

PRESSED IN STEEL

Part - II

CENTRE FOR NEW ECONOMICS STUDIES



PHOTO ESSAY

Pratidin



Overlooking Badli jhuggi

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Thousands of *jhuggis* are built around the major industrial areas of Wazirpur and Badli. Shacks line the streets of these slum areas, which can only be reached by marching in single file past leaking sewers. Despite this, most individuals go about their daily lives. Children are seen playing in dirt and taking water showers from the broken pipelines in the alleys. On the streets, stallholders offer everything from plastic toys to saucepans. People here lack what most consider to be fundamental necessities. The scant resources available in these slums are getting even more exhausted and worn down as the population grows dramatically.

The slum's material absence of a permanent home, water, and sanitation, inflicts everyday social, cultural, and symbolic violence. As the slum life is always exposed to public scrutiny, slums represent a tangible politics of closeness and distance in an unusual way. The *jhuggis*, although providing a haven from the city's exclusion, is nevertheless vulnerable to intrusion and violence from the community and within the family.

The women, men, youth and children have drastically different lifestyles from each other whilst living in close proximity together in these *jhuggis*.

Millions of women and girls begin their day hours before the rest of their neighbourhood rises. The majority of these women work as labourers in the steel factories, and the ones that don't, work as domestic workers in the *kothis* nearby.



"No one values women in factories. Male workers tend to order women around, with an inherent sense of authority which is indifferently overseen by the factory owners. Here, both men and women are at fault. Women don't speak up for themselves and men take advantage of that."

-Resident of Wazirpur Industrial Area



As women spend hours cleaning, cooking and looking after their children early in the morning, men wake up just in time to get ready for work. Just as both of them leave for work together, the younger kids are left in the care of neighbours and the community elderly.



An outdoor wash-place in Wazirpur Industrial Area



Kids headed for tuition in Badli jhuggi.

Overlooked by their parents, the children of these migrant workers are deprived of formal education, congenial social environment and parental presence. They spend most of their day playing in the alleys completely unsupervised, exposing them, very early on, to intoxicants and a patterned ferocity.

These children then grow up in a trend of following the crowd. They drop out of school and work as labourers instead of improving their skills, trapping them in a vicious cycle identical to that of their parents' generation.



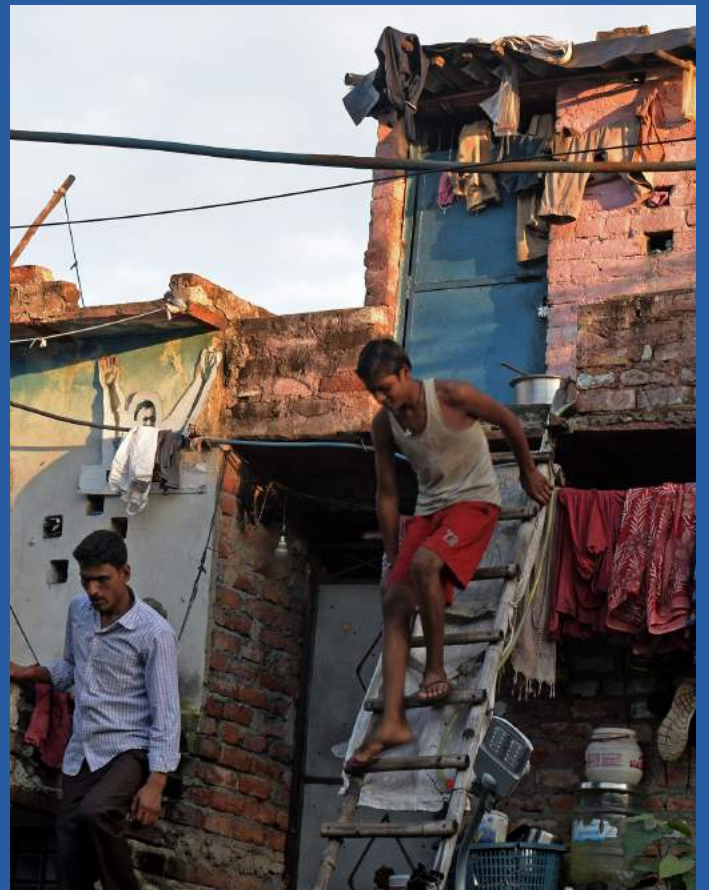
The open gutters in Badli jhuggi



A family of 6 in Wazirpur Industrial Area.



Kids playing on train-tracks in Wazirpur.



Pakka makans in Wazirpur.



A child working in Wazirpur Industrial Area.

"A friend of mine had gotten a job in a well established company. They let him go when they realised he lived in a jhuggi"
- Resident of Badli JJ Colony

The youngsters of Wazirpur and Badli are imprecise with their approach towards their future. Growing up unaided, a large part of the community actively indulges in alcohol and drugs, while gambling away the little money they have. The other half of the community is either settling for a low paying laborious job, and for those who can afford, are appearing for competitive exams.

A minority of youth determined towards making their future better face difficulties due to their domestic logistics. In midst of a chaotic colony, they find it difficult to study in their homes. Often, they are interrupted by the drunken howls and loud abuses of their peers, which forces them to travel out of the vicinity for a modest environment.

Despite their vexatious lifestyles, men, women and youth of Wazirpur and Badli continue to work hard in the hopes of creating an identity for themselves and provide a better way of life for their generations to come.



Shops in the alleys of Badli jhuggi.



A gathering of people on the railway tracks in Wazirpur Industrial Area.

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