

# A study on problems and prospects of slums in India

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## ABSTRACT

Slum can be defined as 'A residential area where dwellings are unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, lack of ventilation or sanitation facility and having drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions'. So, it is an obvious choice one makes: It is always a better choice to live in cities even if it is a slum than living empty stomachs at their villages. Men easily get into any kind of daily wage labour work. Women get into domestic help or construction works in the cities. The people who live in slums, a large proportion of them are construction labour earning their daily wages from the real estate activity happening across India's large metros. India has really a long way to go to become slum-free. India is good at producing slums because of over population and illiteracy. People are shifting from rural areas to cities and doing small works and settling at slums increasing the slums because they cannot afford at better places. Some people shifting to different states due to unemployment and the companies are offering poor places and even in slums to them. By synthesizing the social and physical constructs, this paper provides a more holistic synthesis of the problem, which can potentially lead to a deeper understanding and, consequently, better approaches for tackling the challenge of slums at the local, national and regional scales.

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## 1. Introduction

Slums refer to makeshift housing or shanties found especially in urban areas, and are characterised by lack of basic facilities, squalor and overcrowd. There is no regular supply of water, electricity or proper sanitation facilities. Slums are generally built on government land that is lying unclaimed or vacant. There is no regular supply of water through pipes. This makes obtaining clean drinking water very difficult. The pressures of improving the Urban developed picture of India has unintentionally deepened the slum crisis. The number of people living in slums in India is more than the total population of United Kingdom, the Indian Government has announced. The movie Slumdog Millionaire completely shot in the slums of Dharavi portrayed the miserable life of a slum and the world saw it and laughed. We Indians saw it too, but simply as a 3 hour entertainment package without realizing that it was actually sounding the death-knell for our reputation as a superpower.: The word slum is employed to explain informal settlements at intervals cities that have inadequate housing and squalid, miserable living conditions. They usually overcrowded and aren't provided basic municipal services, such as water and sanitation. The Census of India defines a slum as "a compact area of at least 300 in population or about 60-70 households of poorly built, congested tenements in an unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.

## 2. Definition of Slum

According to Gouder, "Is an environment that lacks the basic amenities of a good living condition and is regarded as the worst form of human habitation."

According to the report of the United Nations on the Urban land Policy "A slum is a building, group of buildings or area

characterized by overcrowding, deterioration, insanitary conditions or absence of facilities or amenities which because of these conditions or any of them, endanger the health, safety or morals of its inhabitants or the community"

According to Websters new world Dictionary "Slum is a populous area characterized by Poverty, poor housing etc."

## 3. Some facts about Slums

Here are some quick facts about slums in India –

- The number of people living in slums in India has more than doubled in the past two decades and now exceeds the entire population of Britain" (Davis, 2007, p. 123).
- 22% of the Indian urban population live in slums, approximately 62 million people.
- Dharavi, Mumbai, Asia's largest slum.
- Approximately 6 million children (0-6 year) live in slums.
- Although the country has experienced an economic boom, the number of Indians living in slums has increased by 100 percent in the last two decades.

Realising that immediate steps are necessary to provide more humane living to the slum dwellers, Raheja Group in association with DDA is working towards a slum-free Delhi. The group has vowed to rehabilitate 2800 slum dwellers in the Kathputli Colony and provide them with improved living conditions.

## 4. The impact of slums

The rapid urbanization in conjugation with industrialization has resulted in the growth of slums. The growth of slums is

expected to have major consequences on both humans and the environment. On the other hand, slum residents themselves can impact their environment due to lack of basic services, which results in contaminated soil and polluted air and waterways. Growth and expansion of slums can also impact the national and regional economy, both negatively and positively. In addition, ambiguous property and tenancy rights can reduce the efficiency of urban land and housing markets, and may discourage investment or reduce participation in urban labour markets. The poor conditions that exist in slums and daily struggles that slum dwellers face continues to be recognized as a global and ethical challenge. Many governments, regional and international non-government organizations (NGOs) have put in place legislation or systems recognizing the need to protect and improve the lives of slum dwellers. These impacts highlight the critical need for managing slum populations worldwide. Socially, slums remain isolated from rest of the urban society and exhibit pathological social symptoms like drug abuse, alcoholism, crime, vandalism and other deviant behavior. The lack of integration of slum inhabitants into urban life reflects both, the lack ability and culture barriers.

## 5. Socio Economic Condition of Slums

Slum is the areas which indulge in all sorts of antisocial activities like gambling, alcoholism prostitution, delinquency, organised crime and bootlegging. As there is a marked sex imbalance in the slum society because of the selective male migration, the crimes of adultery to and prostitution prostitute are rife. Their poverty and overcrowding lend helping hand in such crimes which often lead to quarrels and violence. The houses in slums are mostly substandard and are hovels rather than homes for the teeming slum dwellers. The sanitary conditions are very poor in slums due to lack of basic physical facilities. In slum there is no provision for the street lighting, it is hazardous to cross them during night hours. The marked feature of the urban slum is paucity of roads. UNICEF in India has been advocating "participative and inexpensive" projects to provide basic social amenities and to improve the general level of well-being of the poor. The target groups identified for assistance are children, women and the poor.

## 6. Causes the growth of slums in India

The life of slums in basically a manifestation of poor quality, along with the economic and industrial development slums will continue to survive and more. The emergent of slums in the urban areas is the direct output of better economic opportunities accessible in the cities and towns. Following are the some important causes of slums in India

### ▪ Rural-urban migration:

Many people move to urban areas primarily because cities promise more jobs, better schools for poor's children, and diverse income opportunities than subsistence farming in rural areas. However, some rural migrants may not find jobs immediately because of their lack of skills and the increasingly competitive job markets, which lead to their financial shortage. Many rural-urban migrant workers cannot afford housing in cities and eventually settle down in only affordable slums.

### ▪ Urbanization:

Rapid urbanization drives economic growth and causes people to seek working and investment opportunities in urban areas. Local governments are unable to manage urbanization, and migrant workers without an affordable place to live in, dwell in slums. The UN-Habitat reports that 43% of urban population in developing countries and 78% of those in the least developed countries are slum dwellers.

### ▪ Poor housing planning:

Lack of affordable low cost housing and poor planning encourages the supply side of slums. Insufficient financial resources and lack of coordination in government bureaucracy are two main causes of poor housing planning. The Millennium Development Goals proposes that member nations should make a "significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers" by 2020.

### ▪ Poverty:

Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums. The richer the country, the lower is the incidence of slums and, on the contrary, the higher the magnitude of slums in the country the lower is the gross national income (GNI) of that country.

### ▪ Politics:

Removal and replacement of slum created a conflict of interest, and politics prevented efforts to remove, relocate or upgrade the slums into housing projects that are better than the slums.

### ▪ Natural disasters:

Major natural disasters in poor nations often lead to migration of disaster-affected families from areas crippled by the disaster to unaffected areas, the creation of temporary tent city and slums, or expansion of existing slums.

## 7. Problems and Challenges of Slums in India

Slum dwellers sometimes expertise a high rate of malady. Diseases that are reported in slums embrace epidemic cholera, HIV/AIDS, measles, malaria, dengue, typhoid, drug resistant T.B., and other epidemics. Studies target children's health in slums address that epidemic cholera and looseness of the bowels square measure particularly common among young kids. High population densities, poor living conditions, low vaccination rates, Insufficient health-related information and inadequate health service engender a better rate of malady transmission in slums than that in non-slum areas. Overcrowding ends up in quicker and wider unfold of diseases thanks to the restricted house in slum housing. Poor living conditions conjointly create slum dwellers additional susceptible to bound diseases. Poor water quality, a manifest example, could be a reason for several major diseases as well as protozoal infection, looseness of the bowels and eye disease

## 8. Strategies to Remove Slums

The idea is to make each village sustainable in itself with infrastructure including schools, hospitals and opportunities for

employment nearby. Once the people understand this, they'll start supporting the moves that will actually empower them to lead a better life without migrating. So many people end up living a worse life when they migrate from villages to cities. To find a solution, we will have to dig into our rural areas which experience poor facilities in almost all the conceivable areas—employment, education, sanitation, infrastructure, entertainment or agriculture. We have failed our rural areas and people from these places throng bigger cities with the hope of better living conditions. If we can provide them with a good quality of life at the place where they belong to, they wouldn't migrate and we can control the further expansion of slums. As per the last census in 2011, around 65 million Indian citizens lived in slums. Of course, the number is a bit higher today. India has a large slum population in its bigger cities like Mumbai and Delhi.

## 9. Conclusion

Many researchers argue that slums are not problems that have to be solved - but are indeed results of lopsided and

vested urban policies covering land ownership, infrastructure provision and maintenance, and other socio-economic issues. As all the fastest growing slums are found in less developed countries that suffer from a general shortage of resources, a key challenge is striking a balance between improving the conditions in slums and using the resources slums require to assist their economy. Social factors such as rural-to-urban migration, poor urban governance and policies that fail to address the needs of slum dwellers, along with various locational choice factors, have led to the present state of slums today. With such an approach in place, it is only then that we can address the specific social, economic, environmental and policy issues necessary for addressing the challenge of slums in different cities, countries and regions of the world. Local governments should develop strategies to prevent the formation of new slums. These should include access to affordable land, reasonably priced materials, employment opportunities, and basic infrastructure and social services.

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