

Linking Economic and Industrial Development to Urbanization: Case of Dholera Special Investment Region-Gujarat

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ABSTRACT: In the last two decades, post Industrialization cities have been conceived as product of global aspiration and identity. This paper attempts to understand the transformative model of governance adopted in development of the Dholera Special Investment Region in the domain of private partnership and exclusive planning strategies. It explores the role of speculation and making the city a spectacle in the planning of Dholera Special Investment Region. Working on the intersection of these broad theories of the mode of governance, it analyses the Special Investment Region Act, as a facilitator to the growth corridor project and investigates the role of the State in the conceptualization and execution of mega-project. The greenfield project reflects the transnational circular economy and urban policies that have brought a paradigm shift in the planning and development of cities in Neo-Liberal Era. It investigates the implications of SIR Act, 2009 on a greenfield project in reference to the right to the city. It argues that for the case of Special Investment Region, Urbanization is seen as a byproduct of the transformative economic and industrial policies.

KEYWORDS: Dholera Special Investment Region, Greenfield, Special Investment Region, Worlding strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Greenfield Cities

Planning of new Greenfield cities have followed new urban policies, showcasing shift in power and unique modes of conceptualizing new cities. Post 1990s, with the liberal economic urban policies, urban areas have been benefited more than Urban or rural development (Shaw, 2007). New cities are not organically grown but are implanted sectorial with various growth magnets to bring life and demand for the city. With the amendment of 74th Constitutional Act mandating the devolution of powers to local bodies, a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of new greenfield cities began. The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) brought focus back to urban centers with establishment of large funding opportunities. This paradigm shift has brought transition in the way new cities or urban growth centers have been understood, planned, and executed. With liberalization and new modes of funding policies especially from the UN and World

Bank, there are shifts in urban policies and resultant implications in governance methods resulting in it being fragmented and exclusive [1]–[3]. The implanted growth centers and proposed emergent cities speak very less with the proposed master plans and visions in case of greenfield cities. These greenfield cities lack demand and thus fragmented supply from the funding agencies and support from the parastatals. Government of India developed these spaces of production and growth centers as special zones and regions leading to paradigm shift in urban planning. NICDC clearly defined any region to be minimum 100 sq kms. These zones such as Special Economic Zones, Special Investment Region, National Industrial Manufacturing Zones, and Industrial corridors are ‘spaces of exception’ with prevalent questions of job, citizenship, and inclusion (Anand, et al., 2015). Post 74th CAA, the emergent cities face challenges in urban governance, land acquisition, organizational framework, compensation tariffs and functional overlaps of various parastatals. These satellite towns or Greenfield cities have been manufactured from certain external industrial or investment opportunities which has resulted into friction with the dynamics on the ground. These bifurcated zones of special regulations have been planned on the outskirts of a metropolitan area as their business and industrial hub to support the nearby metropolitan by decongesting the crowd in the city. Navi Mumbai is a similar kind of example where the entire satellite town was planned to decongest the highly congested metropolitan of Mumbai. Dholera was also planned on same concept however, the major difference between Navi Mumbai and Dholera was the demand for a new town. Dholera in that case has been manufactured on a saline soil near Gulf of Khambhat, 150 kms from Ahmedabad to be its twin city lacks growth trigger from Ahmedabad and Dholera village both [4]–[6].

B. Economic Development along Corridors

National government in India adopted the corridor development as a strategy of economic development through industrial estates along the transit corridors. In mid-2000s the ruling government proposed a set of Dedicated Freight Corridors as listed in the image below to improve connectivity and trigger growth along Golden quadrilateral Highway. Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) improved connectivity to Western Dedicated freight corridor and was developed by Department of

Industrial Promotion and Policy (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India with partnership of Government of Japan. During that time not only the satellite towns were modelled to be Shanghai or Singapore, but the entire growth corridors were modelled on the Japanese Taiheiyo Belt running from Tokyo to Osaka (Pacific Belt or the Tokaido Corridor). “These regions are proposed to be self-sustained industrial

townships with world-class infrastructure, road and rail connectivity for freight movement to and from ports and logistics hubs, served by domestic/ international air connectivity, reliable power and other quality social infrastructure, and provide a globally competitive environment conducive for setting up businesses”.

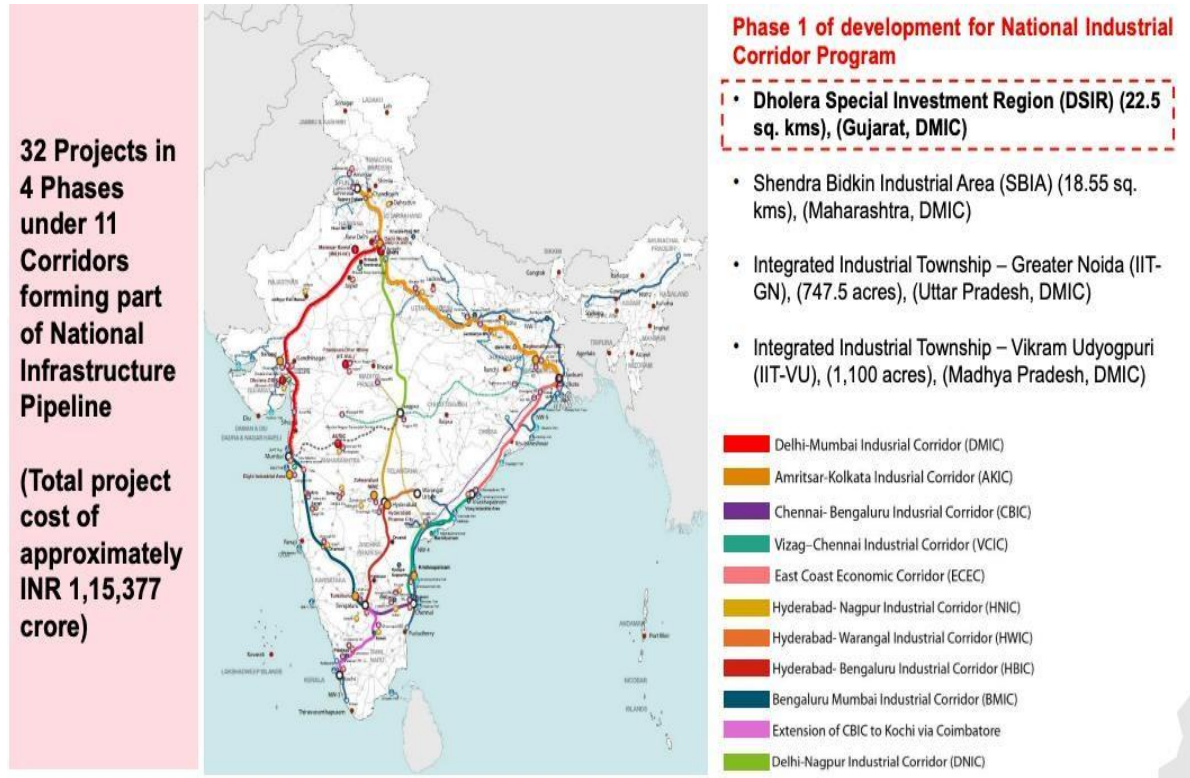


Figure 1: Proposed corridor under National Industrial Corridor Program.

As seen in Figure 1 Dholera was envisioned to be first investment region under Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor. It was anticipated to see the sun by 2019, as first Greenfield smart city of 900sq kms. However, only after 2015 the terminology of ‘project’ used by DMIC shifted to 22 sq kms from 900 sq kms of Dholera Special Investment Region. The in-charge Town Planner of Dholera Special Investment Region Authority claimed that the project being anticipated to be of 900 sq kms was beyond the scope of the site and hence the project could not perform. However, she compared the site with nearby SIRs like Mandal Becharaji and Dahej of which she is also in charge of. She added, “Mandal has Maruti and Dahej has Reliance” (Maruti car plant in case of Mandal Becharaji Special Investment Region and Reliance Power plant in case of Dahej SIR). She implied on Dholera despite being planned as investment region lacked a magnet of growth trigger which the other greenfield projects had. The interview was conducted in DSIRDA office at Udhog Bhavan, Gandhinagar on 2 November 2021[7]–[10].

Such along the corridors are a unique form of urban development where a linear growth along the transit corridor is anticipated to bring revenue and people of nearby neighborhood and follow a planned master plan with special regulations of the project. Another striking identity of these Regions is that they are planned to be self-sufficient on barren lands with no demand of resource or

livelihood on ground. According to NICDC, Special Investment Regions are NICDC proposed these corridors in the country to distribute the economic development across the country, however, did not plan the regions to be organically developed but follow a certain trajectory pre-decided by the ULBs and state government. Following Investment Regions were proposed by NICDC under Phase 1:

- Ahmedabad – Dholera Special Investment Region, Gujarat (903 sq. kms.)
- Dadri-Noida-Ghaziabad Investment Region, Uttar Pradesh, (218 sq. kms.).
- Manesar-Bawal Investment Region, Haryana (402 sq. kms.);
- Khushkhara-Bhiwadi-Neemrana Investment Region, Rajasthan (160 sq. kms.);
- Pitampur-Dhar-Mhow Investment Region, Madhya Pradesh (372 sq. kms.)

NICDC further added a nomenclature to the organizational structure of the SIR by mentioning it to be Greenfield Industrial City managed by SPV (Special purpose vehicle) called “Dholera Industrial City Development Limited” (DICDL).

The paper begins by understanding Dholera Special Investment Region in the theoretical premise of Entrepreneurial Urbanism and Speculative Urban Governance. To understand the traces of neo-liberal

policies in the conceptualization and planning of the Dholera Special Investment Region and the role of global finance in it, the study was done through key person semi-structured interviews, visiting key stakeholders (planning and execution) and community representatives. The paper refers to the secondary source of the Special Investment Region Act, 2009 and uses it as prime evidence of the Speculative mode of urban governance. The paper reflects upon Textual analysis of secondary source like SIR Act, Gujarat Industrial Policy, DGDCR, DSIRDA Draft Development Plan, Dholera Draft Development Report and primary field analysis of the execution of the project and dynamics on ground.

C. Documentary Analysis Special Investment Region

An Investment Region defined by NICDC is a specified area delineated as industrial region with an area of over 200 sq kms (20,000 hectares).

D. Special Investment Region Act, 2009

Defining the Special Investment Region, Gujarat Act No. 2 on 6th January 2009 as an act “To provide for establishment, operation, regulation and management of large size Investment Regions and Industrial Areas in the State of Gujarat; and to specially enable their development as global hubs of economic activity supported by world class infrastructure, premium civic amenities, centers of excellence and proactive policy framework; and for setting up an organizational structure with that purpose and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto”. The definition further extended itself with detailed explanation of the terms listed in the definition to avoid disparity. However, the explanation clearly expressed the global vision and the speculative agenda of the conception of the investment region. The above traces can be seen as follows: The provision of civic “amenities” in this case mentioned provision of essential services which focused on infrastructure development of the region like roads, Bridges, bypasses, underpasses, water supply, waste, health, education, transport, disaster, townships, institutional areas, industrial park, and other facilities for the investment region. However, this provision was anticipated exclusively within the boundary of the investment region and not a regional circuit. I argue that the inclusion of industrial park, townships, and institutional areas along with the essential amenities reflected the ambition of the speculative urbanism adopted by the Special Investment model. The notion of providing specialized service for the public good with the private capital is the genesis of the speculation adopted by the SIR (Special Investment Region) Act. The “economic activity” as described by the Act consisted of a generous list of ambitious typologies of industries and institutional arrangements like “commercial, financial, processing packaging, logistics, transport, tourism, hospitality, health, housing, entertainment, research and development, education and training, information and communication, management and consultancy, corporate offices” and others as specified by the Apex Authority. These avenues of economic adventures had a broad area of exploration with no clear demarcation or organizational structure. These economic activities had not listed any inclusive strategy for the dispossessed and contested people of the

Dholera village on whose land the investment region was proposed. The right to livelihood for the people around the project had very limited opportunities to participate in the project and utilize the opportunities. These economic activities targeted the investors and the people outside the existing premise of Dholera. The mentioning of “Global Hub” of economic activity clearly articulated the exclusive strategies of the SIR Act for the investors and reflected the authoritarian model of power. The activities were not conceptualized for the marginalized but for the aspirations of the preferred middle class. “Infrastructure project” was conceptualized as any facility, service, utility to facilitate the “required or desirable smooth, productive and efficient functioning of the SIR”. This infrastructure provision was to rescale the national project to be a “worlding strategy” as described by Roy and Ong. These worlding facilities worked with the anticipated capital returns in lieu of the huge loans and funding from the Foreign Direct Investment, World Bank, and others. A “Special purpose entity” was formed legally under Gujarat Companies Act, 1956 to execute infrastructure projects in DSIR. “Pro-active policy framework” mentioned the special regulations and organizational structure set up for the execution of the SIR Act, 2009 in Dholera. The Apex Authority was on the top of the power structure, which was Special Investment Region Apex Authority in this case. The creation of a parallel power structure and a paradigm shift in the power role of State being a facilitator instead of provider. Authority overlapping and ambiguous. This shift in the power structure was a prevalent method of exhibiting control in the Neo Liberal policies. The “regulation” for DSIR were also formulated by the Apex Authority, the head of the power structure in this case eliminating the role of state and center.

E. Declaration of Special Investment Region

The Act described the Special Investment Region as an Industrial Area with the location name and its predominant activity. Thus, Dholera Special Investment Region was declared under the Official Gazette by the State Government (Government of Gujarat). However, chapter 2 of the Act clearly stated “Special Investment Region to be out of the jurisdiction of local authority”. The “local authority” mentioned in the act included Village Panchayat of Gamtal, Municipal Area and Municipal Corporation, this statement reiterates the exclusive policy making for the SIR region and clear “denied urbanization” in the case of Greenfield city making. The declaration further added, that the DSIR authority if required can consult the “local authority” while preparing the Development Plan of the SIR Area to consider the plan prepared by the local authority if at all. The low level of participation in the making of the DSIR Development plan by the local authority clarifies the notion of speculative and entrepreneurial urbanism. The entrepreneurial strategies clearly charted in terms of regulations and acts in case SIR Act, 2009 lays the foundation of the specialized form of urban governance which is the most important element of Neo Liberal governance as shown in Figure 2.

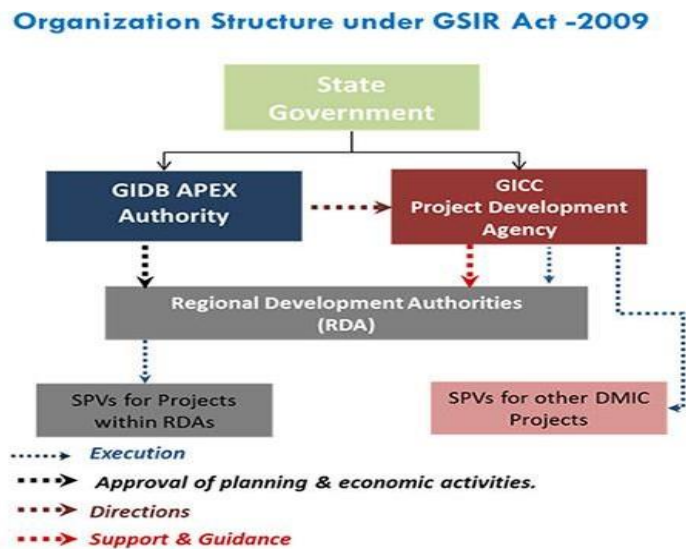


Figure 2: Illustrating the Organizational Structure of Power in DSIR.

F. Power Structure and the play of politics

a. Apex Authority

The Apex authority for DSIR (Dholera Special Investment Region) is Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB) established under Gujarat Infrastructure Development Act, 1999. By virtue of the authority, the then Hon. Chief Ministers presides as the head of the Apex Authority as part of the GIDB committee.

Functions of Apex Authority (AA)

- Regulations for SIR.
- To approve Land Use plan, received from Regional Development Authority (Dholera Special Investment Region Development Authority) in this case.
- To approve Town Planning Scheme, Development Plan and General Development Regulations proposed by Regional Development Authority.
- Granting permission for economic activities, see to agreements, fix the rates and user chargers proposed by Regional Development Authority in SIR.

b. Regional Development Authority

The State constituted “Dholera Special Investment Region Development Authority” (DSIRDA) by notification of the Official Gazette declared under section 3. DSIRDA has the authority to “acquire, hold and dispose of movable and immovable property” in SIR area. DSIRDA works as a parallel committee to Apex Authority in the power distribution system of DSIR.

c. Functions of Regional Development Authority

As mentioned in SIR Act, 2009 Classify the area for SIR and decide the prominent economic activity, amenities, and community services

- Preparing Development Plan, Town Planning Schemes for the entire SIR area.
- Regulating the development in the SIR Area.
- Acquire land for the SIR Area by “sale, lease, grant, allocation, donation, consent, agreement or

through proceedings” under Land Acquisition Act, 1894.

- To execute the development in SIR area which includes landing into agreement with the developers and investors, organization and other services and amenities.
- The regional development authority “may frame its own regulations” as mentioned in the SIR Act, 2009.
- DSIRDA is the single point contact for any activity in the SIR Area.

The act has many ambiguities in terms of functions and scope of work between the institutional arrangement. For example, the authority of any economic activity and the agreement with the developer or investor lies in the purview of the Regional Development Authority as per the Act. However, chapter 6 of the Act, mentions Apex Authority to be the contact agency for the permission regarding starting of any infrastructure project in DSIR. Meanwhile, the act also states the selection of the economic activity proposed by the developer should consider the development plan proposed by the RDA under Gujarat Special Economic Zone Act, 2004 (GIDB, 2009). The frequent jumping of scales in power structure and bypassing the state is prominent evidence of the speculative form of urban governance.

d. Project Development Agency

According to the Act, the State Government under Companies Act, 1956 can develop a Project Development Agency, further working closely with Apex Authority and Regional Development Authority for the executions of infrastructure projects in the SIR Area. The absence of hierarchy of Nodal Company and the Regional Development Agency makes it difficult to decide authorship of the power. However, the primary function of the Nodal Agency is to bring Private Sector for participating in the investment schedule and assure finance for the projects.

e. Extension of Powers

According to Chapter 10 of SIR Act, 2009 the rights of the Regional Development Authority extend to the periphery of the SIR Area. The periphery as defined by the Act included the outer area under section 27 of the Act. This extension of the rights outside the premise of demarcated SIR Area brings Authoritative avenues for the RDA and Nodal Company. The Regional Development Authority can control development in the periphery area as well violating the rights of the people living in the periphery. Contesting claims over the periphery and the SIR Area of the Dholera SIR brings the debate of the “denied

urbanization” and rights of the marginalized as shown in Figure 3.

Miscellaneous of the SIR Act document identifies “Land deemed to be for public purpose” and extends the rights to cease land for infrastructure projects, town planning schemes and development land in the name of “public good”. The document does not clarify or define “public good”. However, the Act also restricts any mode of access in the notified SIR Region without the permission of DSIRDA. This binaries in the development regulations shows extension of powers and authoritative physical planning exercise of DSIR.

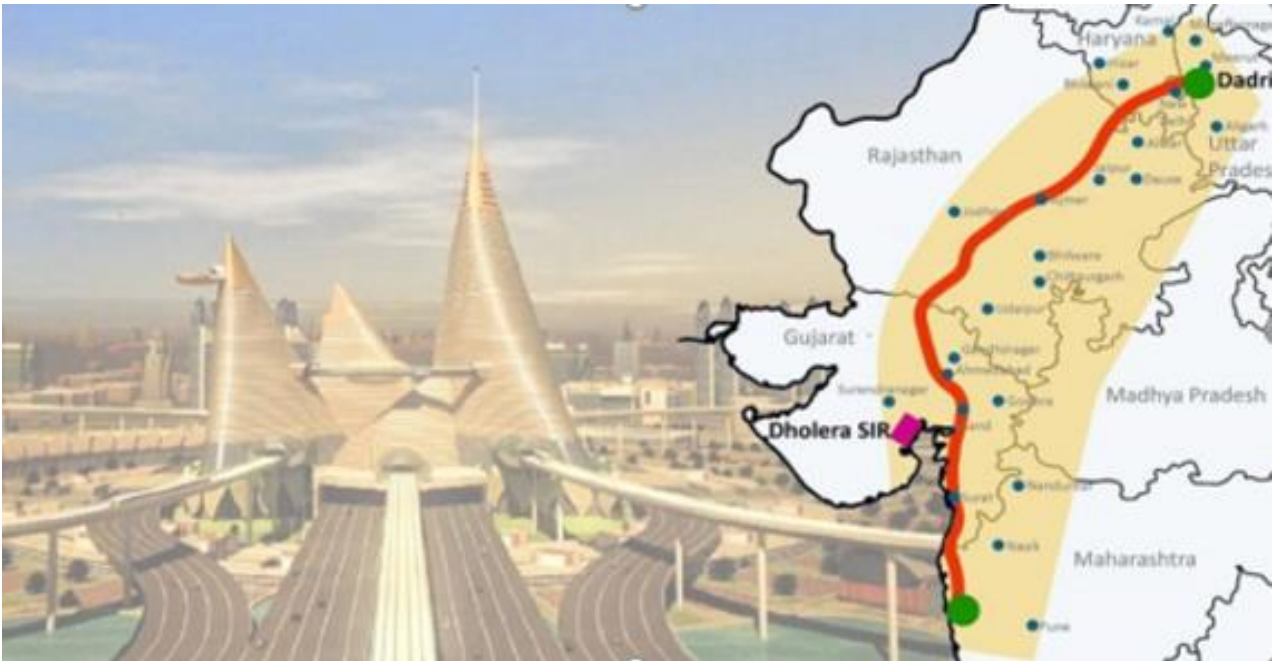


Figure 3: Representing the Dholera Special Investment Region.

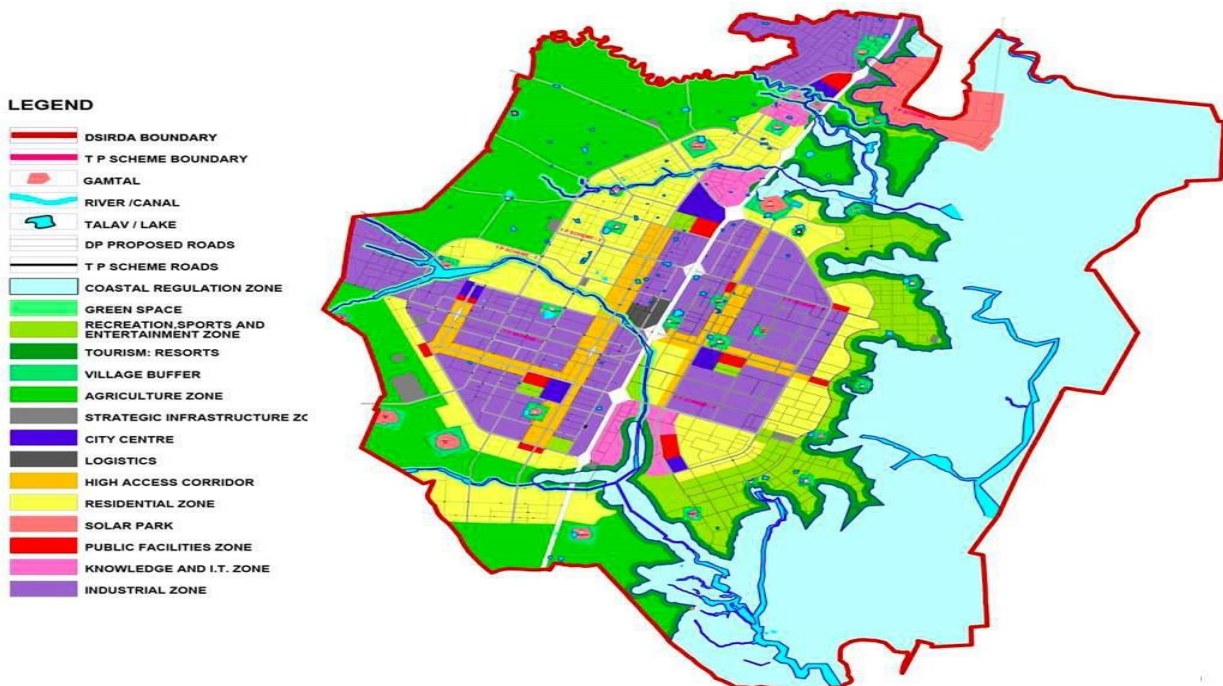


Figure 4: Illustrating the Dholera Special Investment Region used Plan.

The then chief minister of the state and the current prime minister of the country envisioned Dholera as a multimillion project, booming with investments from national and international funds and a successful twin city of Ahmedabad. The proposed new dream city was conceptualized on aspirations of world class infrastructure on a saline land, pooled together with the politics of the state and other parastatals like Dholera Special Investment Region Authority and others. Despite state being a facilitator of land in the case of Dholera, the project had its downs in the process and was not executed till 2019. The master planning of Dholera was done by HALCROW, who worked with Indian consultants and local architecture team named Design Planning Counsel. They envisioned Dholera Special Investment Region to be 924 sq. km of site as a large-scale project that was planned to be developed in three phases at an interval of 10 years each. The project showcased the aspirations of a developing country like India wanting to create a benchmark in the global market by imitating the trends of European and Asian countries. Dholera followed the new city making process as a top-down model which was particularly inspired by the Neo Liberal state. The top-down model of master planning the cities from scratch has also been seen nationwide in cities like Navi Mumbai, HITEC city, Lavasa and many more. Like these examples, Dholera was also branded as “pinnacle of technology driven urbanism (Datta, 2015). To support the political agenda of the new city making, Special Investment Region Act was developed to facilitate the entire model of urban governance [11]–[13].

This act not only changed the demographics of how the region would be conceptualised but also the fact that it targeted industrial investments to generate economy and promote industrial development. Thus, for the first time with the example of SIRs the government tried to relate economic development and industrial activities to urbanisation. Dholera was proposed to be an example of the same. Urbanisation was anticipated to be result of industrial development. The proposed land use plan also is an example of the fact most of the land is proposed to be of industrial use. Architect Shobhit Tayal, Director of Design Planning and Counsel and important decision maker in the Dholera Land Use plan claimed, “Dholera has been envisioned as a multi-million-dollar global hub of infrastructure and entrepreneurial aspirations of the nation. It is based on the premise of the Land Acquisition Scheme

and the TP model of the GTPUDA. The project has been delayed due to liquidity in finance and withdrawal of proposal by several industrial bidders. The scale of the project is also an important factor to understand the delay of the execution of the project [14]. The proposed activation area of 22sq kms is completely on government land and the SIR Act has facilitated both the industrialists and landowners with heavy compensation and waiver in development charges of their land post implementation of the TP scheme”. He also implied that the landowners have no scope of disagreement because they have got better accessible lands and infrastructure services like power and water which their lands were devoid of before the implementation of the DSIR. The land use planning was done by Halcrow, UK and Design Planning and Counsel as the local Indian architecture firm as shown Figure 4. It was done based on twelve spatial planning exercises and conventional principles like: “Creation of a compact city, Integration of land uses, Accessibility of industrial zones, Focus on the city internally away from the central expressway, Separation of industrial and city traffic, Provision for a high quality public transport system, Development of a poly centric structure that has number of commercial and community nodes, Integration of existing villages in new city, Conservation of the better agricultural land, Protection of CRZ (Coastal Regulations Zone), Development of strong landscape strategy (Authority, 2012)”

f. Gujarat Industrial Policy 2015:

Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation released a report in 2015 named Investment Opportunities in Gujarat to build Industrial Ecosystem elaborated on incentives to all types of industries for listed SIRs of phase 1. For Dholera Investment Region, the report referred to Gujarat Industrial Policy, 2015 and clearly stated that the incentives are for the Multipurpose (Non-Chemical) industries. The land allotment price shall be 2750 INR where 1 INR= 75USD. The Industrial incentives listed under Mega and Innovative Policy lured the industrialists to go for investment of at least 1,000 crore and provide employment to at least 2000 people to avail the benefits. The broadly listed sectors were Auto and auto components, Ship building, Fabrication, and other large industries as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Gujarat Industrial Policy 2015 Listed Incentive Type and Ceiling Cap for Dholera SIR, Which Is as Follows:

Incentive	Incentive Type	Ceiling/cap
Tax Incentive	For Bagapura, Vithlapur and Dholera 90% Net SGST reimbursement to be paid for 10 years	100% Gross Fixed Capital Investment
Interest subsidy	Interest subsidy at 7%	INR 1 crore per annum
Payroll assistance for labour intensive industries	INR 1200 per person and additional 300 INR for women	NIL

g. Reflection: Fractured Reality

Large chunks of barren land lie vacant along the State Highway in the Dholera Special Investment Region. The project was to see the sun in 2019, however only one building (ABCD building) the administrative head quarter stands tall in the entire 900 square kms of site of Dholera Special Investment Region as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Representing the Oaks Residency out Side DSIR Boundary

Moving towards Dholera along the Bavla Bagodara Highway, one sees these promising billboards of the proposed project with captivating tag lines as “the future of Manufacturing”. The International Airport proposed was aspired to be one of its kind with ultra-modern amenities to serve the investors and the future residents of the Dholera SIR, as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7.



Figure 6: Representing the Bill Board along the Bavla Bagodara Highway



Figure 7: Representing the Mode of transport in Dholera

The project was activated in 2016 on an area of 22 sq kms, the activation zone which laid the trunk infrastructure of the project. The trunk infrastructure would help the fundamental infrastructure of the layout to make basic services reach any project. Right before entering the demarcated SIR zone, a few private developers have captured the potential of the project and proposed residential plots with the land cheaper than the one in SIR. The residential project is priced at 3800 Rs per yard is an investment opportunity for a client actively looking for a house near DSIR. The proposed built structure of the residential scheme showcases the aspired client of the scheme that is the upper middle class who would commute from their houses to the DSIR, 1.5 kms away. However, in the last decade the properties around the official SIR zone also could not see the day light because of shortage in demand. The soil being saline is not used for agriculture and it becomes comparatively easier for the state to capture the land in this case, considering the land to be waste.



Figure 8: Proposed High Access Corridor in the Master Plan of DSIR



Figure 9: View of ABCD Building from the High Access Corridor

II. DISCUSSION

Access corridor of the DSIR, one is greeted with large chunks of barren land plotted neatly for the proposed development. The local authority for the project Dholera Special Investment Region Authority cleared land for future development in 2009, however the development has not begun yet. The project was conceptualized on the funding of various national and international investors while its launch in 2009 but they have faced a huge delay in the execution of the project on ground as shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9. The reality of the project speaks a lot about the fantasies of the state with global aspirations detached from the local needs and demand. The backwaters on the site from the Gulf of Khambhat makes it evident for the possibility of low- rise construction making it difficult for the industrialist and builders to move ahead with the project in case of DSIR. The project anticipated high speed monorail bullet train to provide service between Ahmedabad and Dholera by 2019, however currently the only mode of commute for the locals to access the SIR zone is this shared autorickshaw. Nearby villages like Dhandhuka, Fedara (the proposed international airport site) and others try to capture employment opportunities from these SIR activities. The shared autorickshaw is the only mode of commute currently for their needs of vegetables and other stock. The locals from Dholera village have started these services to facilitate movement in the barren vast land of the project, otherwise left on its own. The Special investment region is divided into various Town Planning Schemes, a model of execution of the project adopted by DSIR. Town Planning Schemes is an accepted model of land pooling and acquisition under the GTPUDA Act practiced in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The entire project is divided into 6 TPs for the ease of execution and management of resources. The local authority along with the state had decided to move ahead with TP2 in its initial phase, which largely includes trunk infrastructure and industrial development in its core and residential on secondary roads. When one approaches TP2, we can see ABCD building standing amidst large open barren lands, shouting for its binaries in the sight. ABCD building. All legal works and permissions will be done through a single window within this building. ABCD building will provide single window clearance

[15]–[17].

Dholera ABCD building office will have command center for all the ICT and SCADA sensors. In short, all command and controlling will be through this building. It has been constructed in TP2 West part (Phase 1) and is in commercial zone (Knowledge And It Zone). ABCD building constructed by Cube Construction Engineering Ltd. has become the main attraction for present investors. DSIRDA has the responsibility of managing land in the SIR area. The planning and development of DSIR is done from the ABCD building along with an SPV called Dholera Industrial City Development Limited. The SPV is created between Central Government (DMICDC Trust) and the State Government (DSIRDA) to work with the growth corridor project along which the DSIR is conceptualized. The power politics in the SIR area showcases the authoritative approach towards management and execution. The entire process of management and execution is further guided by SIR Act, exclusively crafted for the project along with its Development Control guidelines which are applicable only to the SIR Area.

III. CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the analysis of the SIR Act and its implications on the project, the following details have been observed. The inclusion of industrial parks, townships, and institutional areas along with the essential amenities reflected the ambition of the speculative urbanism adopted by the Special Investment model. The notion of providing specialized service for the public good with the private capital is the genesis of the speculation adopted by the SIR (Special Investment Region) Act. The economic activities proposed in the master plan did not list any inclusive strategy for the dispossessed and contested people of the Dholera village on whose land the investment region was proposed. The right to livelihood for the people around the project had very limited opportunities to participate in the project and utilize the opportunities. These economic activities targeted the investors and the people outside the existing premise of Dholera. The mentioning of the “Global Hub” of economic activity clearly articulated the exclusive strategies of the SIR Act for the investors and reflected the authoritarian model of power. The activities were not conceptualized for the marginalized but the aspirations of the preferred middle class. The parastatals in this case consisted of a horizontal distribution of power which made functions and roles of every Authority overlapping and ambiguous. This shift in the power structure was a prevalent method of exhibiting control in the Neo-Liberal policies. The “regulation” for DSIR was also formulated by the Apex Authority, the head of the power structure in this case eliminating the role of state and center. The authority of any economic activity and the agreement with the developer or investor lies in the purview of the Regional Development Authority as per the Act. However, chapter 6 of the Act, mentions Apex Authority to be the contact agency for permission regarding starting the infrastructure project in DSIR. Meanwhile, the act also states the selection of the economic activity proposed by the developer should consider the development plan prepared by the Regional Development Authority under Gujarat Special Economic

Zone Act, 2004 (GIDB, 2009). “Land deemed to be for public purpose” and extends the rights to cease land for infrastructure projects, town planning schemes and development land in the name of “public good”. The document does not clarify or define “public good”. However, the Act also restricts any mode of access in the notified SIR Region without the permission of DSIRDA. These binaries in the development regulations show the extension of powers and authoritative physical planning exercise of DSIR. The proposed plan and the virtual images promised the city to look like Shanghai and give employment opportunities to locals but were imagined for the tourists and elite able to invest heavily in the “smart” technologies. The locals objected to the proposed branded visuals and this phenomenon brings to face how branding can affect the alter the urban realities. The national goal of uplifting the city to the global dream leaves the peasants and the locals to pay the price of the progress. The development model and the process leave no scope for the upliftment of the locals but is designed to make room for new tenants i.e., the investors and developers giving rise to the new debate of globalized idea of city-making. The analysis of the execution of the Neo-Liberal form of urban governance brings out the disparities that exist on ground between the theoretical premise of the Act and its operation on ground. Field visits to the Activation zone of the DSIR, reveals absolute delay of the project in terms of its execution on ground. The lack of demand and the speculated need of the project reflects the site conditions. Key person interviews with members of GICC, GIDB and DSIR Authority reveals positive aspirations about the chances of the project to flourish with further subsidies from the Government and funds from investors. The proposal of International Airport and High Access Corridor has rejuvenated the interest of the builder lobby to invest in the project. However, detailed study of the land market and comparison with the neighborhood land prices shall generate a debate about tax incentives and subsidies by the DSIR Authority to facilitate investment in SIR Region. However, Dholera puts forward an interesting case of Speculating economic demand on a greenfield site and projections about the industrial growth along the corridor is a result of paradigm shift in the discourse of planning. The visual narrative of the proposed greenfield city and its dynamics on ground provides an imperative of being a manufactured agenda of city making process which supports its delay. However, the narrative of the nation to have the same visual for all proposed greenfield smart cities claims that we need to rethink on the discourse of the city building.

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