

Infrastructural Challenges and Proliferation of Slums in Metropolitan Cities of India

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Abstract

Urban landscape is incomplete without slums. Slums are an important part of the urban economy and are also partners in the growth and expansion of the same. However, growth of slums exhibits an exclusive character of the urban and cannot be regarded as a healthy development. To improve the condition of the slums it is essential that the socioeconomic condition of the people residing in slums be improved. In the era of urbanization, the upgradation of the infrastructural facilities has become all the more imminent. The present paper focuses on the infrastructural challenges and the proliferation of the slums in the metropolitan cities of India. The analysis of the slum areas in the metropolitan cities of India is based on the data of the 2001 and 2011 census of India and government reports and websites. Almost one-third of the slum population of the country resides in these cities but the amenities vary across them. The schemes and the benefits provided by the government appears marginal for the population residing in these slums.

Keywords

Slums, Metropolitan Cities, Infrastructure, Proliferation

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Introduction

In the Indian urban landscape, slums are an inseparable part. Cities attract a large number of people towards them due to their diverse economy and availability of work of all skill types. Many of the people in the slums belong to the lower economic strata. Many factors like smaller incomes, expensiveness of housing, lack of personal resources and scarcity of infrastructure makes these slums the first choice for this section of society. Electricity, water, health and sanitation, visible poverty with small living space, are common physical aspects of the slums. There has been a massive proliferation of the slums after independence in the metropolitan cities of India due to industrialization and the need of employment. The informal workers and the families belonging to the lower economic strata of rural origin reside in the slums of the urban areas. But the concentration of the population is uneven in the different cities due to concentration of work in specific areas, cost of living in the different cities, lower income of the people and lack of knowledge about the cities make these slums unevenly populated. The formation and the development reveal the inability of the urban governments to provide decent housing and infrastructure and also exhibit the existence of a power structure to ensure a continuous supply of cheap labour. The proliferation of the slums with time in the metropolitan cities is a point worth considering in this context. The slums are characterized by the poor houses, unhygienic conditions with lack of either household latrines or unserviceable community latrines, small rooms with low roofs, inadequate drinking water and drainage, open stinking drains usually running in front of the houses, lack of health facilities, lack of waste management, poor law and order and various environmental problems. The population in the slum areas receives second-rate of treatment and perform job like recycling, vending, auto and rickshaw driving, servicing of sanitation, garbage collection, domestic help, construction, and other informal activities. Since important helping activities are performed by the slum people so there it is required to upgrade their living conditions and provide them better chances of employability and rehabilitate these slums and making them liveable.

Since independence many programmes such as Environment Improvement of Urban Slums (1972), Slum Upgradation Programme (1985), National Slum Development Programme (1996), Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojna (2001), Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (2005), Rajiv Awas Yojna (2011) have been launched and implemented by the government but then also the number of slums keep on rising. According to the 2001 census, the approximate households in the slums were 10 million which rose to 14 million in the 2011 census. Therefore,

the government should implement such policies which can improve the living conditions of this vulnerable population.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study living conditions of the people living in the slums.
2. To study the proliferation of the slums in the metropolitan cities with the passage of time.
3. To study the infrastructural challenges faced by the vulnerable population in the slums of the metropolitan cities on India.

Methodology

The analysis of the slum areas in the metropolitan cities of India is based on the secondary data of the 2001 and 2011 census of India, government reports and websites and various studies performed on the slum areas.

Review of Literature

According to the Nakamura, 2017 study on slum declaration in Pune indicates that providing slum dwellers with the guarantee of occupancy rights, even in the absence of complete property rights, can motivate them to enhance the quality of their housing in slums. Hence, formalised land tenure plays a crucial role in enhancing tenure security and facilitating housing improvements in the long run.

Mukhija (2013) argues that these enabling approaches seem to be more about trying the opposite of what didn't work before, without clear proof that it will be successful or is the best and only solution. Delhi's Kathputli colony's in-situ rehabilitation through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model is yet another example which shows these alternatives are inefficient as they do not accommodate resident needs and concerns. The project involved temporary relocation of the slum dwellers to transit camps until vertical structures were built for them to reside.

According to Mann, 2012, People migrate to urban areas by the pulling factors like economic opportunities, better education and Infrastructure facilities. Non-profitability of farming, land fragmentation and Lopsided urbanization are some of the pushing factors leading to the growth of urbanization.

According to a study conducted by Mukhija, 2003, on the Markandeya slum, a part of Dharavi in Mumbai, which was chosen for reconstruction as part of India's Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) in 1988, highlights institutional, physical, and financial challenges over the ten-year construction period (Andavarapu & Edelman, 2013).

A study by Werlin, 1999, suggests that the slum upgrading approach is not fundamentally flawed; rather, its successful implementation demands a robust and

compassionate bureaucratic system. His evaluation of the Bustee Improvement Programme (BIP) of Calcutta showed that the outcome of the programme was initially positive until the early 1970s, but it progressively deteriorated over time as it could not adequately address the housing issues; the government appeared either incapable or unwilling to confront the challenges posed by the growing squatter settlements. The programme was designed to enhance slum conditions by providing service latrines, installing water taps, improving surface drainage, constructing and widening roads and pathways, and providing street lighting and waste disposal facilities.

According to the Ramachandran, 1989, “the increase of slums in cities, it needs to be noted that it is not a recent development. Since the post-independence period, there has been a massive proliferation of slums in the million-plus cities of the country . Cities having diverse economies attract a large number of the workforce to work in the urban informal labour market. Most of these informal workers are of rural origin and belong to the lower economic strata. But their limited knowledge of cities, concentration of work in specific areas, and lower earnings and cost of living in cities make slums a natural choice of residence for these vulnerable groups”.

Table 01: Growth of Slums in Metropolitan Cities of India (2001-2011)

S. No.	Metropolitan Cities	Proportion of slum population in 2001	Proportion of slum population in 2011
1.	Delhi	18.7%	10.7%
2.	Mumbai	54.1%	41.3%
3.	Kolkata	32.5%	31.35%
4.	Chennai	25.6%	30%
5.	Bengaluru	10%	8.5%
6.	Vishakhapatnam	54.8%	44.1%
7.	Ahmedabad	13.5%	13.11%
8.	Pune	19.39%	22%

Source: City Development Data, Census 2001, 2011.

The above table shows the trend of the population in the slums between the year 2001 and 2011 in the main big metropolitan cities of India. The total population residing in the slum areas has showed a decreasing trend in the major metropolitan cities of India. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Vishakhapatnam, Ahmedabad showed a downward movement in the population of the slums whereas Chennai and Pune showed an upward trend in the slum population. Many factors had affected the population of the slums in these cities.

Infrastructural Challenges of the Slums in India

Slum population faced many challenges residing in such areas in the era of slow industrial development. Employment opportunities were limited to particular cities making the condition of these areas a havoc. The people started searching for the alternative areas to overcome the problems of the slum areas of the selected metropolitan cities of the country. People found out the areas of the nearby cities as an alternate to the existing ones. The cities like Ghaziabad, Noida, Faridabad provides new shelter to the poor people reducing the burden on Delhi, Mumbai slum population is dispersed in Thane, Navi Mumbai, Kalyan-Dombivli, Virar, Kolkata population have looked forward towards Chandannagar, Howrah, Falta, Bengaluru is supported by the cities like Mysuru, Mandya while Vishakhapatnam slum population is majorly dispersed to Vizhinagam, Guntur, Puri, Ahmedabad has many cities developing around it and the population is majorly dispersed towards the other cheaper areas like Nadiad, Vadodara and Bhavnagar. The major challenges faced by the slum areas are:

1. **Drinking water-** Safe drinking water is one of the most pressing slum crisis. Slum areas often receive just 5% municipal water supplies irrespective of supporting vast population. Slum areas often endure irregular supply timings, contamination and distant community taps.
2. **Electricity-** It is often a web of complex, unsafe and illegal connections. People lack legal connections which leads to severe fires, safety hazards etc.
3. **Health Facilities-** These areas have low level health facilities dependent on local community clinics, decentralized primary care centres. They provide low-cost medical facilities to the poor people of the slums.
4. **Education facilities-** The poverty barriers paved the way for high drop outs. Education is mainly confined to localized classrooms, Community Learning Schools and Bridge Schools, Government Formal Schools and Mobile Classrooms.
5. **Housing Problems-** This is a complex problem of the slum areas marked by the severe overcrowding, structural fragility and lack of basic infrastructure. This challenge is creating deep environmental and health crisis for the vulnerable slum population.
6. **Environmental Problems-** The major environmental problem of the slum areas are basic sanitation and inadequate waste management leading to chronic issues like contaminated water, poor air quality and severe health problems to the residents.

7. **Law and Order-** The slum areas due to their over crowdedness leads to localized disputes, and violence, property crimes, and violence by the localized gangs leads to migration of the people from these areas.

How Can the Condition of Slum Areas Be Improved?

Holistic slum upgrading programs can improve the condition of the slum areas that can provide basic infrastructure like, sanitation, clean water and socio-economic support. The key strategies that can effectively improve the condition of the slum areas are:

- **Basic Infrastructure-** Installing utility network like piped water supply, paved roads and reliable electricity.
- **In-Situ Redevelopment-** Informal structures to be replaced by proper high-rise tenements like the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) models in Mumbai.
- **Socio-Economic Empowerment-** These areas should be boosted by the financial stability through micro financing and vocational training.
- **Community Engagement-** In planning, involvement of the local residents in order to match the social, cultural and economic needs.
- **Legal Recognition and Land Tenure-** Encouragement of the local residents in their own properties and granting legal documents of entitlement to them to prevent forced evictions.

Conclusion

The paper evaluated the proliferation of the slums in the major metropolitan cities of India. Intentionally, the slums are not created but they grow in negligence and irresponsible attitude. In such cities a major population resides in the slum areas since decades but the infrastructural challenges make the living conditions adverse or even impossible in the present scenario irrespective of the many programmes run by the government like PMAY-HFA(U), SBM(U) and AMRUT etc. but the success of the programs is a matter of concern. SBM(U) is concerned with successful to some extent in construction of toilets. The Smart Cities Mission has generated much interest as it claims to develop inclusive cities, but from the project proposals one can find few projects with respect to slums. Small and insignificant benefits appear of AMRUT scheme. With the participation of the private participation in slum redevelopment and reconstruction of a high order can make PMAY-HFA(U) programme meaningful.

On the other hand, there is a need to enhance the employment opportunities in the rural areas to reduce the forced exodus and distress migration. To improve the

condition of the people in the slum areas there is a need to implement the minimum wages and welfare measures enshrined in law for construction workers, transport workers, street vendors, cooks, household helps and the informal working population that are basically living in slums. NGOs have taken many steps to improve the living conditions of the slums. Government implement its own measures but the then also successful implementation is not yet achieved. Instead of isolated ones, the need for the hour is a collective effort of all the role players together. To improve the slums in terms of facilities, education and skills, government, NGOs, Private players and educational institutions joining their hands together. And above everything there should be a strong political will power to transform the slums and its people.

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