

Understanding the role of non-state driven urban water development initiatives in informal settlements

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Residents of informal settlements in the Global South are typically marginalised by the state. In India, the state views informal urban development as an aberration, and seeks to limit it by ensuring the ongoing marginalisation of residents through frequent demolitions, the limitation of land tenure rights, and the denial of basic water, sanitation and hygiene services. In this context, residents are left to rely on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their own efforts to secure even basic services. However, development thinking and practice continues to view such non-state driven processes of development as stop-gap measures, rather than legitimate avenues of action. This project seeks to understand the role of non-state driven urban water development initiatives in informal settlements through case studies of the locally-led interventions of individuals and NGOs in three communities in Faridabad, Delhi, and Mumbai, India. The aim of this research is ultimately to disrupt the marginalisation of the legitimate processes by which actors in informal settlements are seeking improvements reflective of the lived needs and aspirations of residents, and to reflect on the implications of viewing such processes as legitimate for the way that urban development in informal settlements is approached by the state.