

IS SLUM A GLOBAL PHENOMENON?

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Abstract

More than 900 million people live in slums worldwide. These slums can be found mainly in full-grown metropolitan and semi-urban hubs. The urban poor have wretched living conditions. They have usually inadequate access to basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation, roads, housing or energy. Planned supply infrastructure to improve the quality of life of slum dwellers requires the participation of both the government and non-government sectors. Now, slum Settlements are no longer burden on the bustling city life. They contribute a lot to the economy and maintenance of urban life. It is the paradox of the world economy in the form of industrialization and urbanization that has attracted the rural poor to migrate and live in cities as an integral part of urban life. Therefore, it is a global challenge to integrate slum dwellers into the urban mainstream instead of removing them to live on their fate.

Keywords: slum settlement, urbanization, migration, up-gradation, policy

Introduction

The United Nations makes a universal definition of slum as those settlements where people in the urban towns share the same roof and lack access to quality water, sanitation and shelter, and safe and sustainable housing. Hence, poverty is measured to be the global perspective for defining slum. Another global standard for measuring is its location. Almost all slums are located in urban or sub-urban areas. Poor living conditions and poor housing infrastructure are two hallmarks of slums anywhere in the world. Due to industrialization in the 18th century, and rapid urbanization in the 19th and 20th centuries, population around the world grew rapidly as the demand for labor increased resulting in high scale rural-urban

migration . Other causes of slum growth are economic instability, depression, mass unemployment, poverty, informal economy, poor planning, politics, natural disasters, social conflicts and politics. All countries follow the same pattern in terms of removal, resettlement, settlement development and urban planning of slums from cities. Interestingly, the word slum is said to have been derived from the British word slang. Before the turn of the 20th century, America and Europe were learning to adapt slums in urban life. In Britain, slums were organized in industrial cities, low-lying towns in Scotland and Ireland. Like most industrialized European countries, France saw a proliferation of slums in Paris and other urban areas in the 19th century, many of which lasted into the first half of the 20th century. New York City is believed to have formed the first American settlement at Five Points in 1825, as it grew into a large urban settlement. In the 1960s, more than 33% of Rio's population lived in slums, 45% in Mexico City and Ankara, 65% in Algeria, 35% in Caracas, 25% in Lima and Santiago, and 15% in Singapore. By 1980, there were approximately 25,000 slum settlements in Latin American cities and towns alone.

Reasons for Growth of Slum in the World

The following are some of the major universal causes of slum growth in the context of the world –

Colonialism and segregation

The most glaring example of this is Dharavi Basti which was started by the British government in 1878, for their industrial and segregation policies .Tanneries, potteries and other economies established in and around Dharavi during the British rule of India. Some of the settlements in today's world are a product of urbanization brought about by colonialism. For example Europeans arrived in Kenya in the 19th century and established urban centers like Nairobi that mainly served their economic interests. They considered Africans as temporary migrants and needed them only for labor supply. The housing policy aimed at accommodating these workers was not implemented properly and the government established settlements in the form of single bed accommodation. Due to the cost of time and money in their movement between rural and urban areas, their families gradually moved to urban areas. As they could not afford to buy houses, such slums were formed. Some of the slums of Lagos, Nigeria grew due to the neglect and policies of the colonial era. During the apartheid era in South Africa, racial and ethnic groups were segregated under the pretext of sanitation and epidemic prevention.

Urbanization and Industrialization

The formation of slum settlements is closely related to urbanization and industrialization. In 2008, more than 50% of the world's population lived in urban areas. In China, for example, the population living in urban areas is estimated to increase by 10% within a decade at the current rate of urbanization. UN-Habitat reports that 43% of the urban population in developing countries and 78% in the least developed countries are slum dwellers. Some authors suggest that urbanization causes slums because local governments are unable to manage urbanization, and migrant workers who lack affordable housing tend to live in slums. Rapid urbanization drives economic growth and drives people to work and investment opportunities in urban areas. However, as evidenced by poor urban infrastructure and inadequate housing, local governments are sometimes unable to manage this change. This inability can be attributed to insufficient funds and inefficiency to organize and deal with the problems brought about by migration and urbanization. In some cases, local governments ignore the flow of migrants during the urbanization process. Many examples can be found in African countries. By the early 1950s, many African governments believed that urban slums would end with economic growth. They neglected the rapidly expanding slums due to rural-urban migration caused by urbanization.

Rural–urban migration

This is one of the reasons for the formation and expansion of slums. In India, 52% of total GDP in 1954 and only 19% in 2004 forms the contribution of agriculture. In Brazil it is one-fifth of what it was in 1951. Agriculture during this time also became more productive, less disease-prone, less physically demanding, and more efficient with tractors and other machinery. In the last 50 years, the proportion of people working in agriculture has decreased by 30%, while the world's population has increased by 250%. This has become a major cause of population migration worldwide, with many people moving to urban areas primarily because cities promise more jobs, better schools for poor children, and more diverse income opportunities than farming in rural areas. For example, in 1995, 95.8% of migrants to Surabaya, Indonesia, reported that employment was their primary motivation for moving to the city, which leads to their financial deficit. On the other hand, many cities do not provide enough low-cost housing for large numbers of rural-urban migrant workers. Some rural-urban migrant workers cannot afford housing in cities and end up settling only in affordable slums. Thus they expand existing urban sprawl.

Informal Economy

Many slums grow due to the growth of the informal economy which creates a demand for workers. The informal economy is the part of the economy that is not registered or licensed as a business that does not pay taxes, and is not supervised by local, state, or federal governments. When government laws and regulations are vague and excessive, government bureaucracy is corrupt and abusive to entrepreneurs, labor laws are inflexible, or when law enforcement is weak, the informal economy grows rapidly. The urban informal sector accounts for between 20 and 60% of GDP in most developing economies.

Labour

Research in recent years found that the primary importance of the emergence of labor, rural-urban migration, consolidation of informal settlements and growth as key factors for slums. It has also been shown that work also plays an important role in the overall informal planning of houses, alleys and slums, as well as forming a central direction by slum dwellers when their communities undergo developmental plans or resettle. Alleys and houses were planned to facilitate work activities, which provided livelihood and sustenance to the community. When resettled, the main reasons for the displacement of formal housing units were due to their lack of possibilities to work in new houses designed according to formal architectural principles, or the distance they had to travel to work in the settlements. Originally lived in, residents were confronted by self-constructed spaces to shelter the work done in the settlement later in formal housing units. They generally have no access to shelter, basic urban services and social amenities. Slums are often the only option for the urban poor

Poverty

Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums.^[1] With rapid shift from rural to urban life, poverty migrates to urban areas. The urban poor arrives with hope, and very little of anything else. They typically have no access to shelter, basic urban services and social amenities. Slums are often the only option for the urban poor.

Poor house planning

Poor housing planning and lack of affordable low-cost housing encourages the growth of slums. The Millennium Development Goals proposes that member nations should make a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers" by the current

decade. If member nations succeed in achieving this goal, 90% of the world total slum dwellers may be benefited. The large number of slum dwellers indicates a deficiency of practical housing policy. Whenever there is a significant gap in growing demand for housing and insufficient supply of affordable housing, this gap is typically met in part by slums. Insufficient financial resources and lack of coordination in government bureaucracy are two main causes of poor house planning. .

Poor infrastructure, Social Exclusion and Economic Instability

Social exclusion and poor infrastructure force the poor to adapt to conditions beyond their control. Poor families who cannot afford transport, or who simply lack any form of public transport, usually end up in squatter settlements within walking distance or fairly close to their formal or informal place of employment. Social exclusion and poor infrastructure as reasons for many slums in African cities. Poor quality, unpaved roads encourage slums. Affordable public transportation and economic infrastructure empower the poor to move and consider housing options beyond their current slums. A growing economy that creates jobs faster than population growth provides opportunities and incentives for people to move from slums to more developed neighborhoods. Economic stability, by contrast, creates uncertainty and risk for the poor, which encourages people to live in poverty. Economic stagnation in a country with a growing population reduces per capita disposable income in both urban and rural areas, increasing urban and rural poverty. Growing rural poverty also encourages migration to urban areas.

Politics and Social Conflicts

Many local and national governments have sabotaged efforts to remove, reduce or upgrade slums to better housing options for the poor for political gain. In the second half of the 19th century, for example, French political parties relied on the votes of the slum population and had a vested interest in maintaining that voting block. Slum removal and replacement created conflicts of interest, and politics prevented efforts to remove, relocate, or renovate slums in housing projects that were better than slums. Similar dynamics have been noted in Brazil, India, and Kenya. Some of the world's largest settlements are due to political or social conflict. Politics also drives rural-urban migration and subsequent settlement patterns. Pre-existing patronage networks, sometimes in the form of gangs and

other times in the form of political parties or social activists, try to maintain their economic, social and political power within the slums. These social and political groups have expressed an interest in encouraging migration by ethnic groups that will help maintain slums and reject alternative housing options even though the alternatives are better in every respect than the settlements they seek to replace.

Some of the Largest slums in the World

The following are some of the world's largest slums:-

Dharavi, Mumbai, India

Dharavi is an area of Mumbai in Maharashtra which is considered to be one of the most densely populated slums in India. It has an area of 2.1 square kilometers or 520 acres and a population of 1,000,000 with a population density of over 277.137 per Sq km. Dharavi is located between Mumbai's West and Central railway lines and is also close to Bombay Airport. Mahim and Bandra are located west of Dharavi and Mithi River in the north. Antup Hill region is in the east while Matunga region is in the south. The Dharavi settlement was established during the British era in 1884 and flourished as British rule drove factories and residents from urban areas and relocated rural Indians to the city of Mumbai. Due to this, Dharavi is now a religiously and ethnically diverse settlement. In the 18th century, Dharavi was an island consisting mainly of mangrove swamps. Before the end of the 19th century, it was a sparsely populated village, inhabited by Koli fishermen. Later Dharavi was called Koliwada village. By the early 1850s, after decades of urban growth under the East India Company and the British Raj, the city's population had reached two and a half million. The urban area then covered the southern part of the Bombay peninsula, at which time the population density was 10 times that of London. By the time of India's independence from colonial rule in 1947, Dharavi had become the largest settlement in Bombay and the whole of India. During this period Bombay began to grow as a city Dharavi was soon surrounded by cities and became a major center for Mumbai's informal economy. About 30% of Dharavi's population is Muslim, compared to 19% in Mumbai as a whole. Christians make up about 6% of the population, while the remaining 63% are Hindus, along with some Buddhists and other minority religions. About 20% of Hindus work in animal skin production and leather products, while other Hindus specialize in pottery, textile production, retail and trade, distillery and other caste occupations, all as small household occupations. These slum

dwellers are from all over India who have migrated from rural areas of different states. The settlement has many mosques, temples and churches to serve the people of Islam, Hinduism and Christianity; A mosque with Badi Masjid as the oldest religious structure in Dharavi.

Orangi Town, Karachi, Pakistan

With a population of: 1.5 million to 2.4 million, this cluster of 113 settlements on the outskirts of Karachi on Pakistan's west coast covers about 8,000 acres of land and is home to at least 1.5 million people, although many estimates are closer to the total. 2.4 million Residents live in houses made of concrete blocks, with eight to 10 people sharing two or three rooms. Freed from government services, the community has financed and built its own drainage system – with local people taking responsibility for its maintenance – and many residents are engaged in making carpets, leather goods and other goods. But overcrowding and a lack of clean water (or any water at all contribute to health problems such as malaria, drug-resistant typhoid and brain-destroying viruses such as *Naegleria fowleri*

Cite-Soleil, Port au Prince, Haiti

In Cite-Solil, a population of 300,000, mostly criminal gangs, live. Here police health care and education facilities are lacking and sub-standard. And as of 2017, the district has been deployed by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti) from the Haitian capital to combat criminal gang control.

Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl (Neza), Mexico City

Ciudad Nejahualcoitl, also known as Neza, with a population of 1.1 million, has been transformed from a slum into a suburb, with brick houses scattered among improvised shanties and drug wars, but the neighborhood is considered extremely dangerous. Mexican standard Community action urged the government to formalize land titles, start garbage collection, and build other major infrastructure. Currently, about 70% of residents work in the area, making it the most populous municipality in Mexico.

Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa

With a population of 1.2 million, the settlement was established in the 1980s as a ghetto for black workers who moved to Cape Town in search of work during the apartheid

era. After the abolition of the oppressive system in 1994, however, it grew rapidly. Some residents must queue for hours at communal water pumps to fill up a bucket or two to meet all their needs for the day, thousands of homes are not equipped with toilets, unemployment runs at around 70% and local police say gangs and other violence are rampant. Because of this, they handle four murder cases every week.

Manshiyat Nasser, Cairo

With a population of 262,000, this slum is located at the foot of the Mokattum Hills in southeast Cairo, is home mainly to Coptic Christians who work as garbage collectors. As such, it is a recycling highway, and vital to the functioning of Egypt's capital, yet most homes lack sewerage, electricity or running water. After the swine flu outbreak in 2009, a move to cull all of Egypt's pigs hit the residents of Mansiat harder, as they used the pigs as organic waste to earn extra money by selling the meat. .

Tondo, Manila, Philippines

With a population of 400,000 people and built on a dumping site on the outskirts of Metro Manila, Tondo has a population density of 80,000 people per square kilometer. Dirty water and other sanitation issues mean that disease is rife, and scavenging for items that can be sold or recycled is the only source of income for many residents, who earn as little as \$2.50 a day. Known as Happyland, residents of this slum make a living by collecting chicken scraps from the garbage to sell to other poor slum dwellers.

Kibera, Kawangware and Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya

With a population of 1.5 million, more than two-thirds of the city's residents in Kenya's capital live in three slums crammed onto just 6% of the land. For example, Kibera is a sprawling community of 15 interconnected villages of mud huts and tin shacks. Although infrastructural improvements such as piped water, tarmac roads and street lights continue to improve life in Kibera and other Nairobi slums, criminal gangs, political violence and extrajudicial police killings remain serious problems..

Slum Up- gradation: Global Practice

Despite more than five decades of slum development projects carried out by many developed and developing countries, the population living in slums continues to grow and the challenge to deal with the problems surrounding slums is ever greater. While expanding basic infrastructure is a fundamental component of lean development, a concern for physical built-up is often limited. Effective practices tend to recognize the multifaceted nature of poverty and exclusion. Financial interventions can include water, sanitation, drainage, electricity, roads, and public spaces. Social infrastructure can look after issues such as health infrastructure, education facilities, community centers, and sports facilities, skills, jobs, and business support. and legal provisions such as regularization and security of tenure are the key common factors word wide . Countries around the world upgrade slums differently. While there is a need for a unified discourse on this issue, there is no silver bullet to turn the tide and ensure a better living environment. Every city and neighborhood is unique, and what may work very well in one place may fail in another. However, common elements and remaining challenges can be synthesized Common elements of successful slum upgrading practices are participation, providing physical infrastructure, providing slums as the backbone of upgrading, addressing social infrastructure needs, ensuring tenure security and rooting out problems by creating opportunity structures. As a result, slum upgrading is increasingly linked to poverty alleviation and inclusion initiatives. The remaining challenges revolve around the challenges of land and finance and, as a result of the combination of both, developing appropriate tools not only to unlock land-based finance but also to counter reversing forces. Rights to service and construction standards are important to maximize the effectiveness of interventions and ensure their feasibility. Slum upgrading requires specific solutions to specific problems and local contexts.

Covid and need for Slum improvements: An Eye Opener

The epidemic (Covid19) cast an unforgiving light on the hardships of the slum settlement. Millions of people in the West were able to live in homes subsidized by their governments. It was not available to slum dwellers in developing countries Due to poor infrastructure, the slums were not readily accessible and the scale of the requirement was unmanageable. The biggest challenge was how short-lived the informal economy is in slum areas. People were told to stay at home. The police tried to shut down the market. But it

became clear how quickly people would begin to starve. People work during the day to buy food at night. All measures to keep people in their homes failed and the results were disastrous. Much of the progress made in the fight against poverty over the years has been reversed by the epidemic. Slums and informal settlements have become hotspots for COVID-19 transmission. Living conditions in slums – home to more than a billion people worldwide – are often substandard and overcrowded, with inadequate access to public services. Simple preventive measures like social distancing and hand washing are a luxury here. In times of crisis, the economic impact is even more devastating for slum dwellers, who often live from hand to mouth. The challenges slums facing, are not new, but during the COVID-19 pandemic they require more urgent solutions than ever. That is why the World Bank is working with national and sub-national governments to ensure that neighborhood development, housing improvements and other interventions are part of the response. These activities are part of an integrated and multifaceted Inclusive Cities approach to promote the spatial, social and economic inclusion of people in informal settlements.

Slum Integration: An Unavoidable Necessity in Cities

Until the 1970s, policies relating to slums emphasized restrictive measures such as slum clearance, urban renewal and resettlement. These were practiced in European and North American cities till the early 20th century. The preferred option for this model is slum redevelopment by relocating residents to new public housing estates. However, this approach is not scalable given the large population and limited resources in developing countries. Parallel to this was the laissez-faire approach that slums and irregular settlements were a transient phenomenon. Slum improvement was considered a temporary measure to ensure residents basic minimum environmental health conditions until residents could be resettled in public housing. This was not largely due to the prohibitive cost of public housing for most slum dwellers but due to the much slower than expected economic development of individuals and countries/cities. The 1970s saw the beginnings of subsidized policies when it became clear that it was neither possible nor desirable to bulldoze the vast communities of the urban poor. It was a viable and low-cost solution to renewing infrastructure and social amenities while keeping communities intact or supporting self-sustaining ventures in new locations. Site and service and slum renewal projects in the early 1970s marked the first fundamental shift in housing policy—a shift from total public housing to housing and infrastructure provision for low-income families within resettlement efforts. UN-Habitat

promotes an approach that goes beyond creating the conditions for tenure security and incremental improvement of land and housing rights through a road-led urban slum development strategy. By the end of the 1990s, a large number of sites and services and slum up-gradation projects were carried out in about 90 countries. These projects are designed to both improve and prevent problems. They were considered largely successful in encouraging affordable housing for low-income families but failed to meet the goals of price recovery and elimination of subsidies. Currently, almost all countries of the world are working towards the physical integration of slums into mainstream city life rather than eviction and displacement.

Conclusion

The need of the hour is mostly associated with the sheltering of the urban poor and their gradual integration with city life. The urban poor struggle to survive in urban areas, mainly through informal shelters and the informal economy. Building the foundations of the survival strategies of the urban poor requires new strategies to create new expectations among slum dwellers. This is an arena where both the public and private sectors as well as the international community have to play a major role. Renewed concerns about urban poverty have recently led governments to adopt a specific goal set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which aims to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. At the beginning of the new millennium, the region faces two major challenges. One is rapid urbanization and second is urbanization of poverty. Slums have the highest concentration of poor people and poor shelter and physical environmental conditions. The total population of the world in 2001 was about 924 million people. This is about 32% of the total urban population of the world. At the same time, 43% of the urban population in all developing regions combined lived in slums, while 78.2% of the urban populations in the least developed countries were slum dwellers. In some developing country cities, slums are so widespread that only the wealthy have to isolate themselves behind small gated enclaves. However, slums have the most unbearable of urban housing conditions, which frequently include: insecurity of tenure; lack of basic services, especially water and sanitation; inadequate and sometimes unsafe building structures; overcrowding; and locations in hazardous areas. In addition, slum areas tend to have concentrations of poverty and social and economic deprivation, which can include broken families, unemployment and economic, physical and social exclusion. Slum dwellers have limited access to credit and the formal job market due to stigma, discrimination and geographic isolation. Slums absorb the city's

pollution, industrial runoff and toxic waste, and the only land available to slum dwellers is often fragile, dangerous, or polluted—land that no one else wants. People in the slums suffer from water borne diseases like typhoid and cholera. Slum women - and the children they support - are the biggest victims of all. Slums are also commonly believed to be places of high crime, although this is not universally true as slums with strong social control systems tend to have lower crime rates. But on the other side of the story, slums are the first stop for migrants. They provide low-cost and only affordable housing that will enable migrants to save for absorption into urban society. As housing for low-income workers, slums turn the city's wheels in a number of ways. Most slum dwellers in developing country cities earn their living from informal sector activities located in or outside the slums, and many informal entrepreneurs operating from slums have a clientele that extends to other parts of the city. Most slum dwellers struggle to make an honest living in the face of widespread urban poverty and formal unemployment. Slum is also a place where a lively mix of different cultures often results in artistic expression. A level of cultural movement and solidarity can emerge in the suburbs of the affluent out of unhealthy, overcrowded and often dangerous environments. Against all odds, slum dwellers have developed economically viable and innovative shelter solutions for themselves. Yet these in no way justify the continued existence of settlements and should not be an excuse for slow progress towards the goal of adequate shelter for all. Future policies are needed to improve and develop urban informal sector activity, by linking low-income housing development to employment and ensuring easy geographic access to jobs through pro-poor transportation. and more suitable locations for low-income housing. Settlement policies should indeed be integrated into broader, people-centered urban poverty reduction policies that address multiple dimensions of poverty.

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