

**An Overview of the changing habitat of Indian slum dwellers**

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**Abstract**

With the growths in the pace of increased urbanization, India is facing one of its foremost challenges in the form of disparity between redistribution of economic opportunity and growth moreover. During last two decades, migrations from villages and small towns to metropolitan areas have increased tremendously. Consequently, the centre of poverty is gradually shifting towards urban centers and this situation is further worsened by already high population densities, poor infrastructure, lack of an effective housing policy and provisioning for the poor. Slums are considered to be the major issue within many urban areas. The according to the census of India 2011, 66% of all statutory towns in India have slums, with 17.4% of total urban households currently residing. This present paper aims to study the how the living habitat of the slum dwellers have under gone change in the past few decades which would help in identifying the major areas of concerns for the people residing in the slums.

Key Words: NSSO, Migration, employment, Slum Enumeration Blocks, Census.

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**Introduction**

India has a long history of migration, which has shaped its social history, culture, and pattern of development. In pre-colonial times, the reasons for the circulation of populations were mainly for religious and trade purposes (McNeill, 1984: 9). Migration, because of military movements, also played an important role. People also travelled in search of pastures with their cattle. Nomadic migration, even for short distances, was an important feature outside the Gangetic valley.

These migrants in cities and towns have predominantly engaged themselves in the informal sector as construction workers, hawkers and vendors, domestic servants, rickshaw pullers/drivers, electricians, plumbers, masons, security personnel, etc. A large number of these jobs are seasonal and temporary in nature and take place in cities and also in more distant urban destinations. The majority of the seasonal and temporary migrants are either casual workers or self-employed in urban areas. About 31 percent

are casual workers, followed by 26 per cent self-employed, with about 23 per cent regular workers; however, approximately 11 per cent were not in the labour force and 8 per cent were reported to be unemployed. The casual workers and self-employed seasonal and temporary migrants seem to be quite vulnerable to the vagaries of the labour market as they lack any social protection (NSSO, 2010).

Migrants are not only employed largely in informal sectors but are also housed in informal settlements, generally known as slums. In India as a whole, every fifth urban resident lived in slums according to the 2011 census; in the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, about half of the population lives in slums. Slums are an integral part of urbanization and a manifestation of rural to urban migration. Slums provide cheap housing and serve as a gateway to the large cities through a network of friends and kin who migrated previously and are living there. Cheap housing is also available through rented accommodation in slum areas. A study conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences shows that one quarter of slum households hold in Mumbai and about half of those in Kolkata live in rented accommodation (IIPS, 2009:94). The same study also shows that, in eight selected million-plus cities, the percentage of male migrants living in slums varies from approximately 53 per cent in Delhi to 29 per cent in Nagpur.

### **Objective of the study**

The main purpose of this present study is:

- To identify the different types of slums in India.
- To understand the habitat of the slum dwellers in terms of their living condition.

### **Slums in India**

A Slum, for the purpose of Census, has been defined as residential areas where dwellings are unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of street, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to the safety and health.

Slums have been categorized and defined as of the following three types:

- Notified Slums
- Recognized Slums
- Identified Slums

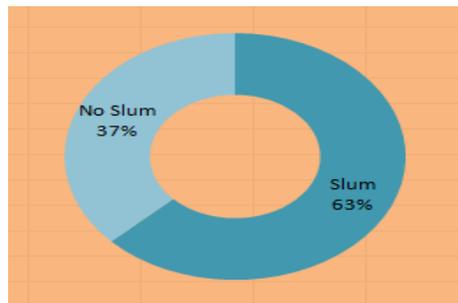
**Notified Slums:** All notified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State, UT Administration or Local Government under any Act including a 'Slum Act'

**Recognized Slums:** All areas recognised 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.

**Identified Slums:** 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 (Identified).

Slums have risen dramatically since 1947. There were main two reasons for slum development. One is Partition of India and the other is Industrial revolution after independence. Before 1950 slums were predominantly found around the mills, factories etc. They were mostly industrial workers in one room tenements. Health and Services provisions to these areas rose as main issues. Instead of going farther, the density of the slums started growing in and around the cities. From 1950 to 1968 the number of slums increased to 18%, in the 1970s they had a huge surge and by 1980 slum dwellers were half of the entire city's population. (Joshua Arbury, 2006)



Source: Census 2011

According to the census 2011, Out of 4,041 Statutory Towns in Census 2011 Slums reported from 2,543 Towns (63%). Total Slum Enumeration Blocks (SEBs) in Census 2011 is about 1.08 lakh in the country. A total of 33,510 slums were estimated to be present in the urban areas of India. About 41% of these were notified and 59% non-notified. Largest number of Slum EBs reported from Maharashtra (21,359). Maharashtra, with an estimated 7723 slums, accounted for about 23% of all slums in urban India, followed by Andhra Pradesh, accounting for 13.5%, and West Bengal, which had a share of about 12%. An estimated 8.8 million households lived in urban slums, about 5.6 million in notified and 3.2 million in *non-notified* slums (NSSO 69<sup>th</sup> survey report).

## The popular slums identified in India

Silicon india (2012) has identified the following major slums in India:

**Dharavi Slum in Mumbai, India:**Dharavi slum of Mumbai is found biggest slum of the world as well as in Asia.It is found that poverty; crime, increasing population and dirtiness are increasing black spot on INDIA and especially on Mumbai. Dharavi slum faces a lot of problem like lack of drainages system, Sanitation, water facility, education, health care plan, etc.

**Bhalswa Slum, Delhi:** Delhi is the heart of India. This slum is located on the bank of Yamuna River. Population of this slum is around 20% of the total population of Delhi. This slum has largest child labors. In this slum majority of the slum occupants are resettled from various part of the Delhi city. Increasing trends of crime leads to one of the most unsafe Indian city for women.

**Nochikuppam Slum, Chennai:**Chennai is called "The city of flyovers". Nochikuppam slum is located inChennai city of Tamil Nadu and has the locality of 1300 huts and around 5thousand occupants living under below poverty line. A slum occupant of this region does not have enough money to get two times meal a day. Thisarea is poorly affected from various factors and this slum is lacking fromalmost all the basic necessity required for human being.

**Basanti Slum, Kolkata:**Basanti Slum is one of the major slum in Kolkata. Around 1/3rd of the Kolkata population settled in this slum. Majority of this slum occupants are living below poverty line, and they are lacking from basic amenities.

**Rajendra Nagar Slum, Bangalore:** Out of 2000 slum in the state 570 slums are found in the Garden City. It is found that 20% of the Bangalore population lives in slum.

**Indiramma Nagar, Hyderabad:** Around 6,24,689people are living in Hyderabad. In Hyderabad city both identified and unidentified slums are found, there are around 104 identified and 24unidentified slums are found.

**Saroj Nagar Slum, Nagpur:**In Nagpur city alone there are total 424 legal slums found. Saroj Nagar isone of the legal slums out of 424 slums. In Saroj Nagar around 1,42,000peoples are living in this slum. This slum is developed on 1600 hectares ofprime land. Due to scarcity of land in Maharashtra, this slum is in processof second largest slum after Dharavi in Mumbai.

### **Mehbullahpur Slum, Lucknow:**

In the City of Nawabs it is found that majority of the slum occupants are migrated from the various parts of nearest district for employment opportunities. Around 20,000 peoples are living in this slum. Majority of this slum occupant are poor and are daily wage earner. It is found that slum occupants of this area are facing shortage of basic amenities.

**Satnami Nagar Slum, Bhopal:** Satnami Nagar is one of the oldest slum in Bhopal.

**Parivartan Slum, Ahmadabad:** This city provides various employment opportunities to almost all the worker. In this city around 4,40,000 peoples are living in slum. This slum is the home for the large poor population expanded around the River banks. This slum is one of the oldest slum of India.

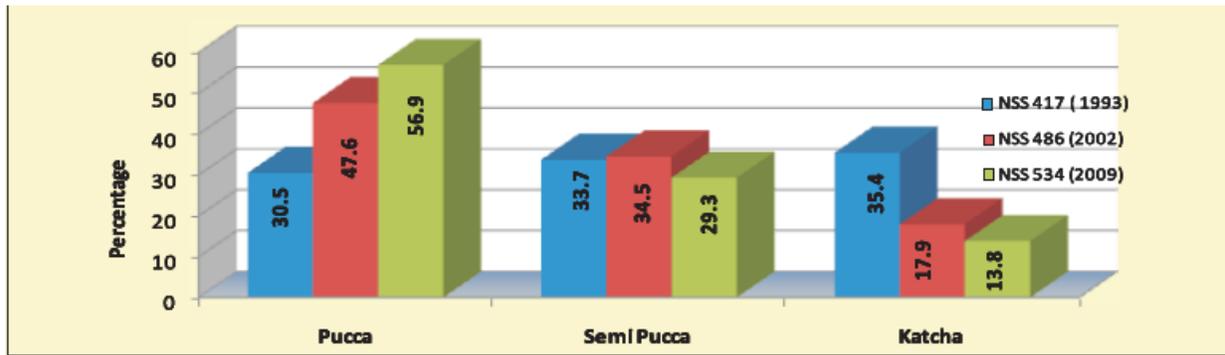
### **Living conditions of the slum dwellers in the country**

The NSSO Surveys on Slums conducted between 1993-2009 presents evidence for decrease in the number of slums, but there is an increase in the number of slum households.

### **Housing structure**

The housing structures in slums has classified into three categories, viz., 'pucca', 'semi-pucca' and 'katcha' in the NSSO surveys. The 49th Round of NSSO survey (1993) highlights that at all-India level, the dwelling units were distributed equally, i.e 1/3rd (approximately) under each category, viz. pucca, semi pucca and katcha housing structure. More than 50% of slums had predominantly pucca houses in states like Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi. On the other hand, more than 50% of slums in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had semi-pucca houses. Katcha structures were mainly found in slums of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. The survey revealed that pucca houses in the slum have increased between the period of 1993 and 2009. The percentage of slums having pucca houses was 30.5% in 1993, which increased to 47.6% in 2002 and 56.9% in 2009. The variation in the distribution of slums by its structure is quite significant across the states. In some states like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, the proportion of slums with majority of its houses built by pucca materials were very high. On the other hand, slums of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jammu & Kashmir were far behind and almost all houses of slums were either semi-pucca or katcha in these states.

Slums by type of Structure (in%)



Source: National Sample Survey Organisation, NSS Report No.417, 486, 534

Besides housing facilities, electricity, drinking water, sanitation, drainage and sewerage system, garbage disposal system etc. have always been major areas of concern for the slum dwellers.

Almost all the houses in slums are in bad, and sometimes dilapidated, conditions. The houses are usually inadequately ventilated. The designs are such as to afford bare shelter, leading to acute congestion. In squatter settlements, houses are constructed using materials like mud, un-burnt bricks, tin-sheets, asbestos sheets, bamboo, gunny bags, plastic sheets etc. and are usually single-room units with inadequate space standards.

| Source of drinking water | Urban | Slum |
|--------------------------|-------|------|
| 1. Tap                   | 70.6  | 74.0 |
| From treated source      | 62.0  | 65.3 |
| From untreated source    | 8.6   | 8.7  |
| 2. Well                  | 6.2   | 3.0  |
| 3. Hand pump             | 11.9  | 12.7 |
| 4. Tube well / Borehole  | 8.9   | 7.6  |
| 5. Other sources         | 2.5   | 2.8  |

Source: Census 2011

Private toilets do not exist in a majority of slum areas and even common toilets are available only in a few. Where there are no toilets, people defecate in the open which, besides being an environmental nuisance, poses hardships for, especially women. Community latrines, even where available generally remain filthy and insanitary and virtually a menace to the areas in which they exist.

| Type of latrine                | Urban | Slum |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|
| 1. Latrine within the premises | 81.4  | 66.0 |
| (a) Water closet               | 72.6  | 57.7 |
| (b) Pit latrine                | 7.1   | 6.2  |
| © Other latrine                | 1.7   | 2.2  |
| 2. No latrine within premises  | 18.6  | 34.0 |
| (a) Public latrine             | 6.0   | 15.1 |
| (b) Open                       | 12.6  | 18.9 |

Source: Census 2011

Most of the houses in slum areas do not have individual water supply. In some slum areas, public taps do exist but the number of persons using each such tap is generally very high. Many slums, especially in the outskirts of the cities, have open wells as their only source of water for drinking, bathing and cleaning. These wells are generally insanitary. No attention is paid to the maintenance of wells, or even of public taps. A considerable number of slum dwellers have to fetch water from outside the slum areas.

#### Location of drinking water source

| Location            | Urban | Slum |
|---------------------|-------|------|
| 1. Within premises  | 71.2  | 56.7 |
| 2. Outside premises | 28.8  | 43.3 |

Source: Census 2011

The drainage system in almost all the slums is very poor. With the exception of pucca buildings in old city areas, slum settlements generally do not have any drainage. Furthermore, a majority of unauthorised colonies and squatter settlements are located on low-lying lands. As a result, sewage water cannot flow away. The situation becomes particularly worse during the rainy season when storm water finds its way into these low lying settlements and get mixed-up with the sewage water, making extremely unhygienic environment.

Roads and lanes are narrow and often unpaved. Puddles and slush are common-place after every rain shower. The facility of roads and street lights is generally inadequate. This adversely affects the safety and security of residents and is generally believed to be largely responsible for high rates of night-time crimes.

There is a complex relationship between environment and health. A number of studies have shown that the unhygienic slum environments make slum dwellers more susceptible to certain types of diseases like respiratory diseases, gastro-intestinal disorders, skin diseases, malarial fever, tuberculosis, etc. Unfortunately, the economic circumstances of the slum dwellers are such as they do not allow them to improve their living conditions.

| Source of lighting | Urban | Slum |
|--------------------|-------|------|
| 1. Electricity     | 92.7  | 90.5 |
| 2. Kerosene        | 6.5   | 8.2  |
| 3. Solar           | 0.2   | 0.3  |
| 4. Other oil       | 0.1   | 0.2  |
| 5. Any other       | 0.2   | 0.2  |
| 6. No lighting     | 0.3   | 0.5  |

Source: Census 2011

A majority of the slum dwellers are employed in the unorganised or informal sector. A large proportion of them work on a daily wage basis and, therefore, have little or no job security. A significant proportion is employed in construction work. Due to low income, their standard of living is also low and they are left with little surplus income for housing after meeting their families basic needs of food and clothing. Still there is a greater percentage who cannot go for savings for some reason or the other.

| Availing Banking Services | Urban | Slum |
|---------------------------|-------|------|
| 1. Availing               | 67.8  | 53.2 |
| 2. Not availing           | 32.2  | 46.8 |

Source: Census 2011

In brief we may say that slum dwellers are faced with insecurity of tenure, lack of basic services, especially water and sanitation, unsafe building structure, over-crowding, limited access to credit and formal job markets. Normally slums exist on polluted land. They suffer from water-borne diseases. It is also believed that slums are places of high level of crimes. This is not universally true. The poverty is the main reason for slums. At the same time slums also provide low cost accommodation to poor migrants and necessary support to city.

## Conclusion

The Government of India has taken certain initiatives for the development of infrastructure as well as improvement of environment in urban settlements with a view to improving the quality of life. In this context, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation are monitoring the implementation of a few Centrally Sponsored Schemes for which, besides policy guidelines, State Governments and their development agencies are given financial support in the form of grants and loans. Some such schemes relate to the development of infrastructure in Mega Cities where infrastructure projects related to water supply and sewerage, roads and bridges, city transport, solid waste management, etc. are implemented on sustainable basis with appropriate direct and indirect cost recovery measures. The National Slum Development Programme is another scheme launched in 1996 where additional central assistance is granted for the development of urban slums. The objective of this programme is upgradation of urban slums by providing physical amenities like water supply, storm water drains, community baths, widening and paving of existing lanes, sewers, community latrines, street light etc. Community infrastructure and

social amenities such as pre-school education, non-formal education, adult education, maternity and child health care including immunization as well as shelter up-gradation or construction of new houses are also part of this scheme.

Some other major government initiatives include **Swarna JayantiShahariRozgarYojana (SJSRY)** aimed at providing gainful employment. In pursuance of the Government's vision of creating a Slum-free India, a new scheme '**Rajiv AwasYojana' (RAY)** has been launched on 02.06.2011. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission(JNNURM) was initiated on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2005 to assist cities and towns in taking up housing and infrastructural facilities for the urban poor. **Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP)** was started to provide interest subsidy on housing loans to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG).

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