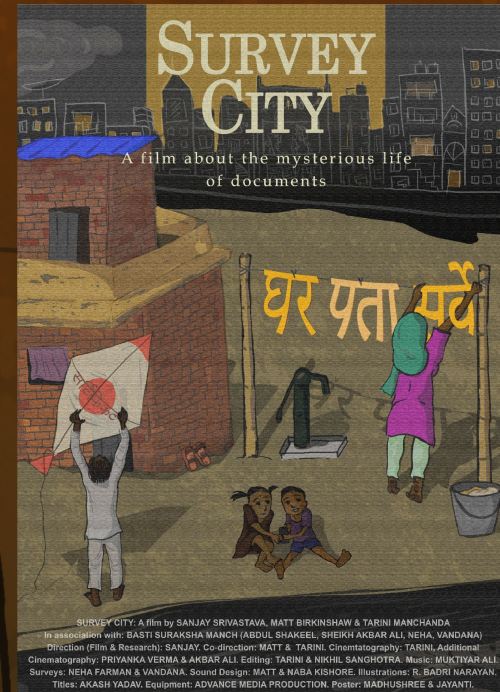


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Department of Humanities and Social
Sciences, IISER Bhopal

FILM SCREENING

SURVEY CITY

Directed by
**Sanjay Srivastava, Tarini
Manchanda, Mathew Brinkinshaw**



Discussant

Dr. Eveleen Kaur Sidana

Assistant Professor (Social Anthropology),
Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Azim Premji University, Bhopal

Date & Time

**18th September,
3 PM, Venue : L2**

Synopsis:

Ayesha and her family live in a Delhi basti (informal settlement). She wants nothing more than to have security of tenure of her tiny house at the precarious edges of Delhi. There are always rumours of demolition as the land is classified as 'illegally occupied'. Ayesha and her neighbours – who mostly collect materials for recycling – are always trying to work out ways of becoming permanent residents of a city in which they were born and have lived.

India's capital, Delhi, is a highly unequal city. By various estimates, between 15-30% of the population lives on just 0.5% of the city's land in low-income informal settlements, the bastis. For basti residents, such as Ayesha, tenure security and access to legal title to land depends on inclusion in multiple government surveys that promise these. These promises most frequently arrive at election time.

However, though documents produced through surveys promise clarity and certainty to the urban poor, they are simultaneously part of confusing processes that are unclear to both those who are being documented and doing the documentation.

This film explores the human elements – fear, anxieties, hope, confusion – that surround efforts by the poor to be good citizens and listen to the state as it promises a better life through surveys and documentation. It also highlights the frequently inexplicable nature of the state and its processes in its dealings with those at the precarious edges of the city. The relationship between women and government documents is a particular concern within the film.

The film focuses on crucial survey-related documents that were intended to provide security of tenure but were declared 'lost'. Between the lost documents and their eventual discovery in a government office, lies the story of a locality, its people and mysterious relationships between government records and citizens. This is the story of Delhi's Border Basti.