



CHAPTER - I

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I_N_T_R_O_D_U_C_T_I_O_N

The present study, is confined to the slums in Solapur city, a district place in Maharashtra. Before dealing with these slums, a brief introduction of the nature and problems of this modern phenomenon of industrialized society, namely the slum, will be useful.

The intricate organization of modern society and the complex processes that have urged its growth have been major subjects of sociological inquiry for over a century. In every major city in the highly industrial or underdeveloped world one fifth to one half population live in slums or slum-like conditions today. The rapid growth of big cities has been a matter of great concern to many westerners. It is pointed out that affluent countries like the U.S.A., West Germany, England and others are still plagued with herlems and dark ghettos inspite of many attempts to clear slums and renew cities. In developing countries like India the problem of increasing slums is still more acute.

After the Second World War the newly liberated colonial countries have launched a concerted programme of industrialization based on mixed economy. During the last twenty years or so, the pattern of urban development emerging in these areas has drawn serious attention. The rapid growth of big cities in this part of the world has bred those refuse dumps of human misery known as slums.

All the big cities in this area such as Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Karachi, Singapur and others are the examples. The economic and social planning pursued by these Governments have not only failed to counteract the growth of slum conditions, but are aggravating them. According to the various studies made by the UNO, ILO and other organizations the pattern of city growth exhibit an ever increasing deterioration of the total material, social and cultural atmosphere.

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SLUM :

Although we use the word 'slum' very frequently and can point out the phenomenon in the big cities very easily, for a scientific study of the same we have to define the term in a clearcut manner. Opinions differ about the definition, nature and the characteristics of the slum. But it is agreed by all that the slum is a by-product of the urban complex created by industrial revolution. It is an outcome of modern industrialization and urbanization. It is often said to be the cancer of the body of the city. Every city, where the working class is crowded together has one or more slums.

The dictionary meaning of slum is "A populous area characterised by poverty, poor housing etc."⁽¹⁾

(1) Websters New World Dictionary, New Revised and expanded Ed. 1973.

Gist and Halbert have defined the slum as "an area of poor houses and poor people. It is an area of transition and decadence, a disorganized area occupied by human derelicts, a catch all for the criminal for the defective, the down - and - out."⁽²⁾

According to Bergel "Slums may be characterized as areas of substandard housing condition within a city".⁽³⁾

The definition of the slum given in the report on Urban Land Policies of the United Nations is however slightly different. According to a UNESCO document, "a slum is a building, a group of buildings, or area characterized by over-crowding, deterioration, unsanitary conditions or absence of facilities or amenities which, because of these conditions or any of them, endanger the health, safety or morals of its inhabitants or the community."⁽⁴⁾

(2) Gist Noelp and Halbert L.A. 'Urban Society', Thomas Y. Crowell Co. New York, Fourth Ed., 1956 (P. 141).

(3) Egon Earnest Bergel, 'Urban Sociology' McGraw Hill Book Co. Inc. New York, 1955 (P. 410).

(4) Quoted by Nels Anderson in "The Urban Community" 1960, P. 191, from Urban Land Policies, New York, United Nations, April 1952.

Thus, there is no general agreement on the exact definition of slum. Some writers regard it as special type of disorganized area. Some, however, do not employ the area concept in their studies of slums. Others treat the terms 'the Slums' and 'blighted area' as synonymous. But in this context it seems preferable to follow Quinn. Quinn holds that the term 'blighted area' is applicable to both residential and non-residential sections, while 'Slum' should be reserved for residential areas only.

As Bergel says "A slum is always an area. A single, neglected building even in the worst stage of deterioration does not make a slum'. Moreover, all studies have also stressed the fact that the slum is an area of poverty.

In short - (1) Slum is basically a typical residential area. (2) It is an area of darkness, an area of poverty. (3) The slum dwellers belong to the lowest stratum of the society. (4) In case of India, another dimension of this locality is that it consists of not only economically backward, but even socially backward people (belonging to Scheduled castes). (5) Many times in addition to the same economic and social status of the residents of a particular slum, there is another factor of common ethnic, regional or linguistic background. Thus we

find South-Indian labourers (Telugus, Tamilians etc.) staying together to form a common linguistic sub-culture of the slum.

THE ORIGIN OF SLUMS :

It is very difficult to trace the origin of the slums. Eventhough it is mainly an outcome of the modern industrialized, too-much crowded and rapidly developed cities, there are examples of the ancient cities wherein slum-like localities were present. Bergel has pointed out that the residential areas of the poor of the Roman Empire at times approximated slum conditions.⁽⁵⁾ In India, because of the very nature of the stratified and segregated caste localities in villages and towns, slum-like conditions were in existence in the localities of the socalled 'out castes' and 'Shudras'. However, in modern cities the slums appear more distinctively. The industrial revolution accentuated the growth of existing cities and created new industrial centres. These offered good employment prospects. Large scale migrations to the cities has become a continuous feature of changing modern societies. The poor workers were an insignificant factor in the industrial production system. They were mostly accomodated in left over spaces.

(5) Bergel, E.E. - Urban Sociology (1955); P. 412.

If by the housing problem we mean cramped, insanitary dwellings where people are forced to live, then the housing problem is perhaps as old as human history. Yet it is only since the beginning of the industrial revolution that the housing problem or the housing shortage became acute. This is because with the industrialization and the consequent migration of large populations into towns and cities according to a peculiar intensification of the bad housing conditions of the workers - a colossal increase in rents. Still greater congestion in the separate houses and for some the impossibility of finding a place to live in at all.

Slums are a reality of urban life and society. Every city in the world has a slum where the poor live a miserable life. The slum dwellers are mostly the rural migrants who have left their villages and have come to the cities in search of livelihood.

When migrants reach the city they invariably find themselves pushed into the slums or squatter settlements.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION IN INDIA :

The rapid urbanization has created an enormous additional burden on the scarce resources of the country. Every year nearly three million new people are added to the Urban centres.⁽⁶⁾ In the decade 1961-71 the overall population grew by 24.7% whereas Urban population grew by 38.23%.

(6) Science Today; April 1980, P. 28.

Of the total population of 548 million in 1971, more than 108 million or (19.9%) lived in urban areas. Eight metropolitan cities accounted for 25.3 million of this urban population. Besides, towns with population over 10,00,000 increased from 81 in 1951 to 142 in 1971. Similarly the number of towns with populations between 50,000 and 1,00,000 had increased from 102 in 1951 to 198 in 1971.⁽⁷⁾

The large scale industries were started in India in the latter half of 19th century. However the real growth of industries took place only after the First World War and since independence in 1947, we see determined and planned efforts to establish a number of industries throughout the country. This has caused rapid urbanization and can be verified with the help of tables Nos 1 and 2 showing urbanization during the last 70 years.

TABLE : 1

Urbanization in India⁽⁸⁾

Year	No.of cities	No.of towns	Urban Population
1901	27	1,910	2.6 Crores
1911	25	1,913	2.6 "
1921	28	2,050	2.8 "
1931	32	2,261	3.4 "
1941	49	2,427	4.5 "
1951	74	3,057	6.2 "
1961	107	2,690	7.9 "
1971	-	2,921	10.9 "

(7) Dr. J.F.Bulsara, 'The Patterns of Social Life in Metropolitan areas; (P. 10).

TABLE : 2

Percentage of Rural and Urban population in India⁽⁸⁾

Year	Rural area	Urban area
1921	88.8	11.2
1931	88.0	12.0
1941	86.1	13.9
1951	82.7	17.3
1961	82.0	18.0
1971	80.1	19.9

As the table Nos. 1 and 2 show since 1941 there has been a phenomenal increase both in the number of cities and the urban population. In 1971 India's urban population rose nearly to 109 millions. Eventhough India is predominantly rural country, its urban population has increased from 11.2% in 1921 to 19.9 in 1971.

Under the impact of expanding industries in order to satisfy the increasing demand for war supplies during the Second World War, the population of the larger industrial cities began to grow at an accelerated pace. Since the independence the tempo of urban expansion has heightened and the magnet metropolitan regions have been attracting large numbers of rural immigrants within and around their precincts.

(8) विलास आ. सांगवे (संपादक) "भारतातील सामाजिक समस्या"

पॉप्युलर प्रकाशन, मुंबई, १९७९ पा.नं.२०५ व २०६

The feature of this agglomerative urbanism is that it takes place without planning and very rapidly. For instance the 1961 census enumerated the migrants living in Greater Bombay at the colossal figure of 26.67 lakhs, 17.18 lakhs being male and 9.49 being female.

The socio-Economic Survey of 21 cities carried out under the auspices of Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission reveals that all the cities are suffering from a tragic shortage of all the essential services for their growing numbers of citizens. Consequently the disordered, dirty locations, would continue to grow and become the part of city life.

The people inhabiting the slums of several Indian cities are denied even the basic gifts of nature. They have in deep, dingy and dilapidated buildings without any sanitation.

These conditions endanger the health, safety, and morals of the dwellers. Most of the inhabitants belong to low income groups. It is noticed that delinquency, crime and other vices are found in abundance and most men are drunkards and suffer from poverty and ignorance.

Various studies conducted in this context also reveal that by the end of this century there will be more and more metropolitan cities and the densities in metropolitan cities will accentuate. Thus the present metropolitan cities are expected to get even more crowded. The result would be

larger slums, additional squatters, increased traffic problems and the accelerated growth of social evils.

Larger agglomerations of rural migrants will enlarge existing towns or increase the number of new ones and the influx of village and town inhabitants into cities and metropolitan regions will intensify the phenomenon of urbanism.

MIGRATION :

Migration is a common feature of the human society. It is said that the present slum dwellers are rural migrants to the city. After the evolution of Factory system of production, agricultural activities became comparative under paying. Mechanised agriculture became too much costly and small farmers found it difficult to make use of their small landholdings without the aid of mechanism, and modern mechanical system was beyond their limit of finances. Hence the transformation of agriculture to the commercial and mechanised form and to establish their living on agricultural activities became a distant dream. Meanwhile the rise of factory system in the urban areas had offered an opportunity to earn at least one time bread for a man. This is how the migration of the rural poor and unemployed or underemployed population started. What is true of the agriculture class is also true of the small artisans and many other groups too, who trek to the cities in search of work. Besides, the absence of rigid social barriers in the city life also

helped the ruralities to quit the native place.

Census statistics has revealed that since 1921 the trend of population in India appears to have inclined towards urbanization (See Table No.1). The regime of British Empire shook the Indian rural and immobile socio-economic system. New trends in trade and commerce, mechanised production and such other things got fill up in the British regime. Consequently the picture of rural India began to change. The statistical figures (in Table No.1) clearly demonstrate rise in population in urban area from 1951. It is believed that immigration has been the major factor that caused urbanization in India.

According to Zakaria during the period of 1941-51, 82 lakh people have migrated to the cities in India.⁽⁹⁾ The census survey of 1961-71 has recorded that the migration from rural to urban during the period was very high. Therefore, the rise of metropolitan cities, density of population, growth in towns and cities in India have given birth ^{to} for urban problems. Almost majority of cities, in India are facing the crises as regards land, transportation, accommodation, alongwith the urban disorganization problems like slums and law and order.

(9) Science Today, April, 1980; P. 27.

Under the pull of industrialization, the problems such as hunger and unemployment of the rural population in urban India are bound to expand. Larger agglomerations of rural migrants will enlarge existing towns, increase the new ones and create their specific and peculiar problems.

CAUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GROWTH OF SLUMS IN INDIA :

Slums are found in almost all countries of the world. But in an economically backward and over-populated country like India, the problem is of larger magnitude. According to some recent estimate, four out of every five families in India are either houseless or without proper housing.⁽¹⁰⁾ It is estimated that 20% of Indias Urban population lives in slums or squatter settlements.

The traditional functions of the slum was to provide shelter to the new comers. In India slum society is usually composed of labourers, mill-workers, petty traders, semi-skilled workers, cleaners, drivers and others engaged in low-paying occupations. Majority of them belong to scheduled caste and tribes, though a few members of the upper castes are also found in the slums.

(10) 'Slum Children of India', Dr. S.D.Sing and K.P.

Pothen; Deep and Deep publication, 1982.

Slums in India are caused by a number of inter-related factors. Industrialization and the resulting mass migration of ruralities to urban centres in search of better living and employment is, of course, the basic cause. However the slum is a complex product of many factors, economic and social backwardness. Let us take into consideration the major factors responsible for the growth of slums in India.

1) Industrialization and migration of rural masses to the Urban areas :

After independence, the pace of industrialization has increased in our country, and large as well as medium sized industries have been established in several parts of the country. These have attracted rural masses to the cities for employment. When they come to the city, they have to accomodate themselves in congested slum areas only.

2) Absence of adequate housing facilities in the urban areas :

Most of our old cities are highly congested and over-crowded. They have ~~suffe=~~ sprung-up in an un-planned and haphazard manner. In such cities the problem of housing accomodation is accute since long. In such circumstances thousands of industrial workers, who have not adequate residential facilities, try to make some temporary arrangement near the place of their work. Thus

large number of unhealthy and unhygienic huts sprung-up near the factories. These naturally turn into slums.

3) Poor Wages :

Large number of industrial and commercial workers are earning poor wages. Many of them are employed on temporary basis. Some of these industrial labours have a migratory nature too. They can not afford to have pucca houses with proper facilities, and they choose the slums.

4) High cost of Urban land and building material :

Urban land is very costly. The building materials are also very costly. So it is inevitable for all the low income sections of the community to live in the hutments or slums.

5) Poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, population explosion :

Population explosion, poverty and unemployment work together in a country like ours for the formation of slums. Illiterate people can not adopt family planning and welfare techniques to control population. Illiteracy promotes ignorance, superstition and fatalism. Thus rapidly increasing population cannot cope up with limited housing facilities and hence substandard and crowded localities develop.

6) Vested interests :

There are some land-lords who own slum lands and Slum houses. They collect rent from the slum-dwellers without improving the conditions of Slum houses. Such land-lords also prevent the Government, as well as the Municipal Corporations to interfere.

7) Negligence by the Government :

In the past, the municipalities and the State as well as Central Govt. also did not pay sufficient attention to the prevention of Slums; or towards their improvement or clearance.

8) Interest of the Politicians :

Even if policy decisions are taken to remove the Slums, the politicians with a vested interest on bulk votes, prevent or oppose such decisions or their executions.

9) Slum Mentality :

There are people who continue to remain in Slums, although they could easily live in better areas. They prefer to rent out their own well-built houses and live in Slums, because they are habituated to live there. They have completely adjusted with the Slum environment.

Besides the above mentioned reasons, there are several other causes too, such as ecological processes of the city, cultural affinity of a particular community owing

to regional, religious or linguistic affiliations, political exploitation etc. All these causes taken together are responsible for the creation and growth of Slums.