

Spatial Variation in Urbanization and Slum Development in India: Issues and Challenges in Urban Planning

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Abstract : Background: India is urbanizing very fast and urbanisation in India is treated as one of the most crucial components of economic growth. Though the pace of urbanisation (31.6 per cent in 2011) is however slower and lower than the average for Asia but the absolute number of people residing in cities and towns has increased substantially. Rapid urbanization leads to urban poverty and it is well represented in slums. Currently India has four metropolises and 53 million plus cities. All of them have significant slum population but the standard of living and success of slum development programmes varies across regions. Objectives: Objectives of the paper are to show how urbanisation and slum development varies across space; to show spatial variation in the standard of living in Indian slums; to analyse how the implementation of slum development policies like JNNURM, Rajiv Awas Yojana varies across cities and bring different results in different regions and what are the factors responsible for such variation. Data Sources and Methodology: Census 2011 data on urban population and slum households and amenities have been used for analysing the regional variation of urbanisation in 53 million plus cities of India. Special focus has been put on Kolkata Metropolitan Area. Statistical techniques like z-score and PCA have been employed to work out Standard of Living Deprivation score for all the slums of 53 metropolises. ARC-GIS software is used for making maps. Standard of living has been measured in terms of access to basic amenities, infrastructure and assets like drinking water, sanitation, housing condition, bank account, and so on. Findings: 1. The first finding reveals that migration and urbanization is very high in Greater Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata; but slum population is high in Greater Mumbai (50% population live in slums), Meerut, Faridabad, Ludhiana, Nagpur, Kolkata etc. Though the rate of urbanization is high in southern and western states but the percentage of slum population is high in northern states (except Greater Mumbai). 2. Standard of Living also varies widely. Slums of Greater Mumbai and North Indian Cities score fairly high in the index indicating the fact that standard of living is high in those slums compare to the slums in eastern India (Dhanbad, Jamshedpur, Kolkata). Therefore, though Kolkata have relatively lesser percentage of slum population compare to north and south Indian cities but the standard of living in Kolkata's slums is deplorable. 3. It is interesting to note that even within Kolkata Metropolitan Area slums located in the southern and eastern municipal towns like Rajpur-Sonarpur, Pujali, Diamond Harbour, Baduria and Dankuni have lower standard of living compare to the slums located in the Hooghly Industrial belt like Titagarh, Rishrah, Srerampore etc. Slums of the Hooghly Industrial Belt are older than the slums located in eastern and southern part of the urban agglomeration. 4. Therefore, urban development and emergence of slums should not be the only issue of urban governance but standard of living should be the main focus. Slums located in the main cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata get more attention from the urban planners and similarly, older slums in a city receives greater political attention compare to the slums of smaller cities and newly emerged slums of the peripheral parts.

Keywords : urbanisation, slum, spatial variation, India

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