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Cybermohalla

A group of young researcher-practitioners has emerged in working-class and quasi-legal settlements in Delhi, under the rubric of Cybermohalla (a collaboration of Sarai-CSDS and Ankur: Society for Alternatives in Education, Delhi). These settlements are: LNJP Colony (media lab operational since 2001), Dakshinpuri Resettlement Colony (media lab operational since 2002), Nangla Maanchi (media lab operational from 2004-2006; demolished when the settlement was bulldozed as part of Delhi's ongoing preparations for the 2010 Commonwealth Games); and Ghevara, a new resettlement colony still in the process of formation on the north-west periphery of Delhi. There is also an experimental Research & Development Lab that hosts the Cybermohalla mobile lab which travels between locations, and to other sites to initiate new possibilities of spaces, practices and circulatory forms. Over a duration ranging at present from six-and-a-half years to a few months for different researcher-practitioners, the city has been inscribed in different registers, using a range of old and new media and narrative strategies involving sound, images, and texts, within the context of the media labs located in their own neighbourhoods. A recent publication from Cybermohalla researcher-practitioners is *Bahurupiya Shehr* (The Dissembler City, Rajkamal Prakashan, 2007, Delhi), a collection of stories, biographies, conversations, blog entries and reflections about the city.

Azra Tabassum (b. 1983) left school in Class IX and assisted her mother with sewing work. She first saw the full expanse of her colony, LNJP, in 2000 while conducting a survey with Ankur. In 2001 she joined the Cybermohalla Lab in LNJP, and also finished her secondary education through Open School. One of her key interests is conceptualising and testing processes for the creation of self-regulated spaces.

Jaanu Nagar (b. 1985) completed his secondary education in Fatehpur (Uttar Pradesh) and his first year of undergraduate study from Delhi University. Deeply interested in writing in Hindi, he taught for a year at Janhitkari Saraswati Vidya Mandir in Fatehpur, and completed a one-year computer course in Delhi. In 2005 he joined the Cybermohalla Lab in Nangla Maanchi, the colony where he lived. By the time the settlement was demolished in 2006, he had created an archive of audio recordings about Nangla. Post-eviction he has continued to work with Cybermohalla. He is a co-author of *Bahurupiya Shehr* (The Dissembler City, Rajkamal Prakashan, 2007), a compilation of writings by Cybermohalla practitioners.

Lakhmi Chand Kohli (b. 1981) took up different jobs after he finished school – operated a public call booth, worked in a milk depot and a factory, as a compounder in a pharmacy, and collected data for different kinds of city surveys. In 2003 he joined the Cybermohalla Lab at Dakshinpuri and now works there fulltime. He co-edits the quarterly Cybermohalla broadsheet *Bade-Bade Shehron Mein Kuchh Namm Baatein* (Soft Sounds and Conversations in Large Loud Cities).

Love Anand (b. 1987) completed Class XII and is trying to find a means to pursue an undergraduate degree in Computer Applications. In 2004 he joined the Cybermohalla Lab in Dakshinpuri. He finds he has matured through working collectively with other researcher-practitioners, and is now paying more attention to his responsibilities towards his parental home.

Neelofar (b. 1985) has been with the Cybermohalla Lab in LNJP colony since she finished school in 2001. While at the lab she has also completed short-term courses, training as a beautician, a DTP operator, etc. At present she is engaged in trying to understand the formation and texture of shared public spaces, and to evolve a vocabulary to bring this understanding into public dialogue.

Rakesh Khairalia (b. 1978) took up different jobs after he finished school – tried to start a courier service, worked in a screen printing press, in a placement agency, as a cashier, as a marketing agent and as a supervisor for different companies. He joined the Cybermohalla Lab at Dakshinpuri in 2004. He is currently researching how different conversational contexts in the locality can be drawn upon and deepened.

Shamsher Ali (b. 1986) has been associated from childhood with the Ankur Learning Centre. While in school he started a workshop with his friends to make jewellery boxes. In 2001 he joined the Cybermohalla Lab in LNJP colony, dividing his time between school, workshop and lab. For the last two years he has been focusing on questions emerging from his engagement with LNJP, Nangla Maanchi and Ghevera resettlement colonies.

Shveta Sarda is a content editor and translator with Sarai. She works in Cybermohalla as a process chronicler and edits the labs' content for diverse circulation – books, websites, blogs, broadsheets, and wall magazines. At present she is working with various research projects at the CM mobile lab. She was part of the editorial collective of the broadsheet series *Sarai.txt*.

Suraj Rai (b. 1987) completed his secondary education from Open School. He had joined Ankur at a very young age. Having taught himself the basics of the Linux/GNU operating system, he is determined to perfect his skills and knowledge with regard to it. He has been with the Cybermohalla Lab at LNJP since the lab's inception. He is a co-author of *Bahurupiya Shehr* (The Dissembler City, Rajkamal Prakashan, 2007), a compilation of writings by Cybermohalla practitioners.

Tripan Kumar (b. 1985) completed his first year of undergraduate study from Delhi University. He is trying to evolve an understanding about the different conceptions and circulatory forms of different media in his locality and the city through a set of questions.

Yashoda Singh (b. 1983) left school after Class IX, and began to write after emerging from a difficult marriage. She has been with the Cybermohalla Lab at LNJP since 2001, and co-edits the quarterly Cybermohalla broadsheet, *Bade-Bade Shehron Mein Kuchh Namm Baatein* (Soft Sounds and Conversations in Large Loud Cities).

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Mogas Station is an artists' collective (Bertrand Peret, Gulschan Gothel, Hoang Duong Cam, Rich Streitmatter-Tran, Sandrine Lloquet, Tam Vo Phi, Vu Lien Phuong) based since 2005 in Ho Chi Minh City. As part of the Migration Addicts project, *Rokovoko* debuted at the 52nd Venice Biennale. <mogas@aartmag.net>

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No One Is Illegal (NOII), UK, challenges the ideology of immigration controls, and campaigns for their total abolition. It opposes controls in principle and rejects any idea there can be 'fair' or 'just' or 'reasonable' or 'non-racist' controls. NOII makes no distinction between 'economic migrants' and 'refugees', between the 'legal' and the 'illegal'. According to NOII, these are political categories invented by politicians. It campaigns to break down these categories and support free movement for all and unity between all. NOII's founding members are: Steve Cohen (Manchester), Harriet Grimsditch (Bolton), Teresa Hayter (Oxford), Bob Hughes (Oxford) and Dave Landau (London). <email: info@noii.org.uk> <http://www.noii.org.uk/>

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