

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:	Lives, Livelihoods and Aspirations of the Kolis in Mumbai: Urban Transformation, Space, Habitat, and Coastal Contestations	
Project Number	HSS0707 b	
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Research Academy Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
7. **Humanities and Social Sciences**

The research problem

Diverse constituents of the Koli community have enjoyed de jure and de facto access and control over a range of coastal spaces and habitats in the Mumbai region which supported their livelihoods, cultural systems, social life, and structures of local governance. The Kolis continue to be present in the region's coastal villages and enclaves (koliwadadas and gaothans) in large numbers even as they are subjected to increasing pressures from urban development, security infrastructure, new coastal claims, and competition over marine resources. Against a background of marginalization, **loss of territory**, environmental degradation, and livelihood loss, their struggles and resistance over protection of resource habitats and coastal spaces combine with new aspirations for the community - especially of the younger generation. This project will seek to study the multiple facets, consequences and outcomes of these ongoing processes while seeking to re-theorize the 'urban' and peasant modes of work and existence in the city. Cutting across urban studies, sociology and social anthropology, political ecology and political economy, projects in this theme will seek to study the local-global interface in the context of neo-liberal urbanism and its implications for a largely resource dependent artisanal fisher community while also paying specific attention to issues of caste, class, migration and mobility, gender, ethnicity and political power. The responses of the Koli to all these pressures will be an important focus for the project.

Project aims

Define the aims of the project

1. Understand the spatial and territorial complexities and implications of urban development and expansion on Koli fisher spaces, livelihoods and lives
2. Trace the cultural, social and political aspirations and anxieties resulting from the marginalization of the Koli community from their traditionally held coastal spaces, with a special emphasis on youth and women
3. Identify new and old legal & political regimes, norms, and customs that constitute the terrain and resources in coastal contestations and conflicts involving the Kolis
4. Map cultural systems, beliefs, institutions, values and rituals unique to the Kolis and as they have evolved in collaboration with other communities, with a special emphasis on ecology and environment.

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

An enhanced and more comprehensive understanding of the diverse communities under the Koli rubric as they are transforming in response to intense urban pressures.

Develop suggestions and recommendations for more inclusive and sustainable urban development options keeping in mind **T**he aspirations of Kolis and other marginalized communities in the city **in** competing for space, resources, and livelihoods.

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION OF TRIBAL MINORITIES IN MUMBAI AND INDIA MORE GENERALLY

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

The project is an inter-disciplinary one located within the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, but contributing to a more inter and trans-disciplinary understanding of culture, ecology, urban planning, development, and **social** and political change using ethnographic approaches.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

1. Strong grounding in sociology, anthropology, urban studies, geography, or allied disciplines
2. Capability and skills in using qualitative methods, especially ethnographic approaches, or a willingness and motivation to learn.
3. A strong motivation, ability, and willingness to carry out field research

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

1. Fishing unions and associations

Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Mumbai, Coastal Environments, Kolis, Fishers, Urban Conflicts and contestations