

Sustainable Urban Development In India: Focusing On Sustainable Slum Development With Related Challenges

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Abstract:

One of the largest problems modern India is facing is how to develop itself in the present while retaining resources for the future. This paper highlights the ways urbanisation leads to slum creation and the problems that come with it. Neo-Liberal Urbanisation's modus operandi of slum upgradation leads to further poverty and negligence, displacement of people and destruction of their livelihoods.

The current meta revolves around rapid economic and infrastructure development disregarding the human factor of slum upgradation or the environmental risks associated with it. This paper aims to present the problem associated with the process of urbanisation resulting in the creation of slums by magnifying the importance of the state's role in slum upgradation as well as the urgent requirement of self-help or community lead development. Temporary but effective physical and economic rehabilitation, adequate water supply, sanitation and housing are the key factors being looked at when slum upgradation begins. To meet the growing demand for increased quality of life urbanisation is necessary but in an Indian context.

The Sustainable Development Goals such as 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', 'Climate Action', 'Life on Land' highlight the basics or the bare minimum necessities when considering Sustainable Urban Development. The need is to expand on these ideas by bringing them under the considerations of anthropogenic variables. A biodiverse nation such as India and its cities do not deserve to be looked at the same way European or North American cities evolved during the process of Urbanisation. Conservation of the environment along with cultural consideration is necessary. It is important to prioritise the needs of the people more than the place. Collaboration and transparency in development can consistently result in better output and higher satisfaction. The importance of culture, religion and ethos of different regions in India render the traditional method of urbanisation useless. A combination of top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top approach is required while urbanising regions and their peoples. The paper aims to show that the solution lies in understanding the people's perspective, their needs and the needs of the environment when considering Urbanisation and Slum upgradation.

Keywords: *slum upgradation, sustainable development, self-help/community lead development, state's role, sustainable cities*

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I. Introduction:

What are Slums? The Indian Census defines slums as "A residential area where housing is unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of the street, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to the safety and health". It is clear from this definition that slums by nature mean a dilapidated condition of living which is forced upon people who cannot afford to live in proper housing in cities. Slums are a key feature of cities. All the essential workers which run a city live in slums.

Asian cities are one of the prime spots of slums. Amongst India and China are the countries with the grave problem of slums and poor living conditions aggravating by the passing time. Slums sow their roots in society when a section of people, usually the economically weaker, fail to pay the increasing cost of living in a city. They live in extremely high density housing, suffer in getting basic amenities, are victims of the government's tyrannical policies which almost always hurts them. Further, as the development hastens up, it forgets to keep in touch with this section of the society. Slum is an amalgamated result of weakened governance, underinvested infrastructures, poor planning, unrealistic high standards, unaffordable housing for poor, insufficient and high cost of transportation.

L.R Singh (1989) emphasised that slums in developing countries like India essentially represent the problem of shelter for the poor. It has assumed alarming proportions in the metropolitan agglomerations where 20-30 percent of the population is huddled together in over-crowded, dingy and unhygienic hovels bereft of all physical facilities and social amenities.

This paper focuses its study area on the metropolitan cities of India like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. We aim to try to understand their process of urbanisation and status of sustainable development to estimate progress towards fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. These locations are selected as they host large chunks of slums. There always exists a positive correlation between the slum and the size of the metropolitan city. As the city attains an industrial status and the population size of the city increases the chances of the location turning into slums increases.

Furthermore, the slum is a multifaceted issue that involves economic, political and environmental variables. This issue does not only impact the individual residing in the slums and the society economically but also hampers the health, climatic conditions, crimes and violence. To solve the issue there is a need for a holistic approach which deals with the social, environmental, economic and the cultural approach.

In India, urbanisation has taken place at a rapid pace in the twentieth century and especially after its independence. Its urban population witnessed a 15-fold increase between 1901 and 2011, i.e. it increased from 25.5 million (10.84%) to 377.1 million (31.16%). There were 7935 urban settlements in India having a population of 377.1 million in 2011. However, about one-third of this urban population was living in just 53 metropolitan cities, having a population of more than one million.

This process of urbanisation has been a result of uneven development of the country. The rural settlements and vast majority of urban settlements have remained backward with poor amenities and little job opportunities, whereas metropolitan cities have emerged as island of development. People from rural settlements and small and medium towns are migrating to the metropolitan cities in large numbers due to lack of employment opportunities in their native areas. The migration is more a result of push factors in the source region than the pull factors in the region of destination. However, metropolitan cities are unable to provide basic amenities and good employment to most of the migrants. This results in the creation of slums in the cities—a face of injustice and a symptom of systemic dysfunction.

II. Literature Review:

This paper has focused on using available secondary material to conduct a thorough analysis of slums and slum development throughout India's history. Several notable books such as *Sustainable Smart Cities in India: Challenges and Future* (Sharma & Rajput, 2017), *Urban Geography* (Singh & Saroha, 2021) and existing research papers have been used to connect the various case studies of slums, slum characteristics and the government's view towards slum development.

In the paper titled *Slums, Space, and State of Health: A Link between Settlement Morphology and Health Data*, the study, which investigates the health status and the morphology of the settlement, the paper introduces the need for properly built and planned spaces to not only foster better living but also foster the health of the settlers in a state. (Friesen et al., 2020)

The paper 'The study of slums as social and physical constructs: challenges and emerging research opportunities' put emphasis on the need to develop a holistic approach to studying and approaching the issue of slums. (Mahabir et al., 2016)

In the paper titled 'Socio-economic and Environmental Vulnerability of Urban Slums: A case Study of Slums in Jammu (India)', the author presents a holistic approach that addresses the need to amalgamate the biological, physical, social, and spatial factors in the process of understanding the slum for strategizing the slum redevelopment process. (Khan et al., 2023)

In the paper titled 'Urban upgrading of slums: Baghdad and London slums as study models for urban rehabilitation', the author presents the idea of slum upgradation in the capital cities of Iraq and the United Kingdom, respectively, through the induction of technology, studying the slum areas, and then preparing a draft plan for the upgradation process. (Abed, 2023)

The paper also uses several news articles, research papers to analyse key issues found in slums and what has been done about them. The recommendations and conclusion have been derived by analysing referred literature (Rai, 2020), (Slums and Slum Upgrading, n.d.), (Report on Skill Mapping Study in JJ Clusters of East Delhi | Directorate of Economics & Statistics and Office of Chief Registrar (Births & Deaths), n.d.), ("Lack of Access and Awareness, High Costs Bar the Poor From Using LPG Cylinders, Finds Study," 2023) in a manner which is achievable by the government and private actors together to benefit the people of the slums.

The paper in its entirety presents a compilation of slum upgradation and redevelopment strategies from all the papers it takes inspiration from. It derives its uniqueness by collating the ideas and research of different scholars on the vast topic of slums. Finally the entire analysis of slums has been linked to Sustainable Development Goals (Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.), (What Are the Sustainable Development Goals?, n.d.) and how they affect the current development of slums.

III. Methodology

This research paper employs a retrospective research design, utilising the secondary sources available to analyse and interpret the needed information for the research purpose. The use of secondary sources is appropriate for the study's objectives, which aim to explore the status of slums in metropolitan cities in India and the issues they face in achieving sustainable development.

The secondary data sources that have been harnessed for this research include several academic journals, government reports, and news sources. A comprehensive study has been conducted to gather the data needed.

To ensure the viability and reliability of the secondary source data, only information from reputable and peer-reviewed sources was included. The credibility of each source has been critically assessed, and preference has been given to expert and institutional sources.

Slums: An Introduction, Causes, and Characteristics

Slums are informal settlements with inadequate living facilities. The process of slumification occurs when the pace of urbanisation leaves a certain section of the city out of the scope of development and governance. Following this are the reasons for growth of slums:

Causes of slum development

1. Non-development or underdevelopment of rural settlements and small and medium towns; and lack of employment opportunities as well as basic amenities in these settlements, which force people to move to large cities in search of a job and better living conditions.
2. The possibility of employment and the hope of a better future in large cities.
3. The growing disparity between large cities and the rest of settlements attracts migrants.
4. Natural increase in the population of the city and slums.
5. Failure of the government and local bodies to promote inclusive cities and distributive justice.

Characteristics of Slums

1. Slums have a stronger tendency to be found in industrial areas and central parts of the cities where the residents find employment. Parts of the cities close to CBDs (Central Business Districts) or downtown areas are favourable for such slum development.
2. The vacant land along highways and railroads kept for maintenance and safety is often occupied by poor people to build temporary shelters.
3. Slums have very limited or no vertical expansion. They have primarily horizontal expansion. The houses are very small, the streets are narrow, and there are very rudimentary drainage systems.
4. Slums often lack basic amenities like piped water, paved footpaths, sewerage lines, drainage, street lights, parks, children's playgrounds, etc. Some of them also lack regular electricity supply, and illegal tapping of electricity is not rare in those places.
5. Slums usually develop without any planning, and hence no care is taken for developing roads or streets or leaving adequate space for them.
6. Poverty and a high incidence of unemployment make slums prone to social ills and delinquent behaviour of various types. Slums often become the dens of people engaging in antisocial and unlawful activities.

Findings of the study: analysing the metropolitan cities and their slum issue

Mumbai:

A survey of Panjrapole located in Chembur in Mumbai indicated that slums in that area had the following characteristics:

- I. Insecure residential status;
- II. Inadequate access to safe water;
- III. Inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure;
- IV. Poor structural quality of living;

The existence of slums is indicative of failure of city planning as it failed to make adequate provision for low cost housing for the poor migrants. Lack of basic amenities such as water, toilet facility, sewerage, etc., in the existing slums again is indicative of poor implementation of government programs aimed at provision of basic services to slums.

Socio-economic conditions in the slum are poor. Most of the people are engaged in low income jobs in the informal sector. Although literacy rate is high, quality education is poor. There is a high school dropout rate after middle level. Alcoholism and drug addiction is a major problem. Low income, insecure employment, poor living conditions and inequality—all contribute to frustration, alcoholism and pessimism among slum dwellers.

Sometimes, these hard-earned low wages are also denied to them as they are unorganised sector workers. There does not exist any redressal system for such complaints.

The status of women is low and cases of domestic violence were reported. Awareness about government programs and policy among slum dwellers is low. There has been little benefit of these programs due to poor implementation of the programs.

The most important aspect of this survey was that the needs and aspirations of the people have remained neglected indicating the failure of an “inclusive growth” planning strategy. People’s participation in the planning process was almost absent. The government failed to realise that local participation in the development of their own homes is required. The economic problem of ‘asymmetric information’ can be observed here. There is a discrepancy of information about the slum region between the public and the public servants. Government officials, urban planners view slum redevelopment as a mere physical process abandoning human emotion.

Our experiences show that most plans and schemes are often viewed by local people more as a regulatory obstacle in their lives, and by the poor as a hindrance in their survival strategies of living in the city. Further experience shows that the whole cycle of planning has gone into a negative loop –formalities are to be completed and cities are then developed through individual projects, more often than not without consultations or taking into account local priorities. This is very evident in the preparation of the City Development Plans (CDPs) and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) Sectoral/inter-departmental convergence within the ULBs implementing the plan is also absent wherein integrated development and efficient delivery of services is missing. Wherever consultations have been held, these have been limited, amongst ‘select people’ and ‘select NGOs’ (the latter considered as representatives of the people). Such tokenism continues as there is little respect for experience, knowledge and wisdom of the local people. (Rai, 2020, 133-147)

Delhi:

A survey was conducted under the name "Sheltering Delhi's Slums" at the Jagdamba Slum Camp in Sheikh Sarai Phase 1 near Malviya Nagar, South Delhi. It reveals the common features of the Delhi slums, which are as follows:

1. Setting up of slums without any rightful ownership, leading to future claims and further rehabilitation In the above case, Jagdamba Slum Camp was settled on the land of the Delhi Development Authority, or the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.
2. Insufficient earnings and lack of personal growth: the slum dwellers, on average, reside in the slums for about 10 years. which shows the lack of income to rehabilitate themselves from the slums and the level of personal development of the slum dwellers.
3. Sanitation is the biggest issue in the slums. Lack of toilets, sewage, clean water etc are commonly viewed scenarios in slums, leading to a wide range of diseases. Open defecation or going to toilets far away is dangerous for women due to the possibility of sexual abuse. Sometimes, the drains become toilets for the people too, leading to further decline in hygiene and sanitation in the slums.
4. Settlers in these slums are migrants in the majority. For instance, migrants from Hindi-speaking neighbouring states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar live in these slums for jobs and livelihoods.
5. Education and employment status are also depressing. Children in these slums are able to get only a primary education. which leads to high unemployment among the youth. This makes them engage in the informal sector and minor jobs with less income. In some cases, these slums turned into the centres of crime and politics. In the case of a girl child, most of them get married after the age of 18.

A few of the reasons that can be stated for the development of slums in Delhi are as follows:

1. **Politics and the power of execution:** Slums are turning into political vote banks. The majority of the slums have a high scope of votes because of the young population in poverty residing there. They are unaware and lack the knowledge to know about their rights, leading to their exploitation by the political parties involved.
2. **The executives of Delhi:** It has several layers of government working together. It has a state assembly, works as a Union territory, has the Delhi Cantonment, and has two municipalities after the first municipal elections in 1997. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation of Delhi (NDMC), which was formed under the 1994 Act. Here, law and order come under the purview of the central government due to the 7th schedule of the Indian Constitution. The two municipal corporations are responsible for reporting to the central government as to the state government. Despite all this, the slums are still the most ignorant zones. This shows the need for a comprehensive governance plan to uphold the responsibility of uplifting the slum status.
3. **Exclusion from the mainstream:** The government's policies sometimes fail to streamline the main objective. To substantiate this, the Bhagidari Initiative, which was launched in 1998 with the objective of promoting "people's participation," the formation of citizen groups like the Residential Welfare Association (RWA) to hear the voice and foster the people's participation. But this idea stayed limited to a certain section of society. This step

excluded the slum dwellers from mainstreaming and took away the opportunity to participate, leading to the limitations of the RWAs to only "middle class."

4. Faulty compilations: There was a lack of criteria chosen to select the slums in Delhi and work for their upliftment. For instance, Samajik Suvidhan Sangam, or Mission Convergence, was introduced by the state boards in 2009, and the formation of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board was laid in 2010. The objective is to obtain data for a more clear approach. But the results were varying in nature, which created a sense of ambiguity and misconception about the reality of slums. For example, the data collected by the government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi: approximately 580,000 households in 4380 slums in the year 2008–09. The Delhi Urban Shelter and Improvement Board states that around 3 million people live in 600,000 slums, and on the other hand, the Delhi Human Development Report provides an estimate of 45% of the city residing in slums or informal settlements.

Kolkata:

It was one of the most important metropolitan cities in India even before India attained its independence. "Bastee" is a common word used for slums in Kolkata. One important feature of Bastee is that they aren't located at a specific location in the city, but they are scattered throughout the metropolitan area. A third of its population resides in these slums, spread over half of the city. These Bastees are mostly ignored by legislation and policymakers. Features of Kolkata's Bastees are as follows:

1. These Bastees are like a rural centre in the "urban milieu" due to the backwardness of the entire city. Lack of sanitation, living facilities, unemployment, and overcrowding
2. These Bastees work as an "entry area" for thousands of landless people in the city and escape from the rural areas.
3. They have been the space for immigrants who were war-trodden. For instance, East Pakistanis during the 1947 partition and independence and the 1971 war for Bangladesh's independence. The region still acts as a sponge for the immigrants displaced from their native spaces.
4. Multi-ethnic nature of the population, comprising Parsis, Bagans, Muslims, and Hindus. No such instances of inter-ethnic conflicts are recorded in these slums.
5. These Bastees are located in close proximity to the adjacent industrial areas, providing housing and employment opportunities for the people in these spaces.
6. These Bastees are home to several small-scale industries and traditional crafts that are heavily dependent on informal credits and lack capital.

Evolution of Bastees in Kolkata

The metropolitan city of Kolkata has been of great relevance to the colonial powers. The city has been developed for trading and administrative purposes. Attracting wealth and population from the country. This leads to the development of a "three-tier system" of society with the evolving role of landlords in influencing the functioning of the local area. When the local settlers and farmers were displaced for the gains. They settled into the slums known as "Bastees."

During the time of independence, these Bastees were mostly inhabited by young single men who were working in the nearby jute factories and were migrants from the eastern hinterland region.

After independence, during the 1950s, the communist-led movement struggled to provide shelter rights to the slum dwellers with the development of national "slum clearance and improvement" legislation and promised resettlement in the event of Bastee demolition.

Further, in 2001, the "Thika Tenancy Act" gave them the permanent occupancy rights of the land on which their huts were built but refrained from any further pucca development over their land.

In the present time period, the Bastees of Kolkata are majorly ignored due to the political parties and states, the lack of an organised sector in the state, the large population as well as the spread of Bastee regions all over the city, and the illegal building constructions in the name of money and muscle power, totally diminishing the rights of Bastees and Bastee dwellers.

Implications of the study: solving the slum problem with SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Countries have committed to prioritise progress for those who're furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. The creativity, knowhow, technology

and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context. (*Sustainable Development Goals*, n.d.)

The SDGs replaced and built on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs (which were run between 2000 and 2015) asked all 189 UN member countries to aim to eradicate income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability.

Progress was made on many of the MDGs. For example, the target of reducing extreme poverty rates by half was met five years ahead of the 2015 deadline; enrolment in primary education in developing regions reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000; and the average proportion of women in parliament nearly doubled over 20 years. (*What Are the Sustainable Development Goals?*, n.d.)

The 17 SDGs are as follows:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

SDGs and their role in slum development

While talking about this paper's topic of sustainable slum development, Goal 16 of the SDGs come to mind. It is in the best interests of a country and a society to build peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. SDGs promise clean water, good sanitation, economic and educational opportunities to all. It is essential to include the people of slums into this equation. Our goal should be a slum-friendly city. The threat of forced evictions for slum dwellers, inadequate relocation programmes, exclusion of locals in the development process all hamper with the goal of SDGs. The sustainable development of slum living is making certain that slum dwellers sense the ownership of their residential area. Sustainable development is the vital means to achieve an actual bang of the developing nations, which therefore affirms the requirements for developing slums sustainable.

The benefit of SDGs is that they stand for a holistic method to urban slum clarifications rather than remote, sector-specific aspects. In this way, SDG can be looked at as an acknowledgment that the urban slum issues are interconnected and should be solved by integrated methodologies. The accessibility to basic infrastructural amenities, namely, professional management of waste, accessibility to drinking water, and energy resources for all, is basic for supporting good health, reduction of illness, and poverty. Hence, it is required for economic development and equity. Planned drainage and sanitation facilities may reduce risks in health, improve quality of the environment, and avoid flooding and other associated problems related to climate change and poverty.

To attain these integrated objectives, multidimensional planning and implementation need that governments have enough financial, human, and institutional resources.

The initial step for reducing poverty begins from the slums. The poor rural people migrate to cities, where there are more employment and economic opportunities and good access to basic facilities. Hunger, malnutrition, and diseases are problems in slums especially in urban areas of low economic nations. The large proportion of urban poor are living in slums mainly because of poverty, and given their informal nature, they are

often stigmatised and neglected by the government. This affects their access to safety needs, financial resources and services to get out of poverty.

The goal of SDG to ensure environmental sustainability is highly linked with slum living. With the experience from the MDG, it is essential to continuously put efforts to improve the conditions of living among people in slums for inclusiveness, sustainable, and sufficient housing facilities for all and reduction of poverty. The target will be achieved by local- and national level authorities generating rights-oriented, gender-receptive, and outcome-oriented national housing facilities and slum improvement plans, poverty alleviation programs, and policies formed with complete participation. Specifically, cities should make stronger the capabilities of women, young people, and susceptible groups so that they may act as agents for improving living conditions and the understanding of their right to sufficient housing with legal provisions and come out from poverty through economic activities and regular employment.

Sustainability, as recommended by the SDGs, is attained through following inclusive, integrated actions that give best results for a variety of objectives. Successful reactions should come in view of the admission of different factors behind various types of slum settlements and the necessity to imbibe a variety of policy instruments simultaneously. In order to be effective in those integrated approaches, they should be executed with long-term strategies that will be helpful to reach social goals on the basis of theories of sustainability.

For the past 60 years, the governments in developing nations have executed a number of approaches to solve the various issues of slums. Those who are involved in clearance and Resettlement believes that the monetary value of the vacated land is higher and this makes a win-win condition in which the poor gets an alternate serviced land to live a better life in the new locations. Resettlement distances people from their livelihoods and shocks them into poverty. Despite a larger population living in slums, policy framework and public discourse imitate two sets of policies for the inhabitants of the city which are inconsistent across various sections. The expansion of policies related to renewal of urban spaces has been sprouting from complete clearance and deportation approaches to a softer, more economic, culture, social, and environment-related sustainable approach now. (Kalyanasundaram & Kosalram, 2021, 5-8)

Types of Sustainability in Slums:

Economic Sustainability: It is critical to give the poor with respectable jobs that cover both a secure source of income and economic power. Better accessibility to development in terms of economic status, well-being of individuals, and reduction of poverty through work is very important from the social point of view. For the poor people, labour is the only valuable property they may utilise to enhance their livelihood conditions. Therefore, the generation of employment chances is considerably effective to attain reduction in poverty and sustainability in economic development. It will contribute effectively to attaining the goals of the sustainable development plan.

Social Sustainability: Social sustainability may be attained by means of four logical and companionable interferences, such as participation, social inclusiveness, empowerment, and mobilisation of communities. Social sustainability may be reached by improving activities, for the residents of slums to make them feel as being a part and parcel of the society and also to create in them a feeling that they are valued as citizens that have equal accessibility to requirements of livelihood.

Environmental Sustainability: It is stated that poverty, symbolised in the poor access of clean water, poor sanitation, and inefficient disposal of waste materials, air pollution, and overpopulation are the main causes for poor environmental health among slum inhabitants. Improving the health and living state of millions of slum populations across the world is a fundamental need for the existing development goals to diminish poverty. (Kalyanasundaram & Kosalram, 2021, 7-8).

Challenges in Sustainable development of Slums

- 1) **Infrastructure Development:** In India, when it comes to slum development, there are deficiencies of proper WASH facilities in the slums and the nearby regions, which hamper sustainable cities and communities (Sustainable Development Goal 11).
1. *Water sanitation:* Slums always have an issue with proper water supply and sanitation facilities, which leads to a lot of issues in fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 6, which deals with the idea of clean water and sanitation. This further accelerates several chronic diseases in the region of slums, leading to resource stress and ending up in a vicious cycle of poverty.
2. *Proper housing conditions:* overcrowding in the slums is one of the common elements that happened due to indiscriminate immigration cases in these slum regions. facing the issue of a lack of proper sustained supply of resources and money for infrastructure development, leading to a decline in the quality of constructed areas. Forcing people to live in unsanitary conditions with unhygienic living spaces and a lack of housing facilities.

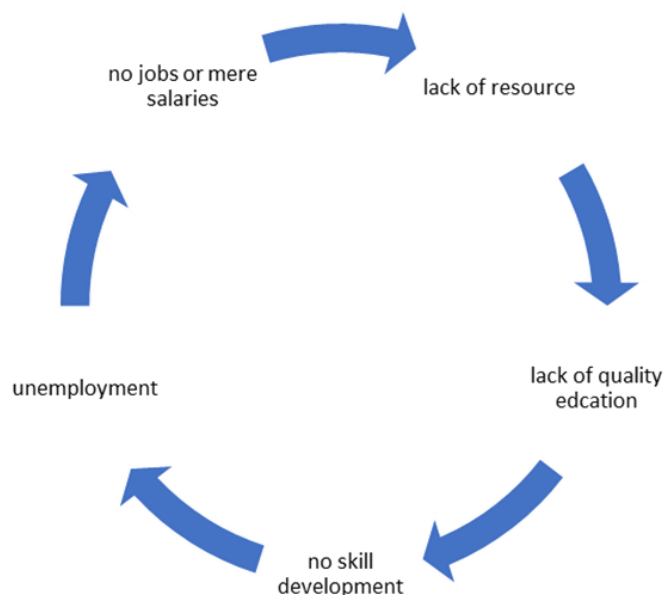
3. *Traditional Urban Planning Approach*: Neglecting modern approaches in urban planning and construction leads to scattered urban spaces and the growth of informal settlements. Focusing on the formal sector only, top to bottom approach, leading to less or no resources left for the people in the lower stratas and ignoring the voices of the lower strata.

2) **Social and Economic issues**: Slums are a complex amalgamation of economic deprivation and an unprogressive society. The slum dwellers always face the sour faces of society when it comes to their aspirations towards getting a good job, higher education, and premium institutions.

1. *Social deprivation*: sometimes these slums get inhabited by a certain caste group or by the formation of a homogenous society, which hampers the idea of equality and leads to the deprivation of a cohort in the society. For instance, slums in Delhi are inhabited by the Dalits as a majority of the population, making up a rough estimate of 70% of the total slum population. Many of them are migrant workers from the nearby states around Delhi, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The state needs to not only design and implement social policies to uplift the Dalits in India but also work on spatial and socioeconomic surveys to collect data on their household life in slums.

When such scenarios occur, the particular cohort of society not only faces social deprivation and the need for the state's involvement to uplift them but also needs society to stop them from exploiting them through deprivation in opportunities like jobs, education, and health.

2. *Economic deprivation*: living in the most deprived conditions, they lacked good job opportunities. The majority of the youth either face unemployment or get involved in the informal sector to get their basic livelihood. For instance, 27% of the slum dwellers are unemployed but available for work. The situation has worsened since COVID-19. Further, around half of the population lives in "very deprived" conditions, with an average monthly consumer expenditure of less than Rs 10,000.



The above situation is enough to explain how a lack of resources pushes a person to survive the vicious cycle of deprivation. This can be further elaborated as: lack of good quality education due to a lack of resources leading to a lack of skills and jobs; this will ultimately result in unemployment or entry into the informal sector, and we will end up getting trapped in this cycle of resource deprivation.

3) **Ignorance and informality**: slums being largely illegal with no land rights upheld by the slum dwellers, this not only increases the informality of the slums but also leads to forced evictions of the slum dwellers in the future by the government and their "slum redevelopment projects." There are two major reasons for such informality and lack of legal rights: the indiscriminate urbanisation that happened without keeping pace with this section of society and the ignorant behaviour of the government towards this issue.

1. *Ignorance of Government*: Slums are largely formed when informal settlements meet inadequate housing facilities. As these informal settlements and inadequate housing facilities became the victims of the government's inactive action and support and the downward spiral of poverty, these regions went through

"slumification." These slum dwellers also lack awareness about their rights, which limits their existence during elections only as vote banks. not only the political rights but also the awareness about their policy rights. Take this for instance: the "Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana" launched in 2016 to foster the use of LPG cylinders to reduce dependency on natural fuels for cooking. But in slums, there are cases of people using natural fuels like wood and cow dung cakes for cooking due to a lack of awareness and access to these facilities.

2. **No legal rights:** these slum dwellers always prevail with the fear of being evicted out, as they hold no legal document to claim over their land or rights over their houses, which results in eroding moral claim over the land they have occupied for their survival.
3. **Forced evictions and poor rehabilitation:** One of the biggest problems they faced was forced evictions, as they have no moral claims; they are said to leave their space at any time, and when it comes to the rehabilitation facilities given by the government, they always lack proper facilities and living spaces. In the worst cases, these rehabilitation camps are located away from the city, not only making them inaccessible to the resources but also affecting their livelihood located in the city. For instance, in recent times, the slum dwellers evicted under the Sabarmati Ashram redevelopment project have approached the Gujarat High Court to ask for proper guidance and rehabilitation with proper housing built.
- 4). **Lack of community participation:** there is a lack of community engagement with the slums and the slum dwellers. NGOs, government, and private stakeholders. But these community engagement bodies are lacking in some dimensions. These are as follows:
 1. **Non-Government Organisations:** NGOs can play an important role in community engagement through field surveys and fieldwork, but they are largely poorly coordinated and relatively engaged in managing their own problems, administration, and funding. They face issues of proper funding as well as get into disputes with the legislation. For example, the recent amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act of 2010.
 2. **Government:** The government can play an important role in uplifting the status of the slums through their governance policies, but they lack knowledge of the on-the-ground realities. Often, the on-ground realities are different from what is mentioned in policies. Forceful evictions need to be controlled, and if they happen, there is a need to focus on the proper rehabilitation of the slum dwellers.
 3. **Cooperation between NGOs and the government:** There is a lack of coordination between the two, which leads to disparities between the plan and the execution. NGOs are working more on ground relations, and the government is working more on the legislation portion. There is a need for healthy collaboration between the two bodies.
- 5). **Environment sustainability:** Being the centre of a large population with a lack or sometimes no resources, the challenge of sustainability raises. Following are the challenges that are contributing to environmental sustainability issues:
 - Inadequate infrastructure with a large population and a lack of these facilities lead to improper disposal of waste and sewage, leading to environmental pollution.
 - Overcrowding is leading to a high density of population in limited space due to improper urban planning. which puts stress on the limited resources.
 - Ineffective waste collection and management systems often lead to the release of harmful chemicals into the soil, air, and water.
 - Lack of green spaces, becoming a centre of urban heat island sometimes
 - Informal housing and inadequate construction of the living spaces

IV. Recommendations

The slum problem is not only restricted to a simple urban governance issue; it is a complex amalgamation of ignorance, poor governance approaches, and a lack of resource allocation. The following are some of the recommendations for developing slums in a more sustainable manner, which not only resolves the problem of slums in urban centres but also provides a more sustainable approach for proper inclusion and development of all strata of society.

- 1). **NGOs and the government work together:** The need for collaboration is necessary for the purpose of slum upliftment and upgrading. Civil society needs to work with the government to bring more positive effects and to curb the bridges between differences. This will help in fostering the idea of "sustainable cities and communities" under Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDGs). The following strategies can be adopted along similar lines:
 - promoting the grass-roots administration and delivery of services by civil society with fully sustained financial support from the state
 - need to promote the idea of **social accountability mechanisms** within the community. This will help in reducing the prevailing inequalities in the society (SDG 10).

- promoting community actions for the quality of education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), and skills which will ultimately provide them employment opportunities in future (SDG 8) to the slum dwellers to break the vicious cycle of poverty and depression will lead to the fulfilment of the SDG 1.
- Cooperation and collaboration among various social actors are equally essential for the promotion of community welfare.

2). **Rehabilitation and Redevelopment:** The process of urban planning and development aims to improve the living conditions of people living in informal settlements and slums. These approaches focus on upgrading and transforming the existing slum areas into more habitable and sustainable urban places. There are a few factors to consider for the same

- Improving the living conditions through the induction of better housing, sanitation, and basic amenities
- Infrastructure development in the slum regions
- Economic and social development through the induction of better health facilities, proper nutrition, and vocational training promises future employment opportunities.
- Promoting public-private partnerships for better results

The idea of redevelopment and rehabilitation can be induced through the idea of “in-situ” slum rehabilitation, where the transformation and improvement of the existing slum areas take place on the same site where the slum is currently located, as opposed to relocating these slum dwellers for the purpose of slum redevelopment and rehabilitation. This process is more socially and economically viable as the slum dwellers don't need to compromise with the social spaces and livelihoods that have been set up in the nearby areas.

For example, the case study of Delhi's Kalkaji extension slum rehabilitation project needs to be mentioned, as it laid down around 3000 flats for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), which was inaugurated for a similar purpose. The project is being undertaken by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) with the guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), a housing for all scheme launched in 2015. Here, the “Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)—Housing for All” missions induce the similar idea of “in situ” redevelopment and rehabilitation.

This approach aims to leverage the locked potential of land under slums to provide houses to the eligible slum dwellers, bringing them into the formal urban settlement. Slums that are being redeveloped should be compulsorily notified.

3). **Role of government and governance:** The government plays a very crucial role in formulating and executing the policies pertaining to slum upgrading. The following are the three important elements that the government can incorporate into its slum upgrading strategies:

- Policy and legislation are the important tools in the hands of the government to work for slum upgrading. Through policy and legislation, the government is empowered to streamline its efforts and resources in the direction of the slum upgrading approach. Along with this, there is a need to evolve policies through gradual learning and taking them into consideration. Further, the below-given domains are:

Taking institutional reforms	Socio-economic reforms for public consolidation	Socio-economic reforms for private consideration	Physical environment factors and government's role
1. Reforming the regulatory framework 2. Strengthen social capital 3. Integrate slums into urban fabric	1. Delivery of security of tenure 2. Access to credits and resources 3. Improved environmental management	1. Self help shelter improvements 2. Increase the number and quality of shelter	1. Delivery of emergency facilities during the time of need 2. Secure health and safety

- Political tensions and unrest in parties undermine the proof of slum upgrading programs. A country with a stable government will have more liberty and resources to keep up with these necessary projects as compared to a politically unstable government where such unrest totally undermines the progress of slums.
- Leadership at the city level plays a very fundamental role, and leadership at the municipal level needs to be fostered. This will not only increase grass-roots development but also induce the idea of self-government and reduce the burden on the government.

4). **Providing the legal rights:** providing the slum dwellers with perfectly demarcated boundaries about their place and the land they are inhabiting will not only solve the issue of forced eviction but will also foster a sense of streamlining with the main society and foster the morale of the slum dwellers. for the same, framing legislation

like **SVAMITVA (Survey of Village and Mapping through Improved Technology in Village Areas)** for the slum regions and inducing the use of drones and technology to study the inhabited seas of cities.

Further, the distribution of **land rights certificates**, like the initiatives taken by Odisha to foster the rights and morale of the slum inhabitants,

V. Conclusion

We need to break the cycle of sustained poverty and change the way we look at slums. It is important to begin with the fact that we should see slums and slum dwellers with humanity. The lack of communication between them and the government, lack of provision of aid, a view supporting demolition rather than upgradation do not help reduce the problem. It is the recommendation of this paper that slums be developed sustainably keeping in mind the environment and the people. It all comes down to understanding one another and providing chances. Every citizen of this nation deserves to live a meaningful life. The people of the Bastees, the ones who run the cities do not deserve any less.

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