

# URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS & REGIONAL RESILIENCE

VIRTUAL LECTURE SERIES | SPRING 2021

SEMINAR #6

## LIVING WITHOUT: COVID 19 & THE TECHNOLOGIES OF WATER EXCLUSION IN MUMBAI

### ABSTRACT

Over 1.6 million residents of Mumbai live without access to reliable water. In this lecture, we show how urban transformation is impossible without addressing this fundamental inequality. Why does this inequity and exclusion persist, despite sufficient financial and technological expertise? Based on over a decade studying and organizing water poor communities in the city, we explore the reasons for water insecurity in the city. Focused on the work of making water a human right in the city, and then exploring the ways this right is deferred and denied by city government, we show how municipal water engineering is fundamentally a political field. In particular, we draw lessons from the ongoing work of Pani Haq Samiti (Campaign for the Right to Water) to address how water continues to be denied to residents even as the mandate to maintain individual and public health outcomes during the COVID 19 pandemic gains a particular urgency.

PRESENTED BY



### SITARAM SHELAR

FOUNDER & CONVENER OF PANI HAQ SAMITI

Sitaram Shelar is Founder and Convener of Pani Haq Samiti. The campaign was responsible for the landmark judgment by the Bombay High Court linking the Right to Water to the Right to Life. He has actively campaigned and initiated networks for advocacy for citizen's right to water, sanitation, housing and participatory governance including the people's campaign on the Development Plan of Mumbai 2014-2034. He is founder member and Managing Trustee of Centre for Promoting Democracy and a Consultant to Developmental Organizations. He has a post graduate degree in Business Management from Welinkar Institute of Management Development and Research.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, UNIV. OF PENNSYLVANIA

### NIKHIL ANAND

Nikhil Anand is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on cities, water, infrastructure, state power and climate change. His award-winning first book, *Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Politics in Mumbai* (Duke University Press 2017), examines the everyday ways in which cities and citizens are made through the everyday management of water infrastructure. Dr. Anand has also co-edited *The Promise of Infrastructure* (with Hannah Appel and Akhil Gupta, Duke University Press 2018). His new book project, *Urban Seas*, supported by grants from the National Science Foundation among others, decenters the grounds of urban planning by drawing attention to the ways in which climate-changed seas are remaking coastal cities today.



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