



Growing Urbanization and Mushrooming of Slums in the Prayagraj City

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Abstract: Prayagraj city has a total number of more than 250 slums, although some NGOs and independent survey report claim the numbers to be even higher. Among these slums, 185 are notified with 83% of these built on lands under private ownership. Over 25% of the slums have been into existence for more than 75 years in the city. The total population of the slum is 4, 70467 which is about 42% of the total city population. With respective physical location, 8% of slums are found along the major road network; 11% along railway lines and 62% along nallahs and water bodies, thereby vulnerable to natural disasters. From the list of slums available from the Prayagraj Development Authority, random selection of Pared Ground Basti was made.

Key words- Slum, Urbanization, Prayagraj,

Urbanization and Urban Milieu

Human population is growing at an unprecedented rate and with it are increasing the demand for resources to meet the growing needs of people -food, occupation, livelihood source of income, dwelling place, leisure and so on. In quest to meet these ever-growing needs man migrates from place to place in search of better place presenting itself with avenues of growth, prosperity, transportation, communication and overall wellbeing. This character of man forms the base of urbanization. Urbanization is a progressive concentration of population in urban unit Apart from rising concentration of population in human settlements, urbanization manifests itself with rising engagement of people in the secondary and tertiary production functions, and in the liberal embracing of certain social traits which are distinctive of traditional rural societies. Thereby, the process of urbanization not only encompasses industrialization but is also related to modernization and in many conditions work together in tandem. The process of urbanization in developed countries has been very slow but steady and it has been accompanied by agricultural and industrial revolution, higher per capita income and high standard of living, whereas in developing countries the rate of urbanization is very fast and it is not accompanied by industrialization but rapid growth of service sector in the economies.



Mushrooming Slums as an Off-shoot of Urbanization Process

The catch-all term ‘slum’ refers to a variety of settlements that display a combination of poor housing conditions, lack of basic infrastructure, insecurity of tenure and various kinds of environmental risks. Slums include a variety of settlements such as shanty towns, squatter settlements and illegal subdivisions characterised by their informal tenure. They also include dilapidated inner city housing, overcrowded tenements, villages within cities and deteriorating public housing. Each of these originated, proliferated and developed differently, may vary in size from a few huts to thousands of permanent dwellings, and may be located in the city or its periphery. Terms such as autonomous, illegal, irregular, marginal, spontaneous, uncontrolled, and unplanned have been applied to distinguish these settlements. They are also identified by distinctive terms peculiar to given regions and countries. What is considered as slum invariably depends on local and regional perceptions of housing standards and social conditions!

Slums are generally referred to as a squalid and overcrowded area inhabited by very poor people and known as the physical and spatial manifestation of urban poverty and intra-city inequality. A quarter of the world’s population lives in the slum, with the majority of slum dwellers stemming from the developing world. The conformist categorization of slums fluctuates between formal and informal, legal and illegal, and planned and unplanned. There is need to revisit these spaces beyond conventional categorizations, based on dispossession, or as poor neighbourhoods with low-quality housing.

Empirical Analysis of Slums Pared Ground Basti: Prayagraj

Area (2020)	1.58 km²
Population (2020)	7935
Population Density	5022 people per km²
Male Population	4313
Female Population	3622
Nearest airport & distance (Aerial)	Allahabad Airport, 11.25 km
Nearest Railway Station & Distance (Aerial)	Daraganj, 0.85 km

The sublocality Parade Ground, Daraganj falls in Prayagraj district situated in Uttar Pradesh state, with a population 7935. The male and female populations are 4313 and 3622 respectively. The size of the area is about 1.58 square kilometer.



Living Condition and Challenges of the Slum Residents

Slums dwellers are vulnerable parts of the society. They are facing various types of the problems like health and hygiene related problems, low level of income, poor housing conditions and lack of social amenities. Unhealthy living conditions of slum dwellers are the result of a lack of basic services, with visible, open sewers, lack of pathways, uncontrolled dumping of waste, polluted environments, and unorganized building constructions etc. The existence of the slum is a global phenomenon. Some social scientist said that, slum is the by-product of modern era. The development of the city is very important, but the provision for the slums population is needful. There is need to develop the plans and policies for the up gradation of the slum dwellers in terms of infrastructural development and basic amenities. Slums are increasingly faced with negative consequences such as polarization of population in large cities, high density, slums and squatter settlements, acute shortage of housing and basic civic amenities, degradation of environment, traffic congestion, pollution, poverty, unemployment, crime and social unrest.

Basically, slums and squatters are considered as problem areas for urban development in third world countries. They are illegally occupied houses and creating an irritation of environmental pollution and degradation of urban living situation. 66.7 per cent of the households had Kutcha dwelling units followed by 32.5 per cent households that had semi-Kutcha dwelling units. It is important to state that most of these dwelling units were on encroached land areas and the government neglected areas like under bridges, etc. Therefore, there was no question of construction of pucca dwelling units. The Bansor and Pasi community people had maximum number of kutcha dwelling units. Another important thing is here that the Pared ground slum is located on the land of army cantonment where any type of construction is not allowed.

Water availability in slum areas pure water scarcity is everywhere, but slums dwellers are more affected by the unavailability of the water for drinking and bathing facility. Generally slum areas are poor in terms of supply of drinking water.

Health Conditions

Ill health conditions due to overcrowding, poor housing and unsanitary environment, coupled with poverty are found in slum dwellers. The relative difference in income and wealth is



much starker in urban areas. The higher purchasing power of the rich people drives up the prices of food and healthcare goods, making them unaffordable to the poor. The rich also consume more than their fair share of public goods, for example, water, infrastructure, electricity, which are often subsidized by the state. Poverty and other forms of social disadvantage translate into poorer health status and outcomes for the urban poor. The most common diseases in the slums are gastrointestinal diseases, diarrhoea, water diseases, parasitic worms/infestation and orals diseases etc. chronic non-communicable and communicable diseases like hypertension, diabetes, intentional and unintentional injuries, tuberculosis, and rheumatic heart disease and HIV infection exist in slums. Slum congestion, homeless families, street children, severe drainage shortage, air pollution, stinking water bodies, heaps of garbage, unhygienic working condition are all unique to urban environment.

The study revealed that the housing, water facility and sanitation system in the slums of the Pared ground Slum are poor for which the slum dwellers have to face various problems; even such pathetic condition harms many dwellers outside the slums. The most important fact is that the ecology of the Pared ground Slums being greatly affected by such poor amenities. Besides, such miserable condition affects their financial aspect.

Environmental Conditions of Slum Dwellers

Generally environmental conditions of the slum areas are very poor. High conjunction of the housing, poor building structures, high density of the population, lack of the spaces affects the human health. Most of the slum dwellers use traditional fuels for the cooking food. These traditional fuels like charcoal, coals, wood, kerosene oils, cow dung cake etc. release the smoke in to environment. These traditional fuels create the several diseases like- respiratory diseases, Asthma, bronchitis etc.

Environmental changes are driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. Poverty still remains a problem at the root of several environmental problems. Poverty is responsible to be both cause and effect of environmental degradation. The circular link between poverty and environment is an extremely complex phenomenon. Inequality may foster unsustainability because the poor, who depend on natural resources more than the rich,



deplete natural resources faster as they have no real prospects of gaining access to other types of resources.

The housing conditions reflected by the type of dwelling unit and hygiene and sanitation conditions in and around the slum settlement reflects that they were in very poor conditions in the Pared ground slum. More than 80 per cent of the slums were kutcha houses, thatched house or even shanty make-shift arrangements made of plastic sheets, clothes and other such materials. Thus, the lofty claims of policy prescription by the government in power and governments before have failed to percolate down to the grassroots.

Summary of key findings from the study of Slums in the Prayagraj City

With an overall increasing urban population and urban development of industrial, business and leisure areas the ‘places in between’ get smaller and fewer, pushing the poor out of their homes. This is putting the most pressure on the poor to find solutions as they are disadvantaged in the competition of land due to limited access to finance, knowledge about their rights and options and little political influence:

- a. The slum settlement under study has undergone a process of densification
- b. Large number of people are living in abject poverty and in environmental risk areas such as slopes, river and drainage pipelines which often leak. The city waste is dumped in these areas that even worsen during rainy seasons.
- c. The poor are moving out of the city into informal settlements in the periphery.
- d. There has been a trend of increase in “slum cities”, where most of the urban area has slum characteristics, with no distinct dividing line between slums and other areas.

Poverty and low affordability historically lie at the heart of the problem, but the growing wealth of cities also contributes to it. The intense demand for land particularly has had the inevitable consequence of driving up prices and drying up affordable land supply for the poor, and increasingly the middle class. Data suggests that not all who live in slums are poor. Increasingly people with available income are resorting to slums and informal developments because of lack of diversified housing options and affordable housing opportunities that meet their needs and ability to pay. A far more serious challenge in addressing the issues of slums is the lack of political recognition/acceptance of slums by national and local governments. Even the existence of slums is denied by several countries often because they do not wish to tarnish the image of a developed and modern state. This results in the continuation of



slumization formation but political unwillingness to provide adequate land and housing, finance and human resource capability for their improvement or prevention.

Conclusion

Realization of 'good' urban governance could be attained by establishing a management and governance system based on social dialogue and a re-enforcement of non-governmental structures capable of overcoming social and spatial division. This should involve participatory decision-making, co-production and co-management in which all stakeholders, such as the state, local governments, economic and social actors, community-based organizations and the media, take part. Power balance between them should be tackled, to be able to sustain a necessary level of civic participation. Useful tools include the adoption of participatory strategies of enablement and empowerment of the civil society to play a more active role in the augmentation of problem consciousness of the current socio-spatial disintegration problems, and consequently reaching some sort of harmonization in dealing with conflicting interests.

Its spatial fragmentation produces a spatially induced social exclusion, a socio-economic duality where pockets of poverty and of wealth become more and more alienated both symbolically and in terms of their physical and social characteristics. This dichotomy describes the overall structural character of this urban patchwork

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