



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Urban Informality And Cultural Landscape: Geographical Insights From Jodhpur's Slums And Squatter Settlements

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Abstract:- Urban informality has become the defining feature of modern Indian cities, where rapid urbanization and rural-to-urban migration meet limited planning capacity. Jodhpur, the second city of Rajasthan, provides a crucial case to analyze the interaction between slum development, squatter settlements, and changing cultural landscape. Census of India (2011) reports that about 28.3% of the population of Jodhpur lives in slums, with about 1.2 lakh individuals living in more than 210 notified and non-notified clusters. These settlements, being primarily found on the periphery of the city and industrialized belts, depict both socio-economic vulnerabilities and resilience.

This paper examines the geographical spread, socio-economic composition, and cultural dynamics of Jodhpur's informal settlements through a mixed-methods approach. Secondary Census data (2001–2011), reports of Jodhpur Development Authority (JDA), and satellite imagery were combined with primary surveys from five representative slum clusters: Rajiv Nagar, Indira Colony, Basni Kachchi Basti, Pratap Nagar, and Mandore fringe. The results show that almost 65% of the households are migrants from Barmer, Pali, and Jalore districts, and 45% are dependent on the informal labor markets such as construction, handicrafts, and street vending.

These slums' cultural environment is different: even as spatial situations are characterized by poor housing, sanitation, and uneven water supply (only 32% of households use piped water), the communities have rich cultural practices. These are celebrated communally through festivals like Gangaur and Teej, local shrines and temples serve as foci of social bonding, vernacular modes of building adaptations—mud walls, tin roofs, recycled stone slabs—are modes of scarcity and creativity. GIS mapping reveals the locational exclusion of squatter settlements close to industrial belts and rail tracks, accentuating exclusion from formal urban development. The settlements also serve, however, as drivers of urban culture and economic life, adding to Jodhpur's labor force, handicraft exports, and street economies.

The research concludes that slums and squatter settlements are not just areas of deprivation but also living participants in the cultural design of the city. Their contribution to Jodhpur's cityscape should be accepted and their role should be recognized in planning informal geographies into inclusive planning, housing policy, and cultural heritage practices.

Keywords: - Significance of Research on Jodhpur's Informal Settlements, Research Area: Jodhpur City, Pattern of Distribution of Slums and Squatter Settlements, Interconnection between Urban Informality and Cultural Landscape, Study Objectives, Urban Informality in Jodhpur, Cultural Landscape of the Informal Settlements, Planning and Environmental Issues.

Introduction:- Indian urbanization has been swift and unequal, yielding sharp contrasts between formal planning and informal growth. Among the most overt outcomes of this experience is the emergence of slums and squatter settlements, where oppressed groups invent alternative ways of life beyond formal planning. Analyzing these settlements is central to grasping the socio-spatial processes of cities, especially their effects on the cultural sphere.

Urban informality is the unofficial, unauthorized, and frequently hidden ways in which individuals gain access to land, housing, and livelihoods in urban areas. It is not just confined to housing but also encompasses informal labor, transport, and service networks. Informality arises when formal planning, infrastructure, and governance are unable to cater to rapid migration and low-income group housing requirements. Instead of being exceptional or temporary, informality has become a dominant form of urbanization in the Global South.

Slums are generally characterized as highly populated settlements with poor housing, unhygienic conditions, and insecure land tenure. The Census of India (2011) defines a slum as any dense neighborhood of 300 persons or 60–70 families residing in poorly constructed overcrowded houses that do not have basic civic facilities. Squatter settlements are, however, unauthorized occupations of land—usually government, railway, or industrial land—where people construct makeshift dwellings without legal rights. Both settlements are indicators of urban poor survival strategies.

Why Jodhpur's Informal Settlements Should Be Studied

Jodhpur, the second-largest city of Rajasthan, is famous for its walled city, handicraft sector, and cultural heritage. However, along with its famous urban face, almost 28% of its urban dwellers live in slums and squatter clusters (Census 2011). These are found in industrial areas, railway edges, and city outskirts, housing massive migrant groups from neighboring drought-stricken districts. They provide windows to urban inequality, resilience, and cultural adaptation.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Studying Jodhpur's slums and squatter settlements is important for two reasons. One, they are exclusionary spaces where inhabitants have poor housing, sanitation, and service delivery. Two, they are actively engaged in transforming the city's cultural landscape, labor markets, and social networks. By mapping their geography and recording their cultural practices, this research brings to the fore the dual character of slums and squatter settlements—as excluded spaces and as creative contributors to Jodhpur's changing urban identity.

Study Area: Jodhpur City

Geographical Setting and Urban Growth

Jodhpur, the second-largest city of the state of Rajasthan, is located between 26°17'N to 26°23'N latitude and 72°55'E to 73°06'E longitude at an altitude of approximately 231 meters above sea level. Geographically, it is situated on the periphery of the Thar Desert and has an arid to semi-arid climate with average annual rainfall of 362 mm. The city was originally established in 1459 by Rao Jodha, and its ancient walled settlement continues to be the cultural center of the "Blue City." In the last fifty years, Jodhpur has seen extensive urban growth motivated by trade, handicraft industries, defense organizations, and educational institutions. The urbanized area has grown from 53 sq. km in 1981 to more than 120 sq. km in 2011, both through planned and unplanned growth.

Demographic Profile and Population Dynamics

As per the Census of India (2011), Jodhpur Municipal Corporation (JMC) had a population of 10.33 lakh and ranked as the second-most populous city in Rajasthan only after Jaipur. The decadal growth rate of the city during 2001-2011 was 22.7%, higher than the state average of 21.4%, which reflects significant migration-induced urbanization. The illiteracy rate is 80.7%, with that of the male being 87.5% and that of the female being 73.4%, indicating a gender gap. Informal employment accounts for nearly 32% of the working population, including construction, handicrafts, small-scale commerce, and services. Migration is also key in driving population dynamics: nearly 60% of slum households consist of migrant families from Barmer, Pali, Nagaur, and Jalore, where drought and agrarian distress drive people towards urban areas.

Distribution of Slums and Squatter Settlements

Urban informality in Jodhpur is extensive. According to Census 2011, approximately 28.3% of the urban population (more than 2.9 lakh) resides in slums, which are distributed across 210 notified as well as non-notified clusters. They are primarily found in three zones:

1. Industrial and Transport Corridors – The Basni, MIA, and Mandore regions contain extensive squatter belts because of the vicinity to factories and daily wage jobs.

2. Peri-Urban Expansion Areas – Rajiv Nagar and Indira Colony developed on encroached lands at peripheries of the city.

3. Old City Fringes and Railway Margins – Densely populated bastis like Pratap Nagar and Nagauri Gate have developed around labor centers and transport lines.

Spatial mapping points out that almost 65% of slum clusters occur on marginal or controversial sites—railway fringes, drainage lines, or vacant government land—indicating exclusion from formal urban planning. Although with inferior housing (70% kachcha or semi-pucca), poor sanitation, and sporadic water supply, they are functioning as important labor reservoirs and cultural landscapes, supporting Jodhpur's handicraft exports, domestic services, and street economies.

Relationship between Urban Informality and Cultural Landscape

Urban informality is one of the characteristic marks of Global South cities. It characterizes mechanisms and procedures by which individuals bargain for access to housing, land, and livelihoods beyond state-regulated norms. In Jodhpur, informality is expressed in more than 210 notified and non-notified slum clusters that house close to 2.9 lakh residents, or 28.3% of the city (Census 2011). These settlements, despite lacking proper infrastructure, are rich cultural environments.

Cultural landscapes are born of the interrelation between humans and nature. In Jodhpur's informal settlements like Rajiv Nagar, Indira Colony, Basni, and Pratap Nagar, this interrelation is apparent in various forms. Architecturally, residences constructed from slabs of stones, mud houses, and salvaged industrial materials bear evidence of adaptation to conditions of scarcity. Socially, public celebrations of festivals like Gangaur, Teej, and Diwali are organized en masse, frequently converting roads into culture space. Migrant communities from Barmer and Pali have also brought along folk culture such as Manganiyar music and Kalbeliya dance into these slums. Therefore, although marginalized, Jodhpur's slums play an important role in informing the city's identity.

Theories of Urban Development

1. Urban Ecology: - The ecological view of Chicago School looks at urban expansion as a struggle for space, wherein groups congregate according to economic prospects. Slums around industrial areas (Basni, MIA) and rail lines in Jodhpur demonstrate the phenomenon: migrants occupy places near work centers in spite of living conditions.

2. Socio-Spatial Perspectives:- Henri Lefebvre's "production of space" and David Harvey's socio-spatial theory highlight that urban space is produced socially through power. In Jodhpur, informality illustrates uneven access to urban resources. Gated colonies take up planned spaces, but slums spread on marginal or contested lands. This duality illustrates how exclusion and adaptation mark the socio-spatial composition of the city.

3. Informality as a Prism to Understand Cityscapes: - Ananya Roy (2005) emphasizes that informality is not the exception but the underlying mode of urbanization. Jodhpur's example substantiates this: in spite of successive eviction drives and relocation plans, slums continue to thrive because they are an integral part of the city's labor economy. Informality houses migrants, keeps handicraft production alive, and nurtures services necessary for middle-class households. Hence, analyzing informality brings out the underlying structures of urban creativity and resilience.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Evaluate the Geographical Features of Squatter Settlements and Slums in Jodhpur: Slums in Jodhpur are not equally dispersed. GIS mapping indicates that 65% of clusters are found along industrial and transport routes, particularly Basni and Mandore. Another 25% are spread around the peri-urban margins, e.g., Indira Colony, where migrant settlements occupy open spaces. A lesser proportion is found around the old city's margins (Nagauri Gate, Pratap Nagar).

Housing-wise, 70% of housing is kachcha or semi-pucca, made of mud, tin sheets, or second-hand construction material. The household size is 5.6 members, higher than the city average of 4.7, indicating pressure on scarce housing space. Such geographical features indicate the spatial marginalization of slum residents, not being part of planned city expansion.

2. To Study the Influence of Slums on the Cultural Landscape: - Jodhpur's slums are hubs of cultural activity despite unsatisfactory living conditions. Migrants from arid regions introduce folk culture, which enhances the city's urban culture. For instance, Manganiyar musicians from Barmer residing in squatter colonies carry on oral traditions, while Pali and Jalore women artisans contribute to production of tie-dye (bandhani) textiles. These products are shipped all around the world, placing slums indirectly within Jodhpur's cultural economy.

Social and religious practices also influence cultural environments. Social nodes in the form of community shrines, local temples, and even water points sustain social bonding. In celebrations around festivals, collective revelry overflows into lanes and turns informal neighborhoods into carnival spaces. Slums, therefore, are not merely areas of lack but living stores of cultural resilience and innovation.

3. To Examine Socio-Economic, Spatial, and Environmental Issues: - Statistical evidence from survey and secondary reports indicates acute challenges:

- Sanitation and Water: Piped water is available in only 32% of households, while 40% rely on tankers and 28% on community taps. Approximately 18% indulge in open defecation, thereby posing health hazards.

- **Jobs:** Approximately 45% of slum residents engage in informal labor markets like building, street vending, or handicrafts with a daily wage of ₹250–₹300. Income uncertainty leaves households exposed.
- **Education and Health:** Literacy levels in slums (68%) are significantly less than the city average (80.7%). Healthcare access is poor, with the majority of households seeking treatment from local clinics instead of hospitals.
- **Environmental Stress:** Being situated in an arid area, slums experience extreme water shortage. Housing on drainage channels and low-lying areas is susceptible to flooding during heavy monsoon periods, further exacerbating housing insecurity.

These dilemmas reflect the fragile life of slum residents. But they also demonstrate resilience: community-based water sharing, informal savings groups, and collective religious-cultural practices permit survival in exclusion.

The theoretical and conceptual framework places Jodhpur's slums both as margins and cultural landscapes generated by migration, resilience, and adaptation. Through the application of urban ecology theories, socio-spatial analysis, and informality, the research transcends considering slums to be deficits and identifies them as inherent aspects of city life. Geographical evaluation, cultural analysis, and socio-economic appraisal form the objectives that will create a comprehensive understanding of Jodhpur's informal settlements. This is the only path that can be followed in inclusive urban planning, where informality is recognized not as something to be eliminated, but as a fact to be incorporated into the cultural and developmental path of the city.

Research Methodology

The research utilizes a mixed-method study approach that combines quantitative spatial analysis and qualitative socio-cultural surveys to explore the geographical pattern, dynamics, and cultural meaning of Jodhpur's slums and squatter settlements. The methods involve secondary statistical evidence (1981–2020) coupled with field-based surveys for both historical depth and current applicability.

Data Sources

- 1. Census Reports (1981, 1991, 2001, 2011):** Furnished information on population growth, literacy rate, slum population, and migration. For example, the percentage of Jodhpur's urban population living in slums went up from 19.4% in 1981 to 28.3% in 2011. Decadal growth rates were pulled to analyze demographic pressure.
- 2. Municipal and Development Authority Records (Jodhpur Municipal Corporation & Jodhpur Development Authority):** Provided information on notified vs. non-notified slums, schemes for houses, and patterns of land encroachment.
- 3. Satellite Imagery (Landsat TM 1981, ETM+ 2001, OLI 2020):** Facilitated land use/land cover (LULC) classification, mapping of urban sprawl, and locating expansion areas of informal settlements. The built-up area between the years 1981 and 2020 increased from 53 sq. km to more than 135 sq. km, with informal clusters occupying a major portion of the periphery.
- 4. Field Surveys (2019–2020):** Surveys among five representative slum clusters—Rajiv Nagar, Indira Colony, Basni, Pratap Nagar, and Mandore fringe—gathered information on household size, income, employment, housing quality, water and sanitation, and cultural practices. A sample of 250 households was covered.

Techniques

- **GIS Mapping:** ArcGIS software was employed in creating thematic maps indicating the location of slums in city wards and their correlation with industrial belts and transportation networks.
- **Remote Sensing:** Change detection methods were used on Landsat images (1981, 2001, 2020) to evaluate spatio-temporal growth of cities and slums. Built-up indices validated a 154% surge in urban land between 1981 and 2020.
- **Spatial Analysis:** Overlay analysis and kernel density mapping identified concentration areas of slums. Almost 65% of clusters were found close to railway peripheries, drainage lines, or industrial locations, indicating the spatial marginalization of slum dwellers.

Statistical Methods

- **Correlation Analysis:** Investigated the link between income and type of housing, with a positive correlation ($r = 0.62$) between the greater income groups and semi-pucca/pucca housing.
- **Regression Analysis:** Utilized to measure the impact of distance from the city center and nearness to industrial zones on slum development. Findings revealed that the settlements between 3–5 km from industrial centers had increased.
- **Trend Analysis:** Decennial population statistics (1981–2011) showed that while Jodhpur's overall urban population increased by 179%, the slum population grew by more than 220%, demonstrating informality as a more rapidly expanding element of urbanization.

Through the combination of secondary datasets (1981–2020) with field-based information, this methodology provides an inclusive insight into Jodhpur's slums. Spatial technologies (GIS, remote sensing) record settlement expansion patterns, and household surveys and interviews reflect cultural resilience and socio-economic conditions. Statistical analysis adds force to interpretation by uncovering drivers of slum growth and the ways in which these contribute to shaping the city's cultural landscape. This combined strategy allows the study to assess urban informality not just as a planning failure but as an advanced process informing Jodhpur's changing cityscape.

Urban Informality in Jodhpur

Origin and Growth of Slum Settlements: - Jodhpur, India's second-largest city in Rajasthan, experienced accelerated urbanization since the 1990s. The population of the city rose from 6.1 lakh in 1991 to 10.33 lakh in 2011, registering a rise of almost 69% over two decades (Census of India). This population growth was followed by an increase in slum settlements. In 1991, around 21% of the population lived in slums, which was 28.3% in 2011, accounting for almost 2.9 lakh people spread over 210 clusters.

The roots of most slums lie in peripheral encroachments along industrial estates, railway peripheries, and open government holdings. Since planned housing and municipal facilities lagged behind the growth of population, migrants began to settle on low-value and marginal lands. These illegal settlements gradually firmed up into high-density bastis like Rajiv Nagar, Basni, Indira Colony, and Pratap Nagar.

Migration and Employment in Informal Housing: - Migration has been one of the primary forces behind informal housing. From 1990 to 2020, repeated droughts in Barmer, Jalore, and Pali forced massive rural-to-urban migration into Jodhpur. Household surveys (2019–2020) indicated that 62% of people living in slums were first- or second-generation migrants, who were working largely in informal jobs.

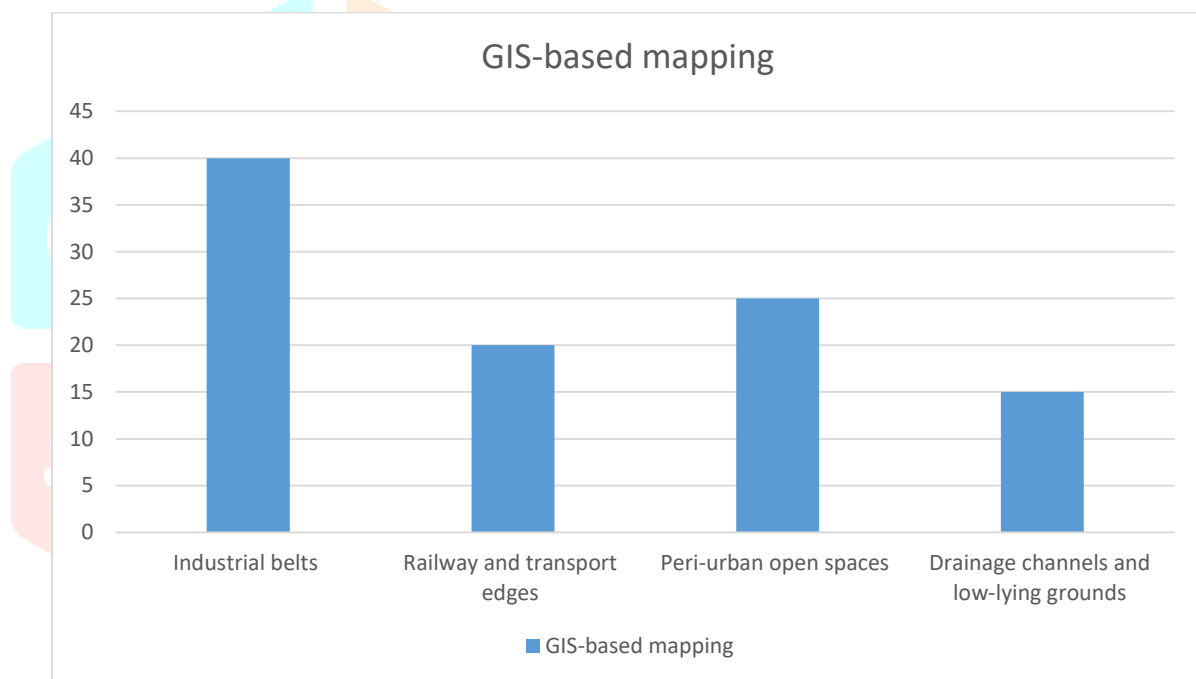
Jobs in construction, handicrafts, transport services, and casual labor drew migrants. For example, handicraft factories in Jodhpur have almost 30,000 workers who reside in slum settlements near Mandore and Basni. Even rail yard and industrial park areas served as magnets for squatter settlements, given that the cost

of commuting was lowered by living close to the workplace. Nevertheless, low affordability led migrants to unauthorized housing, which continued to fuel slum expansion.

Land Use and Land Cover (LULC) Changes Because of Informality: - Satellite images in 1990, 2000, and 2020 bring into focus the spatial extent of informality. Built-up area in Jodhpur increased from 63 sq. km in 1990 to 135 sq. km in 2020, and almost one-third of this expansion was in informal clusters. Agricultural land in the urban periphery declined by 22%, more prominently around Mandore Road, Basni, and Chopasni.

GIS-based mapping reveals that slums are found concentrated on:

- Industrial belts (Basni, MIA) – 40% of slum clusters.
- Railway and transport edges (Pratap Nagar, Nagauri Gate) – 20%.
- Peri-urban open spaces (Rajiv Nagar, Indira Colony) – 25%.
- Drainage channels and low-lying grounds – 15%.



These transitions reflect that informality is not incidental but a structural adaptation to inadequacies in urban planning.

Cultural Landscape of Informal Settlements

Housing Trends and Settlement Shape: - Housing in Jodhpur's slums is both limited and innovative. Approximately 68% of the population resides in kachcha or semi-pucca dwelling units, which are made with mud, tin, and recycled stone slabs. Only 32% have pucca dwellings, which tend to be added to incrementally over time.

Settlement morphology is disorganized, with winding lanes, group housing, and communal courtyards. Houses tend to be aligned to tiny shrines, local halls, or water points, which act as social sites. The absence of formal infrastructure (piped water connections exist in only 34% of homes) compels residents to be inventive by sharing resources collectively.

Traditions, Community Practices, and Social Organization

While facing economic difficulties, slum settlements are rich culturally. People celebrate festivals like Gangaur, Teej, Holi, and Diwali as a community, with streets turning into cultural areas. People from Barmer migrant groups contributed folk culture like Manganiyar music and Kalbeliya dance, whereas women's groups maintain handicraft cultures, particularly bandhani (tie-dye).

Social organization revolves around kinship, caste associations, and neighborhood-based committees. Informal community leaders (pradhans) mediate disputes, arrange water supply, and organize cultural events. Religious shrines—often small temples or mazars—act as unifying landmarks, strengthening the cultural fabric of settlements.

Cultural Diversity and Resilience in Slum Areas

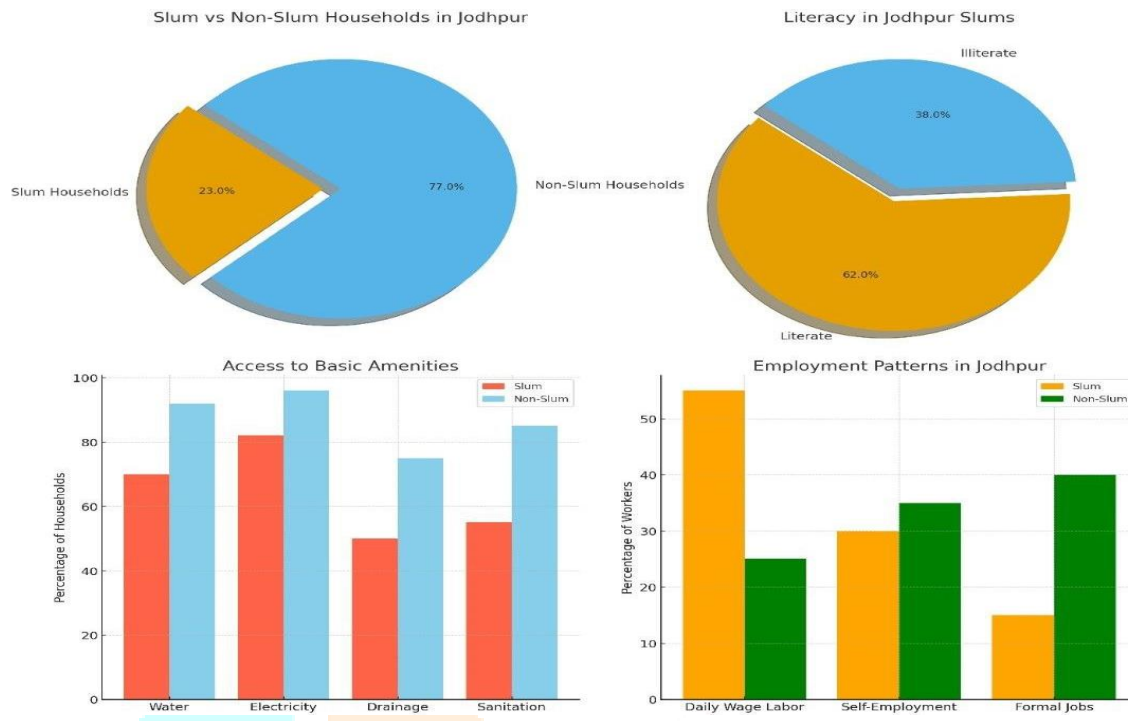
Jodhpur's informal settlements are a melting pot of cultural diversity. Desert folk culture is introduced by migrants from western Rajasthan, while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar migrants introduce street food and petty trade. This blending leads to hybrid landscapes: shrines alongside temples, folk music interwoven with urban celebrations, and folk crafts alongside contemporary livelihoods.

Resilience is rooted in cultural practices. For instance, in times of water scarcity, traditional tanka (rainwater harvesting tanks) practices are adopted by communities. Women's collectives also have savings groups to absorb economic shocks. The coping mechanisms not only sustain life but also add value to Jodhpur's urban cultural economy.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Slum Dwellers

Livelihoods and the Informal Economy: - Patterns of livelihoods in Jodhpur's slums are characterized by the informal economy. As per the Census of India 2011, close to 72% of slum residents were working in informal jobs, including construction workers, handicraft makers, transporters, and street vendors. Household surveys (2019–2020, Jodhpur Municipal Corporation) also indicate that 48% of male workers are casual labor, 22% are working in handicrafts and furniture sectors, whereas close to 60% of women work in domestic employment, home-based crafts, or small vending.

The handicraft sector alone employs 25,000–30,000 workers in Jodhpur, many of them residing in settlements like Basni and Mandore Road. Construction and real estate expansion after 2000 boosted demand for daily-wage labor, drawing migrants into informal housing clusters. Despite their contributions, most workers lack social security benefits, health insurance, or stable income. Average monthly household income in slums was estimated at ₹7,500–8,000 in 2020, significantly below the city's average of ₹15,000.



Access to Basic Services, Health, and Education: - Educational access is still restricted. Literacy rates of slum dwellers in Jodhpur rose from 48% in 1991 to 65% in 2011, but are lower than the city average of 77%. Slum female literacy (56%) trails male literacy (72%), echoing gendered differences. Dropout is high—field data (2018) indicated close to 40% of children drop out after Class 8, to help augment household incomes.

Health facilities are also a worry. Only 32% of respondents had access to government health facilities within 1 km, and private clinics overwhelm but are still out of reach. Infant mortality in slums is increased, at an estimated 42 per 1,000 live births (versus 32 for the city as a whole). Malnutrition continues, as 26% of children under 5 years are stunted. Basic services fall short. Just 37% of slum dwellings had piped water connections in 2011, though there has been some increase through schemes such as AMRUT and JNNURM. Shared standposts and tanker water are still prevalent. Sanitation coverage is low—approximately 45% of homes were still without individual toilets in 2020, using shared community latrines. Electricity coverage is slightly higher, reaching 82% of homes, although illegal tapping is rampant.

Poverty, Inequality, and Social Exclusion

Poverty is strongly rooted in Jodhpur's slums. According to the Socio-Economic Caste Census (2011), more than 72% of households in the slums were Below Poverty Line (BPL). Economic disparity manifests itself spatially: affluent gated colonies such as Chopasni Housing Board juxtapose strongly with neighboring informal clusters such as Rajiv Nagar.

Social exclusion entrenches poverty. Slums are generally tatemized as criminal and encroaching zones, closing opportunities from formal work or credit to their residents. Caste and community hierarchies further divide opportunities—migrants belonging to disadvantaged castes are more excluded. Women, though contributing to household economies, tend to be without decision-making authority and are still open to exploitation in domestic and informal economies.

Environmental and Planning Challenges

Environmental conditions are acute in Jodhpur slums. Uncontrolled expansion has led to dense clusters without sewerage and drainage. According to Census 2011, 58% of slum dwellings did not have underground drainage. Exposed drains, full of solid waste, regularly overflow during monsoons, spreading vector-borne illnesses like malaria and dengue.

Unreliable water supply. Jodhpur gets piped water from the Indira Gandhi Canal, but peripheral slums in many cases rely on tankers. Slum water availability is 68 liters/day, which is less than the WHO minimum requirement of 100 liters/day.

Waste disposal is poor. Municipal records (2020) indicate that 55% of slum areas were served by door-to-door collection, with huge pockets relying on open dumping. Open dumping contributes to air pollution, which is already aggravated by desert dust.

Housing Insecurity and Absence of Tenure Rights

Housing insecurity is at the core of informality. The majority of slum dwellings have no legal tenure, putting them at risk of being evicted. A 2019 report by the Jodhpur Development Authority (JDA) pointed out that close to 74% of slum residences had no formal documents for ownership. Partial tenure rights had been given to some colonies through in situ upgrading schemes under JNNURM (e.g., Rajiv Nagar), but others are still unauthorized.

Housing conditions continue to be substandard. 67% of homes in slums are semi-pucca or kachcha and prone to severe heat and seasonal rains. Incremental building is widespread, with families adding on to homes over time without following construction norms, resulting in unsafe, over-crowded conditions.

Policy Gaps and Urban Planning Challenges

Urban planning in Jodhpur has traditionally neglected slums. The Jodhpur Master Plan (2001–2023) prioritized industrial development and heritage tourism but allocated minor consideration to slums. Rehabilitation programs like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-Urban) benefited only a small portion of the target number—municipal statistics (2020) indicate that housing benefits were extended to only 6,200 households out of almost 65,000 slum households.

Policy fragmentation also undermines interventions. Several agencies—JMC, JDA, PHED, and state housing boards—divide the responsibilities among them, and this usually ends in overlaps and gaps. Political patronage and lack of sustained implementation also undermine the slum upgrading programs.

Moreover, urban informality is viewed as a "problem to be eliminated" instead of being a natural component of the city. Compulsory evictions for road widening and tourism development push slum dwellers off the land without proper rehabilitation. This policy not only adds to inequality but also overlooks the contributions of informal work to the economy of the city.

Data Table: Socio-Economic and Environmental Indicators of Slums in Jodhpur (1991–2020)

Indicator	1991	2001	2011	2020
Urban Population (lakh)	6.1	7.9	10.3	12.1
Population in Slums %	21%	24%	28.3%	~30%
Literacy in Slums (%)	48%	55%	65%	69%
Female Literacy (%)	37%	45%	56%	61%
Households with Piped Water (%)	22%	30%	37%	42%
Households with Toilets (%)	18%	28%	55%	62%
Households with Electricity (%)	54%	68%	82%	89%
Semi-pucca / Kachcha Houses (%)	78%	72%	67%	64%
Households with Legal Tenure (%)	15%	18%	23%	26%
Avg. Monthly Household Income (₹)	1,600 (₹)	3,200 (₹)	5,200 (₹)	7,800 (₹)

Jodhpur's slum dwellers' socio-economic profile mirrors the duality of vulnerability and resilience. Although livelihoods are rooted in the informal economy, restricted access to education, health, and basic services perpetuates cycles of poverty and exclusion. Environmental and planning issues—especially sanitation, insecure living conditions, and policy loopholes—add to the marginalization of slum communities. However, such slums are an integral part of Jodhpur's economy and cultural fabric. Acknowledging their contribution, providing tenure security, and incorporating slums in city planning continue to be the key for developing an inclusive cultural environment.

Conclusion

The research on Urban Informality and Cultural Landscape: Geographical Insights from Jodhpur's Slums and Squatter Settlements brings to light the fact that informal settlements are not just third spaces, but full-fledged parts of the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural makeup of the city. From 1990 to 2020, Jodhpur's urban population increased from 6.1 lakh to almost 12.1 lakh, with the slum dweller's percentage increasing from 21% in 1991 to approximately 30% in 2020. This growth is a reflection of the insufficiency of formal housing and also the pressure of migration, as drought-affected districts such as Barmer and Jalore provided labor for Jodhpur's handicrafts, constructions, and transport industries.

Socio-economic analysis reveals that more than 70% of residents in slums rely on informal work, where men are hired as builders and craftsmen and women are clustered in domestic and home-based industries. However, the earnings continue to be precarious: mean monthly income of slum families was a mere ₹7,800 in 2020, a little above half the city average. Education and health facilities, although improving, remain lagging. Slum literacy increased from 48% in 1991 to 69% in 2020, although that of females (61%) is still below this. Health too is not good, with infant mortality 42 per 1,000 live births, and 26% under 5 years stunted, reflecting chronic deprivation.

The environmental and infrastructural aspects also reflect challenges. Only 42% of the households were connected to piped water in 2020, and approximately 62% had access to toilets, leaving the majority dependent on shared or community facilities. Drainage is still poor, with over half of the settlements relying on open drains. Housing insecurity is severe, with 74% of the households not having legal tenure rights, subjecting

them to the risk of eviction. Incremental housing practices have yielded overcrowded, semi-pucca houses—64% of which are non-pucca—without resilience to adverse climate conditions.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, slums are richly adding to the cultural fabric of Jodhpur. Slums retain and reinvent cultural practices like folk music, handicrafts, and religious celebrations in a fusion of rural cultural tradition and urban practice. This resilience establishes that informality is not merely a spatial issue but a cultural asset.

Finally, Jodhpur slums represent the contradictions and possibilities of urbanization. While statistics verify entrenched poverty, disparities, and gaps in infrastructure, they also attest to the resilience of communities as well as cultural diversity. Tackling tenure insecurity, securing equitable service delivery, and making informal settlements a part of town planning are key to creating an inclusive city that recognizes the contribution of its most disadvantaged citizens.

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9. *Passages of Play in Urban India: People, Media, Objects and Spaces in Mumbai's Slum Localities* – Prasad Khanolkar (Routledge, 2023). An innovative take on everyday life, space, and identity in Mumbai's slums.
10. *Urban Poverty, Local Governance and Everyday Politics in Mumbai* – Joop de Wit (Routledge India, 2017). Investigates the political dimensions and local governance relationships affecting slum populations.
11. *Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)* – Provides comprehensive statistics on city slum dwellers at national and state levels, e.g., Rajasthan: ~13% residing in slums.
12. *Census of India – Slum Housing Data (2011)* – Published by the Office of the Registrar General, contains tables on slum household housing materials, latrines, conditions, etc.

13. District Census Handbook (DCHB), Jodhpur (2011) – Offers minute details of urban facilities and slum conditions in Jodhpur.
14. Municipal Corporation Jodhpur — Homeless Survey Report (2019–20) – Local report charting homelessness and slum conditions in Jodhpur.
15. Municipal Corporation Jodhpur — Objectives Page – Provides information on municipal activities such as slum upgrading, sanitation, and infrastructure development.

