for those who have difficulty climbing stairs. Deprivation and the unsuitability of the housing were important factors contributing to people's illegal residential status as they tried to adapt to the new environment and make their ways of living more comfortable. However, it is also the case, that many households have never been officially allocated a flat by the DDA because they were unable to raise the 20,000₹ deposit required.

Moreover, many who owned their flat began renting them out in order to create an income, some put their flats up as security for loans and lost them and others sold their flats when their circumstances continued to deteriorate. This means that many people now live in unallocated houses and retail spaces, for the sake of convenience and space, but also out of desperation. In 2002, the DDA considered that illegality of tenure could be controlled to a large extent by giving ownership of the flats to the woman of the household. Yet, today, of the core sample, only 45 percent of owned flats are in the woman's name, and of the comparative sample this is 49 percent.

Regardless of household circumstances and the preventative measures taken, the question of secure tenure continues to be an issue for colony residents and raises concerns for the DDA about illegal squatting. Of the core group, 32 percent do not own any property, 31 percent of this sample either rent or squat in a flat, while 54 percent squat in a retail space and 15 percent combine squatting in a flat and retail space. Yet, even though 68 percent of this core sample own a flat in the colony, only 47 percent live exclusively in the flat they own. This means a further 63 percent still have some type of illegal residency status. For example, in addition to living in their flat, 25 percent squat in another flat, a further 27 percent squat in a retail space and 14 percent squat in an additional flat and retail space.

Of the comparative sample, 35 percent do not own property, and of these, 43 percent either rent or squat in a flat, 9 percent squat in a retail space and 9 percent combine squatting in a house and retail space. Of the 65 percent who own their flat, only 32 percent of households live exclusively in the flat they own. Of the rest, as well as living in their flat, 41 percent squat in a second flat, 24 percent squat in a retail space and 4 percent combine squatting in an additional flat and retail space. This means that the people of the comparative sample also have serious illegal residential status issues.

Pavan 19, educated up to 7th class and currently waiting for *goana*, provides some indication of the source of some of the housing insecurities that prevail in the colony:

“The right to stay in the flats is now closed for us, because the DDA won’t take any outstanding money from us anymore. There are so many people living here who either have only paid 10,000₹ of the deposit or nothing at all. The DDA sometimes come here with police and tells us that it’s illegal for us to stay. They close the shops and lock them, then leave, telling us to go from here. But once they go, people come back and break the locks and open the flats and retail spaces again”.

In these circumstances, people’s illegal status in terms of residency, fluctuates day by day as they move from flat to retail space, pay rent or squat, depending on their changing fortunes. However, desperation and the unsuitability of housing have also fuelled a rise in deviant and criminal behaviour. Mali’s narrative of her early experiences in the colony, provides us with some indication of the circumstances which lead her household to steal electricity:

“It was only my son who was able to work when we moved. I was unable to continue immediately because it took me many days to get to know the area. It was very far and difficult to get to work, I didn’t know how to travel. It was very hard getting money together and going by rickshaw and then bus. The flat the DDA gave us was small and there was no drinking water, but we had nowhere else to go. There was also no light, really no light. This meant it wasn’t possible for us to go outside the colony at night and we had to always come home from work quickly. We were offered a supply of electricity from the temple for 100₹ for one week. We initially took it, but after a few days we realised that we didn’t know where we would get the money from, we had to find our own supply, stealing from the street.”

Subhash also talks about the links he sees between the deprivation that living in the colony has continued to bring and the increase in the number of different types of crime that prevails:

“People here are doing crime because it’s not easy for them to find a job and make money. Their lives are not good because they are not settled; they have no work, money, house or happy life. Crime is even worse here than it was in the jhuggi because people are stealing from people’s houses and snatching from people in the street. They are damaging the property, breaking pipes and taking wiring and selling them. Women are stealing metal in the night and selling it to recycling centres and selling whisky from their homes in the colony. This is all illegal and the police know about it, but they take bribe money from those who want to do these kinds of jobs and this allows them to continue”.

Rajni, 23, an uneducated mother of four young children, living with an incapacitated husband due to alcohol misuse, reflects on the impact her husband stopping work has had on her and her family since moving to the colony. Despite her misgivings, she talks about the role criminal and deviant activity have in helping her make ends meet:

“Since we moved to the colony my husband hasn’t been able to do his work selling maps. He drinks the whole day and doesn’t really care about the kids, he just wants food and drink and sleep. I had to start working to make money by selling beer and spirits from our house every day. I don’t like it, but what would I see in my house without this work? Nothing. I go to a young man in the next sector and buy a box of beer for 300₹ and sell it for 100₹ profit. But this also brings problems here at home; some people come to buy and leave, but some people come and sit and drink here. The neighbours don’t like this, they don’t feel good and it’s not good for the children. We also have to pay 100₹ per month to the police so we can sell”.

From the narratives in this section, it is clear that forced migration from village Rajasthan to city life in Delhi brought changes to the ways in which Bhatu people live and earn, which have contributed substantially to their illegal status. The resettlement that followed, meant that the already worse off were uprooted, scattered and reunited, and now live in a zone of squalor surrounded by zones housing the better off, in some cases in considerable grandeur.

Contrary then, to Park et al's findings (1925), Bhatu narratives show that while places like the *jhuggi* and the colony are places of transition, illegal status and activity are not linked to social disorganisation caused by the development of impersonal and fragmented relationships. Despite their widespread migration and subsequent separation and dispersion following eviction from the *jhuggi*, family and caste ties have remained strong; the only constant part of their everyday lived experiences in fact. As Subhash evaluates in his narrative:

"The reason people have survived here in the colony is because we are living together, so people are able to feel a little bit good and have a better life. Being together is the only thing that helps us".

Park et al's idea that such places lead to greater tolerance of difference, is also not reflected in Bhatu narratives (Ibid.). On the contrary, Bhatu people have experienced increasing intolerance, particularly along low caste, poor class lines, in their interactions with people who live and work in the surrounding areas and who provide goods and services for the colony. The experiences and perceptions these people have about the colony and its residents, not only reflect the deprivation and hardship highlighted in the Bhatu narratives, but also influence the way in which people talk about and interact with Bhatu people. Please refer to Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion on the ways in which boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are drawn.

Such boundaries are drawn on the basis of deviant and criminal identities and behaviour, where those doing the drawing understand themselves as victims. Given the reputation of the colony - the place and its people - those living in neighbouring zones control their movements into and out of the colony area and avoid interaction with its residents as much as possible. Residents and retailers alike, with few exceptions, state and justify their positions: the colony is a separate place with a different type of people who have a criminalised position in society because of who they are, the way they live, the things they do and the way they think. In the section which follows, I explore in more detail Bhatu people's criminalised positionality, which is associated with gender, caste and class identities and the way this positionality relates to illegality in their ways of earning.

7.2. Illegality, positionality and ways of earning

In Chapter Six, I highlighted the fact that due to discrimination, even when a level of formal education has been attained, poor, low caste people remain unsuccessful in securing the government jobs which they understand to be the basis for status and better life. Moreover, a lack of formal educational attainment more generally, leaves Bhatu people inexperienced and uninformed in looking for work in any type of formal sector employment. This means that opportunities for learning for children remain embedded in caring and earning apprenticeships as they prepare for adult life. These apprenticeships are anchored in caste customs and norms, which leave people unskilled for the purposes of increasing the variation in the types of work they can do and unable to access more regular, higher earnings.

Interestingly, in adapting to city life, there is no evidence of illegal activity in the pathways into earning adopted by people of the non-Bhatu sample. As highlighted earlier, more of the non-Bhatu people have attained some educational qualification, have continued to attend school till a much later age and have taken pathways into earning that require on-the-job training. By contrast, given their severely limited opportunities, distinct, contrasting pathways into earning have developed for Bhatu men and women, and involve a range of deviant and criminal activities. Currently, 62 percent of Bhatu and 53 percent of non-Bhatu females are working. Of the Bhatu categories, 25 percent of females are engaged in selling beer, whisky, posters, maps, socks and handkerchiefs - all of which are deemed illegal under current licensing laws. A further 31 percent, again concentrated in Bhatu categories, engage in recycling work, 26 percent of whom do a night time strain that involves regularly bribing security officers and police to enable them to steal metals and alloys, which they then sell on to dealers. A total of 5 percent of women, all widows, concentrated in the Bhatu categories said that they regularly beg for a living, another pathway that carries the stigma of illegality.

Despite widowed women's harrowing stories of abandonment and hardship, a significant number have gone on to renovate their homes and have brought comforts into their everyday lives, which go far beyond even the dreams of the majority of people in the colony. Perhaps more significant, is their unwavering commitment to investment in both their male and female children's education. Naina engages in night time recycling in order to earn a living.

She talks about her circumstances and mounting responsibilities, particularly when it comes to ensuring that her children continue to attend school:

“My husband died ten years ago after an accident. I hadn’t worked before this. Who else was going to earn? My mother and father were already poor, they had nothing. So what would I do going there to live with four children. What can you do? Then I had to do something, try to earn. I also had to think about and take care of my mother-in-law, and also the daughter of my husband’s elder brother, who had nowhere else to go after her mother died. I go to work so that my children can go to school, but if I am ill with fever and need to take rest, who is going to come and look at us? If I had a man, he would help a little bit. I would have everything. But no one else looks after us”.

When it comes to male pathways into earning for Bhatu categories in the sample, evidence shows that some variation associated with migration has developed over time. However, a large number remain concentrated in a limited number of irregular and seasonally dominated jobs. Of the core Bhatu males, 59 percent do commission-based shopping, tourist guiding or auto-rickshaw driving or a combination of these, while 17 percent still engage in shoe shining and map selling. Of the comparative Bhatu sample, 64 percent of males do commission-based shopping, tourist guiding or auto-rickshaw driving or combine these, while map selling and shoe shining is still carried out by 14 percent. In all these cases, pathways into earning attract some type of illegality of status due to prevailing licensing laws.

Some theoretical discussions support the idea that men are more likely than women to engage in illegal behaviour and commit more crime than women. This would seem to happen despite boys and girls growing up in the same deprived neighbourhood (Walklate, 2007). Findings from the colony reflect a more complex picture. For example, strong ideals prevail in the Bhatu community, relating to the importance of distinct gender roles of caring and earning and that women should therefore not go outside the home to earn. However, historical evidence shows that Bhatu women have not only always worked; they have been engaged in the same types of work as men in the village, including shoe shining, farm and construction labour and factory jobs.

Moreover, since settling and resettling in Delhi, contrary to the literature, both men's and women's pathways into earning have become increasingly characterised by illegality. More specifically, men report much higher rates of engagement in deviant ways of earning compared to women, associated with toutage or driving. Meanwhile, women report much higher rates of engagement in criminalised ways of earning compared with men, associated with stealing or selling drugs. In fully understanding these patterns, we need to explore the totality of women's everyday lived experiences in relation to men's, acknowledge the nature of the jobs with which women and men are most closely identified and relate this to broader issues of social justice in terms of caste and class (Carrabine et al., 2004).

For example, in this community, a woman going out to work is always seen as a sign of desperation. Moreover, a woman going out on her own in a public place is looked upon with suspicion. This is doubly so when she engages in activities such as recycling and cleaning, which are considered low paid, dirty and dishonourable. These cultural sensitivities, in themselves, contribute to the illegal character of women's pathways into earning. Roshni, from her perspective and experience of having sold drugs to make a living, provides some important insights into why women in particular defy or break the law:

“It is mostly women who do this type of work, because men run the much higher risk of being arrested. Women can plead easier with the police and they will leave them alone. Police would never just come and arrest a woman, they would first come and talk to us, often send women officers to ask us why we are doing this kind of work, and tell us that it's not good. They give us warnings, tell us about the dangers associated with taking drugs, such as doing all sorts of bad things like stealing and committing murder. Only with time, when the police see that we didn't listen to them, will they arrest us”.

Sangita talks about the reasons why, despite the risks of arrest and imprisonment, night time recycling still represents a better, more regular and secure way of earning:

“There is always the fear of being arrested and being put to jail, but what can you do? We are poor; we have to do this to feed our stomach. Our caste people don't have education, I sign with my thumb print. Other jobs like selling posters is of no

use; you go and set out your stock to sell, but Bhatu people are always moved on, leaving you no longer able to make money. There are people from higher castes who work in factories, and they make money one time in a month. But at least with the recycling I know I will go there, do something, and come back with 300 to 500₹ every day. This is better.”

It is clear from such narratives that deviant and criminal behaviour is understood as an expression of cultural ideals, values and needs, as well as of poor, low caste identities (Fraser, 2004). The section that follows explores the ways in which such identities work to position Bhatu people in unequal, unjust and conflictual relationships with the state and its representatives.

7.3 Illegality, Bhatu identity and interactions with the state

Historically, Bhatu people's sense of identity was institutionalised by the state through being formally labelled a criminal caste and a 'backward' class. Post-independence, despite their subsequent denotification and the implementation of affirmative action, these processes have continued to fuel stereotypes and reinforce Bhatu people in a subordinate position in relation to other castes and in relation to the state and its representatives. In understanding illegality, there is a clear connection between the labelling process, those who have the power to label, and the criminalisation of subordinate groups in the interest of the dominant. Evidence from the colony shows, too much attention is given to deviant and criminal behaviour and to deviants and criminals as types of people. More attention needs to be given to highlighting the unjust, unequal and conflictual nature of societal responses that are preserved in policy, and law and its enforcement, which work in themselves to shape crime (Becker, 1966).

7.3.1 Labelling and discrimination

From narrative, we are able to learn that the process of labelling and stigmatising continues to impact negatively on the way Bhatu people talk about themselves, particularly in relation to other Bhatu who live outside the colony. In this case, the stereotyping of Bhatu people more generally is given expression through the bounded, marginalised nature of the colony. Anil combines tourist guiding with auto-rickshaw driving. He gives some insight into the

damaging impact of labelling and the role of deviant and criminal activity in feeding stereotypes in everyday life:

“There are Bhatu people outside the colony, we call them Kanjar. They have different types of work from us; they sell alcohol and drugs and do burglaries in people’s homes and snatch from people in the street. We don’t have respect outside the colony now because of these people. All people think is, we are Bhatu, so we are also like that, this has brought us shame. Bhatu means criminal, even if I am a good man, I have good money, people are thinking that I’m a criminal. I work hard in my job to make money and I have bought property so that my family can live comfortably, but the people outside are still thinking I’m a criminal and that I’m making money from alcohol, drugs and stealing. But the Kanjar make very good money, maybe 40 to 50,000₹ in a month, so now people in our culture are starting to sell alcohol and deal in drugs, and they give some money to pay off the policemen so they can do this”.

In such cases, people are becoming what they are already labelled as being; they get into behaviours which repeatedly violate rules and contribute to deviant, criminal identities. Being labelled criminal stigmatises and isolates people in such a way that illegality becomes central to their everyday lived experiences. These negative labels and stereotypes then go on to shape the nature of interactions that Bhatu people have with state representatives such as the DDA, MCD, and Delhi Police, including the way they are talked about and treated. Anil continues his narrative, detailing the nature of his experiences as a poor, Bhatu caste member:

“I was driving my auto-rickshaw and I was involved in an accident, but it wasn’t my fault. The police came and because I am a poor person they took me to the police station, where I explained to them that it was not my fault; that the other person had put me in danger. They said OK, where are you from? What is your caste? As soon as I said Bhatu, they called me a motherfucker, said I’m a bad guy, that they know I was driving the wrong way and that I was stealing. They started asking me where my friends are, where did they run to and that they know there were others with me, even though I was alone. Then, I realised I was losing my case. This has happened a lot of times. Then they beat me and asked for

money. Every policeman in India thinks they know about Bhatu people; we are always criminals. They are not listening to Bhatu people. The police say we are not doing good jobs and they are always asking us for money, even when we haven't done anything wrong".

Anil's narrative shows the way in which criminal identities, caste stereotypes and poverty coincide and feed discrimination. Building on the findings of Chapter Six, engaging in illegal activity is understood as an expression of the variation in the extent to which people are able to pursue, attain and maintain approved societal goals such as pursuing a better life through earning. Moreover, deviant and criminal behaviour is recognised as learned behaviour just like any other, integral to the survival strategies adopted while adapting to the urban environment and practised in the defence of Bhatu identity. It is something integral to the process of socialisation within the family and by extension the community (Sutherland, 1947), and learned through apprenticeship, as people engage with their physical and social environment (Ingold, 2000).

However, Anil goes on to explain that such criminal identities can be both intimately linked to and defused by the places that people come from:

"I feel very good that my father was Bhatu and I'm proud to be a Rajasthani guy and not do any bad things to make money. This is the main part of it; when I tell anyone that I'm Bhatu, people feel different. But when I say I'm from Rajasthan, then it's OK, then people say ah you are Rajasthani, you look like a western person, a city boy. Then I feel good, and we have this good feeling with people because we are the Rajasthani Bhatu. In Rajasthan no Bhatu caste member is doing any wrong things to make money, we do work like farming, the construction of houses and shoe shining, we only do hard work there".

Despite their reputation, some aspects of Bhatu identity do have positive associations when rooted in Rajasthan and hard work. The section which follows looks at the ways in which Bhatu people's endeavours to work hard are intimately associated with illegality that is induced and defined through their everyday interactions with state representatives and the state's role in drafting policy and enforcing legislation (Fuller and Benei, 2009).

7.3.2 Policy enactment and legislation enforcement

As if labelling and subsequent stereotyping were not enough, the power of the state is also felt by Bhatu people because of developments in policy enactment and law enforcement, which now criminalise otherwise legitimate jobs. Bhatu people's endeavours to earn repeatedly break a range of rules and regulations set out by The National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009, The Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, The Delhi Prevention of Touting and Malpractices against Tourists Ordinance, 2010 and The Delhi Liquor Licence Rules, 1976. In addition, ways of earning are criminalised because people's behaviour breaks laws set out in legislation pertaining to pickpocketing and stealing or to the cultivation, production, trade, possession and use of narcotics, as set out in The National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1998.

People from the colony understand that in trying to earn a living, they are violating licensing laws on a daily basis. Rajni talks about the difficulties people face in accessing licences and about her experiences of earning illegally because she does not have a license to sell maps:

"I go for work after twelve midday. I have to go every day, because I want food for my family. I sell maps and sometimes I move around selling, sometimes I sit down to sell. But when I do this, the police come and ask for money, 50₹ every week, it's a lot. If I don't give this, then they will not let me work. It's not possible to make money anywhere else. If I don't sit, then I don't need a licence and because there is so much construction going on, there is no place to sit. People who have had fifteen to twenty years of experience, they are the only ones who have papers and they have them from before, but now it seems that it's just not possible to get a licence. What can we do? The number of licences is limited, we don't have the connections or resources necessary to pay the bribes expected and now there are no more licences being issued".

Official tourist guides are also given licences, yet despite their years of experience, Bhatu people do not have the qualifications required to make a formal application. Subhash talks about his status in relation to the type of work he does, the need for licences and his inability to access these:

“The work we do; tourist guiding, is legal. But the police have the power to ask us for money or move us on because we don’t have a guiding licence. We only get a licence if we have proof of education, you need to be able to read and write English and know history so you can tell the tourists about places, that is enough. But I have never tried to apply for a guiding licence because I already know you need education and I don’t have any”.

Through narratives, I was to learn that there is considerable bureaucratic discretion involved in the issuing and renewing of a limited number of licences allocated for the purpose of street-based vending. Moreover, multiple state authorities have responsibility for enforcing laws and licensing regulations. Land is owned by the DDA, but areas are not only policed by them; the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the Licensing Committee also actively engage in patrolling. In addition, Delhi Police officers, including a special unit of Tourist Police, are allocated for the purpose of protecting visiting populations and have a permanent high profile in patrolling central areas. Both bureaucratic discretion and the subsequent multiple level enforcement of licensing laws are accompanied by widespread rent-seeking behaviour.

Deviant and criminal identities are only strengthened through such negative sanctioning and rent-seeking, whether practised to deter unlicensed sales or to line officers’ pockets, and generates more crime. Subhash’s narrative reflects this:

“The police know about everything. By taking bribes they support people to do more crime and to do more bad things. They say enjoy eh, take it, do it, while they also benefit”.

This means that whether stationary or mobile, on foot or in a vehicle, Bhatu people live with high levels of stress associated with either avoiding or confronting so many state representatives who claim authority over public spaces. Shalu, 54, an uneducated widow and mother of grown children, talks about the differences in her ability to earn depending on the place she chooses, her refusal to pay bribe money and persistence in engaging in deviant activity:

“I go for work selling posters in the centre and different areas around the colleges. When we do this work at the colleges we don’t feel that we are doing any wrong work, but when we sit in the centre and the public keep coming and talking to us, police and MCD officers always come and tell us to move. They say why are you creating a crowd here? They tell us that if something goes wrong, if there is a bomb, what will happen? Officers keep talking to us and moving us on, but we have to keep doing this work. We can’t help it. When the police start arguing with us, telling us not to sell on the main roads and asking us for money, we don’t give them any. Then they don’t allow us to sell, so we have to get up and move on”.

Such experiences make for a working environment that is high risk and where bribe demands are made. Given their policy-induced illegality and lack of alternative opportunities, many Bhatu people pay up, accepting that, in exchange for money, they can access the spaces they need in order to engage with the public and earn. Payments are relentless, accumulative and their value substantial, yet in reality they do not guarantee earning. For example, while officers representing the Licensing Departments, MCD and NDMC may take fewer regular payments of less money than the police, they frequently take stock as payment or interrupt and stop people earning altogether by moving them on.

Government personnel also periodically carry out organised raids, where Bhatu people are faced with the threat or actual confiscation of their stock, they may also be arrested and charged, taken to court and sentenced, and have to serve a prison term. Such raids on street-based sellers are conducted quickly, without warning, in order to increase the chance of catching people and preventing crowds gathering and violence escalating. These often hostile interactions can be defused informally in the street through the payment of bribes, taken in the form of a combination of cash and stock.

Once confiscated, stock gets taken to MCD premises where it is officially logged. In such cases, people from the colony are then expected to face the MCD or Licensing Officers directly, where they plead for leniency and special consideration, highlighting their poor condition. A woman may strengthen her plea by stating that her husband is ill, that she is widowed, or that she is pregnant or has small children at home who are sick. But regardless

of the nature of persistent pleading, minimum amounts of official fines and retrieval costs are payable on stock confiscated from people engaging in unlicensed sales. In many cases, a percentage of the overall worth of the stock such as maps, school charts, posters and shoe shining and repair equipment is also added to the fees payable. This means that the actual amount payable to get stock returned is a combination of genuine fines, retrieval costs and bribe money.

However, the final demand fails to take in to consideration the additional costs incurred by unlicensed sellers due to the long, drawn out process involved in getting their stock back. For example, where seizures are made in central Delhi, stock will end up at the MCD head office in Safdarjung in South Delhi. People wishing to reclaim their goods have to travel there from the colony to make the claim in person. In all cases, on arriving at the office, they are told by the clerks to return the next day and without fail this will happen on a number of consecutive days. This creates stress and frustration for people because they are prevented from earning money until they get the stock back and in the meantime they still have to feed their families and find the money for the travel expenses, fines and bribes involved in finally getting the stock back.

These organised removal drives are increasingly large-scale and are being used as justification for a hike in the amount of bribes demanded on the street. The rising cost of official fines and confiscated stock retrieval costs has also served to heighten incentives for more government officials to engage in rent-seeking activity. The latest large-scale drives in Delhi were associated with the cleanup effort involved in preparation for the Commonwealth Games in 2010. These worked to further reduce the potential for earning in spaces that were already limited by the extensive building work that was undertaken in the centre of Delhi, which in turn also deterred potential customers from visiting the centre.

In addition, people from the colony experienced an intensification of the implementation of regulatory laws once the Commonwealth Games were under way. They were not only prevented from working in central Delhi during this time; they were restricted in their movements more generally within the city. For example, without proof of ID and a legitimate reason for being in the centre, people were arrested and given an on-the-spot fine of 2,000₹. Similarly, those with vehicles, particularly auto-rickshaws that were not owned, and where

drivers did not have licences, they were restricted from working in the centre. If they were unable to prove ownership and produce a driving license, they had their vehicle impounded and again they were arrested and subjected to an on-the-spot fine of 2,000₹.

In these ways, deviance and criminality are induced through the enactment of criminal law by the criminal justice system. The section which follows looks at the ways in which legislation and its enactment systematically deny Bhatu people their rights to earn a living, let alone pursue a better life and mobility.

7.3.3 Illegality and the criminal justice system

One of the most important constitutional rights in India is equality of opportunity, a legal framework designed to protect people against discrimination on any grounds. Yet, in reality, this ideal coexists with considerable inequalities at the level of everyday life. For example, Bhatu people's 'backward' and criminalised identities, their illegal residential status and pathways into earning, and their poor, low caste positions in society are associated with disadvantage, discrimination and exploitation, which are reinforced in their treatment, processing and sentencing within the criminal justice system.

Courts are high caste, well off and male-dominated environments, which hand out individualised justice, where stereotypical views of caste, class and gender are reinforced through sentencing. For example, expectations of what it means to be a good citizen in terms of fundamental duties or a good woman or man in terms of their respective caring and earning roles dominate proceedings. These are the societal ideals by which people are valued and judged that impact upon the sentence passed. This can mean they are subjected to oppressive, paternalistic forms of justice, where they are processed according to the crime and face the usual sanctions along with additional rulings which reflect the extent of their deviance from social expectations and gender norms.

This leads to injustice for many poor, low caste people, who are further criminalised under prevailing licensing laws and left feeling harshly treated and excessively punished. This is particularly hard felt by women forced into work because their husbands are incapacitated, estranged or deceased. Moreover, in such circumstances, women and men are understood to

have failed in taking on and meeting their responsibilities. They are then further stigmatised and lose their reputation in family and community life, and this can have a very damaging impact on their everyday lived experiences (Carlen, 1983). Again, this is often made worse for women, who face beatings from their husbands on returning home following an arrest or sentencing that leads to imprisonment (Edwards, 1984).

As with rent-seeking, imprisonment is a formal way of sanctioning crime, which actually works to criminalise people further, stigmatising offenders whose actual crimes are their endeavour to earn a living and inability to pay bribes. Rohit is from the core Bhatu sample, but less proficient in English, less skilled in attracting and keeping clients and therefore earns less than others in this category. He talks about the trade-off he has to make between finding money for bribes so he can work and ending up in prison:

“I have been arrested many times and I have gone to jail once. This happened because I didn’t pay them any bribe money and they got angry and took me to jail. They locked me up for one day and then let me out. They were asking me for 2,000₹ and I told them I don’t have this money. I would have had to borrow the money with interest if I had wanted to pay this. So for me, it is better if they send me to jail”.

It is also the case that transitions from one pathway into earning to another increasingly criminalises people. Roshni narrates her experiences of engaging in consecutive jobs while settling into working life in Delhi, which saw her shift from policy-induced deviance to full-on criminal activity in her pursuit of a better life:

“My husband did shoe shining and in the beginning I did recycling, picking and selling wood and metal. We felt OK, good here; at least we could eat two times per day. I also tried selling posters, maps and books in the centre. I had no shop; I would just sit anywhere, unless the police came and moved us on. The MCD would also come and ask us for money. I would give between 100 and 200₹. I couldn’t speak English, so when any foreigner came I didn’t know how to tell them how much the items were. It made it hard to make money, only 100₹ here, 200₹ there. I tried going to sell along with others who could understand some

English, but they always made more money than me and would end up giving me food and trying to help me. I stopped going to the centre then and started doing what I could to make money on my own. I went begging on the street and sold drugs in the jhuggi. There were a lot of people taking drugs in the jhuggi and everyone was buying and selling drugs, so we also started doing this”.

Roshni goes on to talk about the way she accessed the drugs, and the role which caste and gender played in this, and provides some insight into what her engagement in illegal activity actually involved:

“We bought the drugs from very far away in Roghviri Nagar in quarter, half and full kilo packets, from people from another caste. We would have to go there or a girl would come to the jhuggi and distribute them for us to sell. We would then sit for up to two hours making up small packets worth 10, 20, 50 or 100₹ and then go out to sell them. I never tried the drug, but it made me feel ill just to handle it and from the smell when I was putting it into the small packets. I would feel sick, I wouldn’t feel hungry and sometimes I wouldn’t be able to sleep”.

Very few people talk openly about the betterment in their lives following their engagement in criminal activities. Roshni is one exception, but as she continues her narrative, we learn that she always lived in fear of being arrested and imprisoned:

“We had a very good life, and did a lot through selling drugs; we had money, good clothes and twelve tola of gold. In one month we would make 50,000₹ and put it in the bank. We could eat what we wanted, when we wanted, in the day and at night. We made our house out of bricks. Everything was right. We did this for one year, this was a very long time and we made a lot of money. But we were always scared that the police would come”.

As Roshni and her family went about their daily business, she watched other people engaged in the same work as her being arrested and some going free. Despite the complete transformation of their lives, it was short-lived as the inevitable happened; Roshni recalls the way she continued to sell drugs despite her husband’s arrest, until she herself was arrested:

“In the beginning my husband was caught and I had to sell drugs so that I could earn enough money to get him out of jail. After seven months there was a high court order and the judge was very good; we had been selling drugs and given this is very bad, the sentencing shouldn’t have had bail attached. But he said that if we paid 12,000₹, my husband could get out. Later that year, I was caught and put in jail for one-and-a-half years.

I was at home with my daughter when a man came to the house wanting to buy drugs. I gave him what he wanted and when I saw the police approaching I ran away and hid from them. But my daughter was left at the house and they asked her: Who is your father? The police took his name, but when I heard this I got scared; he had already gone to jail once. I decided I had to do something; I got myself arrested by telling the police that my husband had gone to work in Hyderabad. Otherwise if he had been arrested again, it would have been very serious”.

Roshni’s narrative shows clearly the thought processes behind the decisions she took and provides insight into the nature of the trade-offs she made, by way of managing risk, under increasingly impossible circumstances. Her imprisonment was devastating to the remaining members of her household and ultimately to their endeavours to achieve and maintain a better life. During interview, Kajal, whose husband is long-term incapacitated due to alcoholism, talks about her experiences of living in prison. In particular, she provides insight into the way state corruption and people’s criminal activities are hopelessly interlinked and ultimately detrimental to the endeavour of families to cope with and get out of poverty:

“In jail, there is a lot of corruption. If you give money, then you can avoid cleaning the toilets and people can give you clothes and food. If you have money, then things can happen. A lot of things happen underhand, but if you don’t have money, then you have to keep looking at their faces and nothing will happen. We always see this in daily working life, too; those who pay money, take money and do wrong things. You give the people money so that you can steal, you give money so that they will not tell the police, or you give money to stop the police arresting you, it’s all underhand. I am a criminal, other people are also

criminals. What else can I do? I have to go to work for my children. If you earn, then you can overcome poverty, but I can't and can barely live life every day. Therefore poverty doesn't go".

Narratives such as Roshni's, highlight the role of criminal activity in the pursuit and attainment of better life, regardless of it being short-lived. People are much more likely to be like Kajal, emphasising the importance of their illegal activity in meeting everyday expenses such as food and the needs of their children, like clothes and in some cases education. We pick up again on Kajal's narrative, as a mother and main earner in her household:

"When I moved to the colony I was able to continue to do this work. I go at 4 o'clock in the morning, I don't want to do anything wrong, I just want to work hard, make money and keep my respect. Before, I was able to earn 100 to 150₹, but now it's more, 250 to 300₹. I'm not forced to steal, but there are more things to pick and sell because of the metro construction. Women like me do this work because their husbands don't work and because they want to put their children to school. As mothers, we have to do anything and everything for our children. You just have to do it".

Through their hardship and well-meaning intentions, women like Kajal regularly come into contact with the law through their illegal behaviour. In her case, this recently led to her being arrested, charged with stealing and sentenced to a period of imprisonment. She talks about the unrelenting pleading and violence involved in the negotiation process with representatives of the state such as the police:

"I have been arrested by the police several times and they always ask me what I am doing. They try to create problems. What else can I say? I explain that I'm a poor person. I do recycling because I have a child in my belly and ask them to leave me alone. They slap me, arrest me and keep me waiting in the station for two to three hours before letting me go. One time they stopped me on the street and found me with a metal plate I had picked up, which they thought I had stolen. I said that I hadn't stolen anything, but they slapped me a few times and took

200₹ from me in bribe money. As they left me alone, they told me don't steal again".

Recently, I was arrested again, and the police made a theft case against me. They found me carrying twenty kilograms of metal, which I had taken from a metro construction site. I could make 300₹ for this amount of metal. They put me in jail on the charge of stealing for fifteen days. I was sent to the local jail. It is frightening when you go in because they beat you if you don't do your work. You feel very, very scared".

The child being in her belly, in Kajal's case, is a lie, but in keeping with the narratives of other women, claims to be pregnant are often used to plead with the police for leniency. Her experience of corruption is also a common feature of narratives. She goes on to reflect on her situation with hindsight, revealing the incapacity of her husband, bolstered by the needs of a growing family and the increasing costs of living; all too commonly used justifications for why women work, and more specifically, why they take up criminal activity:

"Now I have been to jail, I feel scared when I'm at work, because if I go back, my children will suffer. They kept telling me not to go and do this recycling work, but I kept telling them that I wouldn't go if their father was earning something. If I could get some other good work, then I would do it, but I don't know what else I could do. I could do map selling, but you have to go out of Delhi, but even then you don't make enough money when your children are asking for new clothes, makeup and the cost of food is always going up. How else can you survive? Recycling gives you 250 to 300₹ in a day, so I do that. I can run the house, but I can't save, just buy the food, it's only everyday spending".

Women being in jail has a damaging impact on family life, particularly where husbands are incapacitated. Kajal's daughter Sheetal, aged 18 and married, but waiting for *goana*, talks about the impact of her mother going to jail on her and her brother:

"My mother was in jail for fifteen days and for all that time I didn't eat food or take tea, nothing. My father was always saying eat, eat, eat, but all I wanted to do

was meet with my mother. Then I would cry a lot and then my father cried a lot too. He tried to get her out of jail, but we didn't have any money. We have a very good mother, it is her who goes to work and earns for us. We were all sad. My small brother stopped going to school all that time. Why? Because in our house we were living with a lot of tension. I know that doing this work at night isn't right, but she has children. Her husband lives with her, but he doesn't look after the children. She does this because she wants her children to have everything, to live happily.

I say to her, I don't like you going for work in the night, mummy. I don't know where she is going and what could happen to her, she could be attacked and get raped. I really don't like it, but we have to accept, our house has no other income. What can you do? She is older now, she has children, but what about her man? Our caste is bad, men don't go out to earn. My mother thinks like this: my life is already in a bad condition, so it doesn't matter, but I can't think about not going for work. It's like this. She doesn't make a lot of money, 200 to 250₹ per night, at the most 500₹. What can you do with this? Only eat and drink”.

From the narratives in this section, we learn about the hand to mouth existence common to so many households in the colony, particularly where there is incapacity among male earning members. More specifically, we learn about the role of deviant and criminal activity in meeting everyday needs, as well as pursuing better lives and mobility. However, whether people are able to bring betterment to their lives or simply just get by, engaging in deviant and criminal activity has unrelenting, long-term financial implications. Spiralling economic indebtedness is particularly associated with the imprisonment of an earning household member. Roshni talks us through the nature and extent of the expenses associated with her time in prison:

“Many rounds in the court followed my arrest and we had to give a lot of money. When I first went into the court, we gave 20,000₹ to the lawyer. Then we asked him to help us make an application to get me out of jail so that I could see my husband's younger brother's daughter married. The judge understood that the girl getting married was my daughter and he said that I should be let out. I could

go home for fourteen days, but after that I had to go back into jail. This required further payments of 8,000₹ to the lawyer and 35,000₹ to the judge. Then my husband paid a further 20,000₹ and I was able to get out. But I had to swear that I wouldn't sell drugs again; I told them that I would sell bodies, even those of my children, before getting into this line of work again. After this, I have begged on the street, but I have never gone back into selling drugs, never done any of these wrong things”.

Vinod, whose father is incapacitated through alcohol abuse, gives important insight into the specific nature, extent and impact of indebtedness associated with his mother's sentencing, after she was arrested on a charge of policy-induced illegality - selling socks at Delhi Railway Station:

“In the end, it took 20,000₹ to keep everything going, what with paying for advocates and court proceedings. Then there were the costs associated with visiting her in jail. I would start out to Hari Pur, spending 15₹ on the bus ticket. Then take a pedal rickshaw costing another 15₹. On the way, I would stop and buy fruit, tea leaves, sugar and biscuits for my mother. Then once in the jail the security police would ask for bribe money from the visitors. If I paid them 40 to 50₹ I could go and sit and eat with my mother. If I didn't give anything they would tell me just to leave. One visit could cost 350₹. In the end, I had to approach a lady from my gotra who lives in the colony. She gives loans on interest, so I asked her if I could borrow 20,000₹. She gave me the money and charged 2,000₹ in fees per month. She really helped me because often interest in the colony is 3 to 4,000₹ per month. I have had a lot of problems to try to make the money to pay her back, but my name has been drawn and I have my committee money. I have now paid back the money; it took seventeen months and cost me 34,000₹”.

Kajal, Roshni and Vinod each narrate their experiences following the incapacity of male earning members and worsening household circumstances. Out of desperation, women are forced into earning pathways that involve engaging in illegal activities, which subsequently gets them arrested, sentenced and imprisoned. This then contributes substantially to a

household's spiralling economic indebtedness, which prevents them from moving out of poverty and pursuing mobility.

7.4 Conclusions

This chapter has looked at what can be learned from people's everyday lived experiences about illegality of status as a barrier to better life and mobility. I began the discussion by showing that Bhatu people's illegality of status developed out of their experiences of being poverty-stricken and desperate, and having limited opportunities when they migrated to Delhi. I highlighted the insecurity of ways of living and earning which developed, as they endeavoured to settle and adapt to city living; insecurities which sadly continue to characterise their circumstances and hamper their efforts to live and earn well in the colony today.

Bhatu people lack formal educational attainment and therefore remain unsuccessful in securing the government jobs, which are the basis for status and better life. They are also inexperienced and uninformed in looking for work in any type of formal sector employment and unskilled for the purpose of increasing the variation in the types of work they can do, and unable to access more regular, higher earnings. Given these circumstances, both men's and women's pathways in to earning have become increasingly characterised by deviant behaviour and criminal activity. However, historically, Bhatu people's identity was already institutionalised by the state through being formally labelled a criminal caste and a 'backward' class.

Being so labelled and stigmatised has worked to isolate Bhatu people in such a way that illegality has become central to their everyday lived experiences. Engaging in illegal activity is an expression of need, and an indication of the variation in the extent to which people are given the right to earn or able to pursue, attain and maintain societal approved goals such as a better life, because of discrimination and corruption at the hands of the state and its representatives. In these ways, deviant and criminal behaviour is recognised as learned behaviour, just like any other, integral to the survival strategies adopted while adapting to the urban environment and practised in the defence of Bhatu identity. It is something integral to

the process of socialisation within the family, and by extension the community, and learned through apprenticeship as people engage with their physical and social environment.

Due to developments in policy enactment and law enforcement, otherwise legitimate jobs have been criminalised. There is considerable bureaucratic discretion involved in the issuing and renewing of a limited number of licences allocated to street vendors. Moreover, multiple state authorities are responsible for enforcing laws and licensing regulations. Taken together, these justify organised raids and encourage widespread rent-seeking behaviour among government officials. As a result, Bhatu people face the unrelenting threat of or actual confiscation of their stock and are also arrested, charged, taken to court and sentenced to serve prison terms.

In these ways, legislation and its enactment systematically deny or limit Bhatu people's rights to earn a living, let alone pursue a better life. Moreover, deviance and criminality are induced through the enactment of criminal law by the criminal justice system. People are stigmatised further, leaving individuals harshly treated and excessively punished, and families in spiralling economic indebtedness. In the following chapter, I discuss the way male earning members' incapacity, associated with alcoholism and drug misuse and economic indebtedness, are interlinked and cumulative as further barriers to people pursuing better lives and mobility.

Chapter Eight. Incapacity Associated with Alcohol and Drug Misuse and Economic Indebtedness.

8.0 Introduction

This chapter continues the exploration of what can be learned about barriers to better life and mobility from people's everyday lived experiences. In Chapters Six and Seven, I showed that Bhatu people's ability to earn enough, regular money is unrelentingly challenged. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the ways in which these already insecure circumstances, are made all the more desperate because male earning members drain earnings, and eventually stop earning, as a result of substance misuse and dependency. The devastating impact of such habit-forming behaviours is evident for all to see and is associated with severe weight loss, high or low blood pressure, liver, heart and lung problems, tuberculosis and pneumonia. Such problems may be found coexisting in multiple members of one household, in some cases one individual, and lead to premature death. Furthermore, people's worsening circumstances are associated with their everyday and longer term money management practices.

I locate the details of this discussion on alcohol and drug misuse and spiralling economic indebtedness within an exploration of the complex and variable nature of gender identities and the changing lives of men in relation to women (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 2004). More specifically, I engage with a number of theoretical debates, which suggest a crisis of masculinity (Brooks, 2010, Clare, 2000). Thereby, I seek new perspectives on how changing identities and relationships, in terms of roles, expectations and entitlements, impact upon people's pursuits of better lives and endeavours to attain mobility.

8.1 Intoxication as cultural practice

The consumption of intoxicants, in itself, is not a new story in understanding the everyday lives of Bhatu people. Through their accounts of their lives, it is clear that the consumption of such substances has a long history associated with their medicinal value and their use to help people keep their strength up while labouring, helping them relax, aiding a restful night's sleep, easing psychological distress and physical aches and pains, as well as warding off seasonal colds, easing sore throats and for their wider cleansing and antiseptic properties.

Such examples are long-established remedies for current problems associated with being poor, weak and having to work hard and live in very difficult circumstances.

Intoxication is also an integral part of “*the way we do things*” in the Bhatu community. For example, the father of a new-born child is encouraged to get drunk, particularly if this is his first son. Through such cultural practices, male community members are able to say they are men because of the responsibilities they now have relating to being married and having children. Please see Chapter Six for more details on the significance of such occasions for marking the transition from childhood to adulthood for both male and female community members.

I have also noted that family and community members publicly honour the passing of a person who has died by engaging in the very pastimes they most enjoyed. In the twelve days after a cremation, as a mark of respect, it is expected that people stay at home and spend long periods of time sitting with the deceased’s family, telling stories, smoking, drinking and playing cards. Related to this is *Amavas*, a day of ritual, worship and offering held in the privacy of people’s homes in remembrance of deceased family members. On each new moon, the darkest day in every month of the Hindu lunar calendar, Bhatu people ensure that their ancestors’ souls are not forgotten and are happy and peaceful.

As with the funeral rites, the composition of the offerings placed around a temporary shrine for *Amavas*, depend on what the ancestors enjoyed. They include foods such fresh and dried fruits as well as tobacco and pan leaves, cigarettes and whisky. Once the worship is complete, these items become *prashad*, religiously blessed items, to be distributed to loved ones, the poor and those in need of blessings. Men are given tobacco, pan, cigarettes and whisky, while women are given coconut, banana and *kheer*, rice cooked in sweet milk.

Intoxication is also an integral part of everyday cultural practice associated with the religious life of the Bhatu community. Different Gods are worshipped on each day of the week. The Sunday God is Beronaath, Baba Bhairunath or Bhairu Babu, who is associated with the consumption of whisky. There is a temple dedicated to this God near Pragati Maiden in central Delhi, where Bhatu people go to have new vehicles blessed. While in the temple, they offer brands of whisky considered ‘English’ to the God and then give some as *prashad* to

poor people in the streets nearby. The Monday God is Shiva or Shiv Shanker, who is associated with the consumption of marijuana. Some of the older men and many of the young boys in the community make this their day off from work. They fast and come together in groups at several points throughout the day to smoke, using an assortment of pipes, *ganja* made from the leaves and tops of the marijuana plant and *chiras*, a stronger resin-based version made from the sap extracted from the leaves and buds of the marijuana plant.

In addition to this, during the *Holi* festival held in spring, general drunken rowdiness is encouraged in the colony. Even women get drunk and playfully highlight and in some cases aggressively challenge existing gender hierarchies. For example, a female, aided by her female friends, family and community members will target and chase a male. Once she has him in her grasp, the female will beat him with the stick while everyone else watches and cheers her on. She will then ask him for alcohol such as whisky and beer or *bhang*, a drink made from the leaves and tops of the marijuana plant mixed with milk, different types of spirit, ground nuts, herbs and spices. The males are then forced to hand over the money or go and buy these. In the meantime, the female will sit down where she is, often in the middle of the street, and be quickly encircled by a throng of women and girls who enthusiastically encourage her intoxication.

However, evidence from the colony shows that the consumption of alcohol and drugs, once purely valued for their medicinal properties and cultural significance in ritual practice, is increasingly overshadowed by their association with changing lifestyles, recreational use, misuse and dependency. The section which follows looks in more detail at the emerging culture of intoxication.

8.2 The changing culture of intoxication

When it comes to substance misuse, as a society, Indians moralise, medicalise and legalise. Yet, anthropological findings show that drinking and drug taking are not necessarily followed by pathology and dependency, due to the role of cultural practice in shaping the way intoxicating substances affect us (Gladwell, 2010). In this way, a deeper understanding of the specific nature of the barrier which incapacity through substance misuse and dependency

poses among Bhatu people is reached by acknowledging that *how much* people consume matters far less than *how* and *why* they consume.

Through narrative we are able to gain significant insight into the how and why of substance misuse. Sunil, 35, and uneducated, has a history of alcohol misuse and drug dependency. During his life-story narrative, he comments on changes taking place in Bhatu patterns of consumption as he sees them:

“Every time I come back to the colony I see the environment getting worse; it’s the worst place in Delhi for drinking and drug taking. In the jhuggi people from outside came to sell drugs, but here in the colony people are selling alcohol and you can get drugs nearby in the streets, so there is a steady supply. It was also all secret in the jhuggi, but here there is no embarrassment, people do it during the day in front of their families. What can you do? Those who don’t have anything have a lot of problems and get drunk and take drugs to forget. There are those who have no reason to do it, but just do it out of habit, then there are those who have achieved something in life and they do it because they can afford to”.

In his narrative, Sunil talks about the shift towards a more open pattern in the way intoxicating substances are consumed. He sees this being interlinked with people’s motivations for engaging in habit-forming behaviours. For example, their continued role in coping with struggles associated with poverty and their increasing recreational use as part of changing lifestyles. Interestingly, at the foundation of his how and why, Sunil places significance on the increasing ‘culture of availability’, of both alcohol and drugs in the colony.

According to law set out for the NCR, the sale of alcohol is an all-male domain, conducted from licensed premises and regulated by the government. Interestingly, as I mentioned indirectly in Chapter Seven, securing supplies and selling alcohol in the colony are unlicensed, unregulated and predominantly female-dominated endeavours. Sale and consumption takes place in ground floor retail spaces, which are illegally occupied and double up as people’s everyday living spaces. These established sites, spread throughout the colony, provided me with many opportunities to observe day-to-day drinking behaviour. In

keeping with Sunil's observations, I was able to discern two distinct sets of attitudes, behaviours and etiquettes among Bhatu people, associated with patterns of alcohol consumption.

The first of the two is associated with older generation men, who like to drink village wines and spirits, particularly whisky. Men of this age group have a desire to hide, disguise and cover up their drinking habits, and an important part of their concealment is binging. Metiya is a 50-year-old widower, uneducated and retired from travelling sales. He is at home, surrounded by his family who are sitting on the floor, while he sits alone on his raised box bed with his legs crossed. His shoulders are rounded forward slightly so that his outstretched arms lean on his knees. He has rolled up his sleeves to the elbows in anticipation and has a glass in one hand and a quarter bottle of whisky in the other. Then, as if in a race and suddenly, hearing the starting gun, he begins to pour and down four glasses, one after the other in quick succession, in a familiar single action. He grimaces and makes an *erhhh* sound deep in his throat as he throws the dregs from each glass against the painted concrete-block wall as a gesture to quench the thirst of the Gods. His young daughter then slides a loaded plate of home cooked food across the bed in front of him and encourages him to eat.

The second distinct drinking style I observed in the colony is associated with the younger generation of Bhatu men, particularly those connected with the commission-based shopping and tourist guiding pathways into earning. This is an open drinking culture where the focus is on well chilled bottles of strong beer. Unlike the older generation's secret downing, these men get together regularly for full-on public sessions over several hours of an evening after work or throughout the day when they take days off. Interestingly, food is an important part of the experience and they go to great lengths to get tomatoes and cucumbers peeled and sliced then sprinkled with salt and *masala*, ground mixed spice, before they even start drinking. In addition, I noted that throughout each session they would often call on children hanging around, often younger siblings, to go and fetch *chat*, which is onion, potato and puffed rice seasoned with lemon and mixed spice or *tangiri*, which is spiced minced meat roasted on skewers. Others are happy to munch their way through large bags of potato crisps or *namkeen*, which are dry sweet or savoury snacks.

Such drinking behaviour is increasingly recreational, forming an important part of card games or watching a cricket match. However, although this makes for an altogether more relaxed drinking experience, bingeing is often still part of this drinking culture. The drinking may well begin with one bottle being opened at a time and handed round as each participant of a group takes their turn to sip. However, regardless of the fact that many will drink straight from the bottle or from a glass that is substantially bigger than those used for serving spirits, some participants are moved to down the beer in one go. Moreover, unlike the older generation's approach to drinking, there is very little evidence of the younger generation setting limits beforehand or attempting to curtail their drinking after they have started; there seems to be a general acceptance that you cannot just sit down and enjoy one beer, you have to have ten.

I have already stated that how much matters far less than how and why people drink. Yet Vinod from the Bhatu comparative sample, a travelling map seller, provides important insights during a conversation. He recalls the ebb and flow surrounding one afternoon's card game attended by tourist guiding young men from the core research sample:

"I counted a total of thirty-four 750 millilitre bottles of Kingfisher Strong emptied in one afternoon. There were only six boys and they are supposed to be poor people and this alcohol is very expensive. You can buy this beer for 65₹ outside, but inside the colony they sell it for 80₹ a bottle. These boys live a very different life, it would take me almost one month to make this money and they spent it all in a few hours".

Like Sunil's, Vinod's narrative not only highlights his astonishment at the increasingly open nature of drinking culture, but also at the changing lifestyles that are emerging, and the differences between what it is to be rich or poor which are motivating these lifestyles. However, Vinod's observations do not pick up on the way in which this more open approach to drinking is not deterred by participants not having or running out of money. They may be earning more, and clearly spending more, but at the same time they are also getting into more debt.

For example, each of the young men take turns in fronting the bill for a round of drinks, but should the funds of the group then run out, there is no hesitation among them to run up thousands of rupees worth of tabs. This is possible because while they may not always know when, they always know they will be able to make more money. Ranjit explains:

“I owe 3,000₹ at one of the beer shops in the colony. But even when I can’t get any more beer from that shop, I go and see if I will be lucky at another, and then another, until I get what I want. People know me here, if I go for work tomorrow, I can bring more money”.

However, as I go on to highlight below, for many men, their reputations for earning and their ability to earn, increasingly part ways as they become more incapacitated through substance misuse and dependency. For now, I want to highlight the role children have in Bhatu drinking culture. For example, they are the ones who do the fetching of the drinks along with snacks, food, water and cigarettes. Many children will get a bottle of fruit juice or coke, a pack of crisps or the change from a round for themselves as part of the deal. As Subhash highlights, this is nothing new:

“Children hang around because they want to be the ones to get the empty bottles. They are able to get 2₹ each for an empty beer bottle. I used to do this when I was a small boy. I used to think this was very exciting when my father would sit and drink with his friends. I would make a little bit of money and go and buy crisps, chocolate or a cold drink”.

From these observations and narratives, we are able to learn that drinking and drug taking are historically integral to Bhatu people’s lives and that there is a generational shift in how Bhatu people drink, from closed to more open, recreational patterns of consumption. However, significantly more worrying changes are evident, associated with alcohol and drug misuse and dependency, and as earnings are increasingly drained, the health and well-being of individuals are destroyed and families are torn apart.

The section which follows, looks in more detail at what lies behind such habit-forming behaviours and highlights the ways in which people’s increasing incapacity is wiping out

their own and other household member's endeavours to create the conditions necessary for life to continue, not to mention challenging, and in many cases, reversing their pursuit of better life and any attainment of mobility.

8.3 Men in crisis: Changing roles, expectations and entitlements

According to Lynne Segal, men are in crisis, the new victims, disadvantaged and suffering from falling levels of confidence, losing out on schooling, jobs, personal relationships and overall health and well-being (2007). The language of crisis which she uses is drawn from the work of Anthony Clare, who writes about men being in serious trouble:

“What is it that increases your chances of ending up in remedial classes at school, in trouble with the police in adolescence and in jail in your twenties? What is it that makes you much more likely to inject heroin, abuse alcohol, betray your spouse and desert your children? What is it that increases threefold your risk of killing yourself and tenfold your chances of killing someone else? The answer - being a male” (2000:10).

Bhutu people's everyday lived experiences and life-story narratives contain compelling evidence of such conclusions. The persistent lack of schooling and an over reliance on earning apprenticeships leaves them ill-prepared for secure work and regular earning in the formal employment sector. These incapacities mean that even when men take on their earning role, they are often unable to meet their responsibilities according to their own cultural expectations, let alone those of wider society (Jackson, 2001). Men then respond in self-defeating and self-destructive ways. Such reactions are further sustained because men are supposed to hide or disguise their distress over changing roles, expectations and entitlements.

This is causing many men to suffer in silence and internalise the pain and shame, borne out of their powerlessness in some fundamental way, to reach the standards by which they are judged in their community (Connell, 2005). They then channel their anger into harmful behaviours, such as violence and substance misuse, which lead to dependency. These men are thereby deemed dysfunctional and become targets for treatment and rehabilitation, so that

they can get better, reach the standards and ultimately meet their responsibilities (Brooks, 2010).

As Sunil starts to open up about his experiences, we begin to get a sense of the source of his pain, powerlessness and anger, and the way in which these contributed to an escalation in alcohol and drug use:

“I started drinking when I was 18 or 19 years of age. In the beginning, I was doing it for fun, I was not addicted. I saw my friends doing it, they had this habit. How else did I understand? So I wanted to try. My friends were taking drugs, too, and they always said to me try it, try it. But I didn’t. It was only after around two years, when I had gotten closer to one of my friends, that I felt I could try it.

Then after that I had a lot of stress because I liked a girl, we had been together for four to five years, but it didn’t work out. I saw her with someone else. Then I started drinking more and doing drugs for real. Friends started to say to me, you are ruining your life. My family also tried to arrange a marriage for me after that, but I had started drinking and taking drugs so much that I felt that the girl wouldn’t have a good life with me, so I cancelled the marriage.

It came to the point that I couldn’t stop, I had lost my girlfriend, then my mother died and the final straw came when my younger brother Rohit, who never spoke back to me, finally stood up to me. He would never have lifted a finger, so I felt very upset when I saw the change in him towards me. After that I started to heat and inject the drugs, because in my head, if I took them this way, it was more dangerous and I might die in six months.

One day while in the jhuggi, I noticed a gang of young boys running, they had stolen someone’s handbag and began to fight over the purse. I went over to see what was happening. My intentions were to give the bag to the police at the station over the road from the jhuggi. The boys responsible had all scattered and I was left gathering the contents of the bag off the ground around me, when the police arrived.

When I saw them, I panicked and ran, but the police caught up with me and because I had ran they were convinced I was guilty. They made a case against me and I ended up in jail for one month. It was OK in there; you get good food on time and they teach you some things, too. But while inside I counted every day, I tried to give myself an electric shock, I just wanted to die. I felt like I couldn't manage to have a life without drugs”.

Sunil's story, as with many others who now have alcohol-and-drug related problems, is one of lost love, followed by increasing challenge and separation from friends and family members. His response was to isolate himself further by intensifying his dependency on heroin, which led ultimately to his attempted suicide in jail. However, Sunil has since made a remarkable recovery and I will return to his story below, when I discuss Bhatu people's approaches to rehabilitation. For now, I want to continue focusing on the devastating consequences for families associated with individuals who are living with addiction and controlled by dependency.

The devastating impact of habit-forming behaviours such as alcoholism is associated with increasing ill health. However, it was also brought to my attention repeatedly, that many people are dying from such alcohol-related illnesses. Take for example, Mishri, 62 years of age and retired from breeding horses in village Rajasthan. He comes to the colony regularly to visit family and on one occasion he told me:

“In my family, twenty-eight men have died here because of getting drunk. They drink too much wine and whisky and then they get sick and die. What can you do? I counted this only since moving to the colony. Since 2002”.

When it comes to drug misuse, accounts of diminishing health are also present, as are accounts of overdose and suicide. For example, three years ago Hanil and Bimla lived in a nuclear family with their unmarried teenage son and daughter. They always had particularly high hopes for their son, Rakesh, but his suicide followed the escalation of an argument when they challenged him to stop taking drugs. Bimla, 35 years of age and uneducated, explains:

“We mortgaged our property and spent all our money on our boy. We thought we should teach him and he was good, never failed. I have a card of all his seven passed classes. But while he was studying, someone started giving him alcohol. We then taught him the work of a motor mechanic and the work of repairing machines. We taught him good work, but he refused to agree to continue with this and used to do labouring work in Chandni Chowk. Then he started to drink a lot and not take any earnings home.

When the jhuggies were broken he started taking drugs. It’s all due to the people of the colony; many people inject drugs here, also drink, even small children. If we couldn’t even stop our own child, then how can we stop others? We tried a lot to stop him, but he didn’t stop. The society in which we live has this habit. In the jhuggi it was less, but here in the colony it is more. When I came to know, I admitted him to Lady Harding Hospital. I had him given treatment at a cost of 35,000₹. Then he became OK and for three or four years he used to go to work, he was looking after the household properly.

Then, three days before his death, he started taking drugs again. We never came to know who forced him or if he took them by himself, but he ran away from home and didn’t come to the house. Then we went searching for him and brought him home. He wanted to have drugs and when we refused to buy some for him, he said: I will take drugs! He quarrelled with us when we tried to explain anything to him about stopping. He hit the mirror, so I went to get a bandage. He then knocked me with a brick when I tried to help him with his cuts. He also hit my husband and he had blood all over him.

My son then became afraid that the public would beat him, so he ran to the river and committed suicide. He was sorry for hitting his mother and father. Nobody saved my boy. Nobody stopped him. Only when he was in the water they said, your son has fallen, you have to call the boatmen. They asked for 3,000₹, and only when I paid this did they drag him out. Two-and-a-half years have now gone since the death of my son”.

Bimla's narrative highlights the interlinking of a number of important factors. Rakesh had been a high achiever and his parents had invested everything financially in him to be successful. Rakesh responded by increasing his alcohol consumption and reducing the amount of earning he brought home. In their desperation to actively rehabilitate him, they lost their son in tragic circumstances. Note, too, that in keeping with Sunil's observations, Bimla emphasises the role of the colony in influencing her son's behaviour; firstly, in terms of the people and their 'culture of habit-forming behaviour', and secondly, in terms of the place and its 'culture of availability'.

Some of these important factors are echoed in Arun's life-story narrative, and yet his circumstances could not be more different. He has no formal education and has been incapacitated for the last two years because of alcoholism. He is now considerably weakened by recurring tuberculosis which is only exacerbated by smoking cigarettes. During his narrative, he talks about his motivations for drinking and the consequent changing fortunes in earning and joint-family living that followed:

"My life was when I didn't drink or smoke. I just went straight to work and came straight back home. Then my life was good, we had good food, drink, a lot of gold and nice things for our house. I went with my friends for work and started to get some money. I saved a little for my family: 15,000₹. Then I started to feel different, another way of thinking was coming: Oh, I have money, let's go and drink and enjoy. My family said don't drink, don't do this. But I didn't understand. Once we had big problems, only then I started to think and the feeling came to stop smoking and drinking.

But then my friends started saying to me; Why have you stopped? Come on, drink more. This is the problem with friends and also family: their interest in you is all about money. When I had money in my pocket, they would come and meet me and say they don't have anything. I would say it doesn't matter; today I will give them money, or spend money, because tomorrow I will make more. I have a lot of work; I am the number one earner in the colony.

But now I have many problems. I can only sit on my bed and watch younger boys with money in their pockets and wearing good clothes. I know if I could work, I would do much better than them. But I know that it is my bad thinking that has brought me down. I have never given myself a chance to go up. Just drinking, all the money gets spent on this. Now one month ago everyone came to my house because they thought I was going to die. The doctor came and saw me and gave me medicine. He told me if I don't drink or smoke and eat only light foods, then I will be comfortable in nine months, so now I feel a little bit OK. I know that if I do this, everything is possible.

But I see that my family don't support me, I don't believe in my brothers. They love me, but they're all married, so they're not thinking about me; just their own wives and children. When they're not drinking, they don't talk to me, but when they are drunk, they come and talk rubbish and I ask them to go because all their talking makes me crazy. I don't believe in my mother either, she lives with another man outside the colony. She leaves my two unmarried sisters to live alone and to sell alcohol. I really don't understand her. That's why I just believe in my wife, always when I have problems she gives me a massage and she takes care of the children and brings food and medicine”.

This type of narrative, telling of the rise and demise of such charismatic and highly competitive characters in the Bhatu community, is all too common. Unlike the case of Rakesh, with his parents' investment in education and training, and pressure to succeed, people like Arun had their own drive to earn and compete with their peers. However, as a consequence of their success, friends' and family's expectations of having their needs met becomes raised to the point that they cannot be satisfied. This is particularly the case where pathways into earning are seasonal, irregular and increasingly drained by alcohol and drug consumption.

This leads to another important point, as Arun highlights. Once incapacitated and unable to earn, sons soon lose their position in the joint family. Many are pushed out without support to live separately with their wives and children. Roshni talks about the different ways she has been separated from her husband and two sons due to their alcohol and drug dependency:

“I had a good husband; that is why we had so many children. He loved me a lot and wouldn’t eat without me. But he started smoking smack and had breathing problems. He died at home after two months of being ill, taking medicine and glucose, but nothing helped him. He died here in the colony, it was four years ago. After that, only more tensions came on me because my oldest son Vijay started taking drugs and my third son Kishan is in jail. He had an argument with someone and killed him with a bottle when he was drunk. He has brought shame on himself and everyone in the family because everyone now talks about him being a murderer.

It’s now my younger children who are thinking about taking care of household things, my oldest child isn’t thinking about anything. I feel very sad because when you take smack it just makes you completely incapacitated. You just stop working. He sits at home and watches TV while his wife goes out for work. She gives him 10₹ in the morning before she goes, then comes back and makes food. He just keeps sitting there and does nothing. He was a bright young boy before, he was really good, he would take care of us, bring me food and medicine. Now we don’t talk, we live in different houses on different floors”.

Santro, Vijay’s wife and Roshni’s daughter-in-law, provides some important insights into the circumstances behind the separation between her, her husband and children and her marital home:

“My husband takes a lot of drugs, so now it’s me who goes for work and then makes food for my children, otherwise we wouldn’t manage. I would be carefree if we lived with my mother-in-law and she made food. But she kept on quarrelling with me from morning till evening. My husband doesn’t earn for us, so my mother-in-law kept telling me we have to live separately and I have to earn for my husband and children. Sometimes I am forced to give my husband food and not my children. I am left feeling very depressed because of my husband”.

Both Roshni and Santro also highlight the increasing burden on wives and children in taking on the earning role which ensures that the household survives. In this family, such changing

gender roles, expectations and entitlements are particularly hard borne for Santro as she copes with everyday life and the enforced separation from her marital home.

Vijay has a long history of drug misuse, which as I highlighted in Chapter Six, stemmed from his earning role for his family as a young boy selling drugs in the *jhuggi*. He has only recently returned to the colony to live with his wife and children, after having spent several months of living down and out on the streets. During his life-story narrative, he talks candidly about the way his consumption of different types of drugs has accumulated and escalated over time. To the point that everyday life has become a cyclical struggle motivated by poverty and the need to earn, followed by desperation, crime, guilt and frustration:

“I was 5 years old when I started smoking cigarettes and by the time I was 7, I smoked ganja, too. When I was 9, a guy asked me to show him what to do because he wanted to smoke heroin. I showed him and that was how I started. I continued to do all these drugs together because I had a lot of problems. Do you know how many people have to carry you once you start smoking fucking brown?”

When I came to the colony my life was already destroyed. I started injecting pain killers and taking tablets that help people sleep. Now I don’t have anything, even my father is dead because I am taking drugs. He kept saying to me, stop, stop or you will die. When he was dying, I couldn’t help him because I was in jail.

My family... we had a lot of money before and too much gold. The whole day I would move around and make thousands of rupees from clients. But there are so many bad people around. They try to get me to take drugs and sell drugs to other people. Now, if I choose drugs and drink, I’m able to make money. If I don’t, then it is difficult to make anything. But once I get drunk, I start doing wrong things. The reason I go for crime is because I’m a poor person.

My family and caste members also want things like video cameras and mobile phones. I get drunk and whatever they want, I get it. I steal from tourists and take the things back to the colony for my family and when my relatives see them they say, I want that. They say if you don’t give me this, then you should give me

money instead. I don't have money, so I go and steal more. I want to leave this, but these people keep asking me to do crime. People always get me in trouble. They are jealous, Why? I don't know. I felt successful and rich before. I had everything”.

Vijay's narrative begins to provide us with important insights into the increasing struggle and confusion in the life of an addict. His everyday lived experiences also highlight that although people may not have addicts in their own households, they run an increased risk of having their lives negatively impacted upon because of a 'culture of criminal behaviour'. Addiction, associated with drug dependency in particular, simultaneously creates incapacity and desperation. Thereby, in an already poor community, high levels of localised criminal activity has developed, relating to property and people, in terms of vandalism, theft, pickpocketing and mugging. In this way, family, but also wider community impacts, cannot be underestimated in understanding the story of incapacity in the colony.

Another important aspect of substance misuse, which Vijay highlights, is the role of corruption among medical store staff and rent-seeking police officers in helping addicts access clinical drugs, particularly sedatives in injection or tablet form, normally only available on prescription. Vijay uses Calmpose, an anti-anxiety drug sold in 10ml vials, costing 45₹, which can be injected directly into the skin. He also uses Nitrovet, known locally as Number Ten, a tablet designed to treat insomnia which can be purchased for 1 or 2₹ each. Vijay describes some of what he has experienced and highlights the dangers associated with taking Number Tens:

“If you take one and you are not ill, then they make you feel high. If you take another one, you feel more drunk. After that you can't feel any pain. If people then beat me, no pain is possible and I am comfortable. Only slowly after some time will the pain come, as the tablets stop working. People have told me that they have taken five or six together and that if you take ten, you will die.

One of my caste members jumped off the roof of a block of flats in the colony. He thought he would feel no pain after taking these tablets, but he killed himself. In Delhi this is the most dangerous tablet and you have to have a prescription from

a doctor. But a corrupt medical store beside the colony sells it, even to children. This is very illegal, but the police take money from the medical store people and allow it to continue”.

These drugs are increasingly attractive because they are much cheaper than heroin and cocaine (Basu et al., 2012). However, due to the ‘culture of corruption’, it is also the case that they are more readily available, for an extra 5₹ a time, only a street away from the colony.

From these narratives we might regard the ill effects of substance misuse and dependency as inevitable. Yet according to the literature, people learn about getting drunk, being ‘stoned’ or getting ‘high’, depending on what society and community allow (Gladwell, 2010). The evidence presented here shows that Bhatu people’s drinking and drug taking cultures both encourage and constrain use. In these ways, social problems are given a cultural dimension in that we are happy to idealise India as a ‘dry’ or ‘abstaining’ culture and then moralise, medicalise and legalise the behaviour of those falling short (Benegal, 2005).

However, in reality, there has been a widespread attitudinal shift to greater normalisation of alcohol and drug use among men, which is growing notably among women, too (Grover et al., 2005, Satyanarayana et al., 2010). Yet, we remain reluctant to provide positive examples of how to drink and reduce the harmful effects of habit-forming behaviour (Gladwell, 2010). The section which follows, discusses the ‘cultures of rehabilitation’, which are evident in the colony for managing substance misuse and dependency.

8.4 Cultures of rehabilitation: The significance of family and village life

During my research, I documented several common approaches associated with rehabilitation among Bhatu people in the colony. As the literature highlights, and Roshni earlier testifies, cultural practices, such as shaming, are important tools in managing drinking and drug taking. However, family members, particularly younger females of a household, will also take it upon themselves to actively help their brothers and fathers through fasting. Maya is 20, unmarried, uneducated and still living in her natal home. In her life-story narrative, she tells me about the respect she has for her brother and provides some insight into the role she feels she is playing in his recovery from drug dependency:

“We have a lot of tension in our house because my father is an alcoholic and my elder brother, Sameer, takes drugs. My elder brother loves me a lot and cares about me the most. I have learned the most in my life from him. That is why I did a fast for sixteen days and I prayed for him, too, to help him. All the girls in the house kept the fast and we ate only one meal every day, in the evening. We couldn’t eat garlic, tomato, onion or chilli. After sixteen days we prepared a feast for nine young unmarried boys in our family. Now my brother has stopped taking drugs and returned to work”.

Maya’s and Sameer’s mother, Kumla, first drew my attention to the increased incapacity of earning members in this household during the census phase of research. She told me about her alcoholic husband, but also her increasing worry over the worsening physical and psychological health of her eldest son:

“My husband is an alcoholic and he only works to keep himself in drink and contributes nothing to the house. If I try to stop him or say something to him, he says that it’s like a medicine. My eldest son injects drugs. I don’t like men who are addicted to drugs; whoever is, is always poor. He started to sleep a lot; he started being the last to get up. He started eating a lot, but never put on weight. I am concerned that he has more recently begun to lose a lot of weight and that he sometimes doesn’t go for work. When he does go, he doesn’t give the full money to the family, sometimes he gives nothing.

He earned well before, but I didn’t know the type of company he was keeping and that he was on drugs. But people began to see him and they would tell me. In the beginning, I didn’t believe them because I had faith in my son. But soon I came to know the truth. He used to take smack before and it cost 100₹ per packet, now he takes injections which cost 60₹ each. He takes one in the morning, then leaves the house and after that I don’t know what he does. He still goes for work because it doesn’t seem to matter how high he gets, he can still speak English. When he has money he spends more than half his earnings on drugs and when he has no money he roams around like a madman. Others, who are addicted like this start stealing and selling things from their houses, but Sameer hasn’t done this.

Our family isn't happy with Sameer, even his grandmother asks him to stop taking drugs and he makes his promises and then breaks them because he is addicted now. His nervous system is starting to break down, he won't do anything on his own to get better and he just keeps moving the area of his body in which he injects. I feel we only have two options now, either we put him in rehabilitation for a long time or we move to Rajasthan because there are no drugs available there".

As Kumla highlights, alcohol and drug taking are ways in which men in crisis, from both the older and younger generation, often in the same household, are 'self-medicating'. She also highlights, in keeping with Roshni, that these habit-forming behaviours are neither effectively managed nor stopped through cultural practices such as shaming and fasting. However, Kumla, like Roshni, highlights the fact that there are a number of other options at their disposal, including more formal medical and legislative approaches to rehabilitation. For example, Sunil attempted to electrocute himself after finding himself unable to cope with drug dependency in jail. In his narrative, he provides a little insight into the role that this type of institutional support played in his rehabilitation:

"While in jail, they took me to the hospital and treated me; gave me medicine that helped me get better. In jail they also gave me some work to do and quickly I felt well. That was ten or twelve years ago now and I have been drug-free ever since. They're not important anymore. I'm what you could call a social drinker; drink was never such a big problem for me. My dream now is to have a wife and family. My brothers and sisters would feel so happy to see me get married and I want to make them happy. I want to go back to Chittori, make a nice house there and continue to go to my shop in the village where I shine shoes. I am a poor man, but you can be big from the heart, even when your conditions are poor".

Sunil, in keeping with Bimla, highlights the importance of hospital treatment and having something to do in turning addicts' lives around. Sunil also highlights the importance of having a nice home and both a working and family life in staying drug-free. However, Sunil also highlights another significant positive influence on his life. While he may continue to smoke heavily and still have days of drunkenness, for the most part, he lives a quiet life in the

village. He returned to Rajasthan to live when the *jhuggies* were demolished, but has continued to visit Delhi regularly.

As many other respondents from the Bhatu community testified, and in keeping with the ideas Kumla has about what can help her son, the change of environment, people and habits have been central to Sunil's rehabilitation journey; allowing him to build a life beyond being controlled by dependency. There are far tighter patterns of daily life and expectations in the village. For example, nights are drawn in quicker because there is little or no street lighting after eight o'clock in the evening and people go to bed early. Ideas of right and wrong are much more rigorously policed by family and community members because there are fewer strangers in their world, and in many cases there is less distance between home and the place of work, compared with that experienced with city living. Moreover, ancestral ties to both people and place in Rajasthan, as mentioned in Chapter Five, are again highlighted in the idea that there is separateness in active addiction and the possibility of belonging in recovery (Magee, 2005). Returning to the village, for a drying out period, is therefore, by far the most used and most successful cultural practice associated with sustained rehabilitation.

Serial incarceration in jail, may be common as a way of drying out, but is less successful in leading to long-term recovery. As people like Roshni and Vijay highlight, such sentences may follow being arrested by the police for criminal activity, as in Sunil's case, or being taken by family members to the police station and having them arrested and locked up, as in Vijay's case. As Sunil's everyday life testifies, such experiences can be a turning point in their lives. However, as Vijay's narrative highlights, jail can turn boys bad and access to drugs does not have to stop in such places if you have the right contacts and money. He explains:

"I've been in jail twenty-three times in my life. Sometimes I would get myself arrested or my mother would put me so that I could stop drugs and crime. This gives you fifteen days without pollution and you feel better. But it's not a good environment, people turn bad, they threaten you with blades and ask you to give them money or they will cut you. But it's not just poor people in jail, some of the biggest politicians and officers are in there and they can get every type of drug because they are rich".

As highlighted in Chapter Seven, periods of incarceration also take their toll on remaining family members because stress and spiralling indebtedness often follow. Earnings stop when a sentence starts and visiting rights while loved ones are in jail, and bail if they want them out early, all drain already overstretched budgets. Economic indebtedness is an important barrier to better life and mobility in the colony and is discussed in detail later in this chapter. For now, I want to focus on the role of specialist drug rehabilitation centres in supporting people in the colony.

Kumla mentions these institutions in her narrative, which offer individuals programmes over a period of weeks or months and provide much-needed support to families once they re-enter the outside world. During retreat, people are given medicinal treatments and the opportunity to practise yoga and other techniques for relaxation, in the hope of helping them cope with the physical effects of withdrawal. They are also taught meditation techniques to give them practical ways of helping them deal with stress. In addition, they are given drug awareness and health education, are able to eat well and encouraged to learn the value of living and staying clean. However, in her narrative, Vijay's mother, Roshni, talks about making such an active investment in helping her son recover and the helplessness she still feels to change things:

“Before, I put my son in a rehabilitation clinic for four months at the cost of 1,000₹ per month. But again, when he came back home, the same story was repeated: he takes a lot of drugs and then steals, his family has no food, no clothes. You still end up with a very bad life. I feel very bad that we can't do anything. I feel the only way it could be handled is if his entire blood was replaced in his body, otherwise nothing will change. It's really better to die than to be on smack because it will be a problem over your whole lifetime”.

As Roshni highlights, the expense of such retreats and treatments makes access to these clinics either impossible or all too short-lived. Moreover, once out of such places, recovering addicts are drawn into the same old environments with the same problems, people and habits, where any positive effects of rehabilitation and support are quickly undone and destroyed.

This means the majority of addicts and their families in the colony are engaged in an ongoing battle, which all too often involves constant comings and goings between village and city life or ends in tragedy because of increasing ill health and suicide. From such narratives, we learn that the matter of incapacity through such habit-forming behaviours is complex. For one thing, the standards the Bhatu community has set for its men neither reassure them nor enhance their well-being. They generate insecurity and chronic doubt about being and doing enough as men. Moreover, Bhatu boys' journeys into adulthood are traumatic and emotionally isolating, providing no space for adaptation to changing times, circumstances and expectations.

In the section which follows, I look at the way in which the ill health and death of increasingly younger male earners means that increasing numbers of girls and women are forced into supplementary or full earning roles. This generates high levels of tension and in many cases leads to ill-treatment and neglect, which women seek to manage through estrangement from their husbands and marital homes.

8.5 Men's incapacity and women's marital-home estrangement

Family involvement and community support are essential elements, not only in arranging a marriage, but for the long-term success of a marriage. On the third day after *goana*, a daughter-in-law negotiates with the members of her marital household when she can next return to her natal household to visit. Out of this negotiation comes an interesting, but complex, dynamic between a daughter-in-law and her natal and marital family. Kavita, provides important insights into this dynamic. Ultimately, the choices couples make with regard to an arranged or love marriage, have very different consequences, particularly for women, in terms of their rights to marital home residency and access to natal home support, should things go wrong in the future:

“In preparation for marriage, you have all this talk at the start about who people are, who families are. Then slowly, six months after you have started your own family, you understand the reality. It's too late then. I wanted to avoid this. I took a year with my boyfriend to discuss everything, then decided I wanted to go for marriage. I know everything and can be comfortable. I know five or ten years

after I will have no surprises. However, with an arranged marriage your relationship with your parents is maintained and if anything goes wrong, it means you can always return to your natal home. The marriage is approved by your parents, so it's easier to go back. With a love marriage, it becomes the girl's responsibility and there is less chance of support. You have to bear the cost, take responsibility and take care of any problems yourself".

Despite the community ideal that married women should live in their marital homes, the natal home is central to the widespread practice of managing marital problems through estrangement. In such cases, a woman's return to her natal home is a temporary, but all too common feature, of married life in the colony. However, this temporariness is an extremely emotive and complex issue given the strength of the ideal of patrilocal residency after marriage. Sangita provides important insight here into the time-bound nature of natal home residency from her own experiences as a married daughter with children:

"In my community divorce doesn't happen. I have lived in my mother's place for five to ten years, but after this I can be sent back to my marital home. If a daughter returns to her natal home for a long time, then it becomes a problem. They can feed you, but they want you out at some point. Now my mother is ill, I have no father and I am earning, so my natal home doesn't lose respect. But some people feel jealous that parents can take a daughter back. But when parents see that the marital home treats their daughter badly, they will take her back. Parents are not embarrassed by the return of a daughter, it doesn't matter.

For now, I live with my mother, it's important, otherwise who will take care of her? But let's see for how long, I have no guaranteed time. If I had a son, however, things would be different. I can't live alone with two daughters, this is the problem. I am able to take care of myself and I could live like this, but I have to return to my marital home because I want to try for more children. If I had another son, that would survive, then I could live without my husband. Daughters move away, but sons will stay with me. But it can happen either way; it depends if the husband likes his mother better or his wife. That is the chance you have to take. You can force a boy to take you in, but not a girl".

Sangita is clearly pushed away from her marital home due to the ill-treatment she experiences at the hands of her alcoholic husband. Yet, she is also clearly pulled back by the cultural expectation that she should live with him in her marital home as well as her own desire to have a son. However, regardless of the prevailing ideals, there is evidence that the younger generation of women are increasingly taking matters into their own hands. They are challenging cultural norms through establishing themselves in nuclear households within their natal community. Pooja narrates the details of her own suffering and reveals a very different dynamic in the relationship between her and her natal and marital houses:

“My mother-in-law said that she doesn’t mind whether her sons earn or not, the most important thing for her is that they live with her. She used to go throughout the village, calling out to people and shining and repairing shoes in the street and in their houses. She never took money because in twelve months all different crops are grown. She would say: Whatever you have, I will take, because we are poor. Her sons have grown up like this and know only this way of life. My husband does the work of shoe polish and repair. He went to work in the morning and came back in the evening at eight o’clock and made 20, 30 or 40₹ and used it to buy alcohol”.

Pooja’s educated perspective and city-based, highly monetised upbringing is clearly very different from her husband’s and becomes a growing cause for concern, particularly when it comes to the life of their young daughter:

“I returned to Delhi to my parent’s house so that my daughter could be born there and then went back to Rajasthan after her birth. After a few months, my daughter developed a very high fever. I knew there was a hospital not too far away and that they give medicines for 50 or 60₹, but I couldn’t even afford to reach that place. While living with my husband in Rajasthan, I didn’t even have 10₹. My daughter’s fever reached one hundred and three, I kept on waiting and thinking about how I could go and get medicine. I asked my mother-in-law and she also said that she didn’t have any money. She told me to fill a utensil with grains and go to the shopkeeper. He will give you oil, vegetables, whatever we need, in exchange for that. What will I do with that oil, food? My daughter was

seriously ill! My mother-in-law said to me that I had had a daughter and that she was ill because I hadn't stayed with them for the birth and hadn't done the proper rituals.

In the evening my husband came home after drinking alcohol and slept. I kept crying, I tried to wake him and tell him that our daughter is ill. I asked him for 20₹ so that I could get medicine for her. He just told me that there was no need to get medicine. She will be cured without any. I couldn't sleep the whole night. In the morning I went to my neighbour, she is my cousin, and asked if she could give me 50₹ and that I would send her the money back from Delhi. I bought medicine for my daughter. Within two days I called my brother and asked him to come and take me and my daughter away from here. I told them that somehow I have managed to live here for two to three months, but now I don't feel well and can't live here anymore.

I packed my things and my brother came and took me and my daughter to Delhi. I told my mother that my husband is an alcoholic and that I will no longer live in my marital home because they beat me and neglect my daughter. I will continue to stay with my husband only if he comes to live here with us in Delhi. I told my mother and brothers that I wouldn't make them feel ashamed. I will do all that I can here and not give them any chance to see me make a mistake. Mother said OK, you can stay here, but you can't live with me. You have to get a separate house or retail space. I then started my own work. Now my husband is here, he tries to do shoe shining. He still drinks, but I have no tension in my mind if he earns or not".

In getting her natal home onside, Pooja has been able, not only to challenge, but to change the norm of partilocal residence practised in the community. In doing so, she has also been able to set up her own household and maintain financial independence from her husband, as well as both her marital and natal households.

Women in the colony also rely on their natal households and communities when it comes to coping with their lives after widowhood. In such cases, many women are reminded that

patrilocal patterns of residence are associated with patrilineal patterns of inheritance. In these circumstances, widowed women often struggle to hold on to their children because they have no custodial claims to or power over them, particularly when they are boys. The marital household is interested in and free to claim them, because the parents' investment in their children is understood to have incurred a debt for them. Moreover, the children will become future earners.

Suman, 29 years old, is educated up to 2nd class and a mother of three growing children. She narrates her harrowing story of widowhood experiences, the way her marital household put her life in danger, threatened to separate her from her children for good and how she formulated an escape plan that worked:

“I had my baby in my belly for seven months when my husband passed away. He built a separate room for us next door to his parents and I continued to live there with my children when he died. Then my marital home cut off my electricity and I had to use candles for daily living. They left live wires in a dangerous way in the hope I would electrocute myself. They treated me badly, beat me repeatedly and asked me to leave. I didn't know, but my brother-in-law told me of the plans my marital home was making to burn me and kill me and that my children would stay with them in the village. He advised me to leave. I told him I didn't know what to do, how could I leave the village? He said take this 500₹ and go.

My mother-in-law wanted my house for my husband's younger brother and his new wife. I knew secretly that I now had some money, but how could I leave the village without my children, who will look after them? I knew if I left them, I wouldn't be coming back again in my life. I had to try to do something. I had a new baby boy of fifteen days, he was very sweet, another boy of 4 years and a girl of 2 years. I said to my mother-in-law; I am going to my natal home in Delhi. She believed I would leave the children with her.

My oldest boy could understand, so I said to him; Leave the house to go to school as normal once I have gone. But don't go to school, go and hide in the fields quietly and wait for me. I also asked him not to tell anyone. He said: OK,

mummy. I continued to do all my work and slowly made my plan to leave. Then I went to get the bus. There was one bus going to Jaipur and one to Delhi. So I sat on the Jaipur bus. I was frightened to tell the driver, but I said: Sir, I have been told to leave, but I don't have my children with me, they are in the fields. What can I do? He said: It doesn't matter, you have told me everything, what time can your children come? The driver understood and wanted to help me.

I didn't know, but as I was travelling on the bus to Jaipur with my children, the members of my marital home were searching the buses to Delhi. When I reached Jaipur, I wanted to go to Delhi, but I had no ticket and only a little money left from the 500₹. The bus driver who had taken me from the village explained to the new driver that I was a very sad lady, that my husband had just died and that I was taking my children to Delhi. He agreed to take the little money I had and we were able to travel, arriving late in the night”.

Suman's dramatic departure from her marital home led to her establishing her own household in the colony close to her natal household. As we see from the cases of Sangita, Pooja and Suman, women have very different experiences and therefore vary considerably in the degree and type of support they need from their natal household. Whether related to estrangement or widowhood, married women's patterns of residency are challenging and changing the cultural norm of partilocal residence upheld as the ideal in the community.

In these ways, the crisis of masculinity is in many cases brought about by the overturning of gender roles, expectations and entitlements. However, in these circumstances women's desperation gets interpreted as empowerment. This threatens men's positions of power and privilege, which they achieve by meeting culturally sanctioned standards and responsibilities (Brooks, 2010, Connell, 2005). Moreover, female Bhatu's ever-increasing role in earning, as well as their marital estrangement and widowhood, do not necessarily stave off economic hardship and spiralling debt in the colony.

In the section which follows, I uncover the workings of indebtedness in relation to the ways in which money is managed in everyday life. It shows that economic hardship is brought about by irregular or reduced earnings due to insecure pathways into earning, or increased ill

health and incapacity associated with substance misuse and dependency. Moreover, debt often accumulates and spirals as a result of the rising costs of living or family and community expectations associated with marriage. In such circumstances, people turn to demanding, high interest, community-based saving and borrowing schemes, which have a profound impact on people's ability to attain and maintain a better life, let alone pursue mobility.

8.6 Economic indebtedness: Money management in everyday life

Economic indebtedness is in many cases the condition into which people in the research community have been born and live out their lives. Parents tend to manage their family's basic needs, such as food and cooking fuel, on a day-to-day basis. However, in many cases they are unable to do anything else. They do not have enough regular income, which they associate with not being educated, not having work or enough regular work due to seasonality, illegality or not having a high enough rate of pay. These are particularly hard felt where women are estranged from their husbands and marital homes and where illness, incapacity and death reduce the number of earning members in the household or remove them altogether.

The rising costs of everyday items, including travel expenses, are regularly mentioned in narratives. Vinod talks about rising prices related to the difficulty in buying and selling his stock in order to make money:

“Everything is quickly very expensive to buy, flour is now 16₹ per kg, it was 14₹ before. I bought vegetable oil yesterday and it was 22₹ for 250grams. That has gone up 5₹. Sugar is now between 60 and 70₹ per kilogram and when I want to make tea I buy the 25gram packet of tea leaves for 5₹, but it's a very small amount. When I want to go on the bus it costs 25₹ to go to the centre of Delhi. It used to be 15₹, but since they put the air conditioned style of bus on the routes, it's much more expensive and they don't even put the air conditioning on.

The cost of buying my stock of maps and charts is also going up, especially in Delhi. I now pay 4.5₹ per small chart. Those with animals, birds and fruits are 10₹ each and the plastic three-foot maps are 40₹ each. I have to make at least

100₹ for my days work, but if I don't have good luck then I reduce the price of my stock to try and sell more. But people in Delhi don't even want to give me cost price, let alone enough to cover travel and food and drink expenses and make a profit. Once the election comes it will be more expensive I believe. But what can you do? Poor people can't do anything, it's all in the hands of the government".

More recently, these expenses have started to include regular monthly electricity bills and will include water bills by winter 2012, the point by which the JB plans to finally complete the long-awaited drinking water supply to the flats in the colony. In these ways, everyday needs, in themselves, regularly get Bhatu people into financial difficulty, where they have to borrow money from family members and neighbours or rely on them for food.

However, for an increasing number of households, everyday expenses include money for the management of one or more household member's alcohol or drug dependency. Sano, a 17-year-old mother, is estranged from her husband who is incapacitated by alcohol and drug misuse. During her life-story narrative, she talks about the nature of her struggle while trying to raise her 4-month-old baby:

"My husband spends a lot of money on drink and drugs. He always wants to hang around and move around with friends, indulging in food and drink. He lives the life he wants to. He does tourist guiding work, but he uses the money for his addiction. I haven't seen any money. I have to take care of myself and my child by going for work and my father also helps. The problem keeps getting worse because if he doesn't manage work then he goes to the office he works for and gets an advance. If he doesn't get money there, he will ask his brothers, sister or mother for money. He keeps borrowing, too, there is now too much money owed, along with the interest, which is always increasing. Now he doesn't have the courage to work because he could never get rid of the debts, they are just too much".

The more time that passes in such hand to mouth circumstances, worsened by spiralling indebtedness, the higher the likelihood that women will start to exchange relying on family and neighbours for borrowing money from interest charging money lenders in order to meet

their everyday basic needs, keep their husband's dependencies under control and meet their longer term obligations. Santro is a working mother of three. She talks about her experiences of managing everyday expenses and coping with the demands of her often estranged husband's drug dependency:

"I am a rag picker; I pick polythene and make 50, 60 or 70₹ in a day. With this I feed my children, but sometimes my husband comes asking for money for drugs. When he knew that I was working, he started to demand more money. He said that now I am going to work, I should give the money I earn to him for drugs, otherwise I shouldn't go for work. I said to him; from where should I get money? I make this money for the children. He sometimes earns, but just spends it on drugs. He also borrows money from people, takes loans on interest and steals so that he can buy drugs.

He often doesn't come home for two or three months at a time. When he does come back it's always to take money from me because he has no money to buy drugs or he's in trouble with debt. If I don't give him money, then he beats me and the children, so sometimes I have to give him money. He has also burned the bed many times and threw out all my utensils. Where it's possible, I then also take a loan on interest. I have to do this, what else can I do? If this is written in my fortunes, then I have to bear it".

As Sano and Santro show, in a bid to cope, they are forced to take on the earning role, taking on jobs such as recycling, shoe shining, poster selling and begging, where the capacity to earn is limited. In the meantime, they also face their own mounting debts as well as their husbands'. As if this was not enough, many of these women are left widowed and face meeting funeral expenses, often without the help of his family members. Roshni talks about the particular nature of the circumstances she faced on the death of her husband, following his long term drug dependency:

"I didn't even have the money for wood for his funeral. I had to take a loan of 5,000₹ to pay for this. I couldn't ask for anyone's help because before we had so

much money, gold and silver when we were selling smack that people would have talked badly about us, it wouldn't have looked good".

The issue of honour is commonly raised with regard to the changing roles, expectations and entitlements of women, and this is particularly the case when women are estranged from their husbands or widowed. Naina talks about her drive to earn, reduce her indebtedness and meet her responsibilities. However, she also tells me about the ways her endeavours are met with disapproval:

"My caste people are very dirty and they disrespect me. I have a lot of debt and I'm the only one taking care of my family, coping when they are sick, struggling to make sure they all go and stay in school. But people don't see this. When I go for work, they ask me where I'm going. They make comments about me not doing good work and ask me why I'm coming home so late. When I take a bath everyday and put on my nice clothes, or buy new clothes, this stirs things up, too, and causes gossip and teasing. If my husband was here, I wouldn't have the strain of having people talk to me and treat me like this. The presence of a man is very important in this community, even when he's not a good husband or father. Now, even when I'm forced to take some help from someone, I'm seen to be making a mistake".

Women like Naina face considerable economic hardship and are forced to make painful trade-offs between their own happiness and being a mother. Moreover, despite their achievement in taking on and meeting both caring and earning responsibilities and their commitment to paying off their debts and giving their children a better future, they are forced to face the additional burden of gossip and accusations about their moral character.

However, it is not only wives like Sano, Santro, Roshni and Naina, who have to take on the financial burden of incapacitated earners, it is often sons. For example, an elder son like Subhash has a long history, and therefore considerable experience, of taking on the earning role and financial burden for an incapacitated father. In his case, this is associated with getting his remaining two sisters married off, as well as striving to meet his own responsibilities now that he is a husband and father himself:

“In my memory, I know I was going for work at 7 or 8 years of age and my father was staying at home. I felt angry because I didn’t make this decision. I had to go with my mother to work and I didn’t want to. I liked to play with other children, go to school. I was small and wanted to do what the other children were doing. But I wasn’t doing the same. When I remember back in my life, I feel worse now than I did at the time. Especially when I see my father still drinking, it reminds me of this time and I feel the anger growing inside me.

He has never been a good father. He made children and then told us to go out begging on the street. If you don’t look after your children, then why did you make them? I don’t like this kind of thing. My father never took responsibility. I’m working hard to pay for his debts that just keep getting higher. Sometimes my father goes for work, but for him going to work has always depended on his mood and when he does work, he never gives the money he makes to the family”.

Subhash’s narrative shows the ways in which social and economic experiences of indebtedness are interlinked in everyday life. He also provides important insight into the resentment that can grow because of the injustice involved in being obedient on the one hand and obligated on the other. Like Subhash, Vinod is an elder brother, responsible for meeting the accumulating costs for his sister’s marriage:

“Everything is so expensive, 30,000₹ for food, including palak paneer, chicken, rice and nan, and you pay 6,000₹ more for four people to go to the market, get the food and clean, prepare and cook it. When I heard this I got scared, but slowly I will look for cheaper people. But maybe we will need to spend between 2 and 3 lakh rupees. But it doesn’t matter. The most important thing is that my sister gets married, that everyone is happy and has good tasty food to eat and that we give good things to my sister to take with her to her marital home”.

The burden of indebtedness associated with marriage is particularly hard felt by parents with daughters. Vinod’s narrative provides us with evidence of the prevailing mindset; marriage costs for daughters escalate to at least double that of sons, because in addition to the ceremony, there is the cost of accumulating the dowry, which must accompany a new bride to

her marital home. However, at the level of experience, this mindset hides some contradictory realities. For example, equally high costs are associated with the marriage of sons because suitable accommodation needs to be provided for them and their new wives. Vinod observes:

“The cost of a room in the colony is rising and rising. For the first floor you now have to pay a minimum of 2.6 lakh rupees. This will only increase once the new water supply is connected”.

Moreover, such narratives do not acknowledge the substantial part of the expense of dowry which is borne by clan households. In other words, some of the expenditure on a daughter's marriage is shared. This, however, also means that, in turn, households are expected to make a contribution to other daughters' marriages within the same clan.

Nevertheless, the extent of economic hardship and spiralling debt and the seriousness with which family and community expectations must be met, means that people are forced to rely on a number of interlinked approaches to saving and borrowing, designed to help them meet the expenses of their children's marriages. In the section which follows, I discuss these important aspects of indebtedness and highlight the ways in which they create barriers for people in their pursuit of better life and mobility.

8.7 Economic indebtedness: Longer-term saving and borrowing practices

If people have not already started on the slippery slope of spiralling debt, their approach to saving and their reliance on interest-bearing loans will lead them to this path. Those wishing to borrow money do so from family, and extend their search to patrilineage, clan and caste members in Delhi and as far as Rajasthan. Anil talks about the circumstances which led to him becoming a money lender in the colony:

“I have felt comfortable only once in my life; we collected money and put it every month into the committee, along with another one hundred people. At that time, I was lucky; my name came up in the draw so I felt comfortable. For ten to twenty days I didn't go for work and I had lakhs of rupees in my home. I saw this for the first time in my home. I started giving it on loan to people on interest at 5 percent.

Then they started giving me back the interest and I was able to live on this. There is one man in the colony, I gave him 10,000₹ at the time of his marriage. He was very happy. After four years and six months he gave me back a total of 36,000₹’.

Those borrowing in the city, often from people like Anil, face ever higher levels of interest these days; anything between 5 and 20 percent. For example, Vinod borrowed money from a clan member for the purpose of getting his mother out of jail. He explains:

“I was in a very bad condition, it was the beginning of the hot season and work wasn’t going well. In the end, I had to borrow money with interest to pay solicitor and court fees and raise enough money to get my mother out of jail. I borrowed 20,000₹ altogether and had to pay 2,000₹ for every month in interest until I was finally able to pay off the 20,000₹ I borrowed. In the end it took me ten months and cost me another 20,000₹’.

Many people return to their relatives or to clan and caste money lenders in the villages, where they are able to borrow at between 2 and 4 percent interest. Again, Vinod provides valuable insights here, this time in terms of his mother’s travels to Rajasthan, in order to secure enough money to meet expenses associated with his sister’s marriage:

“My mother travelled for two to three days in Rajasthan to take 1 lakh rupees at no more than 5 percent interest. She went to a lot of places and spoke to many people, but she only managed to get 50,000₹. Then she needed to travel further south, as she knows a few caste members there, who are lenders. However, they wouldn’t give her anything. In the end, it was only possible for her to arrange 30,000₹ more. She managed to get it from a Bhatu family in a village close to her mother’s village in Rajasthan. But they have asked for a lot of interest: 4 percent, which means in one month we will have to pay 3,200₹, plus the interest for the 50,000₹ on top of that’.

In some cases, people also borrow money from the village and lend to clan members in the colony as a way of earning a regular income. Elaichi, aged 82 with failing health, catches my attention as she sits crossed legged on her *charpai*, a woven bed;

“Oi! Eh!... I have a little business to do with you. I want you to invest some money in my lending work. I get money in the village, but I can't go to Rajasthan. My health isn't so good these days. Can you give me 25,000₹? I want to lend it to a man in the colony who has asked for my help. I will pay you the money back with interest. I make good money. You will make good money”.

What is interesting to note here, is the continuum again between village and city living, where strategies for borrowing and lending are easily incorporated into the endless comings and goings between places. Where the distance, in itself, offers the possibility to negotiate better terms and provides the opportunity to earn a very welcome income.

As Anil's narrative at the opening of this section shows, he had been putting money regularly into a saving scheme referred to locally as a committee. A number of committees are running in the colony at any one time, administered by different 'big men', and involving anything from thirty to one hundred people. The majority of people wanting to save using these community schemes are required to make payments averaging 3,000₹ per month. Where payments are late, they are fined by the day at a cost of 5₹ extra for every 100₹ of payment due. So a late payment of 3,000₹ will attract an extra 150₹ per day.

From my observations in the colony, people on average only make 100₹ per day and I have seen them forced, therefore, to prioritise payments to the committee, before putting food in their stomachs. Roshni is one example, and in her narrative she talks about the unrelenting burden of a commitment once it is running, and the impact this has on her everyday life:

“We all give money to the person who takes responsibility; the big man. In one month we pay 3,000₹. They keep it and then make a draw, for example we put the name of our children in the plate and the name that is chosen gets the 1 lakh rupees for that month. Even after you have taken your money, you still have to keep making the payments until everyone in the committee has taken their money. If you are late in giving your payment beyond a certain time on a certain day of the month, then you have to pay 5₹ extra per day. So this can build up to a lot of interest. You have to do this, so people who put money into the committee need to already have a good income. You have to find 100₹ per day for this, and for many

people 100₹ is all they will earn for a full day of work. So it's a lot of money when you think about it. Once you start giving you have to do this. It causes a lot of problems for a lot of families who contribute to this".

Saving and borrowing practices are very important in people's lives and are often closely interlinked. For example, in his narrative, Vinod talks about the way in which evidence of saving is an important basis for securing access to borrowing, as well as an important source of funds for paying the money back:

"There is a committee for 2 lakh rupees starting soon, asking for 6,000₹ per month. I will pay money into this and use it to guarantee a further loan. Then when it opens, I will pay all the money back to the lenders. The reason why my mother couldn't get more money is because we have nothing at the moment to give as a guarantee. Before they lend money people always ask, how will you pay it back? If we had a committee coming out, then they would have given us the money straight away".

The extent to which people feel compelled to save, the seriousness with which people value borrowing schemes and the hardship they create, are directly reflective of the burden they feel to meet responsibilities such as getting their children married. However, in many cases, families are often anxiously caught between their less than successful endeavours to search for lenders and secure loans that will allow them to accumulate the money they need and the consequences of not meeting community expectations. Vinod explains:

"We will have to try to get some more money because what we have isn't enough. We will have to find someone here in Delhi to lend us more money, but the interest is much higher. I think I am poor, but I know what the Bhatu people are like; I have to have everything, because if not, then the marital family will treat my sister badly. They will say why have you not given this, or that: mangal sutra, payal, fridge, cooler, TV, double bed. Slowly God will be with me and everything will be OK, he will do everything without tension. If I can just get my sister married, then I will be very happy".

However, experiences of further hardship can also result, even when people are able to provide the security for payment, which Vinod's family currently lacks. For example, Sunardy is a 60-year-old map seller and has lived in her natal home, estranged from her husband for forty years. Their marriage had never been consummated. During her life-story narrative, she talks about the ways in which her existing debt is compounded by having to borrow so that she can earn in order to keep up the payments to the committee:

"I have one room, but it's giving me a lot of pain and trouble. My brother wanted to do the marriage of his daughter, so I took a loan of 15,000₹ on interest. I gave my papers for my house as security for the money and gave the money to my brother. But I have had to pay the interest at 5 percent and this is taking too long. Now I have to pay back between 40 and 50,000₹ to stop the interest and get my papers back. This is a big problem, but what can you do? I need the money from the committee, it will come out soon.

But first I need 5,000₹ so that I can buy a stock of maps to sell outside Delhi. If I don't have the money, I take a loan on interest in order to buy stock. If you don't have money for stock, then you can't sell. If you don't have a good stock, then people tend not to be so interested to look and you lose the chance to sell. If you can't sell, then you can't pay the committee. Because I have committee, the money I make goes to this. But sometimes I can't pay, so they say you can give double the next month, but they will also charge interest. We have a lot of tension, a lot of problems, but we need to be able to save the money".

From these narratives, we are able to learn about the ways in which indebtedness can accumulate, spiral and become cyclical in everyday life. Moreover, we learn that such circumstances make it hard for people to maintain the conditions for life to continue, let alone pursue a better life.

8.8 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to look at what can be learned from everyday life about incapacity associated with habit-forming behaviours and economic indebtedness resulting

from everyday money management and longer term saving and borrowing schemes. I have shown that already insecure household circumstances are made all the more desperate as male earning members drain earnings, eventually stop earning all together and become increasingly ill and die at an ever younger age as a result of their substance misuse and dependency. As earnings are reduced and often disappear, the cost of living keeps rising, families continue growing and responsibilities go on accumulating, leaving households facing considerable economic hardship and spiralling financial indebtedness. By way of managing their worsening situations, female household members increasingly take on a supplementary or sole earning role.

At the same time, many women face marital estrangement or widowhood. In doing so, they may become progressively more independent in their ways of living and earning and raising their children. However, natal homes remain important spaces for negotiating positive change and wider natal community members continue to be central sources of support for women as they pursue better lives. Nevertheless, in desperate, often tragic circumstances, people in general, but women in particular, turn to community saving and borrowing schemes, which impose high interest rates and late payment penalties. In these situations, people are often left unable to create and maintain the conditions for life to continue, let alone pursue a better life. In turn, those having attained a measure of mobility can expect to see their endeavours undone by changing, often worsening circumstances associated with shifting roles, expectations and entitlements, as they move through the lifecourse.

Chapter Nine. Poverty and the Pursuit of Better Life and Mobility.

9.0 Introduction

Over the last decade, India has reported high rates of economic growth and according to the first human development report focusing on the NCR; Delhi is now one of the richest states. Per capita income is at two and a half times that of the national average and income poverty has reduced substantially to numbers deemed “not statistically significant” (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2006:17). Despite Delhi’s development progress as a thriving city-state, the benefits are not experienced equally by all its citizens, in fact, geographical, caste, class and gender inequalities persist.

For example, many Bhatu people, historically labelled a ‘criminal caste’ and identified as a ‘backward class’, remain poverty-stricken, untouched by the government’s economic-driven development planning, policies and practical welfare initiatives. They are left to struggle on their own, in desperate circumstances, to create and maintain the conditions necessary for their lives to continue. Inequality and injustice also remain integral to their daily struggles, given the geographic isolation of the colony, the widespread caste discrimination and bureaucratic, law enforcement and judicial corruption that prevail, despite constitutional provision and legal, institutional frameworks (Chêne, 2009). In order for me to learn about these complex issues and what they mean for Bhatu people’s everyday lived experiences, I designed fieldwork research that would help me answer the following questions: Is moving out of poverty possible? Is achieving and maintaining mobility possible?

9.1 A summary of the main findings

These questions inspired my journey to India, shaped my research and motivated twenty months living within a Bhatu community. The findings show that for the majority, moving out of poverty and achieving and maintaining mobility, defined in terms of larger shifts associated with caste and class, is not possible. This is due to a series of cumulative, interlinked barriers associated with incapacity, illegality and indebtedness. These barriers challenge Bhatu people’s ability to create the conditions for life to continue, let alone pursue better lives and mobility. Yet there is evidence of a more subtle type of mobility, which is

recognised within the community for both men and women, based on pathways of distinction. Embarking on these pathways involves taking on the earning and caring roles and meeting the responsibilities associated with these interlinked forms of life, developing a servile personality and gaining experiential knowledge over time, and thereby achieving the status, respect and honour upon which positions of power are based.

However, there is considerable variation in Bhatu people's experiences, depending on the nature and extent of risk and vulnerability they face in their lives. Poverty in its relative conception is therefore most fitting in reflecting people's understandings and everyday lived experiences. Some highlight their struggle to survive, which they associate with not knowing when they will eat, not having enough to eat when they do or going to bed hungry. Others highlight their struggle to make ends meet, associated with the size and composition of households in terms of age and gender, and not being able to meet everyday expenses due to the rising cost of living and having to pay utility bills. Meanwhile, everyone highlights their struggle to meet family and community expectations when it comes to paying for marriage. In taking such a relational perspective, I have been able to identify the dynamic, often accumulative and spiralling character of poverty, which I go on to summarise below.

9.1.1 Poverty, inequality and injustice

Understandings about who the poor are and what poverty is begin with Bhatu people's own evaluations. They themselves recognise their conditions as an expression of poverty and this recognition is integral to the way they perceive their abilities, their world and their position in it. The problematisation of life in such chronic fashion, led me to conclude that it is difficult for people to orient themselves towards or actively pursue a better life, let alone get out of poverty and stay out. People's everyday endeavours are primarily oriented towards creating the conditions for life to continue. Once you look deeper, past the role of fate, destiny, karma and Gods, in the way people understand and talk about their lives and experiences, you find that they are often prevented in their active pursuits of better life and mobility.

People's circumstances of poverty vary in the degree of enablement and constraint they face, as a result of the inequality and injustice that prevails in India. The relative conception of poverty encourages us to look at constitutional entitlements, people's rights as citizens to

work that earns them a living wage, to access housing, water and electricity and services such as education and healthcare. Access to these, however, is shaped by their low caste, poor position and gendered identity in society, which attract discrimination and corruption. Their everyday pursuit of what they are entitled to is dominated by the geographical distance and expense of commuting to work, and the irregular, competitive and often illegal nature of earning, which attracts rent-seeking. In these ways, Bhatu people are at a much greater risk and vulnerability to poverty.

The extent of risk and vulnerability is shaped by the lack of earning members and the failure of earning members to earn due to ill health and incapacity, which are increasingly associated with substance misuse. Those left supplementing or picking up earning responsibilities are children and women; that is, the younger, less experienced, less able and less valued for their work, due to the limitations in the types of work they can do and the lower earnings these attract. Another important part of the experience of poverty in the colony is missing family members. Men experience this when they become isolated from their families because of substance misuse. Women experience this because they have dependent social status throughout their lives, as daughters and then as wives, and face difficult circumstances when they lose parents or become estranged and widowed.

In such circumstances, poverty is to some extent alleviated for a few by being able to squat in a flat or retail space close to family and community members. However, risk and vulnerability are also shaped by sadness and tension, which people associate with insecure housing, uncomfortable, dirty living conditions and the undesirable character of society in the colony. The increasingly open culture of drinking and drug-taking behaviour also feeds into this, leading to the deterioration of earning members' physical and psychological health. Their desperation increases violence and raises the level of criminal behaviour directed at people and property. In these conditions of financial hardship, physical discomfort and environmental insecurity, people struggle to meet their children's everyday needs, let alone invest in their schooling, fulfil their wishes and dreams, or aspire to get them married well.

From these everyday lived experiences, we are able to gain considerable insight into Bhatu people's inability to attain a basic standard of living. They live with deprivation, the depth and severity of which is dynamic, characterised in terms of the interplay between the

transitory nature of circumstances such as the seasonal fluctuation in income and the changing composition of families due to birth, marriage and death throughout the lifecourse. However, in everyday life, people often attempt to stabilise transitory circumstances by using community-based borrowing and saving schemes. Such practices can lead to the accumulation of debt in the long term, particularly in the presence of drivers of poverty, such as the lack of access to assets and maintainers of poverty, such as the lack of education or geographic and social isolation.

Taken together, the depth, severity and persistence of poverty over time, in turn, leaves people at increased risk and vulnerability to otherwise transitory circumstances, such as illnesses where people die otherwise preventable deaths. As debt spirals, parents offload their deprivation onto children and grandchildren and transmit poverty across one or more generations. In these ways, social, economic and cultural aspects of poverty transmission are interlinked in people's everyday lives and over time create barriers to better life and mobility.

9.1.2 Barriers to mobility: Incapacity, illegality and indebtedness in everyday life

The main findings of the thesis focus on what can be learned about the barriers to better life and mobility from Bhatu people's everyday lived experiences. The barriers, often cumulative and interlinked, are associated with incapacity, illegality and indebtedness. Considerable variation in the patterns of unfolding of these barriers is found in, and between, households overtime. For the purpose of analysis, however, I begin by highlighting the incapacity that comes with a lack of formal educational attainment, such as being unable to apply for and unsuccessful in securing the government jobs, which are understood to be the basis for status and better life in the colony. More specifically, being inexperienced and uninformed in looking for work in any type of formal sector employment and unskilled for the purposes of varying the types of work they could do that would allow them to increase the regularity and amount of money they could earn.

Educational incapacity and indebtedness are intimately linked in people's everyday lives because earning and caring apprenticeships are the main opportunities for learning for children as they prepare for adult life. The household relationships within which these apprenticeships are undertaken are hierarchal and dependent in character and produce the

extreme inequalities of power, which sustain social indebtedness. The inherent inequalities generated by joint-family living are the basis for an *intergenerational* contract. It is fed by the obligations that children have to take on roles and meet their responsibilities and fuelled by the rights that parents have to expect that their children will increasingly shoulder their roles and responsibilities, on top of their own, as they get older.

Bhatu people's illegality of status also constitutes a barrier to better life and mobility, which is grounded in their experiences of being poverty-stricken, desperate and having limited opportunities when they migrated to Delhi. Given their circumstances, both men's and women's pathways into earning have become increasingly characterised by deviant and criminal activity. Such behaviour is learned through apprenticeship, just like any other, and integral to the process of socialisation within the family and by extension the community. Such behaviour is fundamental to the survival strategies adopted while adapting to the urban environment and practised in the defence of Bhatu identity. However, historically, being labelled as 'criminal' and 'backward' as a community, sadly continues to shape their experiences and hamper their efforts to live and earn well today.

Illegality and caste, class and gender identities are intimately linked, the bases for discrimination, stigmatisation and corruption when it comes to Bhatu people accessing places to live and earn. Moreover, illegality of status, identity and relationships of inequality, injustice and conflict are all generated and maintained through people's interactions with the state and its representatives, in terms of citizenship, policy enactment, legislation enforcement and the criminal justice system. Bhatu people have become marginalised and isolated to such an extent that illegality has become central to their everyday lived experiences. Engaging in illegal activity is an expression of need and indicates the variation in the extent to which people are given the right to earn or are able to pursue, attain and maintain societal approved goals, such as a better life.

Due to developments in policy and its enactment through law enforcement, otherwise legitimate jobs have been criminalised. There is considerable bureaucratic discretion involved in the issuing and renewing of a limited number of licences allocated to street vendors. Moreover, multiple state authorities are responsible for enforcing laws and licencing regulations. These circumstances justify organised raids and encourage widespread rent-

seeking behaviour among government officials on an everyday basis. As a result, Bhatu people face the unrelenting threat of, or actual confiscation of, their stock and being arrested and charged. In these ways, legislation and its enactment, systematically deny or limit Bhatu people's rights to earn a living, let alone pursue a better life and mobility. Moreover, deviance and criminality are induced when people end up in court and are sentenced to serve prison terms through the enactment of criminal law by the criminal justice system. People are stigmatised further by this process, often leaving individuals harshly treated and excessively punished and families in spiralling economic debt.

Bhatu people's ability to earn enough, regular money is unrelentingly challenged and these already insecure circumstances are made all the more desperate, when male earning members drain income as a result of their substance misuse and dependency. The devastating impact of such habit-forming behaviours is evident for all to see, associated with severe weight loss, high or low blood pressure, liver, heart and lung problems, tuberculosis and pneumonia. Such deterioration in health may be found coexisting in the members of one household and in some cases one individual. Furthermore, as earnings reduce and often disappear, the cost of living keeps rising, families continue growing and responsibilities go on accumulating. Households then face considerable economic hardship and spiralling financial indebtedness. By way of managing their worsening situations, female household members increasingly take on a supplementary or sole earning role.

At the same time, many women face marital estrangement or widowhood. In doing so, they can become progressively more independent in their ways of living and earning and raising their children. Moreover, women's natal homes remain important spaces for negotiating positive change in their lives and wider natal community members continue to be central sources of support, as they pursue better lives. Nevertheless, in desperate, often tragic circumstances, people in general, but women in particular, turn to community saving and borrowing schemes which impose high interest rates and late payment penalties. In such circumstances, many people begin to spiral into indebtedness, leaving them unable to create and maintain the conditions for life to continue, let alone pursue a better life. Only in a minority of cases, was there evidence of success in the pursuit of better life and mobility. These are, however, more subtle, culturally embedded claims, legitimised within the Bhatu community.

9.1.3 Pathways of distinction: Culturally embedded claims and community legitimised mobility

The idea of mobility has proved to be no less problematic than the idea of poverty, in that it has undergone rigorous academic debate and extensive theorising in the western context. Yet, understandings of how and why people move out of poverty, and stay out, remain limited and highly criticised for the same reasons as perspectives on poverty: people cannot agree on what mobility is. Echoing anthropological and sociological approaches, understandings came from exploring Bhatu people's life chances, beginning with the extent to which they are able to adopt achievement ideologies, which highlight the role of education and training in the meritocratic pursuit of employment, harnessing personal capacities to local labour market opportunities and aspiring to achieve.

I was to discover, however, that while mobility in the colony may be defined in these ways, it is rarely pursued in these terms. People have more subtle expectations of better life, where the impact of household choices and priorities, in terms of the balance between income and expenditure, as well saving and investing in the attainment of a standard of living is important. However, mobility is about more than material gain, it is about individual family members becoming skilled in a certain form of life, such as earning or caring and meeting their associated responsibilities. Both men and women achieve this through the presentation of the self in term of a servile personality and ways of speaking and dressing. Such skills, when practised and perfected over time, allow people to establish the relationships of trust upon which their success and accumulation of experiential knowledge depend. Such achievements are the basis for the status and respect upon which positions of authority and power can be attained.

However, reaching and attaining such lofty positions is dependent on the positive or negative estimations of people's achievements by family and community members. Moreover, these positions are continually being challenged by the everyday struggles to meet expenses and ward off the spiralling debt, which leads to more persistent poverty across generations. Furthermore, circumstances can change for the worse in a moment, with the transgression of a daughter eloping with her boyfriend or a son becoming substance dependent or the illness and sudden death of a family member.

9.2 Reflections on the methodology

In taking an ethnographic approach to data generation, I immersed myself in colony life, watching, hearing and interacting with Bhatu and non-Bhatu peoples. The main basis for learning was everyday living; acquiring the language, carrying out daily activities associated with personal care and presentation, cooking food, washing clothes and joining in religious observances, festivals and cultural practices associated with birth, marriage and death. In working hard to develop these basic life skills, I was able to establish my presence in the colony, initiate conversations and build the rapport that was vital to nurturing the relationships of trust and goodwill, upon which my research depended.

More specifically, I spent considerable time and effort nurturing an environment of safety, through adopting a number of ethical principles. Throughout the research period, I maintained a position of participant-as-observer, in that, I became a member of the colony and everyone knew my status as a researcher. However, I refrained from being seen to pass judgement, take sides or interfere in any way in disputes. I also avoided participating in activity deemed illegal, violent, criminal or deviant, such as drinking alcohol and drug taking.

Furthermore, while conducting my everyday interactions, I always took an interest in people, but never talked about people to others. As part of the more formal interviewing process, I reiterated this orally and in writing, while seeking respondents' formal consent to interview them and use their information in my research. At this point, as well as confidentiality, I promised anonymity whenever I presented information in the reporting of my research findings. I also reassured respondents by explaining that they could refuse to answer any of the questions I asked and remove any or all of the information they gave me should they change their mind. I also clarified that they did not have to worry about giving 'right' or 'wrong' answers to questions; it was their own thoughts and experiences that were important to me.

In meeting these basic ethical responsibilities, I was able to create spaces where people felt comfortable in my presence, were able to drop their guard and be less defensive and more open to talk in detail about what I considered insider information. The fact that I was a foreign visitor, curious and always eager to learn also worked in my favour, as did the

flexibility of my approach to interviewing and the extended period of time over which I conducted the research. In these ways, I was able to learn from observation and narrative about illegal ways of living and earning, substance misuse and violence and crime, all of which are integral themes of experience, informing this thesis.

However, taking an ethnographic approach to research does not go unchallenged; questions about the role of researcher subjectivity, difficulty in replicating research and problems of generalisation are frequently raised and I reflect upon these here. Perhaps, the most pivotal moment looking back on my research journey, was meeting Subhash in central Delhi. In learning about his identity as a member of a 'backward caste' and his family's history of migration and resettlement, my research on poverty and mobility became achievable. My interest in exploring such a community's prevailing experiences of inequality and discrimination, despite the government's interventionist approach to development, also became feasible.

Furthermore, given the problematisation of everyday life in these ways, I believed my research findings could only be enhanced if anchored in a geographical area of the city developed through government-led endeavour. To my mind, this made a resettlement colony located in Padmini, Subhash and his family's place of residence, the most suitable site for research, as compared to Noida or Gurgaon. The Padmini Project is designed to house all income groups, including peoples resettled from slum settlements, offers opportunities for earning, education and healthcare and has excellent road and metro connectivity to the wider NCR. In theory, it was their resettlement in this project that presented Bhatu people with the most opportunities to pursue better lives and mobility.

I initially gained entry to the colony with Subhash as my gatekeeper and rented a living space from him. Then, given the particular focus of the research I was developing, Subhash became my fieldwork assistant. In the beginning, he was filled with enthusiasm; after all, the research was about his family, so he worked hard to help me identify the *khandan*, which became the core research sample. However, once I had identified his family, 65 households in all, my supervisor suggested I think about the feasibility of adding a comparative component to the research design.

After some discussion we came to the conclusion that this could make a meaningful contribution to the research findings. Thereby, another 63 households were added to the study. However, in these new circumstances, it became much harder to motivate Subhash and keep him on my side; the workload had doubled, as had the time needed to conduct the census-led data generation. Nevertheless, as a result of my persistence, admittedly fraught with frustration and desperation at times, I somehow managed to coax him through to the completion of the census phase of research.

However, Subhash's role in my research was to cease unexpectedly, shortly after the completion of this initial phase of data generation. His grandmother died suddenly and at this point he cut completely all ties with me. This experience left me feeling very vulnerable and frightened, as I contemplated whether or not my research could continue. The security, confidence and help that Subhash provided became very fragile as I considered the threat, this death, followed by his abandonment, represented to my access to living space and core research respondents.

For a moment colony life stalled, only slowly restarting as I rediscovered my bearings. Then sped off again fuelled by my excitement, once I was sure I could continue planning the main phase of qualitative research. The vulnerability I had felt, quickly turned to relief, as I no longer had to spend my days justifying my approach to research and my thoroughness or persuading and pleading and expecting Subhash to understand and respect this. My new-found freedom made me more open and approachable, giving me opportunities to develop relationships with a much wider group of people and gain access to many more perspectives on the Chittori family, the Bhatu community and colony life more generally.

If I was ever going to be able to make the most of these different perspectives, however, I needed to continue improving my language skills. For me, this was the most difficult part of my research journey; an unrelenting struggle that was reflected in the slow progress of my research. On day-to-day matters, I was increasingly confident, but when it came to conducting the second phase of data generation, again I needed help. Only this time, I brought in fieldwork assistants from outside the colony. However, this created a whole new level of management that was time-consuming and as it turned out, no less 'eventful' than my experiences with Subhash had been.

Yet a number of positive outcomes were forthcoming from the experience. I was able to make comprehensive, hand-written notes as respondents spoke, by way of mapping each interview separately from the recording, transcribing and translating process. These ‘maps’ made it easy for me to pinpoint the location and content of themes and determine their frequency during the analysis process. Furthermore, the fieldwork assistants were able to engage continually with the respondents as they spoke, leaving me free to guide questioning and watch the interactions between respondent and fieldwork assistant. In the end, these interactions, along with post-interview discussions I held with the fieldwork assistants, proved most valuable in deepening my cultural awareness and understanding of the important themes of experience that were emerging.

The initial phase of data generation was very important to my research journey. It provided me with the opportunity to introduce myself to individual members of households and state clearly my intentions and expectations in terms of their participation. Furthermore, I was able to get inside people’s living spaces and experience what they looked and felt like and listen in more detail to their concerns. Moreover, these early, more formal interactions, were important in bringing us all down to earth. I had believed I was special as a foreigner, not only in taking an interest in Bhatu people, but living in the community. I was to learn, however, that I was only one in a continual stream of foreigners visiting the colony.

Moreover, many people in the colony believed I was rich and had come to change their lives, buy them houses, send their children for education, pay for healthcare and marriages. They were to learn, however, that I was only a student, that God had not “*given me money*”, and therefore, I would not be changing their lives. I went on to explain that all I could ever really hope to do as a researcher, was live among them and give them and their culture respect, visit them in their homes, ask them about their lives, take an interest in their problems and answer their questions, help them shop, cook, and clean their houses or practise their English and then do them justice when it came to this point: writing about the experience.

Once the life-story narratives started to flow, during the main qualitative phase of data generation, the BNIM approach to interviewing allowed me to really get behind people’s presentations of poverty and to understand their needs and priorities. Each interview began simply with the question: Can you tell me something about your life? People then talked

about the issues they wanted, for as long as they wanted. In this way, every narrative is unique in terms of length, content and detail, making the findings absolutely contextually unique, anchored to a specific place and time, but nevertheless, a detailed frame of reference designed to inform or compare with other research contexts. In this way, it is the quality of the conclusions drawn from the data, which are highlighted when I make my assessment of generalisability, rather than the presentation of statistical measures tied to a population.

The ethnographic approach to research, characterised in this case by an extended period of fieldwork and multiple phases and methods of data generation, led to an overwhelming amount of information. Considerable time, during and after fieldwork, was spent on translating and transcribing the narratives and integrating and contextualising the data. Further time was also spent reflecting upon my fieldwork experiences, which had left me exhausted and quite traumatised. It took some time before I felt I could start systematically analysing the data and writing up the findings. However, during this process, I began to see that the details in each of the themes of experience I had identified during fieldwork, could be grouped into three analytical categories. It was I who then selected the ideas of incapacity, illegality and indebtedness, which I felt most meaningfully allowed me to capture how these themes are cumulative and interlinked in and between categories, and helped me talk about the ways in which they work as barriers to better life and mobility in Bhatu people's everyday lives.

Through narrative, many different unfolding interlinkages between barriers to better life and mobility were revealed. However, for the purposes of analysis and discussion, while presenting and evidencing these research findings in this thesis, I was particularly concerned with '*telling*' cases; that is, contributions made of experiences and observations from both men and women, young and old, which show the way these categories of themes are most commonly patterned in people's everyday lives, and how they diverge in practice from culturally embedded ideals. Such telling cases are more than illustrations, but the means by which I am '*strategically placed*' to ground, as well as test, inform and develop existing theory, while holding on to the sense of context and narrative flow (Ellen 1984).

9.3 Reflections on the theoretical framework

Long-term fieldwork and the comprehensive data set I was able to generate, along with the grounded analytical strategy of allowing theoretical ideas to emerge from the data, made for very complex findings. These characteristics are reflected in both the development and nature of the theoretical framework. Fortunately, as a researcher, my strategic placement allowed me to continually move backwards and forwards between my own theoretical knowledge and Bhatu people's experiential knowledge. For example, in planning my research, I looked for guidance in reports and literature, so that I could problematise an aspect of everyday life for research, frame the story I would tell, and formulate the questions I would ask. However, once in the colony, the particular details and understandings of the story became grounded in Bhatu people's everyday experiences.

At this point, I began to see the theoretical ideas that had been guiding me did not work in bringing understanding to everyday life in the colony. I had to deal with the depth, severity and persistence of poverty and a more subtle type of mobility, as well as the interlinkages between environment and people in terms of caste, class and gender, all of which were integral to shaping people's everyday lived experiences. Yet, I had no theoretical framework for them. I had to work through these myself, pulling together theoretical ideas, which were grounded in everyday life, emerging out of the process of data generation and analysis and drawn from existing, very different, bodies of literature. In this way, my endeavour to develop a relational theory was not about fixing concepts such as poverty and mobility, but exploring ideas, revising them and piecing them together in relation to the research questions and in connection with this specific research context.

While undertaking fieldwork, I was reminded of a number of meaningful ideas such as Ingold's apprenticeship, Hochschild's emotional labour and Bourdieu's distinction, which I pulled together to bring understanding to the experience of mobility in the colony. However, when it came to the interlinked themes of experience constituting the barriers to better life, relevant ideas were only identified once I revisited the literature. Again, I was able to draw upon the strength of my disciplinary background, pulling together a series of ideas from anthropological and sociological bodies of literature to help me.

These ideas include, decision making in education and a crisis of masculinity in relation to incapacity; adaptation, labelling, stereotyping, discrimination and marginalisation in relation to illegality and *intergenerational* contracts and dominance and subordination in relation to indebtedness. In these ways, the theoretical framework, upon which the relational theory of poverty and mobility rests, was developed organically, always coming into being and always under scrutiny and revision, as my research progressed and my understanding deepened.

9.4 Contributions to knowledge and gaps for future research

This thesis contains historical, anthropological, sociological and development perspectives on poor people's everyday lives. It contributes to understanding by uncovering the way social, economic and cultural dimensions of experience interact. Moreover, it compliments and illuminates the economic-led development research, policy and practice, which dominate development studies. It draws attention to the struggles of the people who are supposed to be the targets of such initiatives, the otherwise 'statistically insignificant', who remain untouched by the constitutional provision of an interventionist state. In these circumstances, the *intergenerational* contract is being negotiated in support of a robust cycle of care, anchored in family relationships, while saving and borrowing practices embedded in community relationships, keep people going. These pragmatic strategies are fundamental to people's survival and well-being because they do not subsidise government development strategies and welfare initiatives, they substitute them.

However, the strategies which people develop by way of coping with the risk and vulnerability associated with poverty, all too often become barriers to better life and mobility. It is awful to think that something so positive, such as aspiring to a better life and actively pursuing mobility, forces people to take such negative pathways that have equally negative outcomes. Given these circumstances, this thesis also informs a number of debates relating to migration, urbanisation, environmentalism and community development. More specifically, it engages with human security debates about people's basic rights and entitlements to food, clean water and housing, productive and remunerative work and education and healthcare, as well as freedom from caste, class and gender discrimination or corruption and fear associated with domestic abuse and violent crime. This thesis also offers considerable insight into the nature of demographic change in families and communities, but also individuals associated

with the lifecourse, childhood-adulthood transitions, aging, birth, marriage and death and the formation of gender, class and caste identities.

Given the nature of the findings from this research, there are a number of interesting areas for future research. One of the most significant realisations is that poor peoples like Bhatu, even though they are living in the capital city, are on their own. The ways in which policies are implemented for assuring rights, such as compulsory education, and processes issuing entitlements, such as licensing for the purpose of earning and pensions, are failing this community. Further exploration, through research, of the dynamic between village and city living would make a meaningful contribution to knowledge in this regard. Poverty reduction measures at present focus on rural and urban areas as requiring separate, unrelated development strategies. Take for example, the allocation of 'backward class' certificates, which entitle people to access reserved places in education and government employment. At the moment, these entitlements do not travel across state borders when people do. How can these certificates be made valid across states? Would more peoples identified as 'backward classes' benefit if they did, and in what ways?

Further exploration of the nature and extent of corruption in the implementation of rights and entitlements, particularly in terms of the interaction between poor peoples and the state, would also make a meaningful contribution to knowledge. Despite the government's zero tolerance approach to corruption, people are still required to pay bribes so that they can access places of work, schooling and health care. Pension payments associated with widowhood and old age are insecure in the hands of clerks who skim or stop monies from reaching the poor. How does the culture of corruption continue? In what ways can the poor be empowered to ensure that they access their rights and entitlements? Findings from such research would, in turn, help bring understanding of the ways in which discrimination prevails despite the constitutional assurances that it will not.

The research provides insights into the still crucial role of social identities of caste, class and gender, in not only shaping aspirations, but also setting the limits of possibility for particular groups of people in India today. This, once again, affirms that practical and legal solutions to poverty reduction are not sufficient to bring about social change or indeed development. Culturally embedded norms and attitudes along with social interests and priorities, continue

to mediate these processes. Unless this is acknowledged and addressed directly, better life and mobility, for the poorest, will remain a distant dream.

APPENDIX I

GLOSSARY OF HINDI WORDS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Accha | Standing in terms of good, sound, distinguished |
| Adhikar | A person's rights |
| Amarvas | Rituals performed each new moon of the Hindu lunar calendar |
| Bara log | Standing in terms of big, prestige, dominant |
| Bara parivar | Big family |
| Bhagvan | Spiritual being or God |
| Bhang | Drink of marijuana, milk, spirit, ground nuts, and herbs and spices |
| Bhatu | The name by which the research community recognises its people |
| Bindi | Decorative mark worn centrally on the forehead by married women |
| Biraderi | Caste-based brotherhood made up of two exogamous groups |
| Chapatti | Thin round of unleavened whole-grain bread cooked on a griddle. |
| Charpai | Light bedstead consisting of a web of rope or tape netting |
| Chat | Chopped vegetables seasoned with lemon and mixed spices |
| Chiras | Resin made from the sap of leaves and buds of the marijuana plant |
| Chota log | Standing in terms of small, lesser, subordinate |
| Dewali | Hindu festival of lights |
| Dharmashala | Building devoted to charitable shelter and rest for travellers |
| Ganja | Dried leaves and tops of the marijuana plant |
| Garib | Poor |
| Garibi Hatao | Slogan used to rally political support and motivate development |
| Gaz | Unit of measurement equivalent to 33 inches |
| Goana | Point after marriage when a wife begins living in her marital home |
| Gotra, got | Clan |
| Holi | Hindu festival of colours |
| Janta housing | Purpose-built multi-storey flats |
| Jat | Caste |
| Jhuggi | Area or settlement of unplanned temporary or permanent shelters |
| Kabari | Work involving collecting and recycling bottles, plastic and metal |
| Karma | Effects of a person's actions that determine destiny |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Kheer | Rice cooked in sweetened milk with sultanas and coconut |
| Khandan | Patrilineage based on patrilocal residence of extended kin |
| Kharab | Standing in terms of bad, worthless, inferior |
| Kismet | Fate |
| Kuchha | Building with permanent structure made of bricks and mortar |
| Lakh | Unit of currency in India worth 100,000 Rupees |
| Lamba Parivar | Long Family |
| Majaburi | A person's obligations |
| Mangal sutra | Holy necklace given to the bride by the groom during marriage |
| Masala | Spice mixtures ground into a paste or powder |
| Namkeen | Dried sweet or savoury snacks |
| Naan | Flat breads shaped and baked in a clay oven |
| Niche | Positioning in terms of low, below, bottom |
| Paise | Smallest denomination of currency in India. 100 paise = 1 Rupee |
| Palak paneer | Sautéed soft cheese served in a thick spinach puree |
| Panchayat | Local council |
| Parivar | Family, denoting close kinship ties |
| Payal | Anklets with tinkling bells, made of silver and given as part of dowry |
| Pradhan | Community head |
| Prashad | Religiously blessed items distributed to those in need of blessing |
| Pareshani | Problems |
| Rakhi | Hindu festival celebrating the relationship between siblings |
| Ristidar | Relatives, denoting distance in terms of kinship and geography |
| Rupee | Unit of currency in India |
| Samaj reetirevaj | Group custom, cultural belief and practice |
| Seva | Selfless service of others |
| Shadi | Ritual processes involved in marriage |
| Tangiri | Minced meat spiced and roasted on skewers |
| Tola | Unit of measurement equivalent to 10 grams |
| Upar | Positioning in terms of high, above or top |
| Varna | Hierarchally ordered fourfold organisation in Hindu society |

APPENDIX II

RESPONDENT PROFILES

The following are the respondents whose conversations and biographical narratives are the main source of data on which this thesis is based. The details are given in terms of name, age, marital status, level of formal schooling and current employment. I then give some biographic information. Each entry is made in alphabetical order according to whether they were part of the core or comparative (Bhatu and non-Bhatu) sample.

CORE SAMPLE

Anil is 23 and has been married for three years. He has an 8th class pass and speaks fluent English. He earns through a combination of shopping commission work, tourist guiding and rickshaw driving.

He was born in village Rajasthan to parents who travelled selling calendars, maps and posters. Anil engaged in shoe shining before engaging in shopping commission work and tourist guiding. He now lives with his uneducated wife and two young sons. They live together with his widowed mother and unmarried brother and sister who is waiting for *goana*.

Arun is 28 and has been married for ten years. He has no formal education, but speaks fluent English. However, he is incapacitated due to ill health associated with alcoholism and tuberculosis.

He was born in Maharashtra, his parents were involved in nomadic sales at the time. His legacy is of being the most motivated and successful in earning from shoe shining, shopping commission work and tourist guiding. However, Arun has been incapacitated for the last two years through alcoholism. He is now very frail and recovering from tuberculosis. After an affluent, promising start, he now lives in a bare retail space with his wife and four young children, none of whom are going to school. He is reliant on his wife's meagre wage from recycling to buy food and pay for the medicine he desperately needs to get well. His widowed mother and three younger brothers all live in the colony, but have more or less abandoned Arun and his family, frustrated and intolerant of his persistent drinking and smoking despite his deteriorating health.

Balbir is 43 and has been married for more than twenty years. He has no education and earns from shoe shining.

He was born in village Rajasthan and has lived there all his life. He lives with his wife and three daughters who are all attending school and two sons who are shoe shining.

Elaichi is 82 and has been widowed for the last seventeen years. She has no formal education but continues to generate an income by lending money, on interest, to caste members.

She was born in Rajasthan to a father who was ill and a mother who begged. She was married at the age of fourteen years and went on to have twelve children. She is now housebound, unable to walk. Her second eldest son and his family look after her in terms of meeting her daily needs. Although she now lives in Delhi, she owns a house in village Rajasthan. She is also reputed for building a *dharmashala* in her village; a shelter for travellers, in remembrance of her late husband.

Harphool is 65 and was married to his first wife at the age of 14 and waited 5 years for *goana* so that he could complete his studies, attaining a 10th class pass. They had six children together in Rajasthan before becoming estranged. He then took his second wife; his first wife's sister and settled with her in the *jhuggi* in Delhi and had a further six children.

He was born in Rajasthan to parents who worked in farm labour. Despite his age, he is in good health and remains very active in the community, referring to his work in terms of social work. He also makes an income from property dealing within the colony. He currently lives with his second wife of 28 years, two unmarried sons, the elder of which has no education and the younger has a 9th pass, and his youngest, unmarried daughter who is educated up to 5th class.

Jagmohan is 53 and has been widowed for twelve years. He has a 5th class pass and has retired from travelling sales.

He was born in Maharashtra at the time when his parents were engaged in travelling sales. His wife committed suicide by hanging. He takes an active interest in history, particularly of Bhatu peoples. He speaks in a notably different way from the norm in that he uses many Sanskrit words, recognised within the community as a sign of learnedness, and represents the giving of respect. He is supported by his sons who work in shopping commission work and tourist guiding. He also has a son in jail and another regularly misuses drugs. Jagmohan himself drinks alcohol and smokes regularly and has some notable breathing difficulties.

Mali is 48 and has been married for 40 years. She has no education and still goes out to earn, selling posters on the streets and in the pedestrian subways of central Delhi.

She was born in Assam, but her mother died at childbirth. She was raised by her father and his second wife. Mali has fended for herself and her family most of her married life due to her husband's incapacity through alcohol abuse. She has brought up seven children in a violent home and has spent some of her time living estranged from her husband by way of managing marital problems. She has continued to work regularly even though her eldest son has increasingly taken over the main earning role.

Metiya is 50 and has been widowed for four years. He has no education and has retired from travelling sales.

He was born in village Rajasthan, was married at the age of ten years and waited until he was twenty years before living with his wife. His wife subsequently committed suicide by hanging. He now lives with his married son, daughter-in-law and young grandson and two unmarried daughters and one unmarried son, all of which have some education in a government school. He drinks regularly.

Mishri is 62 and has been married for forty-five years. He has no education, earned from breeding horses which are used in wedding processions and has now retired.

He was born in Mumbai and lives with his wife in her natal village in Rajasthan. They live with their son, daughter-in-law and seven grandchildren; five granddaughters and two grandsons, all of whom have some level of education attainment. The elder three have completed their education up to 8th class. The rest continue to go to school. The eldest son goes to a private school. His daughter-in-law earns money from labouring under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. He spends part of the year living in the colony in Delhi with his wife, but their stay is often cut short because of his persistent drinking.

Naina is 30 and has been widowed for eight years. She has no education and engages in night time *kebari* and lending money on interest to community members, by way of earning a living.

She was born in Rajasthan to parents who did shoe shining and travelling map sales. While alive, her husband set up a lucrative business making and supplying blackboards in the *jhuggi*. Suspicion surrounds her husband's untimely death by burning. She now lives with her elderly, senile mother-in-law and four children; a son of 16 who has completed school up to 5th class and three daughters who continue to attend a government school. She has recently renovated her house and is planning to buy the adjoining properties so that she can increase the living space for her and her growing family.

Pavan is 18 and has already been married and waiting for *goana* for one year. He has no education, but speaks English and earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He was born in the *jhuggi* to parents who were engaged in travelling map sales. He is currently living with his oldest brother and sister-in-law and four nieces, two of which continue government schooling and one nephew who is of school age but does not go.

Pinky is 18 and has been married for one year. She has attained a 7th class pass and currently engages full time in her caring role within her marital home.

She does not go outside the home to earn. She was born in Punjab to parents who were engaged in map selling. She was orphaned along with her older sister and younger brother as a child. Her older sister subsequently also died. Pinky and her brother were brought up by their

aunt. She now lives with her husband and baby daughter along with her husband's parents and unmarried younger brother who goes to a government school.

Pooja is 22 and has been married for eight years. She has attained a 9th class pass and currently earns as a cashier in a private clinic dispensary.

She was born in the *jhuggi* to a father and mother who were engaged in travelling sales. She was married as a child and waited for four years before going to live with her husband in village Rajasthan. After neglect at the hands of her husband and marital family she took her baby daughter back to Delhi and set up home in the colony close to her natal home. Her husband, who did shoe shining in the village, has since joined her and their daughter. He now works alongside Pooja's brothers who are engaged in tourist guiding and rickshaw driving.

Rajni is 23 and has been married for fifteen years. She has no education and is engaged in map selling and home-based alcohol sales with her husband.

She was born in the *jhuggi* to parents who were engaged in travelling map sales. She now lives with her husband who is largely incapacitated through alcoholism and their three sons and two daughters, the eldest of which is attending a government school.

Rocky is 39 and has been married for twenty-two years. He has no formal education and although he still sells maps, he has become increasingly incapacitated through alcoholism.

He was born in Rajasthan to parents engaged in shoe shining and map selling. His wife is the main earner along with their oldest son. She sells maps and he earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding. Rocky cooks and takes care of the youngest four children at

home, three boys and a girl; all of whom are school age, but have never gone to school. He drinks in cycles, having long periods of abstinence followed by sustained drunkenness.

Rohit is 27 and has been married for eight years. He has no education, but speaks English and earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He was born in Uttar Pradesh to a father who did shoe shining and a mother who stayed at home. He also did shoe shining before getting into the shopping commission work and tourist guiding. His English is not as fluent as those of his peer group and he is less able to earn. He also has some incapacity through alcohol misuse, which also affects his ability to earn and the amount of earning which reaches his family. He now lives with his wife and their five very young children.

Roshni is 50 and has been widowed for five years. She has no education and earns from begging.

She was born in village Rajasthan to parents who were engaged in shoe shining and travelling map sales. She has a long history of working outside the home to earn. She currently lives with her unmarried children; two daughters and two sons, none of which are educated. One of her sons, now 16, has been in jail for the last three years on charges of murder. Her children can be found regularly begging for food and money in the nearby shopping centre.

Sano is 17 and has been married for one year. She has no education and does not go out of her marital home to earn.

She was born in Rajasthan to parents who travelled to sell maps. Since marriage she has lived with her husband and their young baby in a retail space in the colony. Her husband's increased incapacity due to drug and alcohol misuse means she spends ever increasing time living with her parents and siblings who live nearby in the colony. Her husband regularly travels to Nepal for tourist guiding work and Sano talks about her experiences of travelling with him and having to beg foreigners for food and money because of her husband's failure to support her and the baby while there.

Santro is 25 and has been married for fifteen years, joining her husband in the marital home after five years waiting for *goana*. She is uneducated and currently earns from *kabari*.

She was born in Rajasthan to parents who were engaged in construction labour. She is currently estranged from her incapacitated husband because of his drug abuse and domestic violence. She is also estranged from her mother-in-law, in that she lives in a separate house in the colony and provides for herself and her growing children. She goes regularly for work engaging mostly in morning time *kabari*. She is indebted due to having to borrow money to meet everyday needs, demands of an addicted husband and striving to cope with the debt he continues to accumulate and cannot pay off. Her two sons and one daughter are all school age, but they have never attended. Her sister however, is close by, married to the brother of her husband. This is an important source of support for Santro and her children.

Shalu is 54 and has been widowed for eighteen years. She has no formal education and continues to earn from engaging in night time *kabari*.

She was born in Maharashtra to parents who engaged in shoe shining and farm labour. She was married at 15 and her husband was one of few who left to the Middle East to work as a cook for several years. Having had nine children who are now all grown up, she lives with her

married son, his wife and two grandsons, an unmarried son educated up to 3rd class, and a daughter who has no education, but has been married since the age of 9 and is still waiting for *goana*.

Subhash is 30, was married and subsequently widowed five years ago because of complications during the birth of their first daughter who survived. He remarried three years ago and has a second daughter, but is estranged from them. He has no formal education, but speaks fluent English and earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He is one of the few first generation tourist guides left, who is successful and not incapacitated through alcoholism or drug use. Subhash was born in Chandigarh to parents who were engaged in travelling sales. He is currently living with his parents, younger brother who is educated up to 6th class, his oldest daughter from his first wife who has attended a private English medium school since nursery. He has a reputation for domestic abuse and has lived estranged from his second wife for the majority of their marriage.

Suman is 29 and has been widowed for eight years. She has a 2nd class pass and earns from night time *kabari*.

She was born in Delhi to parents who were engaged in travelling sales of maps and school charts. She moved to village Rajasthan when she got married. Her husband had a teaching degree and was about to take promotion when he was killed in a road traffic accident. As her widowhood began, Suman faced harassment and death attempts at the hands of her husband's family who dragged her through the courts in order to secure their son's compensation money. She escaped to Delhi with her children and now lives close to her parents in the colony. She works and takes care of her three growing children who are all in school. The eldest has already attained 7th class at a government school and the younger two are in 2nd and 3rd class of a private school.

Sunardy is 60 and was married forty years ago and estranged after less than one year. She has no education and currently earns from map selling.

She was born in Assam to parents who earned by begging, shoe shining and map selling; they had both worked. She moved to her marital home in Haryana when she got married, but the marriage was never consummated. She returned to live with her mother and brother who were living in Rajasthan at the time. She now lives alone, but close to her brother in what was their mother's house in the colony. She continues to travel daily to the centre of Delhi's tourist districts, where she sells maps.

Sunil is 35 and unmarried. He has no education and earns from shoe shining and repair, which he does while living in Rajasthan.

He was born in village Rajasthan to a mother who begged for food and money. His father had been a shoe shiner, but died before Sunil was born. His mother also subsequently died, leaving him to live alone. Given his regular travelling and living between Rajasthan and Delhi throughout the year, he gave his mother's house in the colony to his younger brother who has a growing family. He has some incapacity due to alcoholism, particularly while living in Delhi.

Suresh is 47 and has been widowed for ten years. He does not go out to earn.

He was born in West Bengal to parents who earned through breeding and selling dogs. He currently lives with one married daughter, her husband and young son and one unmarried daughter who is approaching her teenage years and has learning difficulties. Suresh made watch covers and sold maps, but has become increasingly incapacitated through alcoholism and is unable to go for work, earn and take care of his family. He is reliant on his son-in-law, who is a machine operator in a factory that makes bearings for heavy machinery in south Delhi.

Vijay is 30 and has lived with his wife for the last ten years, after five years waiting for *goana*. He has attained a 3rd class pass and is fluent in English, but is incapacitated through drug dependency.

He was born in village Rajasthan to parents who were engaged in construction labour at the time. Vijay was initially very successful in shoe shining, before getting into shopping commission work and tourist guiding until two years ago when he became seriously incapacitated by drug misuse. As a result of his failure to earn, his mother has thrown him, along with his wife and children, out of the marital home. He now lives in a nuclear family with his wife, two sons and one daughter, none of whom are going to school. He frequently engages in crime and is violent towards his wife. He has had time in jail and rehabilitation as attempts to break his addiction. However, the positive steps he has taken are quickly undone when he returns to his home in the colony.

COMPARATIVE BHATU SAMPLE

Ashok is 21 and unmarried. He has completed a 10th class pass and speaks English fluently. He earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He was born in Karnataka while his parents were engaged in travelling sales. He is the eldest son and supports the family along with his mother and younger brother.

Jyoti is 23 and was married at the age of 19 to her non-Bhatu boyfriend. She has an 8th class pass and had a history of earning for herself through shop work before marriage. After marriage she has not gone outside the home to earn.

She was born in Gujarat, orphaned as a young child and now lives with her husband and two young sons.

Kajal is 40 and married for love at the age of 18. She has no formal education and earns from night time *kabari*.

She was born in Madhya Pradesh to parents who were engaged in travelling map sales. She now lives with her husband who has a 5th class pass, but has been long term incapacitated through alcoholism. She provides for her family, along with her two oldest sons who are unmarried and earn from shopping commission work and tourist guiding. Her eldest son has a 10th class pass, her eldest daughter has no education, is married and waiting for *goana*. The next three younger children have all completed education with a 7th, 6th and 4th pass respectively and the youngest son continues, currently in 3rd class.

Kavita is 36 and has been married to her non-Bhatu husband for five years. She attained a 9th class pass and went on to work in an export house until after her love marriage.

She was born in Delhi to a father who made furniture and a mother who worked in a factory. Her mother would take her to work as a young child and during an accident Kavita had her lower leg amputated. Despite a long period of rehabilitation she went on to walk with a prosthetic limb. She now lives with her husband who earns from his job as a pedal rickshaw man and they have a son who is going to a government school.

Kiran is 26 and unmarried. She is uneducated and does not go outside her natal home to earn.

She was born in Rajasthan, but she was brought up in the *jhuggi*. Her mother sold calendars and her father did shoe shining. She is the second born of eight children, three of which died as children. She was engaged, but the marriage did not go ahead because the boy was a persistent drinker. She now lives with her mother who is often ill and her father who suffered head damage in an accident. She also has one brother and two sisters, all of which have no education and remain unmarried. Being the eldest daughter, she has the caring role for the family, while the mother and sisters sell maps and the brother shines shoes.

Kumla is 42 and has been married for twenty-seven years. She is uneducated and earns from night time *kabari*.

She was born in Maharashtra to parents who did farm labour and shoe shining. She now lives in the colony in a joint family which includes eight of her children. Her husband has a 5th class pass and earns from shoe shining. However his alcoholism often prevents him from working and when he does it drains his money.

Maya is 20, unmarried and uneducated. She does not go out for work, but takes on a caring role for her family.

She was born in the *jhuggi* and now lives with her parents and two older brothers, one of which is married and has a son, the other is married and waiting for *goana*. She also has a further five younger brothers, none of which have attained schooling passed 2nd class. Her mother, along with three of her brothers, two elder and one younger, support the family through a combination of shopping commission work and tourist guiding. Yet, this is a joint family struggling with a lack of education as well as alcoholism and drug misuse.

Raju is 22 and unmarried. He attained a 2nd class pass in school, but speaks English fluently. He part-owns an auto rickshaw with three other young men from the colony and combines this with shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He was born in the *jhuggi* to a father who moved around a lot selling maps. His mother died shortly after his birth. His father took a second wife, but a long history of unsettled life and violent beating at the hands of his strict and over powering father followed. In the end, it was his grandmother who looked after him. Meeting and befriending a European man while map selling in the centre of Delhi, accounts for his current good fortunes.

Ravi is 18 and unmarried. He has no education, speaks a little English and is proud that he has achieved the same as others who have attained some education. He earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding.

He was born in the *jhuggi* to parents who were engaged in selling maps and posters at the time. After a fight in the *jhuggi*, his father was left with a paralysed hand and is now less able to work. Ravi shares the earning responsibility for his family with his older brother who

deals in human hair. Ravi also has younger, unmarried siblings still at home, three sisters and one brother. All are of school age, but only one of the girls attained a 2nd class pass before giving up.

Sangita is 24 and was married as a child. She was given no formal education and in order to survive she engages in morning time *kabari*.

She was born in Maharashtra to disabled parents who were earning from selling maps. She went straight to live in her marital home when she got married, but was mistreated and suffered domestic violence at the hands of her husband and in-laws. As a result, she periodically returns with her two young daughters to live with her widowed mother and unmarried brother in the colony. This time, she has been estranged from her husband and her marital home for five years.

Sheetal is 18, was married at 15 and is now waiting for *goana*. She has no education and does not earn outside her natal home.

She was born in village Rajasthan and now lives with her parents and five siblings and carries the burden of housework for the family.

Sunita is 20 and has been married for three years. She has no education and stays at home to care for her two young children.

Born in Rajasthan, to parents who were engaged in travelling map sales. Her husband earns from shopping commission work and tourist guiding, but he is increasingly incapacitated by alcohol misuse. The colony is both her natal and marital home, but given the difficulties with her husband's frequent drunkenness she spends a lot of time with her parents and siblings.

Vinod is 25 and unmarried. He has no education, but earns from travelling map sales.

He was born in village Rajasthan to parents who engaged in shoe shining and map selling. He spends the majority of the year travelling in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra selling maps and living in rooms which he rents on a daily basis. When in Delhi, he lives with his mother and father, two younger sisters, one of which is of marriageable age and an unmarried younger brother. Like him, none of his siblings are educated. Along with his mother, who sells socks and hankies at train stations, Vinod has to bear the burden of his father's responsibilities because of an accident in the *jhuggi*, which left him with a damaged leg and subsequent walking difficulties. His father also has increasing ill health associated with alcoholism.

COMPARATIVE NON-BHATU SAMPLE

Bablu is 17, unmarried and has attained a 5th class pass. He works in a clothing show room close to the colony.

He was born in the *jhuggi* and now lives with his father and mother in a joint family, composed unusually, of his two married sisters, their husbands and children. Although he started work at a young age with qualifications, he has moved from job to job and faced multiple bad experiences with employers due to poor working conditions as well as discrimination and corruption.

Bimla is 35 and has been married for nineteen years. She was not given an education. She made children's toys in the past, but does not earn now.

She was born in village Rajasthan to parents who were engaged in farming. She now lives with her husband who labours for a shop and their unmarried teenage daughter who has received no education, but has learned how to use a sewing machine and earns by stitching clothes for people in the community.

Mahavir is 26 and has a love marriage of four years to a Bhatu girl. He is educated up to 8th class and earns as a motor cycle courier.

He was born in Delhi to parents who did packing work in a factory and owned a vegetable stall. He now lives with his wife and their two young sons in a nuclear family. They are particularly active in providing food and care for the poor families in their block.

Poonam is 60, was married at the age of 16 and has been widowed for the last eight years. She has no education, but sells second hand clothes on the market and drugs to residents of the colony.

She was born in Delhi and her father was a government service electrical engineer and her mother stayed at home. She had four children, the eldest of which, a daughter, died at birth. Her second eldest daughter was left widowed with a small son after her husband was killed in a drunken brawl in the colony. Poonam now shares a retail space with her two unmarried teenage sons who are both incapacitated by drug misuse and have a reputation for pickpocketing and knife crime.

Rani is 43 and was married at 27. She achieved a 10th class pass and has a history before and after marriage of working as a teacher. She now runs a hot food stall in the colony with her husband.

She was born in Punjab and now lives with her husband who is educated to the level of BCom. However, he is long term incapacitated through alcoholism. Her teenage son has left school with a 10th class pass and is now an auto rickshaw driver, working with Bhatu boys who are engaged in shopping commission work and tourist guiding. Her unmarried daughter has already attained 10th class and continues to go to school.

Ranjit is 48 and has been married for thirty-five years. He has no education and is retired from driving a loading rickshaw.

He was born in Rajasthan to parents who were engaged in farming. He now lives with his wife, two married daughters, their husbands and children and an unmarried son who has attained education up to 5th class.

Tinu is 19 and unmarried. She has a 5th class pass and currently performs a caring role in her natal household.

She was born in the *jhuggi* and now lives with her parents and two younger brothers, one with a 5th class pass, the other with a 6th pass and still studying. She has aspirations to train as a beauty therapist.

APPENDIX III

INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY HISTORY

In this section, I discuss the context of India's policy making, which has shaped the experiences and choices of the people in the research community. In particular, I introduce pre- and post-independence approaches to poverty and mobility and provide an overview of the important debates. These debates provide historically informed insights into the increased variation and complexity of people's experiences of poverty and mobility. They also provide insights into the comprehensive nature of understandings and approaches accumulated by the government, both central and state, designed to address poverty, reduce inequality and bring about mobility over time. Living in poverty and striving towards a better life are inherent in a society, which is driven by a vision of equality at the level of ideals, while at the same time being stratified and characterised by unequal circumstances at the level of everyday lived experience (Beteille, 2002).

Poverty, inequality and mobility are related concepts, and the ways in which they have been focused upon in India has shifted over time. This transition has been facilitated by a series of layered, often overlapping administrative processes, anti-poverty policies and implementation programmes.

Pre-independence Administrative Processes: Untouchability and Criminality

The majority of the research community are low caste Hindus with a history of nomadic ways of living and earning, who were identified as 'untouchable' and 'criminal' as a result of pre-independence administration processes. These administrative endeavours began with a call in the Bombay Gazetteer, in 1877, for the elevation of 'depressed' castes. By the time of the 1901 census, an experiment was underway to formulate a new scheme for classifying and ranking peoples by caste. This resulted in the introduction of the concept of untouchability, which was understood to represent the 'special difficulties' peoples from lower castes were experiencing. In 1919, Mahatma Gandhi adopted the use of untouchable in quotation marks, signifying his discomfort at the term, which became widely used by British reporters, both inside and outside India. By 1931, Gandhi replaced the term 'untouchable' with *harijan* meaning men of God, which he contrasted with *durjan*, meaning men of evil, in his

endeavour to draw attention to the importance of upliftment for people of the lower castes (Charsley, 1996).

Meanwhile, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a member of the Constituent Assembly and prominent leader of the lower castes, upheld the category of untouchable with a capital U, highlighting its potential as a source of empowerment and pride. However, a more negative side of untouchability emerged, whereby different peoples with wide ranging experiences of deprivation, became caught up in oppositional, but dependent relationships, with upper castes. As a result, any positives stemming from who untouchables are and what they do, were devalued as they became defined by what upper castes do to them as subordinate, excluded victims. Furthermore, untouchability became a trap when used for accessing the benefits of upliftment. Ambedkar himself, went on to escape this entrapment by converting to Buddhism (Ibid.).

The category of 'depressed classes' made its final official appearance in 1931 and was replaced in The Government of India Act, 1935, with Scheduled Castes (SC). Untouchability became the criterion for identifying people for inclusion in this new category. Lists were subsequently compiled for electoral purposes and published as schedules attached to the act. SCs went on to be allocated land, housing sites and houses and given access to loans, financial support and reservation in educational institutions and government employment, at central and state level. However, untouchability only maintained its capacity for reform until its abolition post-independence in the 1949 Indian Constitution (Charsley, 1996, Constituent Assembly of India, 1949).

According to the 2011 Census of India, there are a total of 44.2 million people recognised as SCs in India, (36.5 percent of the total population), In Delhi, 570,000 people have this status (1.3 percent of the all India total), of which 97.1 percent are living in urban areas. Meanwhile, in Rajasthan, there are 2.3 million SCs (5.2 percent of the total population), of which 21.7 percent are living in urban areas (Directorate of Census Operations, 2011).

A similar process in the development of state-based administration can be traced for those castes deemed criminal. Ideas of deviance and criminality were initially associated with 'thugs' identified throughout India, who moved from place to place and earned their living by

stealing. This held the attention of Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General of India, who set up the Targee and Dacoity Department in 1830, for the purposes of suppressing nomadism and illegal activity. The criminal label was subsequently used in the wake of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 and became officially recognised in the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Under this act, people were labelled criminals or habitual offenders and included forest and hill dwelling peoples. Leading up to independence, some of these people were included in the SCs category and others were identified under a new Scheduled Tribes (ST) category. The rest remained criminal communities until they were denotified on the abolishment of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1952 (Singh, 1965, Spivak, 1999).

The abolition of the act resulted from an investigation of the Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee, set up in 1949, to investigate the basis of the Criminal Tribes Act under which 128 tribes were already included. The process of identifying peoples was subsequently challenged in recognition that criminality is not inherent and that the blot on the character of individuals and communities should be removed. The label of Criminal Tribe (CT) was replaced with denotified communities. The state subsequently called upon the expertise of criminologists and psychologists in devising a series of welfare schemes motivated by the idea that these communities needed enlightenment and rehabilitation, particularly those having been placed in the CT settlements under the act (Biswas, 1960).

While in these settlements, people were given food, clothing and shelter, but they did nothing to earn their keep. It was also recognised that the process of segregation had cut them off from the ways of the world and at the same time the outside world was reluctant to reintegrate them. Significant funding was allocated to changing the lives of those living in such communities, through employment in the form of labour and the allocation of land, which they were encouraged to settle on and cultivate through grants and working animals. However, it was found that people preferred to continue to live within the settlements: *“It was more easy to unload the pockets of people than to unload the wagons and thus earn two-three rupees a day without any hard labour”* (Ibid.:viii).

In 1954, the Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission financed a study of the ex-criminal tribes of Delhi, undertaken by the Department of Anthropology at Delhi University. The study was designed to investigate the changes in the lives of these

communities since the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act and to assess the success of several welfare programs in reducing crime, in order to influence further planning for ‘rehabilitation’. According to the report, crime continued to be subversive to society and responsible for ‘defects’ and ‘obstructions’ in its working order. However, it was also recognised that these criminal communities, having had a hard life and struggled for existence, had been forced, in difficult circumstances, into travelling, looting and stealing.

This had, in turn, earned them a reputation as habitual thieves and professional criminals engaged in regular and occasional theft, protection of the guilty or selling stolen goods. This had led to a criminal mindset and habitual behaviour, used as ways of avoiding, or as an alternative to, hard work. It was also suggested that people with low incomes resort to criminal behaviour such as theft, begging, gambling and prostitution. In times of struggle and hardship, they incorporate criminal activity into their livelihood strategies. Even those with adequate incomes can have a lot of insecurity where work is irregular or seasonal. In such circumstances, crime has a stabilising effect, acting as a safety net (Ibid.).

As we can see from these examples, administrative processes, policy focuses and practical measures have changed over time. The story of untouchability looks at the way caste-based hierarchy worked to position people and impacted upon the way those comparatively lower were treated by the higher, in that they were excluded and discriminated against. At this point, inequality was naturalised and poverty was the consequence. Low positioning was reflected directly in poverty-stricken lives. The policy focus however, was on mobility; that is, the elevation and upliftment of peoples, rather than on the alleviation of the condition of poverty, which inequality had produced at the level of everyday lived experience. The alleviation and eradication of poverty was not a central, but consequential concern.

Through the criminal story, we see a shift from poverty as the consequence of inequality of positioning and treatment, to a focus on the condition of poverty. At this point, the focus of policy shifts towards the alleviation and eradication of poverty through social inclusion, social justice and practical measures such as providing land and creating jobs by way of changing people’s lives. Now poverty itself becomes understood as the positioning factor, responsible for creating inequality and maintaining exclusion and discrimination in the way people are treated. This has led to deprivation in people’s living conditions being engrained

in a society shaped increasingly by class distinctions, which cut across prevailing caste distinctions. In this way, alleviating and eradicating the condition of poverty has become central to the development endeavour in India, while the reduction of inequality and increase in mobility in the everyday lives of people is a consequential concern (Srinivasan and Kumar, 1999).

Post-colonial Independence, Constitutional Provision, Citizenship, Economic Growth and Planned Development

Since India's independence, the endeavours to understand and address poverty and the lack of mobility have been driven on two levels; firstly, in terms of ideals reflected in the Constitution of India (the constitution), and secondly, in terms of the research, recommendations and interventions regularly set out in the Planning Commission's five year plans.

Independence brought with it constitutional security for all its citizens in terms of: social, economic and political justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status before the law and the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of caste, religion, gender and birth place; equality of opportunity in education and employment; and finally, fraternity, which assured the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

The formulation of the constitution and its practical workings over time, have been about managing the relationship between the vision of equality in terms of the rights of citizenship and the reality of peoples' everyday experiences of inequality. Management has therefore been about acknowledging that conditions of poverty are a consequence of the way society hierarchically positions people and where the comparatively lower are marginalised and excluded and experience differences in status, treatment and opportunity (Beteille, 1992).

Within the constitution, a major shift in perspective takes place because attempts to defuse the hierarchal basis of the inequality inherent in society are made, by banning ideas and practices associated with untouchability and removing titles of privilege. In doing so, the focus on the elevation and upliftment of people could be replaced by a focus on a forward-

backward dichotomy, which highlighted the progressive character of mobility. In this way, there was a reduction in the direct association between position, status, treatment and opportunity. Caste-based organisation was increasingly cut across by class distinctions (Patil, 1990).

Much of the debate around citizenship centres on the relationship between civil society and the state. Civil society constitutes a territorialised type of citizenship, based on a social contract between the state and the individual, as a politically enfranchised adult represented in parliament and given equality before the law (Kaldor, 2003). The state is interventionist and orientated towards development and this has to be balanced by the electoral approval of the population as a whole.

However, in India, the idea of civil society is no more than an ideal presented in the constitution, and does not characterise people's experiences. For example, during the Emergency, which lasted from 1975 to 1977, the balance struck between citizens and the Indian state shifted toward the state with its authoritarian approach to politics (Chatterjee, 1999). Moreover, from the 1980s, the state has brought its citizens increasingly under the scrutiny of social scientists and experts engaged in simultaneous processes of normalisation, subjectification and governmentality (Inda, 2005, Legg, 2007).

Furthermore, the norms of society, to which people are subjugated and by which people are governed, were gleaned from ruling elites, not the population as a whole. This means that the idea of civil society has a narrower definition in India, corresponding only to the ruling elites and their norms. In this way, the majority of the population is positioned outside the norm, rendered deviant and carries the burden of poverty and inequality. Therefore, the interaction between state institutions with their interventionist, developmental orientation and normative requirements of civil society, has given rise to a mediating sphere of peoples identified as political society.

The rise of political society highlights the extent to which India's peoples and institutions do not conform to the ideals and norms of civil society. As the findings of my research uncover, while the peoples of civil society relate to state institutions on the basis of their active participation as citizens, those of political society relate to the state only on the basis of the

state's obligation to provide welfare and protection for them; they are neither seen as full citizens nor active participants (Chatterjee, 1999, 2001).

Yet the rise of a political society also highlights the extent to which governmentality through political power and authority on the one hand, and disciplining through the police force on the other, can be problematised, testifying to the degree of resistance evident at the level of everyday life (Legg, 2007). For example, for the people in the colony, voting involves a political candidate paying for voters to travel in trucks to the voting station, where they vote and are given food before being taken back home. However, prior to these arrangements, the people of the colony conduct extensive talks, setting out their conditions for participation, in terms of alcohol and cigarette supplies as well as more community oriented requests such as having new water pumps and street lighting installed before any voting takes place. Furthermore, some people in the colony are able to manage the risk to their livelihoods because of prevailing licensing laws, through their investment in widespread rent seeking activities in exchange for the right to work.

In these ways, we can see that citizenship is a constitutional ideal and through its workings leads to very different meanings and experiences for people at the level of everyday life, particularly for poor communities (Gooptu, 2004). In the following section, I continue to explore the relationship between constitutional provision and its workings through the endeavours of the Planning Commission (PC) which was set up in 1950. It was driven by the constitutional imperative to guarantee both individual fundamental rights and collective directive principles. In keeping with this, the PC continues to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a just economic and social order. Men and women are given equal rights to secure an adequate means of livelihood and the ownership and control of resources, which are distributed through a socialist pattern of development, production, distribution, consumption and investment for the common good. The PC has a central role in planning for development. The economy and its growth is a central part of this planning process and regularly discussed within the five year plans.

The objective of the first plan, which ran from 1951 to 1956, was to initiate a process of development that would meet people's needs and aspirations, raise their living standards and open them up to new opportunities for richer more varied lives. Between 1956 and 1961, it

was acknowledged that the positioning of people in life and their poor status, resultant from an accident of birth, should not come in the way of a person's opportunities or their capacity to rise up in life. By the time the third plan arrived, running between 1961 and 1966, poverty was talked about in terms of underdevelopment, which was understood to be endangering the maintenance of peace and spreading ignorance and disease. The poor were seen as a 'class' of people requiring attention with great urgency in terms of social and economic integration.

The fourth plan, from 1969 to 1974, was presented by the new Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The nature of her concerns and the language she used had changed; she had taken stock and the focus was shifted towards the growing population and the persistent problems for 'weaker sections'. The significance of these issues for Indira Gandhi is reflected in the fifth plan which ran between 1974 and 1979. At this point, poverty is pulled centre stage and a new twenty-point economic program was implemented. However, by the time the sixth plan, from 1980 to 1985, was set in motion, the negative impact of rising inflation and the increasing cost of living, fuel and raw materials was being felt.

Up until this point there had been a closed economy, but this would now be replaced with the onset of economic liberalisation. This was particularly hard felt by the rural poor as they began to migrate and settle in Delhi and protectionist price controls were eliminated and ration shops were closed. Between 1985 and 1990, the concern was with reducing numbers: firstly, in terms of the population through family planning; and secondly, in terms of those under the poverty line through the removal of economic, social and welfare barriers for 'weaker sections'. People in the colony, recall at this time, that men were given radios in exchange for having a vasectomy. They were also given resident status from which they could get ID proof, ration cards and voting rights.

With the eighth five year plan running from 1992 to 1997, free market reforms were launched that would bring about privatisation and increased economic liberalisation to India (Hanumantha Rao and Linnemann, 1996). It was stated that development would be best achieved by freeing unnecessary control and regulation and withdrawing state intervention. At this point, the multidimensional nature of poverty was acknowledged, giving priority to the generation of employment opportunities, universalising education and eradicating illiteracy, providing health care facilities, drinking water and electricity. By the time the ninth

plan was introduced, the twentieth century was drawing to a close. Poverty alleviation began to be spoken about in terms of the empowerment of the 'disadvantaged', particularly women, scheduled castes and other 'backward' classes through their participation; that is, making them part of the planning process.

Between 2002 and 2007, the period of the tenth plan, the people of the colony were evicted from the *jhuggi* and rehoused in the resettlement colony on the margins of Delhi. While this plan highlighted poverty and homelessness, the main focus was on the growing population of people of working age coupled with increasing unemployment, which were having great human costs. The Government of India (GOI) recommitted itself to young people, generating jobs and creating opportunities for them to develop their talents and realise their potentials in service of the nation. The tenth plan also reaffirmed the centrality of good governance to the development process, in order to avoid policy failure and shortcomings in its implementation. According to the findings of my own research, the Delhi Development Authority was at the heart of the resettlement project, which uprooted Bhatu people from their homes and livelihoods. Their narratives neither contain testimony to the government's protection of their livelihoods or the creation of new opportunities once they were resettled.

The eleventh plan ran from 2007 to 2012, and was presented to parliament by Manmohan Singh in 2008, the year my fieldwork research began. In entering into his second term in office, he renewed his commitment to planned economic development, as a reflection of the determination of the government to improve the conditions of people and an affirmation of the role of the government in doing this. Furthermore, a return to the focus and language of the early plans; economic growth is not the only measure of development, social 'upliftment' and broad based improvements in the living standards of people are also needed. In keeping with the eleventh plan, the twelfth plan leading up to 2017, focuses on the economy, making growth faster, more inclusive and sustainable. Poverty is narrowly defined in terms of the proportion of the population below the poverty line and broadly defined in terms of the access to essential services such as education and health. By way of monitoring the impact of planned development, twenty-six measurable indices of performance relating to people's lives is introduced, including attainments in income, education and health as demonstratable targets.

Within the evolution of the five year plans, the understanding of poverty has changed over time. In the beginning, it was the underdevelopment and inequality stemming from the way society is stratified by caste and then by class cutting across this. It then became an issue of exclusion. However, by the time Indira Gandhi came to power, it was the persistence of poverty which was a central concern for government. The slogan *Garibi Hatao*, meaning eradicate poverty, drove Indira Gandhi's 1971 election bid. Once she was in office she maintained that the basic strategy of planning for development through expanding the economy was not at fault. Rather, she recognised that supplementary measures were needed in order to reach the poor. Steps in this direction were taken during her office, including increasing India's self-reliance by reducing foreign aid, increasing exports while keeping imports down, stepping up domestic savings and raising the level of resources in the government's hands so that social services, such as education and healthcare, could be extended.

Garibi Hatao is talked about as having given poor people a voice and political representation. It is also talked about in relation to sharing with the 'have-nots' (Gandhi, 1995), and the 'underprivileged' (Ibid., 1984), a strategy to reduce the inequalities between people and minimise regional disparities (Ibid., 1985). These ideals motivated the development of policy and the implementation of subsequent anti-poverty programmes such as the National Twenty-Point Programme, designed to set out key welfare aims for investment such as employment, education, nutrition, health and family planning (Ibid., 1986).

There is however, much criticism and debate over the slogan being empty and the ability of the policies and programmes that followed to eradicate poverty. For some, the extent of poverty and the inequality in the division of national income is a reflection of the injustice in India. They advocate a distributional approach to poverty alleviation and raise serious doubts about the ability of the capitalist economy to provide socialist outcomes. Therefore, the viability of *Garibi Hatao* is questioned as nothing more than a campaign slogan to win votes (Ghosh, 1971). Others look specifically at the economics behind the eradication of poverty. The PCs suggestion of an anti-poverty programme via economic growth is understood to be self-defeating in a country where growth is limited to income, savings and investment and where the majority of the population are poor and the ownership and control of resources are concentrated in the hands of the rich (Kurien, 1972).

Furthermore, there is no automatic relationship between faster growth, the creation of employment, higher standards of living and reduced disparity. That is why programmes have failed and inequality has increased, as the poor get poorer and the rich reap the benefits, leaving *Garibi Hatao* as nothing more than a hollow idea. In these ways, the role of the rich in maintaining poverty arises repeatedly. The rich are seen to cooperate and share their wealth with those in office, while those in office use their influence to help the rich through maintaining double standards and over estimating their desire and ability to change things (Shourie, 1972).

Some take a multi-dimensional view of the endeavour to eradicate poverty, looking at the political engineering, the economic strategy and the social implications of policy and its implementation. *Garibi Hatao* can never be only a slogan, because two elections were fought and won on it and so many people had voted for it. As poverty continues to increase, the policies designed to alleviate it and the institutions through which policies are implemented are inadequate. The five year plans constitute, in themselves, anti-poverty programmes, and while economic growth is necessary, economic objectives have dominated the approach to eradicating poverty. Development in its multi-dimensional sense, although consciously pursued, constitutes an increasingly smaller part of the total plan and goals which are too diverse and conflicting are being pursued simultaneously rather than sequentially. Therefore, they have fallen way short of their intentions (Kothari, 1972, Ranadive, 1973).

Interestingly, another spate of debates arises in the mid-1980s on the subject of *Garibi Hatao*, focusing primarily on the anti-poverty programmes targeting the poor in rural areas. The Small Farmer Development Agency and the Marginal Farmer and Agricultural Labour development programmes were merged in order to help small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. However, these created further inequality and had limited impact in terms of inputs like seed and fertiliser, which landless labourers such as the scheduled castes, were unable to benefit from.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was then set forward, emphasising the provision of assets to farmers such as wells and pumps, bullocks and implements as well as seeds and fertiliser, while landless labourers were given livestock. This worked to reduce the percentage of rural poor, but questions remained over how poor the households were who

benefited and whether households were actually able to rise above the poverty line and stay there. Knowledge of the actual performance of these schemes is well documented and writers vary in their findings and therefore their conclusions. Some of the key issues are detailed below.

For some, the hope of economic growth had failed, the redistribution of land was limited and the IRDP giving assets, inputs, training and tools had come to little, other than the subsidy, which seems to have been the main attraction for people. The strategy was understood to have been misconceived, able to help only a small number of people, and therefore, not suitable as the basis of an anti-poverty programme. Opportunities for private and public wage labour needed to be created (Rath, 1985). Steps towards this end were taken through the Wage Employment Programme, the National Rural Employment Programme the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (Nayyar, 1989), and most recently the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2005).

Questions are raised from these about whether such programmes should be minimised, maintained through modification or replaced by wage labour and concludes that it should not be a matter of either/or. A successful anti-poverty programme should be one that integrates the two, in order to meet the varied needs of the poor (Hirway, 1985). In keeping with this assessment, some saw that the role of the IRDP could not be underestimated and that it is not a matter of being wrong, it just requires some adjustment (Dantwala, 1985). Others point to the need for better implementation to make existing programmes more effective (Sanwal, 1985). Meanwhile, others still, bring in the role that urban areas can play in a strategy for rural poverty alleviation (Sarath, 1985).

Affirmative action, or reservation policy as it is known in India, has also been put forward as a strategy for poverty alleviation and upward mobility. The country's reservation policy history begins before independence. As highlighted above, two categories of Backward Classes (BCs); SCs and STs, had already been identified as targets for reservation policy at the time of drafting the constitution. Independent India's development history has continued to focus on poverty alleviation and on bringing about the mobility of its people in this way. These endeavours are embedded within the constitution in terms of the 'upliftment' of BCs. As highlighted in the introduction of this thesis, a commission was also constitutionally

appointed to identify Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and to make recommendations as to steps to be taken for the improvement of their circumstances (Constituent Assembly of India, 1949).

Under a number of subsequent Backward Classes Commissions, at the national and state level, many people have been identified as 'backward' in terms of their: physical location, particularly geographical marginalisation and ways of living associated with nomadism; economic position, particularly subsistence based farming and agricultural labour; social position, particularly the discriminatory nature of caste and gender relations; and finally, cultural positional, particularly beliefs and practices associated with low levels of educational attainment and child marriage (Backward Classes Commission, 1956, Backward Classes Commission, 1991, National Backward Classes Commission, 2005). In more recent times, 'backwardness' is increasingly associated with economic position, in terms of employment, particularly migrant workers and the increased casualisation of labour (Ahluwalia, 2001, Planning Commission, 2002, 2003, 2007, Sharma, 2003, Virmani, 2006).

Reservation policy was one such step subsequently designed to target all 'backward' groups, by way of addressing the above circumstances as barriers to mobility. Its role is to legislate the reservation of proportional quotas in higher education, government employment and political and gender-based representation. Several general principles are used in the justification of reservation, despite their tendency to clash with the constitutional Fundamental Rights (FRs) and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPs), and each other. These include: compensation, which acknowledges past injustices; protection, of the weak through proportional equality and social welfare; and social justice, whereby a focus is placed on material distribution (Austin, 2003, Bacchi, 1996, Nesiah, 1997, Weisskopf, 2004).

Moreover, there are three types of reservation scheme. The first type is characterised as compartment and layer quota, where comprehensive lists of quotas add up to 100 percent. This achieves a fine division of reservation, which ensures that the weakest benefit. For example, it acknowledges the economic, educational and social differences within collectives and serves best the interests of equity. However, this approach is reliant on the 100 per cent identification of a collective and the acceptance of the principle of collective based rights.

The second type is characterised by guaranteed minimum quotas, where quotas for protected groups are filled first, then the unreserved on the basis of merit. However, despite gaining access through merit, it will still look like people benefited from reservation. The third type of reservation scheme is characterised as over and above quota, where unreserved places are filled first on the basis of merit and then the rest met by quotas. This has the advantage of letting those who gain access through merit to have the option as to whether or not they reveal their caste identity. This type of reservation is mostly used for electoral reservation (Nesiah, 1997).

Reservation policy has been the target for public scrutiny and contestation, the emotive subject of academic and political debates and the motivation for unrest in the form of strikes and demonstrations throughout the country (Bacchi, 1996, Bagchi and Choudhury, 1989, Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004, Desai, 1984, Nesiah, 1997, Patil, 1990, Shah, 1991, Srinivasan and Kumar, 1999, Weisskopf, 2004).

The nature of early debate was dominated by concerns relating to whether the basic material differences and inequalities between peoples should be a basis for poor and disadvantaged peoples' assimilation or segregation from the ruling elites. Assimilation would bring benefits in relation to education and economic development, but crush people's identities. Meanwhile, identities would be preserved through segregation, but educational and economic development would be impaired (Gopal, 2000).

The first Backward Classes Commission (BCC) report was published in 1952, in the wake of this early debate on reservation policy. Commissioner Kalelkar was against making provisions for reservation in government employment, because he felt that such positions demand the best people and that integrity, efficiency and initiative can come from any community. He was however, more positive about the impact of reservation for education, saying that it would allow people of different background to mix and provide the opportunity for lower castes to emulate higher castes (Backward Classes Commission, 1956).

However, the GOI subsequently rejected the recommendations of the Kalelkar Commission and because of the experiences of SCs and STs pertaining to the failures of reservation policy's practical workings were starting to come to light. There was evidence of failure in

relation to: facilitating social and economic upward mobility; excluding the creamy layer from benefiting; the constitutional clause of reducing standards in order to fill quotas and the subsequent undermining of the quality of institutions; preventing a growing ruling elite prejudice-fuelled backlash towards castes and tribes; the revival of militant Hindu chauvinist parties such as Shiv Sena, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and BLP (Bates 1995, Nesiiah 1997).

The government was, therefore, under pressure to show that it could meet the demands of constitutional provision, and it was into this increasingly hostile environment that the second BCC report was submitted in 1981. This report emphasises a new urgency in having the interests and needs of BCs acknowledged and the need to change people's attitudes. Despite the rising tension, reservation policy continues to be absolutely defended as having a benefit for BCs, and recommendations made in the report testify to this (Backward Classes Commission, 1991).

Much of the debate which ensued at this time, was understood to have originated within elite circles, wising as they did, to maintain their interests and position of privilege. It was acknowledged that reservation could not transform India into an egalitarian society. However, it could work to erode the concentration of elites benefiting from higher education and government employment. This minority was seen to have subjected the majority to injustice over a long period of time. A new class of beneficiaries were now making legitimate claims for their share in what had always been monopolised by the few (Bates, 1995).

However, growing public opposition was fuelled by the publication of the second BCC report in 1991. Furthermore, violent backlashes culminated in widespread rioting in 1993, when the recommendations of the report were finally implemented by the GOI. This report leads to the extension of reservation to OBCs, giving them access to higher education and government employment. What had been *intracaste* and *intratribe* tensions, became much more widespread, between and within central and state governments and extending to between and within states and regions.

Moreover, the nature of the debate was changing to focus on these OBCs being comparatively more numerous and less deserving than SCs and STs. They were already more advanced and had no claims to a history of repression. Therefore the justification for

reservation needed to be changed. On the grounds of fairness, the distribution of benefits in relation to higher education and representation in desirable employment opportunities and the reduction in social and economic inequality more generally, were highlighted (Bates, 1995, Nesiah, 1997, Weisskopf, 2004).

Increased reservation meant there were further restrictions on the opportunities for those not identified as BCs or OBCs and people began developing a vested interest in being formally recognised as 'backward' (Srinivas, 1964). The pressures created by the rapid expansion of reservation were accentuated by slow economic growth, which further reduced the number of desirable employment opportunities and further increased competition. In these ways, reservation policy is increasingly seen to undo the very benefits it was implemented to bring about (Bates, 1995, Jeffrey et al., 2004). Moreover, reservation policy was found to perpetuate: 'backwardness', as the criterion through which people are identified and subsequently targeted for the benefits of reservation policy; and caste, given that it is the level at which reservation policy is implemented (Hay, 2007).

However, the debate to extend reservation has never stopped and it was mandated to women in the seventy-third constitutional amendment in 1992, by way of raising their profile, concerns, autonomy and control (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004, Nesiah, 1997). Central to the debates at this point were the ideas of merit and compensation. Such debates were motivated by the tension between the ideal of equality and the reality of inequality, which is created by the concept of equality having two forms; a simple sense, which operates according to the principle of merit, and a proportional sense, which operates according to the principle of compensation.

The former, sees peoples as having equal opportunities, but that they differ in their abilities and talents. Therefore, benefits are allocated on the basis of merit. For example, this drives the normative, formal ways that people use to access education and employment on the basis of the knowledge and skills they have attained. The latter, sees that all people do not have equal opportunities. Therefore, benefits are allocated on the basis of need. For example, those who are systematically discriminated against on the basis of their low caste status, have less knowledge and skills to draw upon in normative competition, therefore have less chance. As

a result, special opportunities are put in place to help them access education and employment (Beteille, 1992).

In India, people have been given equality in the simple sense through legal status and citizenship (Austin, 2003). However, ideas of equality of opportunity and equality of outcome are also central to the reservation debate in India. This is because, in the face of increased liberalisation and distributive justice regulated by the free market, increased emphasis has been placed on the principle of equal opportunity. Particular attention has, therefore, been given to removing discrimination and exclusion in order to create free and open competition. Yet, the inequalities between peoples can constitute both objective and subjective obstacles to competition. For example, they may lack means and/or motivation due to discrimination (Beteille, 2002).

Furthermore, while equality of opportunity can mean that people are made more equal before competition, it is competition that produces inequality in terms of their achievements. Therefore, the specific needs and priorities of people, once they have access to education or employment, must also be acknowledged in the process of allocating benefits. This is particularly important given the collective targeting of beneficiaries so that reservation policy does not satisfy the needs of all caste members equally. This has led to the development of a 'creamy layer' of people, who have already better starting positions and therefore comparatively less need. Yet, under this system, such people are well within their rights to make claims. The injustice of persistent discrimination and collective targeting is behind the rise of competing claims to different kinds of need, which exceed the criterion for 'backwardness' already set, which have in turn, given rise to political mobilisation (Bacchi, 1996, Nesiah, 1997, Srinivas, 1966, Weisskopf, 2004).

Addressing and feeding into these heightened debates was the third BCC report. The idea of reservation was only ever designed to be a temporary measure, as reflected in the constitution and the first BCC report. However, by the time this third report was submitted in 2005, we find that it is now a nationally focused, permanent body regulating the access of peoples to reservation, reservation orders in recruitment and the issuing of OBCs certificates, as well as the full and effective implementation of reservation policy, monitoring, evaluating and

adjusting policy and the effective functioning of the BCCs, at state and national levels (National Backward Classes Commission, 2005).

Since this report, the capacity of reservation policy to actually bring about ‘upliftment’ has continued to be seriously challenged. Research shows that the poor social and economic conditions of BCs, such as SCs, remain closely positioned with minority groups, such as Muslims, who have not been identified and targeted under reservation policy at all (Ahmad, 1981, Ansari, 1992, Basant, 2007, Desai, 1981, Rajinder Sachar Committee, 2006, Robinson, 2007, Shah, 2007, Wilkinson, 2007, Yasin, 1981).

Moreover, research shows there are concerns about what happens to students once they gain access to higher educational institutions. For example, they are neither prepared for, nor able to meet, the demands of the highly competitive job market on completion of their courses. This highlights the importance of identifying individual’s needs as well as access, but also to prioritise the ongoing evaluation of student competence to ensure that they develop their potential going forward and that educational institutions are accountable (Mehta, 2006, Weisskopf, 2004).

There has also been an unprecedented move to extend reservation policy into the private sector. It is now this particular issue that helps keep reservation policy and practice the target of public scrutiny and contestation, the emotive subject of debate and the motivation for civil unrest across India (Chatterjee, 2006, Gagan, 2006, Nanda, 2006, Natraj, 2007, Rajinder Sachar Committee, 2006, Shah, 2007, Thorat, 2004, Venkatesan, 2006).

Through these discussions we can see the ways in which the focus on poverty, inequality and mobility has interacted and shifted over time, reflecting changing and often competing priorities in national and state strategies for the alleviation of poverty, the reduction of inequality and the increase in mobility, which are increasingly influenced by a globalising world. In the section which follows, I go on to discuss policy development as it relates to migration and urban settlement as a key livelihood strategy within this expanding context.

Migration, *Jhuggi* Settlement and Resettlement

The migration of the rural poor to cities like Delhi has increased the population and experiences of poverty. There is not enough housing to meet demand, neither is there enough affordable housing nor enough suitable housing to meet the needs of migrant families and communities. Moreover, migrants engage in types of earning, for the sake of survival, in what constitutes the informal sector; that is, irregular work with low earnings which does not operate within the legal or tax framework. The formal job market lags behind urban population growth and is inaccessible to migrants, who are often uneducated and unskilled. Furthermore, the urban poor want to live near these informal work opportunities so they can avoid the time and expense of travelling long distances. The lack of housing and the need to be close to work leads to high levels of homelessness, pavement dwelling and the growth of settlements of temporary shelters which are illegal. In these circumstances, there is no ownership of land or tenure based on a formal contract with a landlord where they pay rent. Secure tenancy and legality are beyond poor people's means (Pugh, 1990).

The poverty of squatter settlements does not exist alongside the visual splendour of New Delhi. It is hidden away by administrative elites who want a sterile, geometric, garden city. Bureaucrats and town planners prefer to have the poor and their squatter settlements removed, considering them as less deserving, yet they have to provide them with utilities and services. Housing policies and urban planning have therefore been formulated to remove squatters from unauthorised areas and to relocate them to land in officially sanctioned resettlement colonies far from the centre (Legg, 2007).

Changing Housing Policy and Urban Planning

Housing policy and urban planning are makeshift at the national level and addressed through the PC's five year plans. It is recognised that there are limitations in planning and investment, because individual states were expected to foot the bill and there was no guarantee, therefore, that they would do so. Early five year plans brought housing and urbanisation into the policy planning framework in order to confront housing shortages and provide utilities such as water and electricity. They also introduced town planning legislation and city oriented master plans.

By the 1960s, the resettlement of 'slum' dwellers was seen as socially progressive, given that until then, poor people were evicted, their shelters cleared and they were left to fend for themselves. Delhi was offering something more; security of tenure on small plots of land with shared basic utilities and the permission to build their own houses. However, these plots were unusable as housing opportunities because they were too small and too distant to allow travel to and from work. Difficulties in the implementation of the policy, highlighted serious misconceptions about the needs of the poor who then went on to illegally sell their rights of tenure to those with better incomes. They then moved to other unauthorised settlements where there were better opportunities to earn and where they could pursue a life outside bureaucratic control.

Therefore unauthorised settlements continued to grow due to the demographic pressure, and in turn, the economic pressure of that demographic. During the 1970s, some of these settlements were legalised at election times when politicians such as Indira Gandhi gave their authorisation in return for support. This led to large gains for the occupants, who were often tightly knit family and community groups, who had migrated from the rural areas to offer particular services, such as shoe shining, to the urban population (Pugh, 1990).

At this point in time, housing migrants was a matter of larger public interest because of the continued growth of the population and the urgent need for housing. Assurances of permanency of tenure followed and the temporary structures, often constituting no more than plastic strung up with rope or propped up with bamboo, took on an increasingly permanent nature, as occupants invested money in making walls of brick and roofs of wood to make them secure and water tight. In turn, the government policy of slum removal set out in the early five year plans had to yield to slum upgrading activities and provisions, whereby lanes were paved, water, electricity and street lighting were provided and toilet and washroom facilities built (Deshpande, 1976a).

However, economic changes and development needs over time, meant that priorities changed again and the people were left with no legal rights to complain. Nothing in the law could prevent government authorities from making changes to land use for another totally different purpose, a higher priority, especially when, again, it was seen to be in the wider public interest. This meant that large numbers of people were forcefully evicted, their houses

destroyed and their fundamental rights to life and livelihood overwritten in the name of public interest (Deshpande, 1976b, Shukla, 2006).

In 1990, the government of Delhi adopted a new slum policy, which remains the general frame of reference in the master plan for Delhi 2021. It constitutes a three pronged approach including: the in situ upgrade for settlements on land which is not required for development projects in the next fifteen to twenty years; the relocation of clusters on land that is required for the purpose of projects in the greater public interest; and finally the environmental improvement of urban settlements by providing amenities for community use, irrespective of the status of the land. With few exceptions, the prevalent strategy has been to remove settlements and relocate the people. An essential part of this strategy is that people cannot be removed without notice of eviction and without alternatives being offered, providing that people can prove by ration card that they lived in a settlement before the end of 1998 (Dupont, 2008).

In keeping with this policy, people were resettled to plots of land, and in the case of those with twenty to thirty years residency in politically legitimised settlements, they were relocated and rehoused in purpose-built flats in less developed, more marginalised areas to the west of Delhi. Relocation has been progressively further away from the centre by way of allowing for the maximum amount of prime land to be kept available for development. The high economic costs are borne by those relocated, because of the inadequacy of the housing, the lack of drinking water and dependable electricity supplies, the poor quality of amenities and the daily investment in travel expenses (Ibid.).

Findings show, that many of the sites where people were evicted from have never been developed and attract new settlements of people who do not meet the ration card cut off point of the end of 1998. In turn, existing squatter settlements become more densely populated and new ones appear. Research also questions that the changes in land use actually serve wider public interest, particularly when the areas evicted become parks and green spaces, are used to build flats, offices, shopping malls, petrol pumps and new roads, metro lines and stations and hotels.

In these ways, land use for beautifying and redeveloping is seen to be more about meeting elite and political aspirations, influenced by economic liberalisation, for Delhi to become a world class city. These aspirations are destroying the investments of the poor in their own efforts to improve their lives and pushes them away from the centre, while failing to solve the issue of providing affordable, suitable-for-purpose housing in economically viable areas. Delhi's slum policy has provided inadequate solutions and is increasingly overwritten by the judiciary in the name of illegality and environmentalism (Deshpande, 1976a, Dupont, 2008, Ramanathan, 2006).

Since the year 2000, the pace of demolition has increased dramatically, as a result of the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India judiciaries' expanding role in demanding slum clearance. The intervention of the judiciary is undermining the policy, which requires that settlement dwellers are given notice of eviction and that the government is obligated to provide alternatives. The violence of eviction and demolition had been tempered by these policies of notice and resettlement. However, the fundamental right of every citizen to housing and livelihood is being rewritten, because the urban poor are increasingly given illegal status. The power of the directive principle, which states that land use can be changed if it is in the wider public interest, is increasingly being decided by an elite-driven, environmentalist agenda. In all these instances, the needs of the poor and the drive for a clean, green Delhi, are thrown into competition (Ramanathan, 2006).

While the judiciary have played an activist role in several pro-poor schemes including mid-day meals and employment guarantees, there is an increasing anti-poor orientation in court proceedings. This is particularly the case when it comes to issues of slum settlement and housing. This is being driven by the writ petitioning of Residents Welfare Associations, based on the elevated position of tax payers living in formal, legal colonies with an environmentalist agenda, in relation to settlement dwellers who are seen as non-taxpayers living in informal, illegal colonies. In this way, the entitlement of the poor is removed because of their illegal status as workers, who are low paid, uneducated, unskilled and who live in failed, surplus communities. Neither their contribution to the economy, nor their exploitation are recognised (Sridhar, 2006). They are also illegal because of their residential status and their use of land, which is seen as misuse. They are therefore, criminalised for the

persistent public nuisance and health hazard they represent. Their continuing struggle for survival and fight to hold on to ways of earning and living goes unnoticed (Ghertner, 2008).

The Changing Role of the DDA

After independence, Delhi was the place where new ideas of town planning and land policy were launched. Here it is the DDA who has the monopoly when it comes to land allocation and housing development. In 1960, the DDA developed a regulatory planning approach in the form of a twenty-year master plan of urban development. The poor would become the beneficiaries of this planning; in keeping with the PC, slums would be evicted as housing supply expanded and settlements would be transformed and integrated into suburban developments. In 1961, the DDA was given all the power, authority and policy framework to adopt a development planning approach. The central government provided the initial funds to allow for the trade in land and the subsequent planning and developing the city. The DDA bought undeveloped land, at frozen prices and on a large scale, well in advance of development, retained it in public ownership and leasing it for development in such a way that coordination between housing, infrastructure, utilities, services and employment could be carried out over time (Pugh, 1990).

Since 1973, the DDA has been the dominant developer of formal, permanent constructions in the form of multi-family housing blocks for a range of income groups, including purpose-built colonies for slum resettlement. Besides the funding for public housing from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), the DDA uses its own finances and mortgage funds to construct such housing projects. But supply is limited to what the DDA plans and administers, meaning that it has persistently fallen short in terms of the numbers of houses needed and in building the types of housing that would meet the needs of individual families. Therefore, housing stress continues to be evident, as migrants continue to arrive and live in illegal squatter settlements built outside the original master plans.

The DDA has allowed a focus on the need for regulatory planning to dominate development, where the potential to increase funds to build more suitable houses lay. They set standards and zoning ordinances for separating land use and mapped out master plans for development over time. They continue to attempt to coordinate public and private investment in different

types of land usage, even where land use specifications have to work alongside multiple term planning and uncertain futures. Yet, the increasing role of the judiciary in matters of settlement relocation and housing, has seen the role of the DDA change significantly. Since the year 2000, the power of the DDA to determine the status of settlements has diminished. Furthermore, they are forced increasingly, under obligation, to prevent further settlements and carry out evictions subject to the courts' decisions (Ramanathan, 2006).

However, the DDA maintains its monopoly on land, and this means they sell to the highest bidder, extract high prices, hold back supply and invest only a fraction of the funds raised on the development of resettlement colonies, while ignoring the housing welfare of the poor. They work in favour of higher income groups, who can afford the premium prices directly or indirectly through poor overstretched tenants who sell their land or housing, to those who can afford it, so they can meet their everyday needs. This is often to prospecting property dealers bent on raising property prices for their own gains. In these ways, even though the DDA oscillates between being a land acquisition authority and a housing developer, land price inflation has rocketed, and housing remains in short supply. Meanwhile, those who have housing are living in overcrowded conditions, which are unsuitable for their needs, and in many cases without basic utilities and services. In these ways, allocation continues to be outside the master plan and squatting on unallocated land and in unallocated housing continues to be a feature of urban living for the poor (Ghertner, 2008, Pugh, 1990).

Conclusions

From the issues discussed here, it becomes clear that policies and programmes, driven by constitutional provision to eradicate poverty, are among the most difficult to design and implement. Furthermore, their failures and shortcomings provide important insights into the nature of the struggles influencing the rural poor to migrate to cities such as Delhi to live and to earn. Whether, rural or urban, physical projects such as infrastructure, housing, electricity and water are visible and benefits are apparent in the short term. However, welfare projects targeting education and health, including nutrition and life expectancy, require longer term delivery and access and the benefits take much longer to become visible. This is made all the more difficult when poor people often live in areas which are marginalised, undeveloped and do not have active and effective institutions present (Sanwal, 1985).

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