# The Perception of Forced Movement

Law calls the movement of residents to be ‘statutorily forced’ in nature. But does everyone - at the ground level - also feel the same? Does every relocated and resettled persons - who was asked to move to government allotted houses in peri-urban regions of Chandigarh - feel that there was an absence of choice in their movement? This section tries to give a bird’s eye view about people’s perception of their movement and post-movement experiences – how, not just the black letter of law, but also people’s circumstances make them4 acknowledge their movement as ‘forced’.

It becomes important to disclose that the percentages or reference numbers used in subsequent sections are based on the total number of informants that either perceive their movement to be ‘forced’ or ‘voluntary’ – they are calculated on the basis of a total that does not include those who did not respond to this question about the nature of their movement. This applies across our analysis unless a specific exception is explicitly stated.

## How do self-claimed ‘forcefully-relocated’ peri-urban residents see things around them?

| Locality | Total | Maloya | Sector 49 | Sector 38-W | Dhanas | Mauli Jagran |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of informants that report their movement to be forced | 66.6% (18 out of 30 people) | 85% | 50% | 100% | 28.57% | 57.41% |

This finding concludes that every two out of three informants claimed their movement to be forced. Here, 30 people reported about the nature of their movement, and 18 said that it was ‘forced’. Under this, different peri-urban regions – that formed the basis of our field research – provided different numbers. The first three peri-urban regions have a good percentage of people calling their movement to be ‘forced’. But in Sector 38-West, this number goes up to 100%. And there is another interesting aspect to this: out of all other peri-urban regions included in our study, Sector 38-W is the least distant from the core regions of the planned city – the degree of its per-urbanity is comparatively much lower.

Apart from these regions – where the majority don’t feel that their movement, and post-movement settlement is guided by their choice – Dhanas comes out as an exception. Here, more than 70% see their movement as voluntary. Here, the finding becomes interesting in light of the fact that even though Maloya lies to the west of Dhanas – along the northern periphery of Chandigarh – it reflects quite a different public thought. In light of these findings, we can conclude that mere distance between a peri-urban region and the central parts of Chandigarh city - which defines a geospatial degree of peri-urbanity - does not have a direct correlation with how people perceive their movements. There are many other factors that influence the perception.

To substantiate the reason behind these findings, and talk about subjective factors that influence people’s perception in each localized setting, the next few subsections point out the correlation between demographic, economic and social variables, and relocators’ thoughts on the ‘type’ of their movement. Here, we primarily categorize these variables into 4 classes:

* relating to biographical data (like gender, age, educational qualification, etc);
* relating to public amenities (availability of healthcare, electricity, water, etc);
* relating to livelihood opportunities (current employment conditions);
* relating to the social settings (interpersonal relations among people, law and order situation, etc)

### Biographical Data

| Age group | 14-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | Above 60 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of informants that report their movement to be forced | 33% | 57% | 37.5% | 37.5% | 60% | 50% |

On the basis of gender, an equal percentage of men and women – out of the total number of informants – reported their movement to be ‘forced’: 42.8% of men and 41.38% of women. On the basis of age, it is important to see that the maximum percentage of people can be seen between the age groups of 21-30 and 51-60. At a broader level, a substantial percentage of people across age groups: at least more than 35% report their movement to be ‘forced’. On this basis, we can safely conclude the relocated residents - aged 51 and above - have the highest numbers of people that do not find their movement to be something they would do by choice

| Educational qualification | 6th pass | 8th pass | 10th pass | 12th pass | Collage | Not educated | Miscellaneous |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of informants that report their movement to be forced | 0% | 40% | 22% | 0% | 40% | 57% | 15% |

On grounds of educational qualification, the results show a consistent pattern among the educated and uneducated sections of the informants. For the educated class, less than 10% feel that their movement is forced; and more importantly, a large majority does not have any thoughts on how they would look at their relocation. On the other hand, more than 50% of the uneducated informants expressed strong feelings about their ‘forceful’ relocation and settlement. This gives one reasonable inference about both these classes. The educated folks – despite having the knowledge and understanding to question the legal policy – have not really taken any active steps in that direction. They remain oblivious and seem to not want to reflect on their situation. Had they made that effort, the ‘forced’ nature of the government's relocation plan would appear clearly to them – and responses would have looked very different. However, we cannot comment on the certainty of that counterfactual because of differences within the educated class: some informants had just passed 8th grade; some were done with their intermediate; and only a few were in collages. This implies that the pool of educated people that are capable of understanding and seeking awareness of the law's position – nevertheless – remains a small number. On the other hand, the un-educated people’s response does not derive from an apparent ‘awareness’ of the policy; it comes from their practical difficulties in the new neighbourhood – inconvenience associated with transportation to place of work, nearest hospital, education facility; economic hardships in the form of higher rents, higher charges for water and electricity; and most importantly, the element of social othering and psychological sense of alienation in the new society. These aspects are discussed in more detail in the sub-sections that follow.

| Family size | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6-8 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of informants that report their movement to be forced | 0% | 40% | 25-30% |

These numbers show that family size has a definite impact on the public's opinion regarding their post-relocation experience. Bigger families have reported higher numbers because of a practical issue: the allotment of single room, or single room and hall– in a uniform manner – to each person relocated to these peri-urban regions. The Government policy for implementing these relocations did not pay attention to the specific needs of individual households – it was indifferent to the family sizes; and the subsequent space requirements of relocated people. To avoid this situation, the government should have undertaken a case-to-case insight into every person’s data for making the entire process of relocation equitable.

This issue does not have one ramification – it has many others following the primary one. Not only do families experience serious space crunch and inconvenience in accommodating all members within their new accommodation; that also forces them to create separations within the family – where some members are forced to reside in different places in the city, or return to villages. That said, we cannot ignore the fact that some bigger families have openly accepted their movement to be ‘voluntary’ – and this derives from their access to better public amenities and infrastructure due to their movement. In conclusion, the aspect of infrastructure creates perceptions in both directions. despite the fact that a bigger family size is - more or less - correlated to a perception of ‘forced’ movement, infrastructure creates an impact that the next section brings to light.

### Public amenities

In the previous section, we shed light on the correlation between family size and people’s perception. That analysis is incomplete without looking at the impact of one’s house type on this correlation. There are two types of houses – temporary (kaccha) and permanent (pukka) houses. While government allotted apartments were permanent houses, built within multi-storey buildings, many people were living in either of the two types - kaccha or pukka - at their previous place of residence. After relocation, and on the basis of their post-relocation experiences, around 45% of people living in pukka houses feel that their movement was forced. On the other hand, this number is much smaller – down to 11% - for the ones previously living in kaccha houses. This observation gives two inferences. *Firstly,* for the second group of people (kutcha house residents), very few perceive their movement as ‘forced’ because for informants with smaller families and lesser spatial needs – to the extent that a government allotted single room accommodation could cater to it – this was a visible form of progress in terms of their place of living. They were forthcoming to shift from weak, temporary houses to government constructed, legally approved accommodation.

*Secondly*, for the first group of people (pukka house residents), we observe a mixed reaction – with an approximately equal number of people perceiving their movement to be forced or voluntary. This observation connects back to the aspect of ‘family size’. To briefly summarize, the perception of this class of people - that has moved from one permanent structure to another - is more strongly affected by family size than the ‘type’ of house. On the other hand, for people relocating from kutcha houses: family size - despite being a strong element to influence perception - did not have an impact that could outweigh the ‘development’ effect associated with a new ‘pakka’ house.

Take, for instance, that you are one of the residents that relocated from a ‘pukka’ house in your pre-relocation residence. If you have a family of 2 to 3 members that is well-settled in a small construction. In that case, this movement will not appear forced to you because nothing much would have changed in terms of your spatial needs. However, if you have a larger family of 5 or more people, then you will have a serious space crunch. Even though you had the possibility of expanding your house in the previous accommodation – by occupying more land; or by constructing another floor on top of the already existing house – you cannot do that after resettlement because the government does not permit any unauthorized construction. Moreover, you cannot seek another apartment because the policy allotment is not sensitive about your family size – it will allot just one house to you.

In terms of water and electricity supply and charges, we observed that supply was inconsistent in residences of people prior to relocation. However, the government provides consistent availability of that in the alloted peri-urban neighbourhoods. While supply creates a positive response, higher charges act as a counter-force. Bills are higher – the meter system is expensive and most people do not install: that makes the billing system arbitrary. And when this is combined with the high penalty charges imposed for default, the overall situation looks economically unfavourable for the resident. All in all, water and electricity have created perceptions on both fronts. But there is one amenity that has only invoked a positive response– toilets. Most people are happy with personal, sanitized and functional toilets – a big change from community or local restrooms in their pre-movement residence. While these aspects consider basic amenities, our data reveals a strong correlation between availability of quality education and perception of movement. On one hand, everyone that is unsatisfied with the quality of educational facilities in their locality report their movement to be forced. On the other hand, out of residents that are satisfied with the quality of education services - 42% perceive their movement to be voluntary and around 38%, forced. This concludes that the poor quality of educational services has caused people to perceive their movement, forced; and their social condition, undesirable

Apart from these amenities, there are some other concerns relating to one’s accommodation – about high maintenance and repair charges. Here, any problems related to the house’s infrastructure (seepage, breaking of walls, damage to water supply or electricity wires, etc) have to be managed by the residents at their own cost. The government does not provide any financial support here. The only financial support they did provide – which was actually done in an inconsistent manner – was when it compensated relocators for their transport and settling costs during the initial days of the policy. Apart from this, rent charges are another important aspect – one that has created a profound impact on people perceiving their movement to be ‘forced’. On an average, where people were not required to pay rent at the previous place, the charges have increased to around eight hundred rupees now. Not just that, these charges are uniformly imposed and are consistently increased as well. This system, like the allotment system, is ignorant of socio-economical particularities of people: it does not account for the economic status of residents and imposes the same burden on each household. Here, we observed an interesting point in our analysis – the government initially assured a lower rent – particularly closer to election – and thereafter, the authorities have not hesitated from increasing charges in the pretext of providing ‘additional’ services like sewage, sanitation, garbage, etc. While this holds on paper, people do not really think that ‘additional’ services are being provided either.

### Livelihood opportunities

Informants mostly work in the informal sector – activities like daily wage work, cloth business, tailoring, family business, auto driving, sweets and local street food selling, domestic and household labour work, and even security related activities (colony guards in other central regions of the city). Some work for the authorities as well – as cleaners and garbage collectors in the locality. From our analysis, we cannot draw any concrete relation between the nature of work and the perception of movement. Along with this information, people from both groups – forced and voluntary – did share their concern about increased costs of transportation. However, they were satisfied with the availability of public transport, auto-rickshaw and or any other form of personal transport like cycling or walking for reaching their place of work. Time duration for travel ranged between 15 to 30 minutes across the board. In conclusion, livelihood opportunities play a significant role in shaping people’s choices. But it does not seem to affect their perception about the nature of their movement in a very significant manner at a macro level. Having said that, it is important to highlight that our research is limited in terms of data - empirical premises for making statistically sound conclusions on the correlation between perceived nature of movement and microeconomic living conditions. Despite our reasonable observation at the macro level, our limited empirical evidence offers an unusual insight for Maloya - as compared to other peri-urban regions included in our study. Here, we see that Maloya is very isolated in terms of livelihood because industrial regions - where a large number of relocated residents and poor households find employment - are quite distant from Maloya in comparison to other peri-urban colonies.

### Social settings

At a very broad level, there was one undertone in the responses of all informants: even though people appreciate the better availability of public amenities and infrastructure facilities, they feel the lack of social belongingness and interpersonal relationships. People remain hesitant to walk longer distances and travel to nearby neighbourhoods because they risk exclusion – the fear of being stigmatized because of their peripheral position: both in terms of their geographical positioning, and their socio-spatial marginalization. This plays out in the form of fights, crimes and instances of drug abuse, all of which reimpose perceptions of social alienation and hostile, unwelcoming interaction between the new and old residents.

A consequence of such social conditions can be people’s willingness to return to their previous place of residence - irrespective of its real possibility. In our study, we observe 57% of residents who perceive their movement to be forced are willing to return. This stands in stark contrast with a counterpart figure of 7% in the voluntary category. Social discrimination - that shapes people’s perception in such a significant manner - does not limit to ‘people to people’ interactions. The government and police also play a part here. To give an example, one of our informants talked about the aspect of social stigma inflicted by police. They talked about the incidence of harassment and discrimination – that auto drivers, or other relocated people in Maloya – face at the hand of police authorities. This table below shows the percentage of those people - within the

| Locality | Total | Maloya | Sector 49 | Sector 38-W | Dhanas | Mauli Jagra |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of informants reporting law-and-order situation to be bad, that perceive their movement to be forced | 70% | 40% | 33% | 100% | 30.7% | 25% |
| Percentage of informants reporting law-and-order situation to be good or neutral, that perceive their movement to be forced | 30% | 60% | 67% | 0% | 69.3% | 75% |
| Do people feel safe walking alone in the night (Majority view) | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |

Majority of the people who report ‘forced’ movement, do not find the law-and-order situation to be very good either. In Sector 38-West, the law and situation is said to be ‘bad’ – even though street fights have reduced, informants tell us that police presence and administrative control remains poor; and petty crime – including theft – remains prevalent. Here, while the situation is relatively better, it is largely poor from the standards of Chandigarh’s central regions. In Mauli Jagran, we observe a better state of affairs - most informants feel that the neighbourhood is in good order and walking alone at night is a safe venture. The law-and-order situation is – in general – on the poorer side in Sector 49 and Dhanas. Finally, in Maloya, around 40% of the people reporting ‘forced’ movement do not feel comfortable with the legal order of their neighbourhood; and the others have merely come to terms with the unsatisfactory conditions. This finding - about the tacit acceptance of manageable/neutral law and order situation - is not exclusive to Maloya; it was observed in Dhanas, Sector 49 and Mauli Jagra as well. At its core, this finding points in a direction that this section talks about towards the conclusion - about the minimal impact of ‘unsatisfactory’ public order situation on people’s perception about their movement.

Informants that feel that their movement is ‘voluntary’; or those who do not have an opinion about it, share their observation with the ‘forced’ perception group – that safety against crimes remains insufficient. To summarize, we cannot locate a correlation between the ‘law and order’ situation and people’s perception of their movement. Here, we posit a reasonable explanation for our finding: since most residents relocated from regions of poor public order and crime, they have become indifferent, and under emphasize deteriorating social conditions at newer colonies. This no longer remains a substantive factor to affect their perception. Nevertheless, it is safely concluded that legal mechanisms, police control and administrative actions remain inadequate to effectively manage law-and-order in these peri-urban localities.

A certain degree of ignorance and disregard is experienced, particularly from the government authorities. Complaints regarding electricity and water are not heard. Also, the police does not make frequent trips and ensure public order in the neighbourhood