

Political Economy of Shit

by
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The room is bigger than my shanty. Everything glitters.



They call it loo. I am supposed to clean it but not use it, even in emergency!

The other day, the kid asked her mother—



Mom, where does our shit go?

Don't ask silly and dirty questions!

Bimla! Can't you clean our imported shit pot properly?



Meanwhile, in the periphery of the city



Why do you dump your waste here?

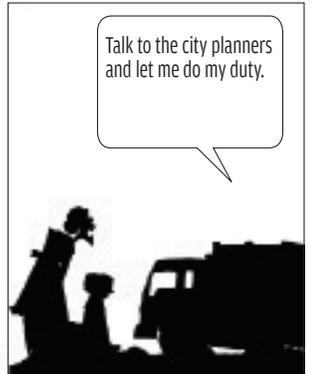
We have been doing it for decades... after all it is our backyard.

May be...but it is our village, our courtyard. You cannot dump your waste on us!

You also build your sewage treatment plant right in front of our home.



Talk to the city planners and let me do my duty.



My slum stinks like hell. As if dumping city waste was not enough, they are now building...



...a sewage treatment plant in my slum.

We have only a handful of toilets and virtually none for women. We defecate in the open. It is more difficult during the rains.



Moreover, it is unsafe for us at night.

My daughter says—



We should not defecate in the open...it is bad for the environment.

She does not know defecating in the open is also a big health hazard.

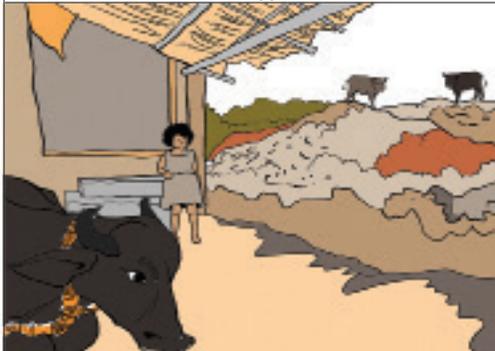


Urinary tract infection and other infections are common...

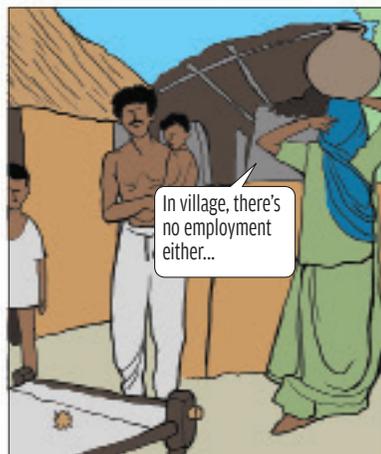
We thought that the city would be different from the village where...



we were forced to live the most filthy part.



People from the upper castes dumped their waste in our area. We were marginalised for our social background.



In village, there's no employment either...

Some of us even carry the shit of the people of the upper castes.



In search of a good and respectful life we came to the city.

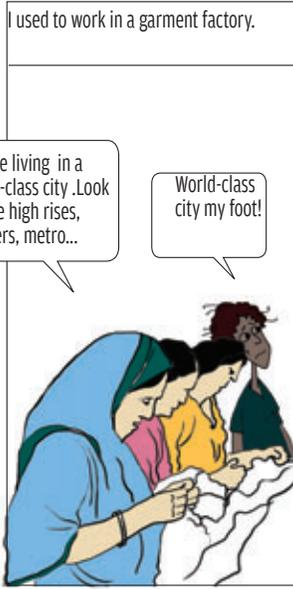


Only to realise that in the city we are marginalised because of our economic background... It is all the same.



The city's main water supply pipeline goes through our slum, but we are not connected to it...

...or to the sewage system of the city



I used to work in a garment factory.

We are living in a world-class city. Look at the high rises, flyovers, metro...

World-class city my foot!



Find me a single safe and hygienic toilet for women!

What kind of world-class city is this where most offices/factories do not have adequate toilets for women?



There are no toilets for daily wage labourers ...

Even domestic maids are not allowed to use the toilet in their employer's home.



Men can urinate in the open but what about us?

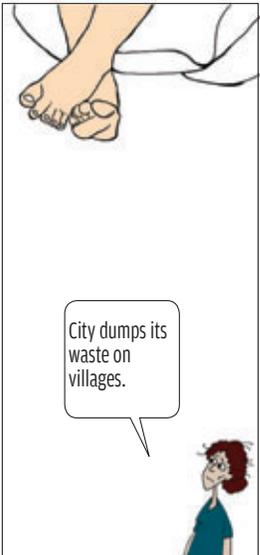
It's a cruel kind of gender discrimination!



Back in my employer's house-

I wonder where our shit goes, Bimla bai?

Poor kid! He is too young to understand that we dump our shit and waste on others.



City dumps its waste on villages.



The rich dump their shit on the poor.



The upper castes dump their shit on the lower castes.

Shit and waste is a tool of oppression, power politics and discrimination.



One can also name it, "The Political Economy of Shit."