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**TRACING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN OBTAINING ACCESS TO
CRITICAL INFORMATION IN KENYA'S KIBERA SLUM:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH**

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Suchismita Goswami

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr. Joop de Wit (supervisor)

Dr. Erhard Berner (reader)

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address:

Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460
Fax: +31 70 426 0799

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List of Acronyms

DC	District Collector
FGD	Focussed Group Discussion
GOK	Government of Kenya
KENSUP	Kenya Slum Upgradation Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RTTC	Right to the City
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Abstract

Participation remains an important *checklist* to be followed in any mainstream development. In this research I look into differential access information as a determining factor for participation and claiming “right to the city” by low income slum people. I locate my research in the Kibera slum of Nairobi to explore the nature, need and spaces of information in part of the slum and as to how gender relations play a role in determining access to such information. The research concludes that both men and women have little access to “formal” or government provided information and hence are mostly dependent on informal social networks. In the patriarchal slum community men have more control over and access to these informal networks through social legitimisation of (in)equal masculinist patronage norms. My paper suggests that much more attention is needed for public, all pervasive information to all as a key requisite for inclusive urban planning and low income housing policy keeping in mind existing gender norms and relations.

The analysis advocates for recognising gender differences in obtaining critical information in urban planning.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research contributes to the field of development studies by looking into spaces of access to information as an important component for determining participation in policies for the urban poor and what is termed their “Right to the city”. It examines the nuanced gender relationships between men and women to get access to spaces of information which is a topic rarely getting the attention it deserves in the present literature of participation.

Keywords

Informal Settlement/slum, Participation, Access to Information, Agency, Patronage, Urban Poverty, Social Network, Gender, Vision 2030

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. The Beginning...

I was introduced to Andrea Cornwall's paper "Whose voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development" (2003) during initial days of my master's programme in International Institute of Social Sciences (ISS). This paper helped me to comprehend important questions about gendered interests and how the least powerful are left without a voice to express their decisions and choices.

The article particularly left a deep impact on me and made me realise how during my work tenure in a grassroots organisation I failed on several occasion to assure participation of women in development projects. I was reminded of women with whom I worked in South Asia who were most of the time confined to certain spaces mostly within domestic walls. In the meetings organised by our organisation when the women were asked to voice out about their decisions and wants they were usually quite or echoed the words previously raised by the leader of their group mostly men. Further introspection increased my curiosity as how does men and women form opinion or voices? Are the men and women getting access to spaces of information to form independent opinion or are they dependent on middlemen for the opinions and voices that they raise? It was that realisation which made me make the journey of how men and women access information? I have worked previously in slums so due to the familiarity with the context I choose to do my research in the slums of Kibera in Kenya. In the next section I will introduce the readers to Kibera as a space of study for my research.

1.2. The Space of Kibera

Kenya's urban population is currently growing in spectacular figures. Just about a decade back Nairobi was a city of about 2 million population and today the numbers are almost double (World Population Review 2015). An increasing number of the population in Nairobi amounting to about 55% live in informal settlements (USAID 1993:6). Interestingly the land area used in the

city of Nairobi for these informal settlements is about 5% of the total area used for residential purposes (Ibid). These informal settlements are spaces of opportunities specially for the people who are pushed to urban areas due to economic failure and lack of rural opportunities. This collective anxiety actually brings the slum dwellers together to create and shape the urban space. In spite of their immense presence and contribution to the city they live in the most perilous conditions with high crime rates, scarce access to water and sanitation as well as housing and secure tenure (UNHABITAT 2008:4). The informal settlements nevertheless continued to expand due to “rapid rate of growth in the city’s population, the poverty of the inhabitants, a deficient national housing policy framework and the insubstantial, inefficient and corrupt system of urban governance” (K’ Akumu and Olima 2007:93-94). The government themselves acknowledged two decades back that failures in public policy leads to existence of informal settlements (Dowall 1991).

Life in the informal settlement across Nairobi is difficult as the settlers thrive on neck deep patronage and corruptions by the landowners. Further as these settlements are mostly considered illegal by the authorities there is always a reluctance to provide them with the basic services like access to education, roads and health care facilities (Madise et al. 2012:1145). Kloop in his study finds “widespread land corruption to an intensifying informalisation of politics and suggests that this tendency increases as other sources of mainstream patronage” (as cited in Huchzermeyer 2011:25). Apart from corruption and patronage politics another defining component of the informal settlements in Nairobi is ethnic identity. The political and social behaviour of a voter is shaped a lot by their ethnic identity.

I locate my research in Kibera. Kibera is supposed to be the largest slum in African subcontinent though it is a contested view now (Robbins 2012, Huchzermeyer 2011:155). The first documented settlers were Nubians from Sudan dating back to 1918 (COHRE 2008: 108). The word “Kibera” literally means jungle, that is exactly how the Nubians found Kibera to be when they first arrived in Nairobi and they soon cleared off the forest lands and started residing there (Ibid: 109). The British gave temporary land rights to the Nubians and much later in 1981 the Kenyans were also allocated spaces to reside

there. Currently the government owns all the land. As per the last census in 550 acres of land about 1,70,000 Kenyans are settled (COHRE 2008:18). It is one of the prominent slums in the region. Lots of movies, books and documentaries are written about Kibera bringing it to the global spotlight. A typical house in Kibera is made up of mud walls an uneven tin roof with a dirt and concrete floor. The landowners are usually from the Kikuyu tribe which is also ruling power in Kenya and the tenants are mostly from the opponent tribe of Luo and the Luhya. Though the Luo was the opposition party yet they were the majority in Kibera and has lots of influence in the Kenyan politics (Huchzermeyer 2011:156). Raila Odinga from Luo tribe has stronghold in Kibera who has been the Member of Parliament of the area since 1992 and Kibera has been the major strong base (Smedt 2009:582). Kibera has been one of the most affected place post 2007 election with “shops and houses destroyed or looted, people killed and for several weeks angry crowds engaged the police in running battles” (Ibid: 582). Rumours played a pivotal role in fueling chaos and violence and influenced the public perception of the crisis and motivated the youths in performing violence (Osborn 2008:316).

On the other hand Kibera is an assimilation of a vibrant economy lined with shops starting from *M-Pesa*¹, vegetable sellers, stingy bars, second hand cloth lines, meat market, *bhajia*² shops and as one walks down the crowded semi concrete path one could hear loud pan African music. Kibera like other slums across the world is surrounded with very posh locality where in a 10 minutes walk across the city one will find a lush golf course and a huge multistore shopping centre. All these modernity and aspirations envelopes Kibera and are also dependent on cheap labours from Kibera.

One of the striking feature for me in Kibera was the NGO haul and how the communities in Kibera were dependent on them for education, health, jobs, clean water and infrastructure development. Kibera is currently earmarked as

¹ *M-Pesa* is money transfer service done easily through mobile phones. It is managed by a network of agents where customers can deposit and borrow money whenever they want through small transaction fee.

² The Kenyan version of potato fries though the term “*bhajia*” is from Indian origin after years of trading with Indians several such Indian terminologies are popular in Kenya.

an area for the massive slum resettlement programme under the banner of KENSUP (Kenya Slum Upgradation Programme) in collaboration with Government of Kenya (GOK) and UN HABITAT. It started in the year 2001 with the goal to provide capacity building, introduce income generation activities and provision of housing finance, improvement and infrastructure for 5.3 million slum dwellers in Kenya with an estimated budget of 13 billion USD approximately (UNHABITAT 2008:7). Anna Tibaijuka the executive Director of UN HABITAT office in Kenya in 2008 stated in a strategy document that the current partnership will look into “affordable housing and infrastructure” which will include integrated development approach by including “successful slum upgradation, focusing on the provision of affordable housing finance and infrastructure (UNHABITAT 2008: 5). Kibera is now in the implementation stage for slum resettlement and has been funded with USD 350,000 and as per August 2016 the families were ready to be shifted in their newly constructed resettlement sites. The ones’ who are left behind did not manage to collect the desired amount of savings as prescribed by the KENSUP so they have to wait till the next phase. In the implementation strategy document of KENSUP emphasis has been given on participatory preparation of settlement strategic plans through engagement by communities (UNHABITAT 2008:30). Studies shows that there are various constraints in participation by the slum dwellers due to faulty participation mechanisms (Amnesty 2009:20, Rigon 2014).

1.3. Statement of Problem and Relevance:

The central point in the debate of participation is to put citizens in the heart of decision making. In order to make decisions one should have access to information. Access to information is referred as a critical component of an inclusive participation processes. However, in the current literature participation is problematized in several contexts but there has been an uncomfortable silence over how people gets access to information? In 1980 Commonwealth Law Ministers declared that “public participation in the democratic and governmental process was at its most meaningful when citizens had adequate access to official information” (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative 2003:13). Further the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises Right to Information as the Fundamental Right and critical for realising all other rights. Recently Article 35 under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 also conferred right to

information to the citizens of Kenya. Yet access to information is very rare among most of the population especially among the weaker sections of the society in the slums. In this research I would like to investigate how does the slum dwellers in Kibera obtain access to spaces of information, and whether information in various shapes and sources is equally accessible to all-notable poor men and women?

Kenya is currently aspiring to be a “middle economy country” through the Kenya Vision 2030 plan where the conditions for development results in restricted access to spaces of information and it deteriorates further when the government recently forcibly shifted the slum dwellers from slums to high rise without putting the institutions in place to support such developments (Government of Kenya 2007: 2). In order to determine the citizenship rights to the slum dwellers in the context of Kibera they should be given the opportunity to take the central role in decision making and should be given information about the choices to develop the slums. This research challenges the current development vision made by Kenyan government where the voice and the context of the people from the slums are not considered in execution and planning of urban planning.

This study address a gap in literature by navigating on how gender relationships determines access to information in complex spaces of informality. This research also brings out the agency present in men and women to reclaim their right to the city by negotiating patriarchy, patronage and power with relationships and institutions.

1.4. Research Question and Objective

How do men and women obtain access to information in Kibera?

This research question includes three sub-questions:

1. To what extent gender relationships determine access to information between men and women
2. What is the role and nature of the agency of men and that of women as regards getting access to important information?

3. Whether men and women actually frame their aspirations in right to the city (RTTC) terms?

Through primary data collection with ethnographic approach I conducted this research in Kibera to narrate and contextualise how spaces for access to information is constructed by gender relationships between men and women. The research further explores dynamic flow of spatial structures which through power relations and agentic behaviour determines creation and destruction of spaces for access to information.

1.5. Structure of the paper:

In Chapter 2 the methodological framework of conducting an ethnographic study is explained with emphasis in the epistemological framework, methods of data generation, data analysis and also reflects by stating the ethical dilemmas faced by the researcher and how I choose to respond to it. In Chapter 3 conceptualises theories of gender, participation, agency, right to city and intersectionality which are used in the research is introduced that carries out further analysis in Chapter 4 and 5. In chapter 4 I discussed how gender relationships determines the access to information and spaces between men and women in informal settlements and in Chapter 5 I highlighted the agency used by men and women to negotiate their RTTH. I concluded my major findings in Chapter 6 and gave policy recommendation to the urban planners to realise the intricate role of “informality” in urban context along with inclusion of a formal access to information policy in slums so that information can be accessed by all as a right than through rent seeking patriarchal networks of patrons.

Chapter 2: Methodology³

This chapter tries to explore the experiences of data collection in Kibera while trying to answer the research question “How do men and women get access to information in informal settlements?” This question arrived by my several inquisitiveness about informal settlement and information dissemination like what are the patterns of information dissemination in informal settlements? Do men have similar access to information? How gender identity plays a role in determining that? Gatekeepers in slum community are influential for poor people who are with minimum resources, illiterate and very busy with their day to day lives. I share in this chapter epistemological considerations, technics of data collection, research design, approach, strategies to get access to the interviewees and my research dilemmas faced during fieldwork.

2.1. Ethnography as an approach and the Epistemological Considerations.

I choose to answer the research question with an ethnographic approach by using the methods of participant observation, focussed group discussion and in-depth interviews primarily with men and women and different stakeholders such as school teachers, health officers, NGO workers and government officials who were present in the informal settlement of Kibera. The epistemological position for this study is the feminist standpoint. Through this theory one is able to generate knowledge from the viewpoint of the group whose knowledge and lived experiences are seldom captured (Harding 2005:220). In this case I have looked out from the viewpoint of both men and women in the slums and their negotiation with channels and spaces of information. The theory manages to capture ‘feminist concerns with subjectivity, identity politics and personal experience that privilege women’s ways of knowing’ (Wickramasinghe 2010:133). In the field I realised the importance of gender as an identity and tried to capture that too in the research. The methodological stance that legitimised ethnography over time is “naturalism” which proposes that human actions are based upon “social or cultural meanings:

³ This chapter is adapted from a class assignment titled “Is Information Gendered an Ethnographic Approach” and was submitted by the author Suchismita Goswami for research methodology course titled “Ethnographic Research and Reflexivity in Development Contexts”. The Course ID is 3303.

that is by intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, discourses and values" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:7). This research similarly wants to understand gender roles and behaviour's motivated by both the genders through interpretation of socio-cultural norms for information sharing in Kibera. This understanding cannot be delivered by statistical information as proposed by the positivist school of thought. Purpose wise it is an exploratory study to derive "meanings" on the rules used for sharing information across gender and spaces. It is a quest to understand as to how the power dynamics flow within each other in terms of position and how each of the actors view themselves as an agency for information sharing and gathering. In the literature we find that there is evidence which talks about asymmetry of both formal and informal information between women and men (Newman 2016: 89). Yet there is no detailed understanding of the process as to how male and female are organised, represented and the institutional practices around them which leads to this asymmetry of information to this detailed exploration around this subject ethnographic approach study is best suited (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:17).

Before I proceed further with the methodological details of my study I would like to let my readers know that this study is situated in a specific context reflecting about a particular population and how the particular population responds to the research problem does in a particular time. There is no plan to claim universality of the findings by the researcher on this subject and conclusions will be drawn only after reflecting on the "situatedness" of co-constructed knowledge throughout the study (Rose 1997: 308). The more I deepened my understanding out the unique situatedness of Kibera the more I realised how the spaces and the instruments studied by me to answer my research question are located out of particular historical and cultural influences. Ethnographic approach is most appropriate to engage with this study because the study is being done in natural settings in the slum where the people receive and delivers information.

2.2. Data Generation

I used ethnography as an approach to address the research question. Crewonka writes that "poststructuralism affirms the cultural constructedness of categories, identities and even bodies" similarly the sites and sources for information

in any setting are also unquestioned culturally constructed categories, bodies and identities for which ethnography has been traditionally found useful research practices (Crewonka 2007:). Ethnographic approach along with other theories will help me to analyse and interpret the recurring patterns of information distribution based on identities and sites.

As it is an ethnographical study I entered the field as a wanderer and gradually made acquaintance with the population. I have engaged with a number of people throughout my research period of 28 days as I was literally staying in the informal settlement and carrying out daily chores like any other resident of Kibera right from eating Ugali, to conversing about Kenyan politics over a cup of coffee to going to the local health centre when I had a bout of fever. Each of these interactions and experiences shaped my research findings. I also kept a daily journal which I used to note down at the end of the day narrating my daily experience, new knowledge and new acquaintances.

I identify myself as a brown skinned, Indian female studying in Netherlands who would spend a couple of weeks in the slum of Kibera to do this ethnographic study in the field. I am occasionally identified as “Muzungu”⁴ by passing school children when I used to walk by the roads of Kibera. This speaks of my many identities and maybe there are much more identities which emerged out on different occasions. Of course in the context of Kibera I am an outsider but at the same time I have worked in slums prior to this and have a sound understanding of gendered spaces. These consciousness of intersectionality of one’s identity and power was reflected time and again for making complex multiple identities relevant in this ethnographic research (Ng 2011:446).

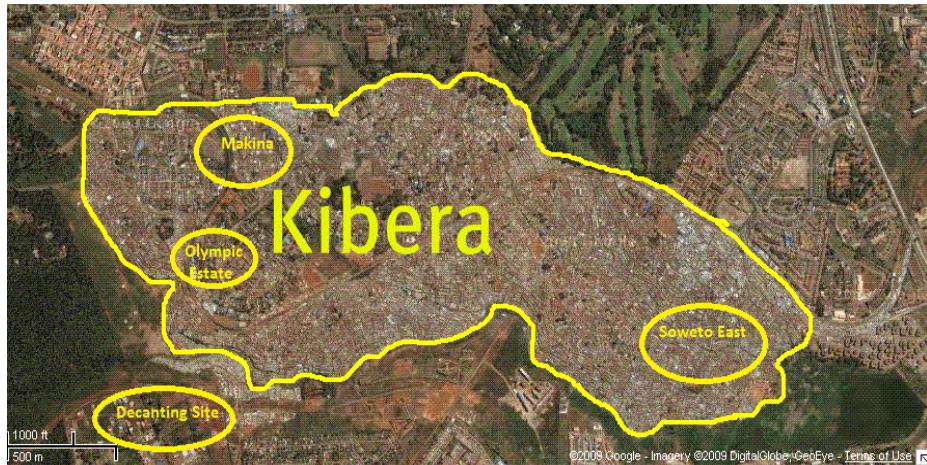
As a participant observer in a natural setting I found a role in the field as a volunteer in a community project to teach English and raise awareness about reproductive health. Hammersley and Atkinson gives the example of Scultz’s (1964) “stranger” who maintains objectivity in the field and at the same time learns to participate in the new environment and access inside knowledge

⁴ Muzungu literally means a white skinned person but over the time white skin became synonymous with foreigner so even a brown skinned person like me is also identified as Muzungu.

about the place (2007:8-9). In the role of the volunteer in the night school I intended to become that “stranger” who imparts information and also becomes the subject to get information. My gatekeepers in this study were women and volunteers from the slum who came to the night school and who took me eagerly in their homes as well as to their friend’s home and from whom I learnt about the patterns of information exchange in informal setting. I started with informal conversations, eventually leading to unstructured interviews and focussed group discussion as I proceed further in the research and identified my target sample. I also contacted government officials and other stakeholders and brought them together in a focussed group discussion. Focussed group discussions gave me a glimpse of how “opinions are produced, expressed and exchanged in everyday life” (Flick, 2009:197). With the identified sample two focussed group discussions were done—one before the unstructured interviews with the volunteers and another after the interviews. The first one was carried out in a more interactive and participatory manner through board games. At this stage the insider’s knowledge and perception of the researcher got churned through this engagement. After this FGD I narrowed down how will I geographically locate my research in the massive slum of Kibera and which information were considered important by the population. The second round of focus group discussion was done after the in-depth interviews with the identified women, men and the representatives from the institutions for gaining feedbacks on the research outcomes (Cronin, 2008).

In-depth interviews were carried out with 10 participants, four males and six females. The spaces that I reached out in Kibera were three prominent locations within Kibera as shown in Map.1. I choose the centre of Kibera which is Olympic Estate where most of the prominent institutions and NGO’s are located, Makina which is a volatile location as most of the mob attacks occurs there and lastly the decanting housing⁵ site built up for the people whose houses in the slum were demolished and they are currently in the temporary housing.

⁵ The temporary housing is now known as the decanting site by the locals. Hence forth in this research they would be referred as decanting site.



Map.1: Places of research

Source: Map Kibera

I also held informal conversations with some important stakeholders like the Principals of two government schools, health workers, local political representatives, NGO representatives and a journalist who runs a local blog and newspaper in Kibera. I followed the selected 10 participants through the popular sites that are accessed by them to weave the circulation of information in diffuse time-space (Marcus 1995:95). These sites were developed by FGDs that were conducted by both men and women from Kibera. The sites that I explored comprised the participant's family, neighbourhood (market place, community bathrooms, water collection sites etc.), workplace, religious institutions, government building, health centres, NGO/CBO and political bodies. Most of these sites were common for most of the participants belonging from the different areas.

Ethnography is a way of doing social research in natural settings by taking participants' everyday account into consideration which is developed out of the messy process of data analysis (Spencer 1994:267-268, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:176). Similarly I started my data analysis by bringing together all the taped and written intercepts of the in-depth interview along with my diary notes where I wrote with great details the informal conversations and observations I felt after fieldwork. I culled out from these notes the different sites, places, institutions and agency from where one draws out information in informal settlement. Through mind maps I identified the key themes of various relationships that were established by each of the participants while accessing

information and through these themes I have gone about analysing my research findings of access to information in slums.

2.3. Challenges and Dilemmas

2.3.1. Non – native Researcher/ Accessibility

Non-native researchers are understood in literature to pose higher potential for conducting objective and non-biased research (Narayan 1993, Huong 2007). My identity as a foreigner stood out to be helpful in this context. Kibera is known to be a polarised place for ethnic politics but as I was an outsider my political position and ethnic identity was not scrutinised before revealing any kind of information. I was not put in the awkward position of revealing my political stand which most of native researchers go through. On the other they felt free to reveal to me their positionality regarding various sensitive issues when I told them that they will not be identified in the research⁶.

Using my position of a non-native researcher I got access to number of places and institutions to observe the gender relationship and flow of information for the purpose of my research. These institutions are normally regulated with gendered norms. Bars and Kamkunji grounds are not accessible to women from Kibera but I was able to easily access such places during my stay in Kibera due to my non-native identity. Samuel a youth from Kibera whom I met in one of these bars excitedly told me how he met many foreigner women in those bars and inquired if in India also women frequented bars normally or I picked it up from being in Netherlands?

Kibera is a well-known slum where researchers from West regularly visits. The natives from Kibera tend to co-operate with foreign researchers on the pretext of monetary gain. I was aware of this and did not want to be part of this “asymmetric, ambiguous relationship resulting in a move away of balance and generalised reciprocity to negative and breakdown of universal reciprocal obligations which can include symbolic dominance of the West” (Korf as cited in Hammett and Sporton 2012). Therefore I carefully choose to become a part

⁶ In the interest of protecting the identity of my participants all the names and certain circumstances are changed

time teacher in a night school within Kibera to teach English and reproductive health to the women. That made my entry to the slum much easier and helped me to bridge a comfortable relationship with most of my female research participants before I engaged with them for my research. With the length of time that I spent in the community I developed a more personal relationship with my participants and other community members and I also got engaged in community cooking, celebrations, joining in family dinners, helping some youths in making their job application but my most memorable moment was when I spent two days at Ismail's workshop as his apprentice⁷. As an apprentice I was able to enter the world of Ismail and found out his daily sources of networks and communication by being present in it personally.

2.3.2. How will I be understood? Positionality and Reflexivity

When I first thought of doing this research in Kibera I was discouraged by many as I was not familiar with the culture and context. I personally feared of not being accepted by the community and doubted if people will open up to my questions especially to an extent of doing an ethnographic study. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:64-66) also writes in details about apprehension of ethnographers of being accepted and the participant's interest to be in the research. I did face some challenging moment.

It was difficult to approach people from the slum apart from the few I knew from the night school. I could not restrict my research to the members only from the night school as I designed my research comprising of three different locations. I used to wander around in identified locations to get access to participants but most of them used to avoid talking with a random stranger and did not agree to be my respondent. It was particularly difficult to access to respondent from the resettlement site as people were uncertain of my identity and did not wanted to disclose their issues to me.

⁷ I did not meet Ismail through the contacts made in the night school or through NGO's. It was a chance encounter when I passed through the Toy Market in the outskirts of Kibera. I reached there and found about 5-6 odd shops and all of them were making bone jewelleries.

Several time in order to get access to the participants I approached potential participants as customers and went on to buy small stuffs and food items from their shops. Eventually if they became interested in my research I choose appropriate moment of self-disclosure and continued my interviews with the consent of the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 72)

During my first FGD the resource person of the group introduced me to the group by introducing my name and that I came from Netherlands (read foreign country) to do research on them. I did not wanted to be introduced as a foreigner from the West to the participants in the first instance but more as a native from a developing country who worked in the slums of India. I was quite disturbed and initially lost my flow of conversation. I quickly tried to bring back my participants to the flow by narrating stories about my experience from Indian slums and gradually they got interested in me and related with my narration.

Rose's work on negotiating "betweeness" have helped me position myself and make sense of my field experience in various settings (1997:313).

In this chapter I have tried to justify my choice of ethnographic approach and epistemological background for fulfilling my research objectives. Then I went on to describe my main research objectives, location, positionality and data collection method. I have also listed my two challenges and how I worked upon those challenges. The experience of ethnographical data collection and analysis is a complex, chaotic, intricate and often confusing but nevertheless an engaging process.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Gender

Lober explains that one needs to understand gender as an institution through which people organise their lives in terms of allocating work and how with time the process of gendering is legitimised by religion, law, science and value system of a society (Lober 1995:15). This produces a process of social stratification resulting in lesser power, prestige and economic rewards to the devalued gender identity purposefully through social processes (Lober 1995: 32). Most people go for this social prescription of gender as “norms and expectations get built into their sense of worth and identity as a way they think, hear and speak, the way we fantasy, and the way we feel” (Lober 1995:36). This concept of gender represents binaries of masculinity and femininity and controls the social interactions, roles and responsibility according to their respective identities and such differences create gender identities as pointed out by Connell (2005). Strong gender identities and power relationships in society forms hegemonic masculinity which is understood as “pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832).

Scott (2010) argues that it is important to focus on gender relations as it is the constitutive element of all social relationship and as signifying power dynamics. It is this reason why gender is still relevant today. He understands the relationships of power through gender by the important analytical elements are: a) “culturally available symbols,” b) “normative concepts that set forth interpretations of the meanings of the symbols,” c) “social institutions and organisations,” and d) “subjective identity” (Scott 1986: 1067-1069).

Through this research I will explore the social relationships between men and women and the space that is carved out of the tension between two genders to access information and thereon get better opportunities for participation in this research. This research also explores masculinist patronage in patron-client networks in slums. This space is dominated by men from poor households

while the women and men not confirming to hegemonic masculinity are excluded from this clientelism relationships of entitlements (Kabeer 1999:6)

3.2. Agency

Each of the spaces that we operate are marked by institutions and rules. These institutions and rules influence and do not determine the behaviour of a person through the powers sanctioned to them by the society (Berner 1998:4). The capacity that is present among humans to decide what actions to take is known as agency. Scott (1986: 1067) understands human agency as:

The attempt (at least partially rational) to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language-conceptual language that at once sets boundaries and contains the possibility for negation, reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination.

The choices that are made by an individual in his/her own spaces to bend and alter rules determines agentic behaviour (Ibid). The ability to make choices enhances when one has access to social, economic and human resources. The inability to exercise one's agency and choices have the consequences of poverty and inequality (Kabeer 1999). Kabeer points out that access to such resources is important in decision making because “access to such resources will reflect the rules and norms which govern distribution and exchange in different institutional arenas”. These resources are accessed and further capacities are developed through membership to certain groups or networks (2010:107). Kabeer (1999:438) also brings out different forms of agency that could be used specially by women in the form of “negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis” which are exhibited by individuals as well as collectives to approach power. Decision making agency is the most important way of measuring agency and it is also one of the best ways to conceptualise power and while explaining that decision making. Kabeer explains the importance of subtle negotiations as well as silences that is present in the private lives of men and women which have a deep impact on decision making agency (2010: 16-19). How agency can be used in better participation and equity is expressed by Naila Kabeer as:

... creating “access” is not enough. Equity requires that poorer women and other excluded groups are not just able to take advantage of such success but do so on terms which respect and promote their ability to exercise choice (1999, p. 76).

Kishore (1997) has also pointed out the control over access to information as the basis of conceptualisation of women’s empowerment apart from the ability to take decision, act in their own interest, or the interest of those who depend on them (as cited in Kabeer 1999: 445) while Birte Siim understands agency both as a “key to women’s active citizenship” and a form of participation (as cited in Lister 2003:7).

In this research I will attempt to use the complex context of agency to unearth the negotiations, challenges and silences inserted by men and women in slums to access information and claim citizenship.

3.3. Intersectionality

Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) to highlight the lived experience of “multidimensionality of marginalised subjects” (as cited in Nash 2008:2). Intersectionality starts from the notion that there are multiple identities and tries to problematise the discrimination and disadvantage that occurs in the combination of identities which are usually derived from various social relations, history and operations of power structure (Symington 2004: 3). The starting point of intersectionality is to recognise that identity and power are dynamic in nature and to analyse how practice and policies shape the lives of those impacted by the influence of different powers and identities as opposed to those not affected by it (Ibid:5). Davis (2008: 81) further clarifies and elaborates that intersectionality includes multiple intersecting factors like age, status, class, geographical background, religion, ethnicity, political influence to form subordinate groups.

Crenshaw (1992) attempts to challenge identity as a more complex entity by cutting the binaries of race and gender and using intersectionality as a tool “particularly adept at capturing and theorizing the simultaneity of race and gender as social processes (as cited in Nash 2008:2). Further, if we do not differentiate the differences that is present among each identities which constitute groups it will further lead to tension among those groups (Crenshaw 1991:1)

There is still lack of clarity whether only multiple marginalised subjects have an intersectional identity or whether it refers to all subject positions which are constituted in the interplay of various identities of race, gender, sexuality, class, etc (Nash 2008:11). In this research I will use this framework to see how men and women from different spaces in Kibera exert their agency which will be further used to elaborate the concept of intersectionality.

3.4. Participation

Participation, empowerment and poverty reduction are the buzzwords which are still dominant in the development discourse. These buzzwords were unpacked several times and it has been found that these words can be assessed against a specific context by re-examination of the power relations and power structures between stakeholders involved in the process (Botes and Rensburg 2000, Mohan and Hickey 2005). Secondly list of things that lead to non- participation are as stated by (Botes and Rensburg 2000:43) selective participation, lack of institutional capacity, socio-cultural differences and influential gate keepers. Thirdly, as Rigon (2014:259) points out that in a community there is presence of a group of “local elite” who have organised themselves and they represent themselves as the spokesperson of the community and in return get back the dominant access of all resources. He further points out that participation is a costly and time consuming process not only for beneficiaries but also for implementers since in order to give more power in decision making to the marginalised people (tenants, single mothers and so on) they have to constantly challenge the dominant local powers as well (Rigon, 2014:278). It becomes more difficult for women especially to participate as the membership is based on “male norms” and both the issues of participation and gender are reduced to a technical process than a political process (Cornwall 2003:1332, Mayoux 1995:246). The reasons pointed by Agarwal (1997) for not being able to participate are the constraints of “time, official male bias, social constraints about women’s capabilities and roles, absence of critical mass of women and lack of public speaking experience (as cited in Cornwall 2003:1329) .

3.4.1 Spaces for participation

Participation is made possible if there are spaces which are viable for participation in the first place. Hickey and Mohan (2004: 17) while describing spaces for participation categorises them as : a) Spaces as situated practices, b) spaces as sites of resistance and lastly c) spaces as dynamic political fields.

Situated spaces questions the “historical construction of place based identities” that might have originated out of external forces which can create the danger of homogenising all spaces as one (Hickey and Mohan 2004:17). Secondly place and resistance compel us to look into people not as “detached” beings but as active agents and thirdly all spaces are dynamic in their own capacities and emerges out of lived experiences (Ibid:77). Access to information and participation are complementary to each other and in order to understand gender relations in access to information I also tried to explore how gender relations and agency create spaces for participation in the context of Kibera.

3.5. Right to City

Lefebvre a French Marxist social scientist coined the term “right to the city”. The expression means that all citizens had the right to the city if they want so through participative decision making (Dupont et. al 2011, Huchzermeyer 2011)

Harvey, over time, drew parallels from Lefebvre and expressed the need to call upon more and more oppressed people of various identities to take control of city, streets and neighbourhood and pursue in making it into a more participative and democratic space (Harvey 2012:23). The RTTC is a collective endeavour which gives the freedom to shape and reshape the cities according to the social relationship, resources and lives that the citizens want to co-own collectively (Ibid: xviii). RTTC is a strong political slogan and the radical Marxist interpretation of the concept slams “capitalist model of accumulation” in neo-liberal ways of urban planning by political elites which “transformed relationships between the state, the private sector and civil society in the cities world over” (Dupont et.al 2011:2, Huchzermeyer 2011:15) . Huchzermeyer (2011:3) holds “Cities without Slums” campaign as “the most problematic liberal paradox in urban policy” and against the conceptualisation of RTTC. Where the

political elite models the cities as per the western standards by “exclusion of the poor from the city” and leaving no space for local imagination (Bayat 2004, Huchzermeyer 2011:3). The communities belonging to informal settlements are continuously resisting relocation and pushing towards democratic usages of public spaces by reclaiming their RTTC as proposed by Lefebvre initially when these three dimensions were stressed as:

firstly the right to long term habitation of the city and to spatial centrality; secondly, a right to voice or participation, through access to central decision-making; and thirdly, a right to the oeuvre, the creative making of public spaces in the city after one's own desire (as cited in Huchzermeyer 2011 244-245)

Kofman and Lebas (1996) understand Lefebvre's conceptualisation of *oeuvre* as a political means adopted by communities to “overcome differences” but the “capitalism and modern statism had both crushed the creative capacity of *oeuvre*”(as cited in Huchzermeyer 2011:53) .

In this research I will use RTTC as a powerful political concept to test whether men and women in Kibera frame their aspiration to per this framework.

Chapter 4: Gender Relations and places of information in Kibera

“Kibera means ‘forest land’ in Nubian language. Map Kibera was started because if you look into the political map of Kenya or the google map you will realise that Kibera is just a blank spot there. The people of Kibera felt much neglected and marginalised on being in that blank spotthat is why we came up with a map of our own community” (Joseph).

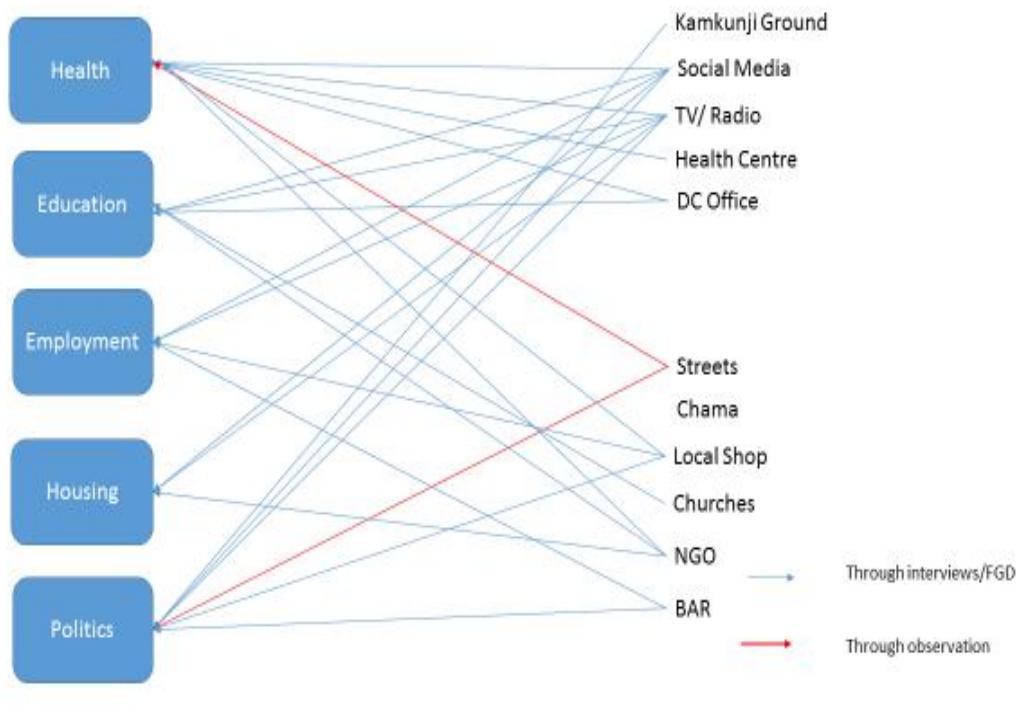
Map Kibera is one of the most successful project that was developed by the youths of Kibera. It is now researched and cited by many articles and peer reviewed journals. In the above paragraph Joseph expresses the reason as to why there was a need for Map Kibera in the first place. Joseph is a resident of Kibera and is associated with the project since its inception in 2009.

Map Kibera is a blank spot in the political map as well in the minds of most people living in the upscale Nairobi. It is considered as a “no go” zone and the people staying there are classified as “dangerous people who are involved in crimes”(UN HABITAT 2010:35). Most of the people I interacted outside Kibera and stay in Westlands or City Centre avoids Kibera and address people there as “violent people”. The social cohesion in most of the slums in Nairobi is said to be weak as the population of the slum is highly heterogeneous in terms of identity based on livelihood and ethnicity (based on own cultural norms and values) (Amnesty 2010:13) In this acute marginalisation and stigmatisation that is faced by most of the people of Kibera I tried to map the space of access to information present within Kibera along with the information needs of the people of Kibera.

As I got familiar with the field I conducted an intensive focused group discussion which was aimed at understanding the perception about access to information among the people of Kibera. How can access to information help them? Which information do they consider important? And what could help them in getting better access to information? After completing the exercise

health, education, job opportunities, housing and political development were considered as the most relevant information for the community.

In Fig 1 I have mapped the sources from where the people of Kibera get access to these information. I gathered from the participants of the FGD as well as from interviews and observations the sites and channels for their important information.



Mapping of information spaces in Kibera

Fig 1: Drafted by the author

I used gender as an analytical category to examine and contrast the challenges, strategies and relations men and women exercise to get access to such spaces. In order to know the information channels I interacted with both men and women from Kibera to prioritise the information that they consider crucial and important for them. The reason why I choose to study both men and women to arrive at my study conclusions is because every space is created by gender relationships and power (Scott 2010) and study of women in isolation only brings out one side of the story which is not efficient in disclosing as how both the sex co-construct spaces.

Both space and gender are social constructs. Gender is produced everyday through the roles played out by different gender and an outcome of different social arrangements in the society constructed historically (Lober 1996, Scott 1986, Rose 1993, West and Zimmerman 1987). Similarly, places are socially constructed as per Lefebvre (1991) space is constructed by the people through their daily engagements and “to the extent that spaces reflect social norms, they also embody gender relations” (as cited in Spain 2014: 582). In this research I use space and place quite interchangeably but the words mean slightly different in urban sociology. Place is a particular geographic location like a city square, tube-well or district court and it is derived by meanings as understood by an individual or group on the other hand space is a “causes of the location-al pattern.”(Logan 2012: 509).

In this chapter I analyse the spaces for access to information as identified by the participants in terms of gender relations and gender norms. The several places as identified by the participants for access to information are clustered primarily in four important spaces namely a) informal networks and social media, b) government institutions c) political space and d) makeshift slum resettlement site.

4.1. Informal Networks and Social Media

Access to information is an important criteria for women to decide the best educational opportunities for themselves as well as for their children, get better control of land rights and make informed decision about health and employment opportunities (Neuman 2016:87). The first three most pertinent need for information as listed by my participants are health, education and employment.

The urban poor staying in slums are found to be suffering from the worst health outcomes than those staying in the non-slum areas or rural areas because the slum environment are burdened with diseases that are “characterised by deprivation, risky health behaviours and environmental pollution” (Essendi, H. and S. Wandibba 2011:19). In this situation they find themselves alone as they are excluded from government health support, opportunities and capacities (Ibid). In Kibera the health situation is very grim with an estimated 14% of the population with HIV – which is double of the national prevalence rate

(Amnesty 2010:15). It has been recorded in secondary literature that due to near absence of public or state run health system in the slums the slum dwellers are forced to access the private health care (Bazant et al.2009:40). The private health care that is present in Kibera ranges from “local traditional healers, and quakes as well as well-established and structured local non-governmental, faith based organisations” (Vijer 2015: 2114). Influx of high population, poor living conditions and restricted health care access makes the slums risk areas for general public health (Ibid). Similarly most of the educational institutions are also run by the private sector. As per the 2012 records in Kibera there are approximately 116 “low tuition” private schools which are run mostly by private entrepreneurs and about 12000 students are enrolled in these schools, the reason why poor parents are making this choices of sending their children to low fees private schools than free government schools is the quality of education that is being offered in these schools (Dixon and J. 2012:698). These schools are managed by different private actors ranging from “individual proprietors and partnerships, national and international non- governmental bodies and religious organisations like churches and mosques” (Ibid: 697).

It is found that most of the information regarding health, education and employment opportunities are derived from informal networks and social media.

4.1.1. Social Networks

Rakodi (1995a:415) finds that membership in social networks are an important part of social identity as well as social and material support. Social networks are extremely important for women in the slums though it is found that elites in the community have access and control over the strongest social network. Previous social network studies in Kenya suggest that social network informs, generates perceptions, creates new knowledge and a lot depends on the focal members of these networks as they are the ones who reinforces and validate information that gives way to gossip and rumours through network (Chep- ngeno et al. 2012:1513).In the same way, in order to get access to important spaces of information like bars, chamas⁸, NGOs or DC’s office one needs to

⁸ Self –help groups are referred as chama in Kenya.

be in the social network and to maintain membership or relationship with such social network is expensive and is dependent on gatekeepers who might allow membership according to the terms of patronage. The poor are also dependent on those elites than organising themselves to gain access to information and this behaviour is determined by the tradition of culture and fear that is present among the poor (de Witt and Berner 2009:929).

Access to Social Network

Kenya had a culture of politics being shaped by rumours and gossips rights from the Moi⁹ era though in the present time the rumours and politics are taken on harshly but there are anthropological studies which offer intense functional analysis of rumours and gossips where rumours have helped in putting social groups together and performing various other social and political functions (Osborn 2008:315-316). Lots of information regarding health, education and employment also reach people through rumours and gossips in the absence of formal information delivery system by government. Access to such information is available through the informal networks that they operate in.

Women in Kibera gets most of the information through gossips from their networks that they establish while being member of chama, water collection sites, through customers who come to their small shanty shops and through their neighbours and friends. Marlyn who is a young mother and runs a small grocery shop in front of her place of residence said:

I interact most with my neighbours and customers who visits my shop, most of the information that I receive regarding prevention of health ailment of my child and about loan information are through them.

Margarita who is a single parent says:

Chama is an important source of information from where I can borrow money and know about the latest news and new opportunities. The leader of our Chama knows

⁹ Daniel Moi served as the second President of Kenya from 1978 to 2002.

the officers in DC office well and gets many information which are not even present with Sam¹⁰.

Similarly Beall argues that “hardship, unequal distribution of the burden of survival may lead to tensions as well as mutual support, within households, between households, between kin and between communities, while such mutual support is fragile where all as are very poor” (as cited in Rakodi 1995a:416). Even in these networks women are not equal but like Margarita pointed they all are dependent on that one single lady who is powerful and has access to other important networks and is the representative for all the women in the chama for their information. These other larger networks through which leader of Margarita’s chama draws information and power are groups dominated by men. These groups are controlled with masculine norms in place so the information and power that is being brought in by the leaders (of women group) is actually the amount of information that the men wants the women to have without touching the real issues of gender inequality. This replicates the observation made by Mayoux (1995:238) of how women’s participation are finally determined by the outside male agency.

Rigon (2014:259) rightly points out that in a community there is the presence of a group of “local elite” who have organised themselves and they represent themselves as the spokesperson of the community and in return they get back dominant access to all resources. Yet the women are constantly fighting in Kibera to occupy the spaces and get access to important social networks which would be elaborated further in the next chapter.

Masculinist Patronage

Spaces like Kamkunji ground, government offices and bars are used by politically influential people and are mostly dominated by men. The men in the slums get access to brokerage and patronage relations in such settings (de Wit and Berner 2009:927) and eventually emerge as gatekeepers of information and services. Samuel whom I met in one of these bars said, “*this place is a good place to establish network. One gets access to information mostly through connections and here we get*

¹⁰ Margarita’s friend from whom she gets information as he is a driver in the government office

information regarding jobs, political news ...specially about the ruling party.....In order to find jobs in Kenya you need connections and these connections are created here”. I myself, as a researcher, found lots of contacts in the bar who gave me good insights about the local politics, education system and “tribalism” in Kibera. They were people from NGOs, local businessmen and unemployed youths too. Though Samuel identified himself as a “not working¹¹” youth yet by talking to him at length I understood that he does earn money by “helping people” in Kibera to get documents from the DC office as he has contacts and he also claims to have contacts with NGOs and other politicians who gives him money from time to time to organise events and getting people involved in such events. Samuel draws his power and position in the community through what Roy (2003a:86) understands as “masculinist patronage” and by his involvement in the gang wars and ethnic violence his community celebrates him as a hero of sorts. This kind of clientelism and patronage networks only has membership of certain kinds of men who abides by the hegemonic masculinity and there is no space for women (Mayoux 1995:247). The spaces of clientelism- patronage like bar or Kamkunji ground about which I will talk about in later sections of this chapter are restricted to men who can enact out the role of hegemonic masculinity and subordinated masculinities or women are not allowed in such spaces (Kabeer 1999:6). This hegemonic norm is maintained not necessarily always by violence but by support of force, culture and institutions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832).

Samuel very easily through his closeness with the powers structures in the slums climbed up from being an unemployed youth to a well-connected youth. Taking on from “field of power” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16) he symbolises hegemonic masculinity through his rent seeking patronages and by keeping ties with ethnic gangs similarly as identified by Roy (2003a:129-130) through his field work in the squatters of Kolkata.

¹¹ Samuel never identified himself as unemployed but he referred as “not working” which stresses on his agency to choose to not to work.

4.1.2 Social Media:

In Kenya the new generation of youths are called “dotcoms” with about 77% of the population below 30 years (UNHABITAT 2010:176). I found that the prevalence is also present in Kibera. The rumours which were local through social network before and which took time to reach from one place to another has now started reaching a larger audience due to the advent of social media in the form of mobile phones, email, internet websites and web-blogs which takes local rumour to a national level within matter of minutes. Rumours find way through modern technology while radio stations broadcasting in vernacular also played a role in further inciting people, fuelling fear, exacerbating violence, displacement and the destruction of property (Smedt 2009:591). Kenya had 6.5 million in 2006 and currently as of January 2016 the number has grown to 37.8 million with 21.6 million registered with internet cum data service (Kariuki 2016). This communication revolution stretched the rumours which affected the political front and at the same time also served a social cause by spreading awareness on issues of health and education.

The story with which I start this research about Map Kibera is one of the successful example of access to information through social media. Map Kibera is run and locally managed by youths who are born and brought up in Kibera but the idea was initially seeded by an American couple who came to visit Kibera. They engaged some local youth and trained them in digital mapping with community participation. The first map was a general map of Kibera pointing all the important institutions, villages and local assets like hand pumps. This was followed by more thematic maps like education, health and security. Their security map became most popular and relevant to the administrators. Ironically, the map is more famous with the researchers working with digitalisation and new media than with the local people belonging from Kibera. Panos similarly had little hope for new communication to take correct information to the marginalised population as he rightly points out that “New communication technologies are revolutionizing access to information- but the revolution is likely to reach everyone but the poor” (Panos, as cited in Wilson and Heeks, 2000: 415). Due to lack of participation the people from Kibera never realised the importance of the map and its relevance. When the Map Kibera took the initia-

tive of putting up the information in the map through wall painting, ITS worth was not realised by most of people and in two months it was replaced by commercial advertisement.

Social media is also used to send information about health camps, vaccinations and new schemes by the NGOs but most of the women in Kibera do not have access to social media as much their male counterpart holds with them.

4.1.3. “Men spends lot of time in front of TV”

Television and radio are also important means of spreading awareness. Radio is major source of information dissemination used by both the government and non-governmental organisation extensively. Radio played an important role during the outbreak of AIDS and is still relevant today for imparting information regarding health, vaccination and other sexually transmitted diseases. Most of the people in Kibera prefer television over radio. As Marlyn explained:

“Information from TV is most useful as I can hear and see them. I do not get much time to see TV though men spends lots of time in front of TV”

As women gets much less time for leisure (Mayoux 1995:248) like Margarita who is involved in child care, household work and her small business so taking time out for getting information from TV or radio is often difficult for them.

4.1.4 Non-Governmental Organisation

The NGOs have kiosks and organise health camps to disseminate information from time to time about reproductive health, vaccination and AID’s awareness. Julie tells me “You cannot miss the presence of NGOs in Kibera …they are everywhere, in every corner”. With rapid increase in slum population in most of the developing countries and the gaps in basic service delivery makes most of the people dependent on the services given by NGOs other than social network whenever it is beneficial (Madon and Sahay 2002: 18). In Kibera there is AN increased role of NGOs with efficient services and follow ups and the residents are more dependent on the services and information given by the NGO’s than the government. The urban poor are dependent on these NGOs because of the social advancement, scope and opportunities that can be enjoyed (de Wit and Berner 2009:930)

Like Julie and Joseph there are number of representatives within Kibera who are founders and an important part of the NGOs in Kibera. They being part of Kibera have increased accessibility within the community than any other people. The people who come as researchers and funders approach them as they are the gatekeepers to get into the slum just like the way I approached Julie to get access in Kibera. The women in the slum identify Julie as their leader and always comes down whenever there is any meetings called by her. Julie's project is run by membership driven by women like most of the NGOs in Kibera which based out of the partnership and inclusion of women in their programmes. The men are usually away in the city or in their shops to earn a living while the women who are at home or are doing home based work are usually the ones involved in these meetings. They are the ones who are feed with information regarding reproductive health, sanitation, bursaries for education and other opportunities from time to time.

The reason why women participate in these meetings is usually because of the incentives provided to them as mentioned by one of the FGD participant "like lunch and at time during meetings about reproductive health when are also provided sanitary napkins and condoms". Secondly, the women spend time and energy to participate in these gatherings and activities even if participation is not cost-benefit than they forego to be part of it as pointed in the literature (Mayoux 1995:247) because they consider it is important to be close to Jane to get access to resources. The NGOs run in Kibera has more number of women than men as members and participants. This exclusion of men completely from the discussion is more problematic as it reinforces the neo-liberal agenda of ensuring participation as tokenism without much actual change in the lives of the women (Mayoux 1995, Cornwall 2003, Botes and Rensburg 2000).

4.2. Government Institutions and Spaces

Government spaces are not the most highlighted space by the people of Kibera for accessing information. Most of the participants with whom I interviewed or spoke to during the FGDs or through informal conversation during my stay in Kibera never approached government spaces as sites for information. Except for two of the participants (Joseph and Irfan) nobody actually went to the DC's office or government office to access information. Since

have the perception that they will never get any information if they went to the government offices. Marlyn is of the perception that “the government are rude and never gives information” or as Paul narrated that “Government is not for poor people as in order to get information about any new job you have to bribe them”. It is however interesting to note that both Paul and Marlyn have never visited any government offices but have heard these experiences from their friends and neighbours. When in need of information the people mainly approach their informal networks or NGOs. Access to information has direct connection with the choices made by the participants whether to opt for private or government services as understood by Sheila:

There are so many NGOs around the area of Kibera and we get most of the information through themso we depend on them more than any government as we do not feel the presence of government around us.

Joseph was the only participant who got easy access to information from government officials as a journalist.

If I want an information as a citizen of Kibera it has been very difficult to access information from government though with the change in constitution we are given the right to information. As I am a journalist and I run the platform of Kibera news network so that has been helpful in demanding information. The officials tend to give information and behave properly when you approach them with a camera and note book.

Women do not feel comfortable to access government spaces independently and seeks help from male members or gatekeepers to access those places. Mercy articulated that

In order to get disability pension I never went to government office on my own. Either I go with my husband or with other male members from the community.

4.3 Political Spaces:

4.3.1 Sexual Harassment and restrictions in spaces of information

Political power and gender has been time and again referred as it best establishes the male-female opposition. Now the first step for participation in the political space is having access to such space.

The formal political space in Kibera is the Kamkunji ground. Kamkunji ground is located in the heart of Kibera near the Olympic estate and every Saturday there are political rallies where representatives from different political parties visits to give information what the government is doing and how the youths should be organised to support the party. As the majority of the population is either Luo or Luhya representatives from Orange Democratic Party has more access in the Kamkunji ground but Kibera being an important place for political actions every prominent politician does try to make his/her presence felt there. Most of the politicians and even the present government consider Kibera to be an important site of political affairs. There is a common saying which I found to be repeated by many people within Kibera, “All the political unrest that happens in Kenya always starts in Kibera”. The locals in Kibera are aware that they are important political representatives and if an outrage starts in Kibera it will have repercussions in the whole country. The youths of Makina are active participants in these meetings. Apart from Kamkunji I realised that the bars and the streets of Kibera where informal conversations takes place are also prominent place for political gossips. I ventured to some of the local bars and though I found them to be very important places for exchange of information among men there was no presence of women in such spaces. I got access to those spaces like bars in spite of being a woman as I was an outsider though there was raised eyebrows and shocked expression when I used to reach out to such places.

Local bars and Kamkunji grounds are spatial structure which are accessible to only men to participate and access information from. Like most of the spaces even in Kibera as Lober (1995:35) pointed out that moral imperatives of what is allowed and what is in appropriate for each gender is followed by most of people or in case of rebellion, power is imposed on them in the form of “political power, control of scarce resources, and, if necessary violence”. Kamkunji ground is strategically avoided by most of the women as they often face sexually intimidating behaviours from men. Marlyn who is interested in politics and keeps a tab on it says that though she is interested in politics yet she avoids Kamkunji ground as “*there are always too many people and usually most of them are men....the men circles around women who visit the place and pass derogatory comments and at times even try to touch women inappropriately*”. My findings complements the study

of Bowman (1993) as how “sexual harassment” actually delimits the women’s right to access public spaces and participate fully in the affairs of the society and restricts them to their homes which according to them is the only safe orbit to operate.

4.4.2 Role of Gender in spreading political violence

The scars of the 2007 Kenyan political violence where about 1000 people lost their lives and about 60000 lost their original homes is still very fresh among the people of Kenya (Flood 2013). Kibera was also massively effected as hundreds got displaced and atleast dozens were killed and this stretched beyond the issue of ethnicity to more historical grievances like unemployment, corruption, land disputes and distrust of state institutions (Ibid). It still continues to be one of the high risk areas with 1 million people but still there is no permanent police post of station (Amnesty 2010:37). Crime rates are very high in Nairobi city compared to other African cities which leads to deep sense of insecurity among its residents (Ibid: 10).

Post-election violence was submerged with rumours and political gossips ranging from the plot to kill Raila and the army taking over power in Kenya (Smedt 2009:591). In the recent times, a lot of studies are focussed on how rumours leads to riots, how with the sheer power of rumours crowds are mobilised and even ruling parties are toppled (Osborn 2008, Smedt 2009). While much attention is paid about how technological revolution paved way for rumours and gossips to reach information to people and inflict violence in the post-election violence less attention has been given to the local agents and the spaces through which rumours are spread. Here I tried to explore the spaces from which both men and women are guilty of spreading political violence through spaces of information.

Margarita says:

When the IEBC violence started in the beginning of this year the men from our tribe used to come to our house to enquire about the houses of the Kikuyus in the neighbourhood and we would tell it to them or we have to regret later.

There are lots of tiny shops that one comes across selling bhajia, small stationary and tailoring shop etc. around Kibera. These shops are mostly run by

women and most of the time their houses are behind their shops and they would just go in and out of the shops to do housework as well as take care of other domestic chores. The buyers are usually from the locality. As the buyers and sellers are known to each other they would end up sharing stories and exchanging news in the non-peak hours of the day. Maryln who runs a shop in front her house expressed as to how she gets to know that Luo's are attacked in neighbouring village of Kibera:

If a Kikuyu customer comes to me from another part of the town then he will tell me about the ways in which they are being attacked by the Luo and then I also tell my neighbours, friends and customers about the issue.

The role of women in inflicting violence is gender stereotypical where women are seen as non-violent and always trying to mediate violence while men are looked upon as the ones who actually inflicts violence but if one looks closer it can be found that both sexes occupy and have access to different space to inflict violence. If these spaces and actions where rumours and gossips multiply are not captured then one will become blind towards the ways conflicts are produced by channels of information as stated by Kihato (2015:17). Participation in violence through gossips and rumours are nurtured by both men and women in Kibera which disrupts the stereotyped belief as to how women are the weaker sex and try to mediate violence and the masculine trait of men of being the aggressor who initiates violence (Enloe 2004, White 2007 as cited in Kihato 2015:18).

4.3. Make Shift Slum Resettlement Site

As discussed earlier, Kibera is going through a massive slum resettlement project under the banner of KENSUP an UNHABITAT and GOK joint collaboration. It is a long drawn process of more than 15 years now since the resettlement project started in East Soweto part of Kibera as a pilot project. It is known that in order to make contribution in the current participation methods like public meetings and community governance structures requires substantial time input which is rare among informal settlements as it leads to loss of livelihood opportunities (Rigon 2014:271, Cornwall 2003:1329). Further ground report from Ethiopia where similar project has been implemented suggests that the meetings that were conducted before resettlement were usually just for the

sake of formality and at the time of implementation their opinions have no impact (Abebe and Hesselberg 2015:257). Similarly in Kibera the people were only told to relocate and take their dues without much engagement. The information that was given for housing through meetings and through the resettlement committee was just to inform the settlers about the arrangement and not to discuss or negotiate about the settlement that was being offered. This type of participation approach is not suitable while dealing with communities who live in the margins as it is an elitist approach and reinforces “elite capture of local power structures” says Rigon (2014:272) who recently studied the resettlement project in Kibera. Further a report released by Amnesty (2009:20-21) reported that the general grievance of the settlers who were relocated to the resettlement site was that the project was conducted without “genuine consultation and participation”. This kind of ill planning and coercion by the developers led to widespread misinformation, fears and doubts among the settlers of Kibera (Ibid:24).

Information regarding housing is considered an important need for the people from the slums not only by the people who are in the process of resettlement but also by other parts of the slum where I conducted the interview as the whole slum of Kibera is planned to be resettled under the KENSUP document. I used the slum resettlement project that is being conducted by GOK along with the UNHABITAT to test how information was given to men and women in Kibera.

4.3.1. Participatory Planning and Gender:

The participatory agenda has become a mandatory “thing to do” for all government, researchers and NGO’s (Cornwall 2003:1325, Mayoux 1995: 237) but in spite of such well-meant recommendations, are women getting space to get adequate information? And are the development programmes which are brought in slums in true sense participatory in nature? Women has definite practical needs which are easily observable in terms of inequality between men and women where we identify the “men as problem” but in doing so blindly we end up putting aside a number of men in the participation process who might be further marginalised than women (White as cited in Cornwall 2003:1326) .There are other intersectional inequalities based on race, sex, class

and location while doing gender which should be considered and their access to spaces of information and participation.

Firstly, as Mayoux (1995:243) expressed that the decision making and choices that are present with the women are decided by the nature of poverty and gender inequality that the woman is in. In the words of Julie, a 54 years old local community organiser who has a well-established organisation of her own in Kibera –

“There are three types of women in the slum of Kibera. Women like me who is into community affairs, politics and upon whom number of women as well as men are dependent for information, the second category of women are those who have a vegetable or bhajia shop adjacent to her house, even has money to afford membership of attending a chama (self-help group) to interacts with lots of other women and have access of information from the network group. The last category of women are those who are restricted to their house and are waiting for the children to come home, she does her household work and keeps herself inside the house. She is the one excluded from all kinds of information..... So the one in the shop will know that there is protest because she will see the protestors passing, they will even know about the medical camp as they announce but this one at home will hardly get such information. All the information that the second category of women can get in the chama are also excluded from the third category of women. This is also a type of social exclusion because in order to participate they have to part with the 50 shilling which is dear to them and be part of the chama. For them time and energy are precious. If you want to tell them something they will not listen to it unless you offer them money.”

Julie not only stresses on poverty and gender inequality as the determining factors but also further understand the kind of networks present with the women to vocalise their needs and support system as important factors for determining participation. The access to networks are also determined by the level of poverty and gender inequality that the women in question is in.

Secondly, participation does come easily for the women as the membership criteria is based on “masculine norm” and the place or the time when the meetings would be conducted are usually during the time when it is important for the women to complete the household duties and functions (Mosse 1994,

Cornwall 2003:1329). Further, the women are not considered seriously in any of the meeting as there are not many women in attendance to support them in public meetings where they can organise together to give their view points and present their struggles (Cornwall 2003:1330). The participants in the interview complained of having to spend lots of time and not being taken seriously in the meetings initially and was much of a men's lobby which was operating in the beginning of the resettlement committee. Later when the matter was taken to court both men and women started resisting together to the new resettlement plan. Only then the women solidified their networks and resisted against the move very strongly. It was post those demonstrations that the women were taken seriously. As one of the participant said:

We never wanted to leave our homes in the slums as in the past we have seen how the beneficiaries near the railway lines were not given the promised settlements and were left in vulnerable condition. As we lost the case the resettlement process started any way and then we formed a resettlement committee of our own to see that the promises are kept.

The resettlement committee had the intention of including women along with people with special needs to be part of the committee and this committee was formed as far as 12 years ago when the initial planning of the resettlement was going on. One of the women representative from the resettlement committee expressed that:

The resettlement committee was established in a very efficient way and all were represented in the committee. We were a group of 12 members in the resettlement committee and the members included men and women from different ethnicity, disabled people, NGOs, female headed households and members from religious organisations.

She further elaborated that she needs to spend long time to engage in the resettlement committee but as her mother in law helps her in the cooking and child care (her babies are very small) she can give time to the work of the resettlement committee and even travel to courts and government offices for the purpose of the resettlement committee. Another women who is a single mother with two children to take care says though she never attends any meeting out of the locality but she makes sure to attend the meetings which are held locally and that is possible due to the co-operation from her neighbours.

When I go out for the meeting I ask my neighbours to help me out with taking care of my children.

In the current literature, women especially elder women and mother-in-law are shown as powerful women who help in the enforcement of the structural gender inequality (Mayoux 1995:244) by not co-operating with younger women and the only way a women can participate are through whole hearted support from her husband or men in her household. Throughout my study I found that women can access spaces of information through the solidarity shown by their mothers-in-law, women neighbours and through women only solidarity networks and self-help initiatives.

4.3.2. “Life changed after we left our homes”

Years back when participation faced its first backlash by the academics was when Kothari and Cook (as cited in Hickey in Mohan 2005:237) through their phenomenal work criticised participation on the grounds that it actually failed to touch or change the power or politics around the issue that is being questioned. This technical method of inclusion of “participation” for the sake of it has pushed the agenda of participation and inclusion into a “to- do list” and not a “political method of empowerment” (Ibid: 242). Women’s participation in development projects was seen as a technical task and consultation and the inherent system of inequality between genders or between class, ethnicity and location was never questioned in the new arrangement of resettlement. In fact, this resulted in making the lives of women much harder and resources much scarce for the women who left the slums for the newly built apartments as they were moved further away from independent income generation, access to health and education information for their children and loan information. Further their personal lives also came under the control of their husband where they faced domestic violence and insecurities.

The shift from East Soweto to the decanting site and the long period of execution had been a difficult process for both men and women but the women had to bear the difficulty more as they lost most of the social networks which was a source of information, solidarity and resource for participation in the social, economic and cultural fronts. After they were evicted from their original place of residence between 2006-08, they were brought to stay in the decanting site

which is located in the outskirt of Kibera where they lost communication with the informal channels of communication like the chamas, bars and the water collection spaces. It is recorded that 85% of women were engaged in water collection in most of the East African countries (UNHABITAT 2010:175). Moreover, in Kibera only 4% household have access to direct water connection, 15% use yard taps and the rest of the population is dependent on water kiosks which are usually run by private individuals, community based organisations or non-governmental organisation (Ibid:169). The water collection spots provide a great opportunity for exchange of information among women. In Kibera one can hear loud shrills of laughter and exchange of news in corners of the road where the women gathers to collect water. I gathered some of my observation around the water collection places while interacting with the women and I found out that right from finding homemade solutions regarding common flu to the latest political developments are shared in these spaces. Of course this is also a space where they complain about their matrimonial disputes and seek solidarity in sisterhood that is formed between them (de Wit 2017).

The resettlement process has been a long one. When they initially came to the apartment¹² system they were quite happy as they were staying in such a system for the first time and were introduced to number of new things for the first time like the indoor bathroom system. They did not have much information as to how to use the modern system and appliances that they were introduced to. Sheila expressed immense joy on having water directly in the newly installed taps in her flat and yet she soon pointed out:

The people around are the same people with whom we stayed in the slums but the culture changed. They were the same neighbours but now we only interact when we meet outside and the culture of coming to each other's house changed. Life changed after we left our homes.... We do not wash our clothes outside together but within our houses. In the slum people were generous but here it is not the same. We are now in an estate... here life is different. Food, water, electricity and travel to the work place has become more expensive now. Life in an estate is different.

¹² Resettlement area was known as decanting site by the slum-dwellers and the architecture was that of an apartment

The solidary networks which was the main source of information for women were cut when they stepped into the decanting site and they now had to sustain their lives on their own which they were not used to doing before. They were not even given sufficient information as to how to lead a life in apartments when they were moved from the slums. Most of changes affected the women than the men as the changes were around the domestic spaces of her home-stead- a place for domestic survival, economic spaces as well as spaces for exchange of information. A women from the slum who previously used to own a bhajia shop tells me:

Previously I had a small bhajia shop attached with my home but now I cannot have that kind of economic arrangement as we are now staying in estates and putting up shops in the campus is not allowed.

Like most of the housing planning in Kibera also the people from squatter settlements were moved to apartments without understanding the real needs of the people specially women. The idea behind such housing are imported from the west which fails to take into account the local cultures and context realities (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989:19-20)

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I clustered the spaces of information from where men and women get pertinent information regarding health, education, employment, housing and political news. The major conclusions that I draw from this chapter is that men and women have little or no access to information from institutions run by government. Most of the sources of information are from the social networks that the men and women are part of in Kibera. These networks are male dominated spaces, which draws their powers and attraction from larger male dominated networks which follow masculine norms and control. Such gendered social arrangement excludes women much more than men from access to information in slums.

Chapter 5. Negotiating spaces to reclaim “Right to the City”

(i)n the most positive of terms [the right to the city] signifies the right of citizens and city dwellers, and of groups they (on the basis of social relations) constitute, to appear on all networks and circuits of communication, information and exchange (Lefebvre, 1996b, pp. 194-195 as cited in Huchzermeyer 2011).

Women experience restricted mobility to access information by the rigid gender norms that they function in. In this chapter I tried to present the strategic instruments used by men and women to access information and, claim spaces for “right to the city”. In doing so I refer back to the concepts of gender, citizenship and agency used in Chapter 3 where I discussed theoretical framework.

The “Right to the City” comes under the civic republican theories of citizenship where one’s right is not just confined to the legal definition of “formal status of citizens” and narrow political participation like “voting rights” (Hickey and Mohan 2005:253). It gives more freedom to the citizens were they through active participation in decision making define their own (juridical, political, economic or cultural) practices (Turner 1993 as cited in Hickey and Mohan 2005: 253). Lefebvre (1968) persuades the excluded groups to take over central roles of decision making by the ability to “defeat currently dominant strategies and ideologies” (as cited in Huchzermeyer 2011: 248) by claiming RTTC “from below through their own efforts of organised struggle” (Hickey and Mohan 2005: 254). In Kibera the means of participation and norms of social network are dominated by men and the rules of inclusion favours inherent inequality between men and women. They have different agency to access information which is not done in collaboration due to the gendered hierarchical structure between them. The men organises themselves into vertical patronage relations (de Wit 2016, de Wit and Berner 2009: 928) based on political patronage through the influence of political parties.

The excluded class in this study are women uses their agency much differently from men to reclaim their space though not always as a conscious decision of “organised struggle” *from bottom* but through multiple strategies of solidarity, silence and tact in the complex web of relationship that they find themselves in the space of Kibera.

Women’s agency to access spaces of information

5.1 Getting closer to the powerful networks of power

In Kibera the women who do not have access to spaces of information and decision-making claim RTTC by unique strategies, where the goal being similar to men of accessing vertical relationship to patronage. The means to reach out to those relationships are different. The few strategies which I countered with are:

Margarita has immense interest in the political information and developments because of her gender identity. She is excluded from access to such spaces where political decision making takes place. She developed her bargaining power by befriending people and structures who are powerful and closer to spaces of information and decision making. Margarita says –

I get to know about political information by making male friends and when I walk down the streets of Kibera I try to eavesdrop in the conversations that they engage in.

Marlyn similarly values her membership in the chama and goes to the meetings organised by Jane even though it is not always productive as she considers Jane as an important site for valuable information and resource. Like Marlyn many of the men and women who are moved away from the central points of access to information rely and reach out for vertical patronage relationship based on access to local elites than joining in collective protests since their capacity and focus is limited to “individualised and fragmented” strategies (de Wit and Berner 2009: 931-932).

Women often resort to such tactical agency like befriending men, networks and overhearing conversation from which they are structurally excluded. Their choice of agency to escalate their political participation also contribute to their citizenship rights (Lister 2003:39). These choices that are embraced by women

should not be recognised as the single story of “women as victim” narrative as such interpretations are increasingly found problematic and damaging for women as political participants (Ibid). Kabeer also supports in counting these strategies as achievements for women by bringing in the criteria for measuring achievement which is not always about being “directly empowered” but also shifting the focus to the “source and setting variable” (Kabeer 1999: 449).

5.2 Performance and Horizontal Relationship

During the slum resettlement programme, there was a strong opposition by the people of Kibera. The resistance was mainly lead by men but when the protests got thicker, more and more women were called in to join the movement by community leaders and male family members. The women stood by strongly and this was enforced by the community which supported that a few women were to be represented in the resettlement committee. The spaces of participation, decision making and information seeking which was previously closed now got opened up to them because of their increased bargaining capabilities (Agarwal 1997). Gender relations and norms gets “consisted and contested” by households, market, community and the state and each of these interacts with each other and increase in the bargaining power of women (Ibid: 34). Horizontal relationship are more easily formed between women if they are triggered by such external or internal events as it can be seen in this case the slum resettlement programme.

In deeply entrenched patriarchal society the rules of the games in institutions and places of information like Kamkunji grounds or bars are dominated by men. The context of such places are changing by the collaborative agency formed by women through horizontal relationships. When such acts gets recognised by broader community it reconstitutes gender hierarchy more organically than otherwise, like an external force interference as promoted by the dominant welfare paradigm (Lister 2003:39). Yet such horizontal relationships are short lived and once the case of slum resettlement was lost by the slum dwellers man and women again went back to the regular vertical relationships.

5.3 Accepting unequal structure to access spaces for participation

Kibera as a society is known to be characterised by deep patriarchal practices, domestic violence and widespread criminal activities and very few women have enough space or power to voice their agency independently by challenging structures of power. Challenging structures of power in such societies can turn out to be extremely dangerous for the women (Papart 2010:19). In Kibera there are still instances of rampant teen age pregnancy, single and early motherhood, HIV and gender violence. Due to these factors the relationship between most men and women are also one of suspicion and doubt. Most of the women with whom I met try to tease out their roles and use their agency to benefit from the institution and articulate it in their daily lives mainly by accepting gender inequality and patriarchy which is known as doxa- a social concept as introduced by Bourdieu meaning acceptance of social norms without questioning or contestation (Agarwal 1997: 15).

Julie who in spite of being a community leader with access to local, national and international spaces of information and decision making believes in performing her domestic duties as a wife and a mother as gender prescribed norm. When I visited her house to accompany her for a meeting I myself quite disturbingly witnessed her to engage in all her household chores and duties while rushing for a meeting. She even served food in front of her husband while he was leisurely watching television. When I asked her informally if her husband helps her in performing household chores. She replied with a wide grin-

I believe in taking in charge of my house as I take in charge of community. All responsibilities starts from home.

Women's attitude of accepting patriarchal norm and capacity to choose against unequal power is criticised by many feminist but they fail to realise the value of "conscious capacity" as noted by Lister (2003) for participation which the women uses especially when dealing with a community like Kibera. Here I support the claim of Narayan (2000:6) that breakdown of relationship between men and women affects the poor most as once the social norms and solidarity changes it leads to "increased lawlessness, violence and crime" to which the women are most vulnerable.

5.4 Silences to fight oppression

Challenging the rigid structures of patriarchy in absence of “institutional or collective power” is often difficult and in such situations women take refuge to silence and suppression of information as their agency to keep the claimed space under control (Papart 2010:9).

Households are the primary units in “determining gender identity and gender differentiated access to resources and opportunities” (Narayan 2000:12). The women are approaching these conditions through subtle skills of manipulation, silence and sisterhood with other women in informal settlement (De Wit 2017, Kabeer 1999:438). I will try to elaborate on this point through a journal entry that I did during my stay in Kibera-

The first time I met Marlyn at her shop, she was managing her shop along with babysitting her toddler and the son of her neighbour who went to the market. In the shop I got very superficial information but today when I met her after church service at her place I got to know about the tensions in her marriage. I got a small present for her daughter with whom she introduced me and told me that her husband is away. Her husband is an alcoholic and hardly manages to save money for the family that is why she picked up her own business after joining the chama and even have a bank account which her husband is not aware of. She do not share the information with her husband she gets in the chama as well as from the customers she interacts with in her shop. She even indicated of her husband having an affair outside of their marriage (she never confronted her husband on that) of which she preferred to maintain silence with me after a point too. (Field note 30-07-16)

Marlyn says:

I do not share all the information that I receive from the chama with my husband..... The money that I have to give to the chama is my money that I earn by running this shop.

The choices of Marlyn to choose silence about her income and not confronting her husband about his illicit relationship should be dismissed as weakness on her part but as strategy to bear with the silences so that she can hold control over her spaces of her access to information.

Chapter Conclusion:

In this chapter I discuss strategies used by men and women to access spaces of information. The women on being excluded from direct access of spaces due to gendered norms in the society use tact, silences, vertical relationship building to claim their right to the city.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research started by trying to answer as to how men and women get access to information in Kibera. I introduced the Kibera slum to the readers and went on to reflect on my epistemological positioning and means used to analyse the data. I chose a broad framework of gender, agency, participation, right to the city and intersectionality to do justice to the analysis of the rich data collected from the field through in-depth interviews, observations and FGD.

I viewed the sprawling slum of Kibera as a field of information and tried to find out how men and women organise and negotiate themselves in accessing information that they both need to navigate complex and risk-loaded daily life. As per my findings men and women in Kibera identified health, education, employment opportunities, housing and political developments as important information that they should have access to. I mapped their information needs and the sources from where they receive such information in my analysis chapter 4. Yet, through personal interviews it was revealed that men and women do not have similar needs of information that is, in a patriarchal society men and women have differentiated roles and responsibility. Gender relationships was used as an analytical tool to study marginalisation and access to spaces and information in this research. The main findings that could be derived from this research are – firstly, both men and women have very little access to information from formal spaces of governance like government offices and institutions. Secondly, most of the information is accessed through informal networks and those networks are dominated by gender unequal means and masculine norms which makes accessibility difficult for women. Thirdly, the little spaces of organisation that are present for women such as having memberships in savings group or joining the protests for housing are not solely dependent on the agency of the women but the reigns of those networks are also controlled by powerful men or women. These powerful men and women draw their powers by occupying important positions in political parties and by belonging to affluent class or dominant tribe. In the current urban planning, the Kenyan government aspires to build Nairobi as per the agenda of “cities with-

out slums” and a part of Kibera is already in the pilot phase of slum resettlement. As per the findings of this study, the removal of slums and informality from the face of the city will not necessarily bring information nearer to men and women- *specially women*. In fact they will be far more removed from participation and accessing their “right to the city”.

Through my research I tried to answer if men and women frame their aspirations in RTTC terms and in answering that I found that men and women in Kibera deviate from exercising RTTC due to extreme poverty and vulnerability that they experience. Men are dependent on vertical patronage which they cultivate in places which are easily available to them like the bars and streets of Kibera while the women are mostly dependent on horizontal relationship due to the exclusions that they face on the basis of their gender for which their access to particular places are limited. The horizontal relationships are developed through their participation in care economy or through membership in women’s savings group. However, these networks are not strong or resilient enough to strive for bigger protests of action. All women cannot form horizontal relationships as poverty isolates them from attending social gathering or paying membership fee to be part of a savings group. Further, there is differentiated access to information within women also as they belong to different locations in Kibera. In this research, intersectionality as a framework is used to differentiate as to how location plays an important role in differential access to information. The men and women from Makina and Olympic estate are well informed and more access to formal and formal places in Kibera than the men and women from the resettlement site.

In the slum of Kibera poor men and women were not successful in responding to the ambitious call of Harvey (2012:23) in taking control of the city, slum and neighbourhood to make cities into more democratic and participative space because the differences in identities, needs and the patronage relationships were too strong to unify them in horizontal relationship. Further the governments in African democracies have the ultimate authority in deciding “which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear” (Roy 2005:149). Yet, most women from the slum of Kibera both slum elite as well as very poor women are resilient and use their agency tactically to engage with places of in-

formation like the bar, Kamkunji ground or streets of Kibera at certain point of the day from which they are historically excluded. While doing so they do not necessarily get into organised struggles against patriarchal structures. Instead they use their agency in the complex web of relationships to negotiate little achievements that they can manage through intra and extra household negotiations (Agarwal 1997:37). This results in accepting masculine norms along with manipulating gender relationship through silences and suppression of information. The results derived by such claims may not directly identify women as victims but there is no denying that the process is slow and changes do not create any precedence in the geography by bringing about a structural change.

Policy Implication

Kenyan government is on the way of implementing a long term development plan called Kenya Vision 2030 with the goal of transforming Kenya into a middle economy country. The social pillar in the document is very vague and does not have any hard metrics to achieve by 2030 (Jayappa 2013). In the Vision 2030 document the issue of urban settlement is very narrowly defined where the goal is limited to increasing the “annual production of housing units from the current 35,000 annually to over 200,000” (Government of Kenya 2007: 19). The governments in most countries of the global South - while doing elaborate urban planning with UN agencies and foreign collaborations forget to realise that informality is an integral part of the city space for the marginalised to survive as it connects multiple spaces and economies together (Roy 2005: 148-149). Recognition of informality calls for resonating local cultures, abilities and needs of the poor in the heart of slum resettlement (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989:17). The resettlement site as well as the new houses that were built by joint partnership between UN-HABITAT and the GOK were designed primarily as per the aspiration of the middle class comprising high rise apartment with two-three bed rooms, car parking and long wired fences. This is surely not sustainable for men and women belonging to poor informal slums whose economic, political and social networks will also get further curbed in the process. The current urban planning in Kibera is not ideal for

putting “citizens at the centre” in the creation of city spaces as their right but it is a systemic approach in creating “knowledge and power” in the field of urbanisation through borrowed ideas of Western modernity (Escobar 2012: 12).

The concept of Gender is also misplaced in the Vision 2030 document where “Gender, youth and vulnerable groups” were clubbed together as marginalised group (Government of Kenya 2007:21). If the desire is to insure Right to the City to both men and women in an equitable manner then the current model that is offered by the government in the form of Vision 2030 is neither best suited nor is the slum resettlement policy by KENSUP. On the basis of my findings I want to firstly, stress that social networks are an important component for participation for men and women in slums and clearly more so for the women. In order to see that the women have access to such networks the common spaces of information (as identified in this research for Kibera) should be cultivated so that there are no restrictions for the women to access such spaces to get information. Secondly, women are a diverse group and their needs are often “conflicting” (Mayoux 1995:242) to each other depending on the position of power and identities one is occupying in the society. Therefore it is inefficient of urban planners to not consider these multiple positions while making straight-jacketed urban development plans. Thirdly, the relation of women and domestic economics are not considered in city planning especially during slum upgradation. Through this study it has been established once more that domestic economies are an important source of information, participation and network formation.

In conclusion this study points out the differential access to information between men and women in informal settlement and urges urban planners to recognise the phenomena to determine equal participation.

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Appendix 1: List of research Participants

Name	Occupation	Age	Sex	Location of Interview	Connected through	Housing Status
1 Margarita	House Maid	33	F	In the doorway of the house	Met her own my own in the vegetable market	Heard about it. She is not directly effected
2 Marlyn	Vegetable Seller	28	F	Once in her house and the other time in her shop	Night School	Heard about it in discussion.
3 Julie	Community Organiser	53	F	Workplace	While visiting in NGO	Heard about it. Got notice
4 Irfan	Bone Jewelry Business	33	M	Workplace	Was referred by a women in night school	Heard about it.
5 Samuel	Unemployed	27	M	My guest house in Kibera Local Bar	Observational visit in a bar	Heard about it
6 Joseph	NGO Worker	29	M	His Office	I read about the organisation in internet	Heard about it
7 Mercy	Vegetable Seller	55	F	His makeshift home	Through an NGO	In a makeshift accommodation
8 Paul	Tailor	57	M	Her makeshift home	Through an NGO	In a makeshift accommodation
9 Sheila	Housewife	35	F	Her home	Through an NGO	In a makeshift accommodation
10 Patrick	Shop Owner	34	M	His home	Through an NGO	In a makeshift accommodation