



The Story Of Survival From The Below: A Study Of Slum Dwellers In The Allahabad City Of Uttar Pradesh

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The present paper examines the conditions of the households living at the bottom of the Indian Society by occupies public space i.e. slums. In conventional literature on secure living of human beings we encompass livelihood security by access of the households to three types of resources: Private resources, Public resources and Institutional support. The studies in general form examine the ownership and uses of private assets like land and education; in parallel such studies examine access to and uses of common and public resources like collection of food- fuel- fodder from CPRs (Common Property Resources). Both private and public resources are supplemented by institutions. The study that we propose here aims at households living at the bottom of the urban economy and mostly trapped inter-generationally at the level of low living. Proper and effective state intervention needed to rehabilitation for this bottom most segments of society.

I. Introduction

Urban living is the keystone of modern human ecology. A town stands between a village and a city by the indicator of human settlement – each of town and city is a constituent of urban settlement. Cities have multiplied and expanded rapidly worldwide over the past two centuries. Cities crop up from human creativity and advancement in technology, and they are the engines of economic growth (McMichael, 2000). Cities offer better employment, education, health care, and contribute disproportionately to national economies. However, rapid and often unplanned urban growth is often associated with poverty, environmental degradation and demands that outstrip service capacity (Moore et al., 2003). Urbanization in India is largely a post-independence phenomenon. During past few decades the million plus populated cities¹ began to grow rapidly. This rapid growth caused unplanned and haphazard growth of urban areas and spread of slums and squatter settlements. Many households struggle to survive at the bottom of the economy. The beginning is living at the bottom of the rural economy and then leaving the rural space in search of jobs to migrate to urban space. In the urban economy, they continue to live at the bottom. These households typically have no able-bodied adult member and no regular source of income. They survive by doing a variety of informal activities (Devereux 2003).

¹ As per Census of India define city having more than one million population is known as million plus city.

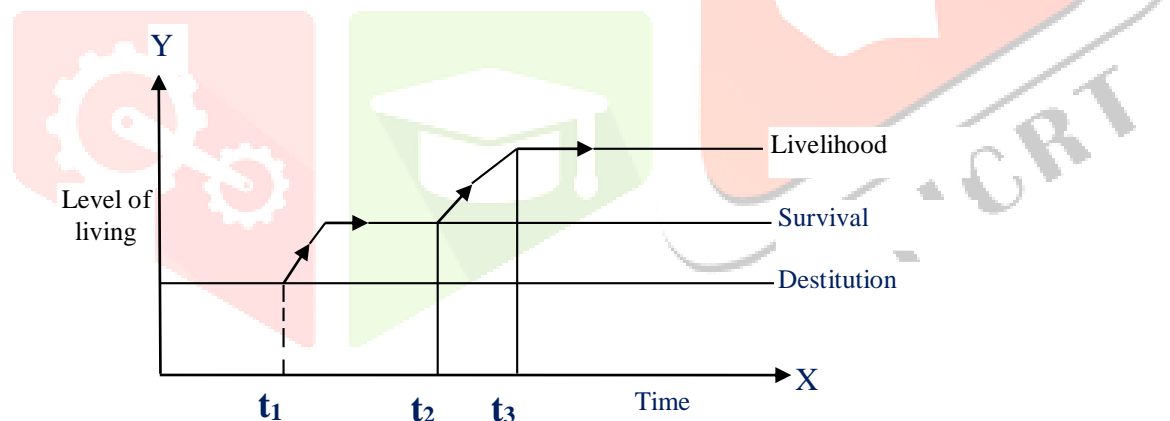
The study that we propose here aims at households living at the bottom of the urban economy and mostly trapped inter-generationally at the level of low living. The study covers the households somehow settled on either government land or privately owned land; these households begin their living in conditions of uncertainty. In our understanding while livelihood security shows living above the level of destitution, the study that we explore aims at revealing survival of the landless and education less poor. The survival somehow of the asset less people in the urban economy who mostly live in the somehow built up slum in the city economy is the focus of our study.

We have taken the assumptions that attempts to survive at the bottom of the urban economy forces the households to get engaged in any jobs whether or not those jobs are legal. We have also taken the assumptions that the survival strategy of the households will forced almost all members of the households to get engaged in odd job at an early stage. Thus, in our study the survival strategy we talk about precedes the livelihood security of the households. In other words, survival strategy is assumed to be a reflection of attempted biological survival on a very short-term basis. Sometimes the survival is nearer to destitution also.

We tried to understand the quality of living of the slum households by selected indicators like ownership of the house and assets, access to public utilities occupations, income, education and social identity. In parallel, we also tried to capture the social support, community support, and institutional support that they receive. Living at the bottom is multi layered like livelihood, survival and destitution. Our Objective is to understand low-level living by the ownership of the slum-settled households over private goods and their access to public goods. The private goods included food, house, ownership of land, basic and comfort goods, productive assets, electricity, education and health. The public goods included roads, drainage, sewerage, waste disposal system and sanitation.

Here we tried to understand the level of living by selected indicators, basically economic, like income, land, education, access of assets, quality of living. In parallel, we also tried to understand the social support, community support, and institutional support (Government intervention).

Diagram 1.1: Levels of Living of Households



The line at the bottom shows level of destitution reflected in occasional hunger. The line above it is survival like that shows households engaged in any odd job to earn and survive. Above the line or level starts livelihood security (Diagram).

In Section I, we present the methodology, sample and the study zone. In Section II, we briefly present overview of urbanization in India and formation of city and slums. Section III, related with the discussions and the implications of living in slums. In Section IV, we present the state intervention in slums. Finally, in Section V, we offer conclusions.

II. Methodology, Sample and Study Zone

As we want to focus on million plus city situation so we selected the city of Allahabad, because the city of Allahabad is one of the million-plus populated cities of Uttar Pradesh (UP). The Allahabad Municipal Corporation provided a list of 97 slums in existence in the city (DUDA, 2011). From this list we selected one registered slum based on the observed congested area and on the bank of Yamuna River by geographic location. The registered slum was Dharkar Bastee, Kydganj, the land owned by the Government on the south of the city located on Yamuna River bank, inhabited only by Hindu population. We selected one unregistered slum, namely, Jhuggi Jhopri Haddi-Godam, Kareli at the center of the city, the land owned by an individual, inhabited mostly by the Muslim population. We selected a core sample of 100 households, of which 60 from the registered slum and 40 from the unregistered slum. (Box 1).

Box 1: Study Zone and Sample Size

Zone	Number	Name
State	1	Uttar Pradesh
City	1	Allahabad
Name & Types of Slum	2	Registered Slum: Dharkar Bastee Unregistered Slum: Haddi-Godam, Kareli
Types of land	2	Government land, Private land
Core Sample	100	Registered Slum: 60 Households Unregistered Slum: 40 Households

Note: We have taken this ratio because the study expected that the number of households in registered slums was higher than that of households in the unregistered slums. Hence, we selected households from registered slum more than that from unregistered slum.

We collected both quantitative and qualitative data through interviews of the households, observations, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The sample consisted of 58.0 per cent female respondents and the rest male. In registered slum all the selected households were incidentally from SCs (Hindu) community and in unregistered slum excepting one house SCs (Paasi) community, all are belonging from General Caste (Muslims). The registered slum had a population of 179 from 30 households. The unregistered slum had a population of 137 from 20 households. In total, 62.0 per cent of all the households were Hindu and the rest Muslim.

III. Overview of Urbanization and Formation of Slum

Urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one. It is the progressive concentration of population in urban unit (Davis, 1965). Urbanization in a region is measured by certain parameters, viz, density of population, number of person engaged in secondary and tertiary occupation, infrastructure networks, transport and communication, trade.

According to Census of India there are two types of towns were categorized (R.G, 2001):

- a) Statutory Towns: All places with a municipality corporation, Cantonment Board or notified town area committee, etc. so declared by the state law.
- b) Census Town: following criteria defines like;
 - (i) A minimum population of 5000;
 - (ii) At least 75 per cent of male working population engaged in non- agricultural pursuits
 - (iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq km.

Urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining outgrowth (OGs) or two or more physical contiguous town together and any adjoining urban out growths of such towns.

India is the second most populated country of the world with 1.2 billion people residing in about 6 lakh villages and 7935 urban centres. Percentage share of Indian citizen living in urban areas increased from 17.3 percent in 1951 to 31.16 percent in 2011. According to Census of India, India increased seventeen times of its total population between 1901 and 2011. “Nevertheless, India did not face “urban explosion” as compared to trends in many other countries of the world” (Mohan, 1985). Over the years, there occurred continuous concentration of population in class I cities² (Census of India 2011).

The literature on urbanization focused on growth of urban areas by towns and cities, formation of slums, provision of public utilities and so on (Ramachandran, 1992; Kundu, 1994; Bhagat, 2011; Bhagat and Mohanty, 2009; Saxena, 2014). 11.4 per cent of India’s population lived in urban India following 1901 Census which increased to 31.16 per cent following 2011 Census. In UP, urban population as a percentage of total population remained much behind national average (Table 1).

Table 1: Urban Population as percentage of Total Population, Uttar Pradesh

Census Year	Urban Population as % of Total Population
1951	13.7
1961	12.9
1971	14.0
1981	18.0
1991	19.8
2001	20.78
2011	22.26

Note: Before 2001 total population of UP included that of Uttarakhand.

Source: Census of India, Different Years.

The Census of India 2001 defined a slum as a compact area of at least 300 in population or about 60 to 70 households living in dilapidated room-cum-house in an unhygienic environment with access to inadequate public utilities (Census of India, 2001). National Sample Survey 49th Round (1993) defined a slum as a compact area with a cluster of dilapidated houses with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic condition. The Slum Area (Improvement & Clearance) Act, 1956, Government of India, defined slums as ‘mainly those residential areas where dwelling are in any respect unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidated overcrowding, faulty arrangements and designs of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangements of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to safety, health and morals’ (GoI, 2010: 14). The UN-HABITAT defined a slum as a settlement where the inhabitants have inadequate housing and basic services (GoI, 2011: 10). Temporary shelters adjacent to the construction work sites in urban areas evolve where labourers are engaged. Depending on the nature and tenure of work the labourers, mostly migrants, set up their make-shift rooms arranged in I-shape to spend night individually or with family. Some of the labourers stay back in the urban space to form labour colonies some of which ultimately take the shape of slums.

² Class I cities- Greater than 1,00,000 population Class II cities- 50,000-1,00,000 population
Class III cities- 20,000-50,000 Class IV cities- 10,000- 20, 000 Class V cities- 5,000- 10,000 population
Class VI cities- less than 5000 population

IV. Findings and Discussion

1. Demographic Characteristics of the Households

62 per cent of the households were Hindus. By castes within Hindus, the Schedule Castes were 62 per cent. 64 per cent of the households had nuclear family. The average size of households was six in registered slum and seven in unregistered slum.

2. Migration and Links with Native Villages

All the selected slum dwellers were Inter-State migrants. They came mostly from Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. Their migration history varied from 20 to 40 years. Economic necessity forced people to go out and social relations give direction to the migrants. The major reasons for their migration were employment, proximity to Allahabad city, and marriage in this city. 86 per cent of the households did not like to live in their native village for absence of employment there, landlessness and low wages.

3. Economic Well-being

The slum dwellers were engaged in multiple occupations like rag picking, rickshaw pulling, trolley pulling, vegetable vending, sweeping, begging, and domestic assistance, basket making, tailoring and bidi rolling. The average monthly income of the slum dwellers was Rs. 11,151 and the average expenditure was Rs. 9,835 per month.

94.0 per cent of the households were borrowers. They generally borrowed from Mahajans at a high rate of interest. All faced problems to repay outstanding debt.

4. Private Utilities of Households

58 per cent of the households lived in their own house. Most of the dwellers lived in kutcha houses. No household had toilet in their houses. 88 per cent of the households were used to cooking inside of their houses. All the households got electricity through katiya. In unregistered slum the dwellers got electricity by katiya but had to pay to their land owner. 30 per cent of the households had trolley for commercial purposes. Most important productive animal owned by the households was pig.

5. Public Utilities

Tap and bore well were the major source of water for the residents of the slum. All the households of the registered slum had access water from Public tap which was installed by the dwellers of this slum. In unregistered slum they got water from bore well installed by land owner and sometimes by the dwellers themselves. All the households of the registered slum used open space for sanitation. In unregistered slum all the households used community toilet. The drainage was open (without any cover) or it was absent in the slums. All the households disposed of their garbage by themselves. In registered slum Medical store was located nearby and in unregistered slum Private clinic was situated nearby house.

6. Social Development of Slum-Settled People

Illiteracy of population in the both slum is extremely high. Female illiteracy was higher. However a trend has been set in motion for children in slum to go to the educational institutions. School near the slums was confined to the primary level. Girl's literacy rate remained low. Only 30 per cent of the households were sending girls to school for the girl children had to remain engaged in household activity. Some other reasons like eve teasing distance discouraged parents to send their girl children to school. Girls below ten years were allowed to go to school. Most of the women felt insecurity in the slum for going outside for sanitation.

7. Quality of Life of the Slum-Settled People

Most of the households felt insecurity in the slums. They were afraid of the police, administration and the land owner. Most of the households had no expectation from police and administration in case of injustice.

- **Food Habit:** The dwellers of this slum generally used to eat low quality food. All the dwellers were non-vegetarian and they used to eat the residue part of chicken and mutton. They used to purchase rotten fruits and vegetables at low price.
- **Health Problem:** The unsanitary physical environment of the slums affected the health of the dwellers.

- **Identity of Slum Dwellers:** The slum dwellers were socially deprived by being members of low caste/community, land-poor or landless, and income-poor. They lacked both physical and social capital to move out in search of better job opportunities. In the absence of social, economic, and political qualifications, they remained stuck at the bottom of the economy at both their place of origin and in the city of Allahabad. They remained delinked from the mainstream urban society. They remained excluded from the upper caste households living in the same slum by the same living standard. The identity of the slum dwellers was their living space seen as 'Dirty Place Dwellers'. They did not have access to basic provisions like shelter, food and water, health care facilities, and education; their houses were dilapidated. This identity prolonged over generations.
- **Status of Women:** In slums discrimination and marginalization of women were based on patriarchy.
- **Security of Tenure:** The slum dwellers did not have legal right over the land on which they constructed their house. They always faced the threat of eviction.
- **Financial Inclusion:** They spent their current income on food-fuel and curative health care. They could hardly save.
- **Silence of Slum Dwellers:** They remained silent because of being untouchables and stigmatized by their occupation. They remained unable to emerge as a strong political group.
- **NGOs:** Some NGOs claimed to be working for the rehabilitation of slum dwellers like 'Sehri Gareeb Sangharsh Morcha' run by 'Oxfam Trust' as an alternative to forced eviction, and the establishment of innovative systems of tenure that minimize bureaucratic lags and the displacement of the urban poor.

V. Conclusions

Urban living in the slum was living at the bottom of the urban space. The illiterate or poorly educated slum dwellers constituted low income group. Poor physical environment with non-existent solid waste disposal system in slums led to high prevalence of disease (water-borne) among slum dwellers. The slum dwellers were living in sub-human condition because of mainly dilapidated housing condition, inadequate space and hazardous environment. The lack of space resulted in unhygienic living condition and lack of privacy. The condition became worse during monsoon and winter. Having one-room katcha house the dwellers had to manage all household activities in a single room. The suffocating environment of the slum had a tendency to make them criminal. Education of children was not priority of the households. Rather, children were sent to get engaged in low quality job to supplement household income. They could not think beyond ensuring meal twice a day; they remained engaged to ensure meal twice a day. The slum dwellers got engaged in low paid jobs and hazardous jobs. The slum dwellers across age and gender remained engaged in multiple occupations at the same time (intra-month) to earn for survival. They failed to live dignified life. They failed to foresee future.

They failed to have access to the basic amenities like '**Roti , Kapra, Makaan**'. The dwellers of the slums were generally borrowers which also reflect their depressed condition. They were living in poor environmental condition so they get easily affected by diseases. So they had to borrow money to spend on their health. Generally they used to spend their major part of income on food and intoxicants. They were boozers not because they enjoyed their tipping. This was because they tried to forget their humiliation. Most of the times they remained unconscious because of fear; they were not able to differentiate between more equal and less equal. They continued to remain exploited. Primarily because of the poverty, the people of slums are characterized by social exclusion in relation to the local community, on the one hand, and cohesion of the slums population, on the other. A slum is a kind of a community, or more families that stick together and keep their traditions. The spatial exclusion (residential segregation) from the urban area of the city is an important feature of slums. It is a result of years of marginalization. They are the 'invisible part of the city', often spatially excluded from official maps and documents. Besides employment and economic empowerment, the housing conditions in the slums are the biggest issue. The housing scheme run by government failed to satisfy their requirement for proper living space.

The slum dwellers remained a socially, economically and politically incapacitated to come out from poverty. The condition of women was vulnerable. They laboured to earn main or supplementary income for the household; they remained victims of domestic violence. Women intra-household were more vulnerable because of patriarchy. Women suffered from domestic violence and also exploited by their sexuality. They were used as reproductive machine which provided the households multiple hands to supplement household income.

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