Namita Dharia

Abstract: **Building castles in the air: the construction industry and the development of contemporary urban India.**

I present an interclass study of the politics of urban development through the study of differential forms of labor within the construction industry in New Delhi, National Capital Region. This includes the contributions of developers, investors, consultants, contractors, and laborers. I look at the messy social relations behind a capitalist mode of production of cities and tie these to the nature of cities formed. Through this I explore the relationality between social life of producers and the physical environment they produce.

My project offers a critical commentary on the politics of urban and national development through the lens of labor. I argue that the work and working conditions of the construction industry are structured by the broader set of national and regional development policies. I look at how the politics of the urban and rural, the national and regional, and the local and migrant feed into the production of new urban areas in NCR. My methodology unites qualitative ethnographic work with planning and documentation strategies of the visual arts.