

Urban Slums: Eyesore for India

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Abstract:

The main objective of this paper is to study the urban slums in India and their conditions. Currently, India is facing rapid urbanization as well as industrialization, which has led to the formation of slums. The percentage of urbanization is increasing because of many reasons, like rural to urban migration as well as in-situ population growth and reclassification of villages. The cities of India have high economic and commercial activities. The paper discusses some initiatives aimed at rehabilitating slums. The study concludes that quick urbanization turns into slum expansion because of loopholes in planning strategies. The status of urban slums in India is to be enhanced to give slum dwellers a greater standard of living and quality of life.

Keywords: Migration, Urban Slums, Urbanization.

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the moment, cities house nearly half of the world's population. In India, urbanization increased from 27.8% in 2001 to 31.1% in the 2011 census. This quick urbanization is directly related to the formation of informal or squatter settlements that turn into slums. In general, this rapid population growth is primarily due to rural-to-urban migration. Agriculture has declined by 20 to 30% over the last decade. The immigrants moved from the countryside to the cities in search of better employment opportunities. Hence, the growth of urbanization is accompanied by the growth of slums. In India, 70% of the population lives in rural areas and works primarily in agriculture. The industrialization of cities promises higher wages and a higher standard of living, attracting millions of migrants from rural areas and other settlements to urban agglomerations. However, these migrants face a number of issues, including poor sanitation, a lack of drainage, a lack of clean water, health and education, and a general lack of basic necessities. The slums of India were created when large numbers of individuals or families were drawn or moved to the urban cities because of the huge difference between urban and rural income levels or to meet the demand for labor. For rural Indians, cities are the preferred location. Residential areas in cities generally do not provide accommodation or employment. So, the migrants find accommodation close to their place of work in an unorganized manner in most Indian cities. The slums, in general, across the world have certain characteristics that differentiate them from other parts of urban areas as well as rural areas.

II. SLUMS

Generally, slums are informal and illegal settlements that are unfit for human habitation. There is no universally accepted definition of slum because the concept and perception of slums vary depending on socioeconomic conditions, but their physical characteristics are nearly identical.

As per UN Habitat, a slum is characterized by a lack of secure residential status, access to safe water, sanitation, and other infrastructure, poor quality housing, and overcrowding. Also, UN Habitat defines a slum as "a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services." "A slum is often not recognized and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city."

In context to India, slums have been defined in three way namely, Notified, Recognized and Identified.

- (i) All notified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State, UT Administration or Local Government under any Act including a 'Slum Act'.
- (ii) All areas recognized as 'Slum' by State, UT Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any Act.

- (iii) A compact area of at least 300 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.

As per the Census of India, a slum has been defined for the purpose of the Census as residential areas where dwellings are unfit for human habitation for reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors that are detrimental to the safety and health.

There is a difference in the name by which slums are recognized in India. Slums are known as "Jhuggi-Jhopadi" in Delhi, and "Jhopadpatti" or "chawls" in Mumbai. Other names are "Ahatas" in Kanpur, "Bustees" in Kolkata, and "Cheris" in Chennai.

III. THE METHOD

For this study, particularly, the data has been used from India's censuses of 2001 and 2011. In the history of the Indian Census, it is important to note that the Registrar General of India (RGI) took the initiative to account for the slum population. Also, the process of investigation was rational rather than mathematical. The report of various authorities in India was used to determine the level of urbanization as well as the slum population. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation National Building Organization, and the National Sample Survey Organization of the country all contributed to the study.

IV. Results and Discussion

Levels of Urbanization and Slum Population in India

Nowadays, urbanisation has increased from 27.8% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2011. The number of towns increased from 4378 in 2001 to 7985 in 2011, while the number of metropolitan cities increased from 35 in 2001 to 53 in 2011. The urban agglomeration in India was 7935 in 2011. These 7935 urban agglomerations have a population of 31% of the country's total population of 1210 million. This quick or decadal increment of population is due to the differential heightening of rural and urban areas, migration from rural to urban spaces, and expansion of urban area boundaries.

Slum demography in India has increased from 2001 to 2011, but the positive part is that the percentage of the slum population decreased by 1%. In 2001, 52.37 million people lived in slums, while 65.49 million did in 2011. This spreading of slum towns and cities across Indian states and UTs was not equal. Nine states and two UTs did not report any slum population in their towns or cities in 2001. The share of the slum population in the total urban population of the country was 18.3% in 2001, while in 2011 it was 17.4%. The poor live in slums because they do not have enough money to buy more land or pay higher rent. So, they make huts or informal settlements in the vicinity of their jobs or work places, in any vacant or open spaces, and in any other places. Some surveys of the NSSO said that at the all-India level, around 30% of slums were located in open spaces, 23% along drains, and 9% along railway lines. These slums are surrounded by residential, commercial, and any other areas; at the all-India level, 66% of slums were surrounded by residential areas, 15% by slum areas, and 10% by industrial areas.

Table 1 Total, Rural & Urban Population (in Millions) & Level of Urbanization (in Percentage) in India 1901-2011

Year	Total Population	Rural Population	% (Rural)	No. of UAs/Towns	Urban Population	% (Urban)
1901	238.4	212.6	89.2	1917	25.8	10.8
1911	252.1	226.2	89.7	1907	25.9	10.3
1921	251.3	223.2	88.8	2047	28.1	11.2
1931	278.9	245.5	88	2219	33.4	12
1941	318.6	274.5	86.2	2424	44.1	13.9
1951	361.1	298.7	82.7	3059	62.4	17.3
1961	439.2	260.3	82	2699	78.9	18
1971	548.2	439.1	80.1	3126	109.1	19.9
1981	683.3	523.8	76.7	3949	159.5	23.3
1991	846.3	628.7	74.3	4615	217.6	25.7
2001	1028.6	742.5	72.2	5161	286.1	27.8
2011	1210.5	833.4	68.84	7933	377.1	31.2

Source: Registrar General of India, Census, 2011

Reasons behind the slum's growth:

Population explosion and poverty force the urban poor to live in slums, and that leads to an increase in the size of slums. Also, a regional imbalance in development creates rural-to-urban migration, thus increasing the overall urban population density, which in turn presses the urban poor to move into slums. In the past 15 years, India's urban population density has increased by 45%. It is further estimated that 40% of the population will live in urban areas by 2026. With an increasingly densified urban population, there is a huge demand for land. This shortage of land forces the urban poor to live in increasingly dense communities, creating slums in the process. Rising material costs and labour costs resulting from a labour shortage are another reason for the growth of slums, as they make developers unable to deliver affordable housing to the market. Also, delayed procedures for land development force people to stay in congested areas, which further leads to the creation of slums. A lack of efficiency among urban local bodies coupled with unplanned city management is also one of the major reasons for the creation of slum areas. 3/4 Furthermore, social backwardness forces people to live in congested areas far from major thoroughfares. For example, more Scheduled Castes live in slums, with one out of every five residents belonging to the SC category. A lack of political will for developing slums can also be seen, as slums provide cheap and steady labour to political parties.

Issues Due to Neglecting Slum Development:

Slums act as a magnet for the rural poor, attracting them towards city life. This it accomplishes by partially blinding them to the difficulties of city life. People living in slum areas are also prone to suffer from waterborne diseases such as typhoid and cholera, as well as from more fatal ones like cancer and HIV/AIDS. Also, women and children living in slums are prone to becoming victims of social evils like prostitution, beggary, and child trafficking. Slum dwellers in general, regardless of gender, often become victims of such social evils. Slum areas are also commonly believed to be places that generate a high incidence of crime. This is due to official neglect towards education, law and order, and government services in slum areas. Then, the majority of slum dwellers in a developing country earn their living from the informal sector, which neither provides them with financial security nor with enough earnings for a decent living, keeping them firmly within the vicious cycle of poverty. Lastly, hunger, malnourishment, lack of quality education, high infant mortality, child marriage, and child labour are some of the other social problems prevalent in slums.

V. OPTIONS FOR TACKLING SLUMS

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation identified that possible development options are, (i) Slum Improvement (ii) Slum Upgradation (iii) Slum Redevelopment (iv) Slum Resettlement (v) Slum Clearance. Also, infrastructure plays an important role in the formation of slums; poor infrastructure becomes a push factor in the slum's creation. The government of India has also taken various steps towards improving urban infrastructure. The Smart City Mission (to create smart cities) should focus on basic amenities, education, health services, IT accessibility, digitization, e-governance, sustainable development, safety, and security. Housing for all by 2022, achieved through the construction of houses for slum dwellers under the slum rehabilitation scheme and the provision of subsidised loans to economically disadvantaged groups. AMRUT aims to bridge the gap between infrastructure necessity and accessibility. HRIDAY, the National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana, is to preserve and holistically develop the heritage cities of India. Swachh Bharat Mission for improving cleanliness and sanitation. National Slum Development Program (NSDP) for improvement of physical and social amenities in slums. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission (JnNURM) with aim of improving urban infrastructures.

VI. CONCLUSION

Following a review of various research papers, review articles, and the author's manuscript, it is clear that there are numerous reasons for the slum's formation, some of which include rural population migration for a better standard of living and urbanisation as a major factor. Slums are the neglected portion of cities where housing and living conditions are poor. The slum dwellers are exposed to health hazards. Not that the government or local authorities don't try to solve this long-term problem of slums, but there is a need for the development of the rural sector in terms of providing basic amenities at the rural level and providing job opportunities at that level so the rural population will not try to migrate from their areas. The performance of various government schemes laid a solid foundation for making India a slum-free country. Also, there are several ways through which the decline and growth of the slum population are possible. Another dilemma is the nature of rural-urban migration, which is a critical factor in the decline of slums.

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