

# Slums



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## Background:

Slums (in Urdu known as KACHI ABAADI) can be found in largest cities around the world, it is an undisciplined populated settlement informally (overcrowded and neglected areas) inhabited by poor people. Slums are considered to be the worst living place for people universally. Slums are defined by UN-Habitat as “it is populated area characterized by sub-standard housing and squalor (filthy and waste dump place) within perspective of physical spatial and some lack of social and behavioral awareness. The social Scientist around the world defines slums as “A group of building with overcrowding deterioration with absence of different basic facilities which endangered health, safety and moral of in-habitat community. In SDGs word Slum used as in general context to describe wide range of human living conditions.

## History

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century slums were basically common in United States and Europe in which New York City believed as first slum around the world. In United States the slums were really common in urban region in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sometime they were known as poorhouses with great depression slums which was crowded in Boston common’s later founded in fringes out of city. Europe slums were by 1920s in England and France. Mostly holy-lane and Westminster slums were common around and known to be as black. Slums in England were also associated with Victorian Britain but with time they been removed with government initiatives for better living. Also in France slums were widespread in the Paris and all urban areas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century till half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. French government passed laws for many unprofitable housing projects and deployed most of slums in 1950s.

## Characteristics of Slums:

In global report of UN-Habitat 2013 it defines the following characteristics of slums to make comparison with other human living conditions

- Inadequate access to basic needs of life
- Poor quality housing
- Overcrowding
- In secure residential tenure status.

Now we will go through further description to understand slums characteristics to know the difference of slums with other human living conditions

### **Location and expansion**

Slums are typically begin at the outskirts of a city that are mostly state owned or philanthropic trust or have no clear title. They are often hidden from plain view of city centre but close to some natural water source. Slums also get establish next towards the economic activity areas to carry out income on which they rely on. Some slums are also named with the locally historical figures and politician to garner political backing against eviction.

### **Insecure tenure**

As given above that slum are typically least desirable lands near the town. Some immigrants regard unoccupied land as land without owners. In some cases the local community or the government allots lands to people later developed into slums and they don't have proper rights. Informal land tenures also include the occupation of land belongs to someone else. According to UN report of millennium index agenda 2010 that 33.4% slums invasion to private lands.

### **Substandard Housing**

Slums are characterized on the basis of sub standard housing structures with shanty homes with unsuitable housing material for which construction quality inadequate to stand against local climate changing. Slums also extensively violate building codes of local government for which they refuse to recognize them. Mostly the living compound is one room unit in which family contain all activities sleeping, living and cooking etc.

### **Overcrowding**

It is another highlighted characteristic of slums mostly slums are not expanded in landscape but they create additional rooms in the unit sometime with growing of family or new people come to live in. There is high occupancy rate of one room unit mostly 5 or more people share one room between them also there is one toilet which facilitates dozen of families at one time.

### **Inadequate infrastructure**

Slum is lack with infrastructure with all basic needs from drinking water to the sanitation. Slums have unpaved roads with narrow streets which don't allow even emergency vehicles and many other services like garbage collection and fire brigade. This lack of infrastructure makes serious issues to deal with by which government don't own it seriously

### **Global Situation of Slums dwelling:**

According to UN-Habitat report 2013 in which they state the slums dwelling is increasing with time by time however millennium development goals achieved some levels of better living conditions for reducing number of population living in slums. UN-Habitat estimated 863 million people living in slums around the world in contrast to 760 million in 2000 and 650 million in 1990 they figure out that 33% of urban population in developing world living in slums. There are some estimated percentage of highlighted regions for slums like Africa over all having 51.3% in which Northern Africa having 13.3% while sub-Saharan Africa is with estimation of 61.7%. Asia over all is with 31.6% while different regions of it like eastern Asia is with 28.2%, Southern Asia 35%, Southern-eastern Asia 31%, western Asia 24.6%, Latin America and Caribbean is with 23.5% also Oceania is with 24.1%(It is from 1990 report no new figures been got from there however there is change in population of slums dwelling)

### **Some Highlighted Slums around the world:**

**Neza-Chalco-Itza, Mexico city, Mexico:** It considered being the biggest slum of world with 23 million dwellers it is extending day by day due to large expanse for renting house and sudden change in population.

**Maharashtra, India:** According to report of National Sample Survey Organization that 60% of Maharashtra of entire population live in Slums, approx 19 million dwellers with really little government interventions for assessments

**Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya:** It is located in 7km if southwest of Nairobi occupies its 6% land with no basic facilities carrying approx 2.5 million dwellers

**Orangi Town, Karachi, Pakistan:** It is considered to be largest slum in Asia with 1.8 million dwellers it is getting expanded with time due to immigrants from other parts of country for job seeking.

**Manshiet, Cairo, Egypt:** Manshiet slums find home approx 1.5 million due to poor economical situation it is expanding day by day due to poor economical situation with lacking basic facilities

**Dharavi, Mumbai, India:** It is also considered as one of biggest and poorest slum in Asia, it is populated with mostly migrant in 1960s. Approx 1 million dwellers are settling in there with 40% of economically weak people

**Cite' solely, Port-au-Prince, Haiti:** Cite' solely is with most densely shanty town in all Haiti with dwellers of 0.4 million the resident originate from la saline slums after it was destroyed by fire.

**Khayelitsha, South Africa:** This slum is founded in 1985 on the cape flats of South Africa with dwellers of 392 thousands having unemployment rate of 80%.

**Rochina, Brazil:** It is located on uphill side in Rio de Janerio with dwellers of 69 thousands. The dwellers there been made of hard rocks and bricks with some basic facilities

**Hidalgo county, US:** Mostly farm-working Mexican crosses Rio Grande for job seeking they become the part of settlement in hidalgo county with dwellers of 52 thousand. 50% of population in hidalgo is below poverty line these slums are exploited by wealthy landowners.

## Causes and issues behind expansion of Slums:

Some following issues behind the expansion of slums are the highlighted in different reports focus at global level,

### **Migration (Rural-Urban Migration)**

It is one of the causes to formation and expansion of slums. Mostly rural people leave their agricultural activity due to have less income also governments mostly neglect these site as they are not having participation in GDP.

People from rural areas move to urban for life betterment as they have many facilities out there related to job, education and infrastructure etc. With job limitations and economic situation some migrants don't able to find job with lack of capacity to finance highly rented house, so they move towards slum where he get low cost housing.

### **Urbanization:**

The slums formation has great contribution in expansion of slums, according to report of UN-Habitat 2008 reporting upon slums that 50% of world population lives in urban areas. As migrant come out of rural boundary to seek economical good support in urban areas in which government also ignore their flux during urbanization process. The high land rent price to low level income holder motivates to create informal settlement convert to slum dwellers which factorizing the Urbanization.

### **Poor house planning:**

In urban areas there is highlighted issue mostly of high cost house renting and land prices, it considered to be as the encouragement for developing slums. The economists summarize that "high cost housing for low income level, slum is better for him than nothing". The negligence of government and landlords' rules exploitation lead them to towards building of informal settlement



### **Social exclusion and poor infrastructure:**

Social exclusion (exclusion from the prevailing social system and its rights and privileges, typically as a result of poverty or the fact of belonging to social different groups) forces poor to adapt the conditions beyond their control. Also poor infrastructure like of local transportation or expensive public transportation which ends up with creation of informal settlement close to formal settlement or working places.

### **Informal economy:**

Informal economy (it is set of economic activities that are not registered or protected by the government as they do not make part in tax generation) is also big cause of expanding slums. Informal economy is growing day by day more than formal economy. Informal economic system demands low flexible worker, so the worker made their settlement near to the income opportunities like this besides burdening development of formal business.

### **Poverty:**

The rapid shifting of people from rural to urban areas due to issues of income and poverty as they come here and not finding a proper shelter slum is one and only option for them

### **Natural disaster:**

There are many natural disasters we can see in history which led to the foundation of slums. The effected people moves towards unaffected areas. The ignorance of government related to the effected people settlement become permanent settlement which later on categorized as slum.

### **Politics:**

Some political powers, stakeholders and governments for their own interest subvert efforts for betterment of slums living. Removal and replacement mostly creates political blocks and interest conflicts for building political image and vote building creating blocks.

### **Socioeconomic status**

Also socioeconomic status of slum is low for which they aren't able to produce tax revenue for government for which government give them little attention but mostly don't own them and regret working for the betterment of infrastructure in that places

## Overcoming Strategies for Slums:

In recent years we see that slums are growing day by day and disturbing the social norms. Right now billion of people living in slums and it are projected that nearly by 2030 it will reach to 2 million. Under Millennium Development Goals slums were focused as in wide range of Human living condition. Now in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the following are focusing upon the slums upgrading.

- **Goal 01:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- **Goal 03:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **Goal 06:** Ensure availability and sustainability management of water and sanitation for all
- **Goal 08:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- **Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- **Goals 17:** strengthens the means of implementation and revitalizes the global partnership for sustainable development

However some states took steps for overcoming slums by its removal and relocating, but they are not sustainable action plans because they don't make change in population of slums. However slums upgrading has strong focus in overcoming the slums.

## **Slums in Pakistan:**

Pakistan is on sixth rank with largest population in the world, according to World Bank report 2012 the people below the poverty line is about 40% and 60% people live on \$2 per day. Pakistan is one of developing country and with time try are trying to progress through different goals settlement in every sector. The slums in Pakistan are also increasing day by day due to different situations as they play big role in aspects of economic building and political scenarios. The mainly cities like Karachi (Orangi town is also in Karachi), Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore and other main cities having options of working and job opportunities.

### **Income Source**

The slums resident are mostly belongs to low economic level. In most cases men and women both work for supporting families. Most of them having professions like coolie (luggage carrier in airports or train stations), auto driver, maid servant (in homes, schools and colleges), Technical and professional labors, government municipal workers, self employment (cart driver, vegetable sellers etc.), security guards etc.

### **Slums living people**

Slums are (approximately) having most of people migrated from somewhere which is having diverse ethnic groups and religious groups like Muslims, Christians Hindus and some others people with different belonging. Also many refugees from Burma, Bangladesh (Dhaka fall), Afghanistan, Bihar's people as refugees they are having many informal settlements around Pakistan boundary for living.

### **Causes of expanding slums:**

The following are highlighted causes seen through different reports which are actually encouraging the expansion of slums

### **Rural survival issues**

Mostly in rural areas the living community is lack with basic needs like electricity, good education, less income opportunities and health facilities for which people move towards urban areas to seek some good opportunities for development of children socially and economically. The migrant from rural does not have capacity to access high rented house so he get the opportunity of living in slums.

### **Life security**

As in Pakistan we know that the rural areas atmosphere is link with dictatorship a person who is having strong economical power with strong family background known as Saeen in sindh, chaudhry in Punjab and Khan gee in KP regions and men power make his stake upon people. In many cases it is seen that they misuse there power given to them by society. Some people if make them up pleased in any scenario they may kill them or violate humanity rules also government institutes don't have power to make any action against them due to their powers so people have life insecurity from them move out with their family to urban areas and get settle in cheap settlement they found which is none other than slums.

### **Refugees**

As from different sides like Burma, Bihar, Bangladesh living forming informal settlements. However Afghan refugees are in huge number settling in slums and they are having big informal economy setup and disturbing the employment situation for the population of Pakistan. However in National Action Plan now they are sending back to afghan refugees and demolishing their informal settlements.

### **Local Economy destruction**

The local economy which usually add small and cultural handicraft industries, agriculture sector which gives support in development of country and local employment. In Pakistan government is not having focus much on the local economic development which enforces people to migrate to the areas having good economic situation.

### **Lacking of urban policy**

State or Government till now has not focused properly on the urban policy, in which Shoaib Sultan Khan says” government urban policies are really sorry for Pakistan which are turning urban into slums”. The policy lacking gives opportunity for expansion of slums.

### **Issues in slum:**

Slum is one of the worst settlements found for living with lack of all basic needs a common person demand in daily life. The following issues been faced by the people living in slums.

#### **Health issues**

The slums been effected with many health issues and facilities. Illness and disease spread in slums like a fire because of polluted environment. Child mortality is also serious issue, as in report we see child under 5 mostly die from malaria and HIV. There is no basic health facility and government health awareness campaign to educate them regarding disease causes and healthy life settlement.

#### **Education and child labor**

There is big gap between slums and education by which children don't even get the facility of primary education due to financial issues and big number of family members which lead them to child laboring working as helper in different shops.

#### **Lacking of Financial support**

Mostly banks don't give loans to slum resident and considered to be un-bankable for which they do not have any financial support properly, however some microfinance institution gives opportunity for getting some small loans but they also make heavy interest sometimes so they don't try to get benefit out of that.

### **Development authorities' attitude**

Till now the development authorities of different local government are really weak to look upon the slums issues and upgrading the basic needs required for their daily life usage also department people ignore their applications on the behalf of government which makes bad effect on the slum localities. Also government till now is not having proper define urban policy regarding slums

### **Girl's life in slum:**

Mostly the girls are not having time to have education as they get busy in early age which violating the rights of children under constitution of Pakistan 1973. These girls perform duty of carrying waters from miles or caring of family members, there are also mention cases child sexual assault when in night they go to the toilet due to not having proper sanitation.

### **Emergency service lacking:**

There is extreme issue of controlling emergency situations, as roads are unpaved and really narrow due to addition of rooms or expansion in room units. Mostly the emergency vehicles are unable to reach the emergency risking area like ambulance to severe patient and House fire by fire brigade.

The slums surrounding urban areas are also disturbing the environment; the things like crime, drugs addiction, pollution, disease spreading, prostitution considered to be integrated by slums in urban areas, for this slum consider being a breeding ground.

## Conclusion:

Every problem is having solutions, slums is big issue as we can see with above detail. It is need of time to take some strong actions to solve different issues expanding through slums and faced by slums resident as they are also part of Pakistan and children living out there also belong to future of Pakistan.

After doing study with different aspects we are recommending following points to overcome issues in or through slums:

- Government should strategize the urban policy which should overcome the slum expansion, which should contain the subject of overcoming urbanization, slums upgrading and low income housing facility.
- Local economic development is really important which can overcome the problem of migration.
- The awareness programs should be arranged with topics like environment protection, basic health maintenance, disaster risk reduction and social issues awareness to make them a good citizen and enjoy good life.
- The refugees should be bounded in specific boundary so they do not disturb the local situation with their integrations in different aspects.
- Microfinance institutions should make interest free loans for slums people so they could get some benefit in emergency issues like surgical operation, business upgrading etc.
- The slums should be taken as serious concern in education, government should make small or community based schools which cover the level of primary education so they could also move towards better life with good understanding and motivation.