GHETTOES, RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE - A MUSLIM ENCLAVE IN NEW DELHI

Debanjana Das

Abstract: An urban reality, ghettoes express urban stratification, economic and socio-cultural inequalities characterizing migrant lives. While ethnic ghettoes have reinforced community solidarities and cultural survival, it has also ushered in exclusion for the cultural community, whereby the ghetto has become a 'state of mind'. This applies to Indian Muslims, who have clustered themselves into segmented enclaves for 'being safe' in a social milieu characterized by exclusion. This focus upon religious segregation in explaining ghettoes, have diverted attention away from the role of the state and how power structures reinforce marginalization of religious communities in urban contexts. Based upon fieldwork and secondary data exploration, the paper seeks to investigate the contours of marginalization that characterize Delhi's populous Muslim ghetto, Jamia Nagar. It explores how state neglect has relegated this Muslim enclave towards the city's margins. Apart from reinforcing urban exclusion, state action and inaction speak volumes about the stratified urban landscape that Delhi is as a capital city.

Keywords: Ghetto, segregation, Jamia Nagar, Batla House, Muslims, State, Delhi

INTRODUCTION

The construction of the Indian nation state entailed the inclusion of cultural, religious and ethnic communities whereby secularism and tolerance were to become the watchwords towards assimilation of diverse cultures. The Constitution was framed keeping in mind these multi-faiths and their rights were to be protected by a sovereign state. After independence, the state emerged as the legitimate source of power to bring about the nation's progress (Chatterjee, 1999: 200-219). However, seventy-three years since independence, inclusive development of minority religious communities continue to remain debatable in both quantitative and experiential ways. The Sachar Committee (2006) pointed that Muslims as a religious community have socio-economically lagged behind compared to other religious minorities. With dismal development indicators, Muslims continue to survive in stratified and segmented ghettoes across Indian cities, including the political capital Delhi, the territorial and symbolic site of state power.

In the domain of urban sociology, scholarly emphasis upon a socio-economic, racial underclass constituting a quintessential ghetto has been produced within the context of first world societies, especially amidst American segregation experiences (Park and Burgess, 1925; Wirth, 1928). One can possibly argue that western theories fall short in explaining the complex and multi-factorial aspects of community segregation in Indian society shaped by a different set of social, political and cultural

Debanjana Das, Ph. D. Scholar, SSS/CSSS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, E-mail : debanjanadas@gmail.com

realities and where ghettoization and decisions to segregate has often been forced by workings of a post-colonial state. In fact, "…*state structures and policies play a decisive role* in the differential stitching together of inequalities of class, place and origin…"(Wacquant, 2008: 6). Hence, it becomes pertinent to understand how the state and its workings bear upon its cultural and religious minorities and shape their existence and experiences in urban society.

CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

Urban sociology abounds on the existence and exclusionary practices of ghetto life (Clark, 1965; Park and Burgess, 1925; Wacquant 2008, 2012; Wirth, 1928). Urban segregation has been explained through the lens of racism and ethnicity whereby the ghetto has signified a city quarter restricting racial minorities. Louis Wirth, the doyen of urban sociology, described the ghetto as a social institution reflecting a 'specific social order' (Wirth, 1928:287). The ghetto is 'an effect of isolation', but this isolation is more than territorial, ghetto 'is a state of mind' (Wirth, 1928: 8, 287). It expresses social distance between communities cohabiting the city and continues as a refuge for racial group desiring to maintain cultural distinctiveness. Weber treated ghetto as an instrument of 'exclusionary closure' characterized by a 'closed' social relationship (Weber, 1978). It is a case of closure within, as well as against outsiders writes Weber (1978: 43- 44). Thus, ghettoes exist as an institutional form, spatially based mechanism of ethno-racial closure and control, born through relegation of a negatively typed population, which develops an array of specific institutions operating as a substitute for dominant social institutions. Characterized by social problems and inhabited by 'urban outcasts', ghettoes are a mix of dispossessed households, disenfranchised immigrants and minorities and territories of relegation, writes Wacquant (2008:1).

The concept of 'community' has been integral in defining the ghetto. While earlier sociologists had opined upon the gradual diminution of communities with the onset of modern bureaucratic state (Durkheim, 1933; Tonnies, 1955), contrarily the community has emerged as the place for 'seeking safety' (Bauman, 2001). Following anthropological and sociological understandings, religion has been linked as a quintessential feature of community life. Rather than conceiving religious communities as anachronistic and opposed to the modern state, we need to devote attention to how intrusion of the bureaucratic state has often denied religious communities and in the process strengthened inward community solidarities.

Muslims constitute a religious community in terms of sharing solidarities based upon a common Islamic faith and cultural tradition. India's culture contact with Islam began in 712 with the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad Ibn Kasim[1] and was later solidified when the Turk, Muhammad of Ghor, defeated Prithviraj and captured Delhi, thereby opening way for Muslim rule in Delhi (Eaton, 2000; Hambly, 1968). With political rule, religious reform and spiritual traditions like

Sufism, Islam spread into the subcontinent and was accommodated in the form of an Indo-Islamic culture. Foucault (1980) argued, how through discursive processes and practices, the colonial state 'invented' these community identities.[2] Presently the modern bureaucratic state has been reconstructing the identity of these religious communities, whereby through socio-political movements, ethnic and religious groups are resisting state hegemony.

MUSLIM GHETTOES IN DELHI

The birth of the post-colonial statecraft followed 'critical events' (Das, 1996), leading to the creation of a category of refugees. Their migration from partition camps followed their movement into 'safe' zones of community life or what we sociologically term 'ghetto'. Post partition, ghettoization increasingly became a state-mediated affair. A Ministry of Rehabilitation set up in 1947 created refugee colonies.[3] Delhi, receiving substantial state attention towards rehabilitation of migrants and refugees, a state body called the 'Custodian' was appointed on September 20, 1947, which was responsible for assigning abandoned properties to rehabilitating refugees. It was an internal displacement, directed by the newly formed state, whereby houses of Muslim families were being declared evacuee properties and custodian's business was to examine the eligibility of those in possession of houses and find tenants among the refugees for vacant Muslim houses. Most of these Muslim refugees flocked to Muslim majority locales where they 'felt safe'. The All India Congress Committee recommended that Muslim majority localities be turned into Muslim zones, which will provide safety to the city's Muslims (Zamindar, 2007:817). Nehru declared that Muslim zones were 'safe'.[4] Although this movement was presumed temporary, most Muslims never returned to their houses which in due course of time were occupied by non-Muslim refugees pouring into the city. In other words, the Nehruvian policy legitimized Muslim ghettoization that began with partition, an event solidifying communal and territorial separation of communities.[5] Over time these ghettoes continued to be populated by Hindu *bania* communities, who transformed some of these spaces into commercial hubs.

Presently, Muslim ghettoes abound in postcolonial Delhi including Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi), Seelampur, Jaffrabad, Welcome Colony, Seemapuri, Nizamuddin and Jamia Nagar. In spite of being religiously integrated clusters, some of these ghettoes are highly structured hierarchic formations. For instance, the Muslim neighborhood of Nizamuddin *basti*,[6] which developed around the Chisti saint's tomb, primarily consists of a substantial poor working class Muslim population. Another fragment, the Nizamuddin East is where Delhi's elite, privileged Muslims reside. This structural hierarchy within the neighbourhood speaks of the extent to which the Islamic community remains socio-economically stratified from within.

JAMIA NAGAR

Jamia Nagar (JN), situated in the southeastern margins of New Delhi, is a universe of Muslim population.[7] It evolved from an urban village called Okhla, which was converted into an economic industrial estate in 1957.[8] The history of Okhla *gaon* (village) goes back to the times when the British built the Agra Canal in 1874 to boost irrigation in Delhi, Agra and Bharatpur. An 'urban village' (Kanaujia, 2015 and Mehra, 2005)[9] prior to residential clustering, JN was characterized by a rural landscape with cultivating villagers following traditional crafts and vocations. With introduction of the industrial estate, effects of industrialization became visible across Okhla's rural hinterland. Village tradition and culture began to transform. Lacking skills for industrial work, villagers were reduced to marginal workers in the estate, which constituted approximately 34 factories by 1961. These factories manufactured engineering goods, handicrafts and cosmetics (Srinivas, 1966:36). Okhla expanded and continues as one of the oldest industrial hub of Delhi.

Okhla's demographics bourgeoned after Jamia Millia Islamia's migration from Karol Bagh in 1935.[10] Literature on JN has often missed giving its due to this integral factor behind JN's establishment. Given Jamia's ancestry to the Aligarh College, Jamia scholars and students had begun migrating towards Delhi. Stalwarts of Jamia, including Dr. Zakir Husain and Prof. Mujeeb belonged to Uttar Pradesh, Hakim Ajmal Khan was a Delhi'ite and later scholars who arrived to offer the university a strong footing drew their lineage to a combination of *qasbati* and cosmopolitan culture. Muslim families from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar began drifting towards JN seeking education and employment and they have been adopted and sheltered by the community (Visvanathan, 2010:153) Presently, JN includes a cluster of residential colonies including Zakir Nagar, Batla House, Ghaffar Manzil, Joga Bai, Joga Bai Extension, Abul Fazal Enclave, Johri Farms, Noor Nagar, Nayyar Manzil, Haji Colony, Shaheen Bagh and Okhla Vihar.

Residents perceive the distinctiveness of this ghetto from other Muslim conglomerations across Delhi, in terms of its lineage to the locus of Muslim education, Jamia Millia Islamia.[11] However, in spite of Jamia's secular and nationalist past, with Dr. Zakir Husain's mausoleum reminding the contributions of nationalist Muslims and their desire for a secular nation, the neighborhood is dubbed as a '*chota Pakistan'* and 'mini-Pakistan', a popular imaginary notion perceiving Indian Muslims as foreigners.[12]

Much of JN was not a part of the Delhi Master Plan (Sriram, 2014:155). First generation residents point out that the space is much older than Jamia Millia, a forested land where Okhla was a village comprising of Hindu Gujjars, Jats and Yadav who engaged in agricultural small-scale occupations. Presently, the Hindu population of JN is concentrated in Serai Julena and Okhla Head. A Shiva temple exists at Zakir Nagar, where Hindu families throng for ritual performances. The

Okhla Barrage remains an attractive spot for leisure seekers. Older generations reminiscence the times when they used to fish in the adjoining Yamuna River before the space transformed into a congested urban ghetto.

JN's demography consists of first and later generation Muslim families of Jamia and identifies themselves as *padhe likhe musalmaans,* an integral segment of Delhi's urban middle class Muslims. They are families who had moved during 1930-40s seeking employment and education in the newly constructed capital. They purchased land in the adjoining neighborhood and began living. Post independence, especially after 1980s, a substantial Muslim population from Shahjahanabad began migrating towards JN. Apart from Jamia's staff, young professionals employed in private and public sector, a floating migrant population including Jamia scholars and seasonal migrant laborers and workers attracted by economic opportunities in Delhi constitute its population.

Popularly termed *musalmanon ka mohalla,* JN is characterized by an Islamic *mahol* (ambiance), with preponderance of Islamic culture and tradition. *Mahol* is a way of life defining the identity of people and reflects their belonging to the community (Kirmani, 2008:358). In spite of this unified *mahol*, JN's Muslims remain internally stratified. Residents display diverse regional, class, caste and gendered identities. Sunni Muslims are preponderant along with *shias* peacefully co-existing. Commensality and marriage choices remain restricted to selection from preferred sects and caste groups. Economic class indicators like income and occupation have determined residential spacing and hierarchy within this ghetto. Upper caste elite Muslims have contributed towards enumeration of class differences and segregated the 'other' non-privileged Muslims. [13] Regional hierarchies run deep here where *biharis are* often mocked and considered ethnically inferior to Muslims of Uttar Pradesh. Exclusion persists within this ghetto's closure.

State and ghettoization in Jamia Nagar

A combination of socio–historical, economic, political and cultural processes have led to JN's establishment. However, it is interesting how this ghetto has evolved from a small residential community parented by Jamia Millia into becoming a marginalized ghetto with a bourgeoning migrant population. How political events, processes and state action have resulted in spatially and symbolically segregating JN, constitutes the following discussion.

Post-colonial state formation

Independence transformed Delhi into a re-location site for migrant families. With a new state grappling with partition violence, Hindu and Muslim communities took up the care of trauma ridden migrants huddled at Purana Quila, Jama Masjid, Humayun's tomb and Tibia College. The Jamia fraternity proactively began

resettling Hindu and Muslim refugees.[14] In *Naqoosh-e-Jamia*, Ghulam Haider points out to a 'cooperative secularism' whereby the Jamia fraternity extended support to broken migrants. Jamia School became the base for such activity. Dr. Zakir Hussain formed a committee to take care of victims of communal carnage. Assisted by members of *Khaksar* movement, Jamia's staff and students worked tirelessly to take care of the displaced (Talib, 1998: 176-177). Many riot victims, including refugees from West Pakistan found employment in the Industrial Estate and began re-settling in Okhla.

Emergency

Residents recall, the Emergency (1975-1977) imposed by Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, was instrumental in pulling families from other Muslim ghettoes towards JN. The state authorities unapologetically dismantled slums, re-structuring the morphology of Delhi. DDA carried out slum clearance along with operationalizing its sterilization project. Muslims harassed by state policies of sterilization began to flee from Seelampur, Old Delhi and moved into other Muslim predominated spaces, thereby contributing to the re-inscribing of geo-religious boundaries (Tarlo, 2000:69).[15] Housing colonies and residences sprouted in order to meet the demands of incoming migrants. Noticing visible changes post emergency, Aslam Kidwai, who had migrated to Zakir Nagar during 1950 observed:

> This area had meager population in the entire city of Delhi. The Yamuna River ran wide and we used to stroll along its banks. After 1975, the *aabadi* (population) in Okhla began to increase along with the construction of new houses. In order to arrange lands for housing, the profit-seeking businessmen began filling up the riverbanks with earth and started erecting residential flats. In the name of development, housing and population escalated in Jamia Nagar.[16]

Although sterilization and slum clearance had secular concerns of regulating population, effects of population control were starkly visible among Delhi's Muslims. The emergency spoilt the government-community relations, uprooted them, forcing their movement towards JN.

Pogroms and religious riots

Segregation in JN needs to be understood with respect to state sponsored pogroms and religious riots. Following Khalistan movement in Punjab, the state carried out a ruthless Operation Bluestar against Sikhs (Chopra, 2010; Das, 1985; Pettigrew, 1987). This led to the assassination of Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi on 31 October, 1984 by Sikh security guards. Delhi witnessed religious carnage against Sikhs in the worst possible forms. The Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission of Inquiry (1986) concluded that riots escalated because of the 'passivity of Delhi police'. Later, Justice Nanavati Commission of Inquiry (2005) attested that heinous

crimes were committed against the Sikhs across the Capital where approximately 2146 Sikhs were killed cold-blooded. It concluded, "It was also felt that the Delhi Police was not only negligent in protecting the Sikhs and their properties but probably connived at or instigated such attacks." (ibid.,2005:1). Experiences of Sikh community, prompted Muslims to look for safety and shelter among co-religious neighborhoods.

By 1990s when encouraged by hopes of liberalization Muslims had begun turning towards cities for a better life, communal riots following Babri Masjid demolition escalated fear among Muslims (Kirmani, 2008:60-61). With rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and muscle flexing of Sangh Parivar, 1990s witnessed the rise in militancy and stereotyping of Muslims as 'invaders' and 'militants'. The *Rath yatras* initiated with the objective of mobilizing Hindus around construction of a temple at Ayodhya, begun propagating the ideology of *Hindutva*. Fundamental displays of parochial loyalties fanned communal discords.[17] Since JN was exempted from these dividing *rath yatras,* Muslims began to increasingly cluster here.[18]

In JN, riot victim families looked for safety. Sabiha, who had moved from Seelampur to Batla House, narrated her memories of 1992:

> My brother was shot dead in Seelampur during the Babri Masjid riots. He was seventeen years old and used to work at a fabric industry at Seelampur. On the fateful day, he was at the market when the police began firing in order to contain the crowds from rioting. His friends managed to escape the firing, but he was randomly shot. We were made aware when his dead body arrived home. Ever since, we faced many hardships. My father was dead and I was the eldest sister, with the entire responsibility of my family upon me. We lodged a police complaint and a court case began, which continued for a couple of years. We were not given any compensation from the government. Given our financial condition, it became impossible to seek or hope for justice. We had to drop the case.[19]

At such wounded junctures, the *mohalla* extended its solidarities to provide shelter and comfort. This brings us to the words of Wacquant (2008) when he writes, although ghettoes have been spaces of misery, "…amidst its desolate landscape, scattered islets of relative economic and social stability persist, which offer fragile but crucial launching pads for strategies of coping and escape of its residents; and new forms of sociability continually develop in the cracks of the crumbling system." (2008: 49).

The riots fractured the *Ganga Jamuni tehzeeb*[20] of Delhi. Muslim families in Shahjahanabad fled fearing anti-Muslim propaganda. The *Ramlila* (Ramayana epic) created a stir among Old Delhi Muslims[21] Today, this explains the existence of several merchant families in JN, who escaped here given its no-riot past and who were instrumental in expanding trade and commerce in Batla House *chowk*

and neighboring markets. The Gujarat pogrom in 2002 and its post reconstruction, reinforced religious separation thereby making political violence and state powers potent weapons in re-building people's sense of community (Gupta, 2011).

JN offered a safe choice for fleeing families and presently residents take pride in the fact how families have successfully resisted violence, especially when other ghettoes of Delhi have been terror-struck. Asad, editor of 'Okhla Times', a hyper-local online portal catering to communication needs of Okhla residents,[22] explains this resilience in the following words:

> Education was an important factor behind the establishment of this ghetto. Consisting of a middle class, predominatly educated Muslim community, people are more tolerant, towards other cultures and religions. They have a stake in society. Here people are ambitious, peace loving and hence they realize the effects of damage in a society brought about by religious violence and conflict.

Batla House encounter, stigmatization and forced ghettoization

Batla House, one of the residential colonies of JN, consists of socio-economically lower middle class Muslims. Characterized by over population, traffic congestion, unstructured housing, and inundated monsoon organited streets, this residential quarter became infamous with the Batla House encounter. Following terror attacks in Delhi on 19 September 2008, the Delhi Police Special Cell carried out an encounter at Batla House to arrest suspected terrorists. Following the encounter, the enclave became infamous as a 'terror hub'.

In spite of earlier police raids by Special Cell in 2000, after terror attack at Red Fort, this encounter was an unprecedented event given its impact upon residents. They have continued to question it, given instances of fake encounters and witch-hunts against Muslims. Demands for an independent judicial probe have surfaced.[23] However, dismissing such claims, in July 2009, National Human Rights Commission gave a clean chit to the Delhi police. The Supreme Court too dismissed further plea for judicial inquiry citing reasons of demoralization of police forces.[24]

Post encounter, collective labeling and stigmatization of the ghetto followed. Indiscriminate arrests along with arbitrary media coverage led to labeling JN as a 'terror den'. Since two of the alleged terrorists were enrolled as students in Jamia, the university too was stigmatized. Territorial stigma looms over the ghetto. Living in segregated pockets has made Muslims easy prey of a repressive police system. Residents complained of random night raids by the police, who in civilian clothing visit *jhopris* picking up young men citing investigative reasons. *Rickshaw wallahs* in JN, migrating from Bengal, lured by better wages, often complained how they are suspected as 'illegal' Bangladeshi Muslims.[25] A *rickshaw wallah* who had migrated from West Bengal's Malda district, expressed that the police occasionally

interrogates seeking identity proofs. Documentation becomes essential in re-assuring identities within the ghetto.

Residents observed that prior to any political event elections or upcoming verdicts on terror trial cases, the space is transformed into a 'sensitive zone'. Random searches and police presence is escalated in certain migrant pockets of JN. For instance, days before the Babri Masjid verdict,[26] police patrolling was escalated in JN in order to control disturbances. With any terror attack, fear of another encounter is resurrected in this neighbourhood.[27]

The encounter escalated housing apartheid in Delhi whereby it has become challenging for Muslim families to seek rented apartments outside JN. An anti-Pakistan, anti-Kashmir and anti-Bangladeshi narrative is increasingly being validated by the media, especially in the context of the rise of right wing forces and their agenda of creating a '*Hindu Rashtra*'.[28] This has strengthened segregation. Exclusions are severe across Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods including New Friend's Colony and Vasant Kunj.[29] Part of the problem emanates from insufficient public housing across the city and incapacity of the government to regulate private housing. Families seeking a way out to escape territorial stigma or desiring improved accommodation have found it challenging to re-locate themselves in other parts of Delhi, only to find themselves stuck in JN.

Unchecked migration, unauthorized development cascading ghettoization

Migration in metropolitan cities like Delhi are mostly determined by what Dupont (2000:118) terms as 'New Economics of Migration' whereby decisions to migrate are taken with the objective of maximizing economic wellbeing. Proliferation of economic activities in Okhla has attracted working class migrants from bordering states.[30] An illegal inter-state bus stand in Batla House brings thousands of migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They accept jobs existing below in the social hierarchy that natives are willing to outsource. They have found employment in construction and transport industry. Illegal shops and factories employing children below occupational age flourish in parts of Batla House. Children work as vendors or rag pickers and women are mostly employed as house help. Integrating to the city is challenging and the poor are shifted into *jhuggi jhopris* (urban slums) where they live in conditions of abject poverty and inequality. These slums are a reflection of unequal urbanization trends of Delhi metropolis and inability of the government to arrange adeqnate public housing.

Escalating housing demands have transformed residential clusters like Batla House into a rent based economy with high-density land use. Compressed residential apartments, mostly unregulated, characterize its morphology. Residents narrated that during early urbanization phase, villagers were willing to sell farmlands to government at designated rates. Presently, they have forged alliances with local capitalists and investors who are interested in converting lands into unauthorized

constructions.[31] *Qabza* (forceful acquisition) by migrants into public lands is starkly visible. Parts of Abul Fazal Enclave and segments of Batla House constitute illegal colonies and unauthorized constructions in the river zone. The government has failed to work out a plan for unbridled urban growth.[32]

Since these lands are *lal dora*,[33] DDA rules remain inapplicable. Lack of coordinated administration and ambiguities of law, make such economic resources vulnerable to coercion by profit seeking powerful groups and corrupt developers. Nexus of land mafia, property dealers, capitalists and politicians operate to make a culture of *qabza* operational in the locality. Given the construction boom in Jamia Nagar post 1990s, individuals with muscle and money power belonging to caste of *qureshis* (butchers), and *saifi* (carpenters) have forcibly wielded control over landed property in JN.[34] They have also engaged into local politics or *netagiri* and have become famous among the neighborhood.

Proliferation of urban slums and illegal colonies has escalated pollution in the Yamuna River. Aqsa, a resident of Batla House narrated:

> During monsoons, the river water floods the entire area and also enters the lower floors of the house where we live. The water is dirty and the entire house stinks of waste. Often it takes days for water to recede and after it does, it leaves behind a fowl layer of waste and garbage where mosquitoes breed. No wonder, this place has high levels of dengue and malaria cases during and post monsoon. Efforts towards waste management, drainage and sanitation have fallen short.[35]

State initiatives in the form of DDA Act of 1957 had made illegal encroachment of village lands punishable by law.[36] In 2004, the Delhi government invited applications for regularization of unauthorized colonies whereby it appeared that total number of colonies demanding regularization was 1,639 (Jain, 2015:71). The Master Plan of Delhi 2021 aims at regularization of unauthorized colonies. This however presupposes better infrastructural facilities, civic improvements and rehabilitation of families.[37]

STATE INTERVENTION IN JAMIA NAGAR

What appears from the discussion is how ghettoes partially born as a result of a skewed urbanization process in Delhi, have been forcefully made to expand through actions and inactions of the State. With JN, we see how institutional neglect apathy and stigma have furthered a life in the margins. Excluded from development initiatives like DDA Master Plans, JN has become vulnerable to corrupt moneymaking businesses and local political interferences, thereby challenging regulated urban planning. Residents experiences reveal the extremely segmented housing market in Delhi, which is entrenched and perpetuated by housing policies that have relegated religions minorities towards the city's corners.

With increasing house rents and escalating ownership fee, choices of the not so privileged minority have been reduced and they are forced to reside in insalubrious accommodations. Further, Islamophobia and religious prejudices have accentuated housing segregation, whereby Muslims are forced to ghettoize themselves into selective segregations. In spite of alternate housing options existing across Delhi, their housing choices have been controlled.

Urban governance is one area where the state is experienced on an everyday basis. Field inquiry reveals shrinkage of government services and public benefits across the locality. Institutional arrangements in form of education, housing and health require urgent attention across JN. One of the recurring of residents' complaints was over-population followed by lack of hygiene and cleanliness. Domestic garbage and trash border the constricted roads of Batla House. Water and electricity supply is erratic. Lack of proper drainage leads to water clogging in the streets, often causing accidents. During monsoons, proliferation of water borne diseases like typhoid and cholera are rampant.

JN has been described as a 'manufactured ghetto'[38], 'incomplete city' (Farooquee, 2014:86) expanded through institutional negligence, infrastructural deficit and shrinking of regulation. Residents prefer living in this locality given its proximity to South Delhi and Noida. They are eagerly availing the construction of parles, garden and parleing area. With the absence of state run hospitals and clinics, residents clamor for medical facilities and public health benefits. Families have to rely on private actors.[39] There exists a dearth of government schools and community libraries. There are three Municipal Corporation administered schools and two Government Senior Secondary schools (Borker, 2019:22) where the infrastructure is poor. Jamia School given its seat limitation, can only meet educational needs of a fraction of neighbourhood children. Families who can afford, educate their ward to far off schools like DPS Mathura Road or Modern School Barakhamba. Young adults complain of lack of entertainment options including cafeterias and movie theatres. As a result, youths throng to the New Friends Colony's Community Centre market. The Café Coffee Day there is constantly buzzing with young crowds from Jamia. Before high-end shopping malls had sprung up across Delhi, The Community Centre was one of the earliest spaces that introduced Jamia's youths to global fast food chains like McDonald's or Subway.

JN is in dire need of government interventions. Earlier Congress party held sway, with Muslims of JN being loyal supporters of the party. However, Congress became a lesser electoral preference post Batla House Encounter whereby Muslims began to blame the party for stigmatizing the community. An alternative party that found its sympathizers among Muslims is the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). In 2015, during the pre-election campaigns, Arvind Kejriwal promised regularizing unregulated colonies across Okhla. Such promises have turned stale. After a sweeping majority, AAP candidate, Amanatullah Khan was chosen as Okhla's

MLA. According to RWA members, his achievements include construction of wider roads, dengue prevention, installation of security cameras and establishment of schools in Batla House and Joga Bai. Local development issues remain important behind mobilizing electoral support in JN. Contending parties have repeatedly used the Batla House encounter to garner political sympathies, both within and outside the ghetto.[40]

A wide gap persists between government policies on paper, practices and their execution. In order to address the vacuum, civil society has been addressing urban challenges and reducing local inequalities. NGOs continue catering to the community[41] along with Jamia's outreach programmes and welfare drives.[42]

Capitalist forces have brought about inequalities. A major component of India's foreign exchange has come from remittances of guest workers in the Gulf and the Middle East. A large proportion of India's guest workers are Muslims and they send their earnings home to relatives and families back in India who have invested such fortunes in property and other consumer expenditures (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2008:402). Such Gulf families have invested in properties in JN and furthered economic disparities within the ghetto. Consequently, we witness stark material contrasts in the form of coexistence of *kothis* (bungalow) of the privileged along with dilapidated migrant slums. Globalization of the economy has led to the unbridled rise of material desires and wants, and given prevailing institutional neglect, pockets of JN has become vulnerable to rising crime rates, drug addiction and delinquency.[43]

Wirth had described the ghetto as an administrative device facilitating social control over its members (Wirth, 1928:20). The State's attention towards surveillance and security in the neighborhood persists, especially after the 2008 encounter. An intrusive surveillance system and omnipresent police ensures law and order. Imposition of restraints on such neighborhoods is creating a zone of 'urban outcasts' (Wacquant, 2008) whereby secluded zones are stigmatized by outsiders who fail to grasp the daily politics of land use, infrastructure and the lacunae in addressing the everyday survival needs of the urban marginal by the bureaucratic state. The mention of JN often carries an unattractive connotation among Delhi'ites who live away from the neighborhood. The non-Okhla dweller fails to comprehend that ordinary, peace loving, terror-fearing communities can cohabit the space. Such observations come from individuals or families who have never traversed the lanes of Jamia Nagar and prefer to keep on their cultural blinkers.

DELHI, A SYMBOL OF STATE POWER AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY – INTEGRATED YET DISTINCT

This brings us to argue how territorial status of the Muslim community has shifted from locations of privilege towards closures of the ghetto. Their present spatial location is symbolic of the marginal space they occupy within Indian society.

Previously, urban centers were the foci for the growth of Islamic civilization (Hambly, 1968; Eaton, 2000) and Delhi has been a cultural heartland for South Asian Muslims. *Dilli ke Musalmaan* is a popular phrase expressing the Islamic tradition and a cultural community whose history is intimately entwined with the urban space and experience of the city of Delhi. The Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire revolved around towns and cities, which were seats of power, centers of learning and economic hubs.[44] In fact, "Mughal emperors made their cities of residence the seat and mirror of their power...Through awesome monuments and heavenly gardens, and town planning...Mughal rulers never ceased to experiment on the city..."(Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2012: 14). The city was the space where a sense of identification to a non-territorial entity (*umma*) converged with a sense of belonging to a circumscribed community (*watan*). In the context of Mughal Empire's twilight (Spear, 2002) and the Empire's intrusion, the fall of Delhi came to be lamented by poets.[45] With the transfer of the capital, one of the 'best-kept secrets' of colonial state, Delhi re-emerged as a seat of sovereignty and architectural expression of Britain's temporal power.[46]To the south of Shahjahanabad, looking down upon it, both physically and symbolically, the British started building 'New Delhi' (Metcalf, 1989). "It was to be imposing, immortal, a fitting monument to Britain's imperial idea" (Sengupta, 2006:16). The construction of the Capital entailed a compartmentalization of the city into 'old' and 'new' which had its bearing on cultural and religious groups.[47] This power and prestige was physically manifest across the landscape and morphology of the city whereby the 'Indian or native city' came to be situated at a considerable distance from the European residences, civil lines and military cantonments.

Post Independence, Delhi emerged as a seat of legitimate sovereign power. The city's planning increasingly showcased the position of the powerful whereby residential and power hierarchies protected the position of the privileged. The power elites consciously choose the Raisina Hill where power and wealth will be concentrated in the 'centre'. They began residing in the 'newly' constructed Delhi and the commoners and marginal were pushed away towards the city's margins. This urban hierarchy was manifested through the social interactions and behavior between the privileged power elites and the rest of Delhi's population (Pothen, 2012). Efforts towards building a planned city accompanied its set of discriminations and exclusion. Baviskar (2003) notes, Delhi's Master plan envisaged a model city, but failed to recognize the existence of large number of working poor for whom no provision had been made. Hence simultaneously grew large shanties, an essential accompaniment the development of Delhi. This 'legal geography' (Sundar, 2001) created by the plan criminalized vast sections of the city's working class, adding layers of vulnerability and insecurity to their existence.

With regard to religious communities including Muslims, Delhi's morphology unveils a process of skewed urban development that has often segregated its

minorities towards the city margins. Shahjahanabad's status depreciated from a royal territory to an oriental relic. It has been transformed into a chaotic commercial zone catering to touristy needs of travellers and consumers. The Pakistani journalist, Raza Rumi, captured this transformation. On his visit to Delhi, he observed that Muslim areas in Delhi represent 'their own world', different and wee bit cut off from the rest of the city (Rumi, 2013:180). A distinct shift has taken place. They may be integrated, yet they remain distinct. While the metropolitan expanded, the Muslim slum grew inwards and sometimes backwards into time, midst the lost world of the fleeting glory (Rumi, 2013:180).

CONCLUSION

JN's exploration reveals how communities who inhabit these territorial margins have also been marginalized through political, legal and economic strictures imposed by a post-colonial state. Their marginalization has been both territorial and symbolic. While the Partition solidified ghettoization in Delhi, post independence, pogroms, strictures imposed in the form of Emergency, cascaded ghettoization, which identified JN as a religiously defined Muslim ghetto. At such junctures, when the state failed to embrace its diverse communities, ghettoes emerged as spaces of refuge. Batla House encounter of 2008 stigmatized the community and imposed a territorial stigma that has worked to discriminate residents from the rest of the city-dwellers. Housing apartheid, lopsided urban planning policies and their implementation and the resurgence of right wing ideologies across the capital is nurturing a situation where Muslims who want to escape stigmatized locales, are forced to concentrate themselves within JN. These 'social margins' are sites of state practice (Das and Poole, 2004). They enable a comprehensive understanding of workings of the modern-nation state in the everyday life of its inhabitants. Although the nation state is removed from intimate experiences of local societies, citizens continue to turn towards state institutions as the last resort for betterment of community life. Given such entailment between these margins and the state, ghettoes can be interpreted as defining the relationship between the state and its religious communities.

Notes

1   The invasion of Sindh by Ibn Kasim, who waged a war against Dahir, the king of Sind in 712 and defeated him (Chatterjee, 1999:102)

2   Foucault (1980) argued how the modern state with the introduction of 'governmentality' and 'bio-politics', including modes of categorization and surveillance controlled communities through classification. Kaviraj (1992) argues, while earlier boundaries were 'fuzzy', colonial rule made them exclusive.

3   Rehabilitation of refugees in Delhi has been dictated by regional affiliation. For instance,

Sikhs and Hindu Punjabis are concentrated across West Delhi's Tilak Nagar and Punjabi Bagh. Bengalis, irrespective of those from erstwhile East Pakistan or West Bengal continue to co-exist predominently in C.R Park.

4   *Selected Works of Nehru*, Nehru to Patel, 21 Nov, 1947, Vol 4, p. 185

5   This is not to deny the presence of pre-partition segregated communities in Delhi. In Shahjahanabad, communities were hierarchically placed according to their economic status. The *dhobi* and other 'polluting' communities moved towards the old city's outskirts near the river Yamuna and the economic and power elite was concentrated near the royal palace. See Naqvi (1986).

6   *Basti* translates as a slum inhabited by the economically poor.

7   In 1966, a sociological study of the Okhla Industrial Estate was undertaken by Prof. M. N Srinivas, which sought to explore the impact of industrialization upon the tradition and culture of Okhla village. Works on Jamia Nagar have been produced in the context of understanding identity construction among the Muslim community. Kirmani (2008) discusses how 'Muslimness' is locally constructed in this south Delhi neighborhood and is also shaped by categories of economic class, occupation and gender. Violence and memory is a recurrent trope in understanding ghettoization. Kirmani (2008) argues that periodic violence and their 'memories' led to fear psychosis among Muslims thereby triggering collective ghetto mentalities. In the context of globalization, Jamil (2017) explores how market forces of capitalism have shaped urban segregation across Delhi's ghettoes. What is missing from these studies is how workings of the state have contributed to the perpetuation of this ghetto after its inception by Jamia Millia Islamia in 1935. In order to understand this form of segregation, we must historicize the existence of Jamia Nagar, its territorial presence within Delhi metropolis and how the state has induced its physical expansion, and re-construction of this ghetto's identity across society.

8   OKHLA or Old Kanal Housing and Land Authority. The Okhla Industrial Estate consists of three phases. Okhla belongs to the Zone F of the DDA Master Plan.

9   An 'urban village' represents a process in which a rural settlement is caught in the process of rapid urbanization of a metropolis. They are a result of land acquisitions by the government, which began after Delhi was converted into a capital in 1912. The process continued till 1960. With economic mode of production introduced in a rural setting, the village settlement lost the erstwhile source of its livelihood and had to adjust to new economic production followed by socio-cultural changes. The Master Plan of Delhi 1961, used the expression 'urban village' to designate the clusters of villages chosen on the fringes of urban Delhi to relocate certain small industries and traditional crafts. In the later years, the DDA used the term to denote all villages, which had lost their agricultural land to the government or a private body in the process of urbanization (Mehra, 2005:3). The NCR has 369 urban villages (Sheth, 2017: 43).

10   Jamia Millia Islami was established in the year 1920 at Aligarh's Muhammedan Anglo Oriental College. In 1935, Jamia School's foundation stone was laid at Okhla, Delhi. For Jamia's history see Minault, Gail and David Lelyveld. (1974). 'The Campaign for a Muslim University, 1898-1920.' In *Modern Asian Studies,* 8 (2) :145-189. Cambridge University Press and Mushirul Hasan and Rakhshanda Jalil. (2006). *Partners in Freedom- Jamia Millia Islamia*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books.

11   Residents perceive Jamia Nagar to be distinct from other ghettoes across Delhi, especially Old Delhi, which they consider as a commercial urban space consisting of a class of mercantile and business population. Residents take pride in the educational legacy of the Jamia Millia.

12   During a field trip, a Sikh *autowallah* described it as a "*mini- Pakistan, jahan musalmaan rehte hei!*"

13   Jamil observes, "The more privileged you are, the easier it is to shut out and forget that other less-privileged people also exist" (2017, 13).

14   Women actively engaged in the struggle, and by engaging with the public sphere dismantled stereotypes. The figure of Begum Anees Kidwai, wife of Shafi Ahmed Kidwai who was murdered in October 1947, was particularly important in mobilizing volunteers for relief work (Zamindar, 2007: xiv)

15   Although it was not within the scope of the DDA, public departments including education, transport, health, housing were assigned the responsibility for carrying out the sterilization project. Tarlo observes, by 1976, a *nasbandi* certificate became mandatory for regularization of resettlement plots in colonies.

16   Interview with Aslam Kidwai, Zakir Nagar resident, dated 09.12.2013

17   Organized by the Visva Hindu Parishad with the support of the BJP, the then ruling party, *Rath yatra* was interpreted by the media as 'Advani's road show' which metaphorically religious in form, was strongly political in content and had a nationalist fervor. The *yatra* began at Somnath on 25 September 1991 and after traversing states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Delhi, was supposed to terminate at Ayodhya.

18   See Panikkar (1993) and Engineer, (1991)

19   Interview with Sabiha at Batla House, dated 22.02.2019.

20   *Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb* refers to the religious solidarity between Hindu and Muslims of the northern plains, specifically the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers. It is a metaphorical interpretation of religious confluence of northern India.

21   The *Ramlila* is a yearly ritual of celebrating Dussehra that takes place in Old Delhi and was started by the Emperor Bahadur Shah in Shahjahanabad in circa 1830. Meant to entertain the city's residents, it was equally patronized by the royal family. Later with the fall of the royalty, industrialists patronized the event. Post independence, the Shri Ramlila Committee (SRC) has been organizing the event. The event consists of actors dressed as the central characters enacting crucial scenes from the ancient epic. Although people from multi-cultures attend and participate in the event, it has been attributed religious interpretation.

22   Introduced in 2010, 'Okhla Times' is a hyper local website that publishes local community news of Okhla. Since, the mainstream media seldom addresses issues pertaining to this territorial community, the need was felt for introducing an online portal that will bring up the concerns of Okhla across the wider population. Interview with Asad, dated 30-07-2019.

23   A fact-finding team consisting of Janhastakshep and the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) demanded a judicial inquiry.

24   'Batla House encounter: SC dismisses plea for Judicial Inquiry', *The Hindu*, October 30, 2009.

25   For discussion on the Bangladeshi migrant, see Sanjoy Hazarika, (2000), *Rites of Passage-border crossings, imagined homelands, India's East and Bangladesh,* New Delhi, Penguin.

26   Supreme Court Verdict on Babri Masjid came on 9th November 2019, when police presence across the entire northern India, including Delhi was increased to check and control possible violence or riots.

27   The Pulwama terror attack took place in Kashmir with the killing of 40 soldiers in February 2019. What followed were hate speeches against Muslims, along with atrocities against Kashmiris across Delhi when Kashmiri shops were burnt and *kashmiris* beaten following the incident. Residents of Batla House were fearful lest it incites violence or rioting in the neighborhood

28   In Delhi, the wealthy and urbanized *bania* castes of merchants, moneylenders, shopkeepers and small-scale entrepreneurs specializing in urban commerce remain active supporters of *hindutva* ideologies and its parties. They collectively constitute the support base of Hindu nationalism across northern India (Jaffrelot, 2000; Jones, 2002).

29   Sowmiya Ashok and Mohammad Ali, 'Housing Apartheid flourishes in Delhi', *The Hindu,* 08.07.2012

30   For instance, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) attracted numerous seasonal laborers who migrated and settled in *jhuggi jhopris* near the banks of the Yamuna bordering Jamia Nagar. The nature of this form of migrant labor is seasonal because they flock to Delhi during demands generated by construction work and return back to villages to engage in agricultural work during the harvesting season.

31   Unauthorized development is essentially illegal transfer of agricultural land for urban use or land use that violates the Master plan and the zonal plan.

32   In order to prevent illegal construction in Delhi, the Supreme Court had established a Monitoring Committee in 2006. However, illegal construction is rampant along the banks of the Yamuna bordering Okhla with people dumping debris into the river. Experts have opined that unchecked concrete expansion over the floodplain of the Yamuna will lead to fatal consequences. Despite the National Green Tribunal's order to civic authorities in 2015 to review illegal structures, rampant illegal constructions flourish in Okhla.

33   Used since 1908, the term 'Lal dora' is classified as village land or '*abadi*' (habitation) land. Since such type of land was marked off from agricultural lands using red color, it came to be known as 'lal dora'. Primarily an extension of village habitation, it is supposed to be used for non-agricultural purposes. According to the Delhi Master Plan, such land is exempted from jurisdiction of municipality rules and regulations. See www.delhi-masterplan.com

34   Interview with Asad, 30-07-2019

35   Interview with Aqsa, resident of Batla House and student at Jamia Millia Islamia, dated 22.02.2019.

36   The Delhi Development Act was passed in 1957 whereby the Delhi Development Authority

(DDA) was set up in order to carry out the development of the urban space. The Delhi Master Plan was given shape on September 1, 1962, which explored the deficiencies in housing, community services and social welfare services.

37 The concept of regularization goes back to 1908-1909 when the walled city of Shahjahanabad was to be regularized by 1910. By 1961, regularization of 110 colonies was announced whereby the colonies were developed by the introduction of metal roads, water supply and provision of sewer lines (Jain,2015:69).

38 'Media Circus', Yousuf Saeed, 19 September 2008, *Outlook*

39 The Holy Family Hospital founded by the Medical Mission Sisters in 1953, continue to cater to the medical needs of the hinterland along with the Fortis Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre.

40 The Batla House effect' as it came to be dubbed by the media, had unleashed a process of Muslim mobilization which took place in Uttar Pradesh and the Centre before the Lok Sabha Polls.

41 NGOs like 'UNICARE' work for the disabled and underprivileged. 'Pahel' takes care of education, health and hygiene needs of the community. 'Volunteers of Change' dedicates itself to the transforming Okhla into an ideal locality. It works towards making Okhla environmentally safe, healthy and clean. Their focus areas also include youth and women development.

42 Jamia had introduced the Adult literacy Program by 1926 that focused upon enlightening adults and parents of children taught in Jamia's school. Balak Mata Centre was established by Jamia in 1938 which took care of education needs of the underprivileged. Later the Community Education Centre (CEC) was introduced to include all members of the community. By 1948, CECs were established in old Delhi areas of Bara Hindu Rao, Beriwala Bagh, Qassabpura, Gali Qasim Jan, Matia Mahal and Jama Masjid.The Zakir Hussain Memorial Welfare Society was established in 1970, to address the needs of challenged children and women education and skill development across the neighbourhood. Jamia uses the competency of several departments of the university to engage with five villages near Jamia as part of their Unnat Bharat Abhiyan Project, with focus on education, health and energy needs. Kushal Kendra provides training and certificate courses in medical sciences. Its Outreach Programme introduced the Dastarkhwan canteen in the campus, managed by women aiming at strengthening their participation and lives. See 'Commitment to Community', *Jauhar,* Vol. 05, Issue 03, Special Issue, pp. 8-10

43 During field work it was observed that residents locked the front gates or doors of their houses at all times of the day. The reason was increasing crimes rates in the form of theft and burglary. Kidwai mentioned his house being burgled before a family wedding was about to take place. He blamed it to the delinquent youths and drug addicts of the locality. Residents confirmed that snatching and petty crimes like eve teasing exist at the neighborhood.

44 Smaller towns were not isolated from political and cultural changes. Small market towns like *qasbas* developed where the Mughal gentry invested and they came to represent the repository of aristocratic and courtly values. It was also the real locus of their identity. See Bayly, C.A., (1992). *Rulers, Townsmen, Bazaars: North Indian society in the age of British expansion, 1770 – 1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

45   The eighteenth century Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810), lamented the decay of the city-states through his *Shahr-e-Ashob* (the city's misfortune)

46   King George V disclosed the decision to his subjects in Delhi on 12 December 1911, the last of the three Delhi Durbars (1877 and 1902-3). For detailed reference of the Durbar, its planning, execution of the new capital's construction and government records letters and reports and memoranda (Hasan and Patel, 2014).

47   The Muslim population of Old Delhi, the Muslims were deemed to be wily and dangerous, often insurrectionists or fanatics (King, 2007).

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