IMPACT OF SLUMS ON OUR ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Urban life is the cornerstone of modern human ecology. Over the previous centuries, cities have grown and expanded quickly throughout the world. Cities are sources of jobs and education and are the motors of economic growth. They are, however, also sources of environmental poverty, inequality, and health hazards. Environmental decline in a town is triggered primarily by fast urbanization and inconsistency in housing and infrastructure provision and maintenance. These include lead exposure, air pollution, road dangers, and amplification of heat waves by "urban thermal island." As the amount of urban customers and their material expectations increase and the use of fossil fuels increases, towns lead to widespread biosphere stresses including climate change. This article will introduce and analyze environmental issues of slum and informal settlements in India.

Keywords: *Keystone, ecology, Employment, Economic growth, poverty, Environmental decay, rapid urbanization, urban heat island, informal settlement, etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Depending on socio-economic circumstances or local perceptions, the notion of slums and their definition varies significantly across states. The names by which slums are known in India are regional variations. Slums are frequently called 'Jhuggi –Jhompdi' in Delhi, while they are called 'Jhopadpatti or Chawls' in Mumbai. Other names known are-' Ahatas' at Kanpur,' Bustees' at Kolkata,' Cheris' at Chennai and' Keris' at Bangalore. But in most of these slums, physical features are fundamentally the same. They are generally a cluster of hutments with dilapidated and dysfunctional buildings that have prevalent or no toilet facilities, lack of fundamental amenities, insufficient drainage arrangements and solid waste disposal and garbage. These inadequacies render living circumstances in slums highly

suboptimal, unhygienic and generally lead to a greater incidence of illnesses borne by air and water for the residents. (India Census 2011— Circular No. 8) Definition used in the 2011 Census 2001. The definitions to be assigned for different types of slums and codes are as follows:

- ➢ · All notified regions in a town or city notified by State, UT Administration or Local Government under any Act including the ' Slum Act ' may be deemed to be notified slums and allocated code 1;

- ➢ · All regions recognized as ' Slum ' by State, UT Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards which may not have been officially notified as slum under any law may be regarded as Recognized slums and allocated code 2 ;

- ➢ Compact area of at nearly 300 communities or approximately 60-70 homes of poorly constructed congested properties, generally with insufficient infrastructure in an unhygienic setting and lack of adequate sanitation and drinking water. The Charge Officer should identify such zones personally and also inspect them by an officer nominated by DCO. This reality has to be properly recorded in the register of charges. Such regions can be regarded as slums identified and code allocated 3; (Census of India 2011-Circular No. 8)

UN-HABITATdefines a slum household as a group of people living in an urban area under the same roof who lack one or more of the following:

- ➢ Sustainable permanent housing that protects against extreme climatic circumstances.

- ➢ Sufficient living space, which means not more than three people sharing the same room.

- ➢ Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price.

- ➢ Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people.

- ➢ Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions (Slum Dwellers to double by 2030: United Nations Human

- ➢ Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) report, April 2007).

DR. SONAVANE SUDARSHAN VENKATRAO

2 P a g e

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India is a third world country in Indian slums that is suffering from poverty, malnutrition, disease, unhealthy circumstances, and more. Most people in India are presently living in a slum. Hundreds of thousands of males, females and kids die around the globe every year, and India alone accounts for 25% of fatalities. (Report of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT), April 2007).

As the slums become overcrowded, the atmosphere becomes overcrowded, resulting in twice as much garbage, bodies, and human excretion. The slums ' physical environment relies on the outcome of housing, water, bathrooms, drainage, and lighting equipment. Unfortunately, some of the fundamental features of slum housing are elevated levels of pollution, absence of fundamental requirements, and room crowding.

- The word "slum" is often used to describe informal settlements in cities where housing is inadequate and poor living conditions are neglected. Often they are overcrowded, with many people in very small living spaces

- These settlements lack fundamental municipal services such as water, sanitation, storm drainage, road lighting, paved sidewalks and emergency access roads. Most also don't have simple access for the community to gather to schools, hospitals or government locations. Many slums have long been underserved and unrecognized in some towns for more than 20 years.

- Like all informal settlements, slum housing is constructed on land that the occupant has no legal claim to and without urban planning or compliance with zoning regulations. Moreover, slums are often places where there are many social indicators on a downward slope; crime and unemployment are on the increase, for instance.

- Not all slums are the same, and some offer better living conditions than others. Similarly, slum residents are not a homogeneous population, but a varied group of individuals with distinct backgrounds, means and interests.

- Slums are also a significant economic force. In many cities, as much as 60 percent of employment is in the informal sector of the urban population.

- Today, more than one billion people in the world live in slums.

- In the developing world, one out of every three people living in cities lives in a slum

Reasons for development of slums:

It is not a fresh phenomenon for slums. They were part of most cities ' history, especially as populations boomed in the early years of urbanization and industrialization. In general, slums are the only form of settlement that is affordable and available to the poor in towns where there is intense competition for property and income. There are two primary factors for the development of slums: population growth and governance.

Population growth:

Countries around the globe are quickly urbanizing as more individuals move from rural to urban regions and there continues to be growth in the natural population. Today, metropolitan regions are home to more than half of the world's population. In the developing globe, more than 90% of this urban development is taking place. For a number of reasons, urban migration takes place:

Migration pushing and pulling forces: Some individuals move because variables such as natural disasters or continuous ecological modifications push them out of their location of origin. Through better work opportunities, education, health services or liberty from restrictive social or cultural realities, others are drawn to a fresh location.

Low income from agriculture: most rural individuals operate in the extremely weather-dependent agricultural sector. Rural land is also restricted, fertility is sometimes low or decreasing, soil holdings are small, farm debts are large, and many families are groundless. As a consequence, general rural income is small

Better job prospects: urban areas offer dramatically increased job opportunities compared to rural areas. Furthermore, as urban cultures are often less restricted than those in villages, cities can also offer greater prospects for social mobility upwards.

People understand what towns they can give: most migrants make a conscious decision in rural regions to stay or leave. Improved transportation, communications and connections with previous migrants have all made rural communities much more conscious of the benefits and disadvantages of urban life, particularly in terms of employment possibilities and housing.

Urban migration is often a strategy for rural households to survive: sometimes rural households divide into multiple groups in distinct locations — rural regions, tiny towns, and large cities — to diversify their sources of income and become less susceptible to financial downturns.

Governance:

DR. SONAVANE SUDARSHAN VENKATRAO   4 P a g e

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Another reason for the development of slums is poor governance. Governments often fail to acknowledge and integrate the freedoms of the urban poor into urban planning, thus contributing to slums ' development. Moreover, many countries simply cannot react rapidly enough to fast urbanization. People come to towns much quicker than they can be incorporated into the scheduling process. They often discover their own territory and construct a shack before the government has an opportunity to learn about their life. Another significant element is a government's attitude towards urbanization. A hostile approach to urbanization is taken by some governments. They think it will attract urbanization and cause the slums to develop if they provide urban facilities to the poor. The issue with this perspective is that for water or services, very few individuals come to the city— they come in search of job. In other instances, governments are taking more of an urbanization passive strategy. They either lack the planning tools to deal with the rapid urbanization that is taking place, or the tools that are in place are not responsive enough to the reality on the ground.

Location of slum development:

Location of slums development in the city is anywhere and everywhere. Mainly it is directly related to workforce. Slum dwellers firstly prefer the location of land is nearer to the workplace and within the city. Then they prefer the land where basic amenities such as water are available and it should be near to the main transport network. That is why slums generally develop near the industries, wholesale-markets, go downs, railway stations and even in residential areas. They generally use public-transport or slow moving vehicles such as cycle, rickshaws etc. because it is economical.

Primary indicators of slums:
- Population density – Population density of that area
- Infrastructure – Accessibility to public services such as road, water supply, sewerage in that area
- Income – Income of the residents living in that area
- Social status – Social status of the residents living in that area
- Construction material of houses – Construction materials used in the houses of that area
- Legal aspect – Land ownership status in that area
- Health and sanitation – Health and sanitation status of the houses in that area.

Roll of slums in the city:

All cities have their slums and their informal settlements. Their extent, proportion and character vary not merely with income level but also with the socio-political or legislative environment and law enforcement system. Ironically, it is not so much the absence of a legal

framework and its application that leads to slums and informal settlements; its very presence can frustrate efforts to pre-empt and prevent their formation and growth. Slums are not only unavoidable; they are a mark of success of a city. The formation of slums is an integral part of the process of growth and development of a city. Only in a static (stagnant?) city does the state and status of its constituent parts remain unchanged. This is not to say that each part of a city must go through a cycle of development, deterioration and renewal, but that at any given moment of time, there are parts that have seen better days, and parts that are being newly developed or renovated. The extent of deterioration is, of course, relative, and the worst "slums" of a city may still be better than most parts of many. The decline and renovation of some cities may be piecemeal and hardly visible on the outside or to outsiders, and an area may continue to be held in esteem even as properties within it are gutted and remodeled, while retaining their facades.

Need of slums:

Just as slums and slum dwellers need cities to survive, so do cities need slums to flourish. With large numbers competing for work in cities, it is easier to pay low wages. However, a worker still needs to live, and without the informal settlements, the minimal acceptable salary would really hit the pockets and the profits of the rich.

Measures to prevent the development of new slums:

There are two main measures by which we can prevent the development of new slums.
- ❖ Legislative measure.
- ❖ Planning measure.

Legislative measure:-There are basic things a government can do to prevent new slums from developing. One is to recognize that urbanization is going to happen. Sometimes governments believe that adopting alternative policies, such as focusing on rural development, will stop urbanization. This approach is rarely effective.

Planning measure:- Once governments accept the reality of urban growth, the next step is to plan for it and determine where the new residents will live. Authorities should identify land and plan for its settlement even if money is not available for urban services. Once people settle on that land and feel that they have a right to live there, they will begin investing in it. Over time, the area will upgrade incrementally.

SUGGESTIONS:

Countries need to recognize that the urban poor are active agents and not just beneficiaries of development. Developing cities requires local solutions. Local authorities need to be empowered with financial and human resources to deliver services and infrastructure to the urban poor. Cities should draw up local long-term strategies for improving the lives of slum dwellers. Local governments should develop strategies to prevent the formation of new slums. These should include access to affordable land, reasonably priced materials, employment opportunities, and basic infrastructure and social services. Public investments must focus on providing access to basic services and infrastructure. Working with the urban poor, cities need to invest in housing, water, sanitation, energy, and urban services, such as garbage disposal. These services and infrastructure must reach the poor living in informal settlements. The transportation needs and safety concerns of the poorest residents of a city should be a high priority when planning urban transportation systems that can expand people's choices about where to live and work. Building codes and regulations should be realistic and enforceable, reflecting the local community's lifestyle and needs. For example, this means that they may need to be flexible enough to allow incrementally built housing from low-cost materials and on small parcels of land.

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