

**Slums and Urban Environment: Study of Slums in Bangalore City**

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**Abstract**

One of the inevitable and almost unavoidable social consequences of urbanization and industrialization has been the unabated proliferation of slums accompanied by environmental degradation among much else. Slums created in this way have come to pose many serious problems to urban communities. Slums and the environmental degradation is one such serious problem which has so far received hardly any serious attention of sociologists. One of the causes of growth of slums as has been noted rather repeatedly is the rural-urban migration. Inevitably, these people find shelter wherever they find vacant unclaimed lands however inhospitable and unhygienic they may be for a stable and sustainable living.

**Introduction**

One of the inevitable and almost unavoidable social consequences of urbanization and industrialization has been the unabated proliferation of slums accompanied by environmental degradation among much else. Slums created in this way have come to pose many serious problems to urban communities. Slums and the environmental degradation is one such serious problem which has so far received hardly any serious attention of sociologists. One of the causes of growth of slums as has been noted rather repeatedly is the rural-urban migration. Inevitably these people find shelter wherever they find vacant unclaimed lands however inhospitable and unhygienic they may be for a stable and sustainable living.

The purpose of this study has been to understand the interaction across urbanization, proliferation of slums and environmental degradation. The phenomenon of environmental degradation in the form of pollution of Air, Water, Soil and Noise has been primarily attributed to enormous increase in vehicular traffic, discharge of effluents by industrial units and generation of unlimited unwieldy solid waste, not to speak of rapid depletion of resources due to rapid growth of population in general and urban population in particular. Indeed very few attempts have been made to examine these problems in the context of the inter-linkages that seem to exist across urbanization, slums and environmental degradation.

**Objectives:**

1. To understand the interaction across urbanization, proliferation of slums and environmental degradation

**Methodology**

This study is based on primary data, which include interview schedule, case study and observation method.

**Discussions and Results**

Table-1 Housing Conditions

Sl No	Housing Conditions	Respondents	Percentage
1	Pucca house	50	20.4
2	Kutchha house	114	45.6
3	Huts	86	34
Total		250	100

Inadequate housing stock and poor housing conditions create lot of environmental hazards. Poor families often lack the resources that they are unable to avoid situations which

might be degrading of their environment. Poor people in crowded squatter settlements frequently endure inadequate access to safe drinking water. Lack of potable safe drinking water forces them to depend upon and overdraw by over-pumping and depletion of ground water. In latest comprehensive large scale sample survey on housing conditions was carried out by NSSO during January and June 1993. 49<sup>th</sup> round in both rural and urban area with a sample of 1,19,403 Household, 75,036 from rural sector 44,367 from urban sector. Some of the key results of the survey are as follows:

In the rural sector the share of kutcha, semi-pucca and pucca houses were 32% each respectively whereas in urban sector about 75% householdspucca houses. Table-1 reveals that the 46% reside in kutcha houses only 20% reside in pucca houses and 34% are in huts respectively This does not tally with what is reported in the said survey. On the other way round, this would mean that living conditions in slums in Bangalore are very degradable indeed and the same has been reflected in the table above.

Table-2 Living Space

Sl No	Living Space	Respondents	Percentage
1	10X10	45	18
2	15X10	70	28
3	20X20	46	18.4
4	20X15	23	9.2
5	10X30	2	0.8
6	20X30	64	25.6
Total	-	250	100

It can be noticed from table-2 that 18 percent of the sample has very small living space of 10X10. 28 percent of the sample has living space of 15X10 and 25.6 percent has living space of 20X30 which is the highest space. The remaining sample falls in the range as follows: 20X20 (18.4%), 20X15 (9.2%) and 30X10 (0.8%). Almost half of the sample owns the houses they are living in i.e. 51.6% and the remaining sample i.e. 48.4% are in rented houses.

It is found that majority of the sample i.e. about 74.4% throw the waste either in open space or gutter. This is the sad state of affair which is affecting the city environment to the maximum extent. The possible reasons for this may be lack of efforts from the Corporation to collect the garbage especially from the slums, lack of infrastructure necessary for the garbage disposal, lack of awareness among the slum people about dangers posed by un-disposed accumulated solid waste. Though the Corporation is making efforts by launching projects exclusively to improve the garbage disposal called 'Swacha Bengaluru' and 'Nirmala NagaraYojane' with the involvement of voluntary organizations both in the city limits and also in the CMC areas, still a lot of improvement is needed in this direction.

Table-3 Latrine (toilet) facilities

Sl No	facilities available	Respondents	Percentage
1	Within the house	6	2.4
2	Outside the house	140	56
3	Public toilets	60	24
4	Open defecation	38	15.2
5	Shared latrine	6	2.4
Total		250	100

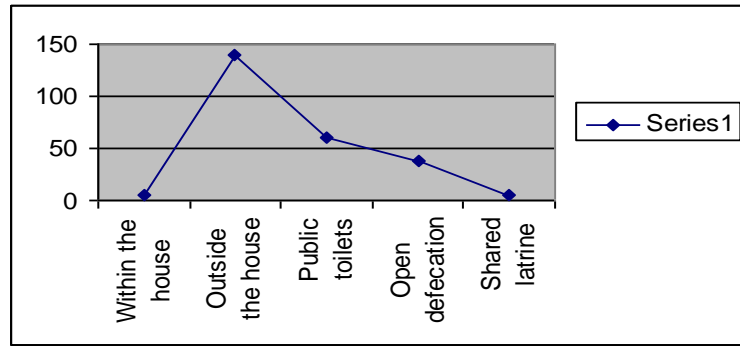


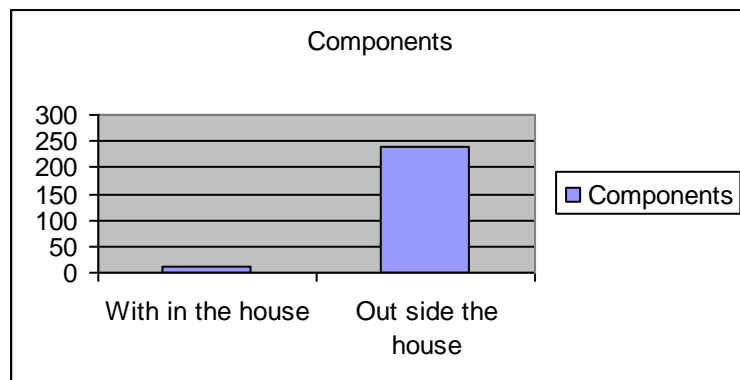
Figure-3 Latrine (Toilet facilities)

From the point view of clean environment, community hygiene, family hygiene, and personal hygiene, toilet and bath-room facilities play a very important role. In several slums due to lack of latrine facilities slum people defecate in open air and majority children do so. In areas very close to slums, people living in neighbourhood having felt the heat of environmental degradation due to open defecation government and non-governmental organizations have been extending benefits of toilet facilities to slums. The study points out that there is lack of public toilet facilities in the slums as only 1.2% of the house-holds have access to the public toilets. A total of 58.4% of them have individual toilets and out of the remaining, 24% of them use public toilets besides 2.4% of shared latrine users and 15.2% are open defecators. The central government has given acceptance for the construction of 1000 toilets in the slums of Karnataka under “Nirmala BharathAbhiyana”. Out of 1000, 500 will be with in Bangalore slums.

Table-4 Drinking water availability

Sl No	water availability	Respondents	Percentage
1	Within the house	10	4
2	Outside the house	240	96
Total		250	100

Figure- 4 Drinking water facilities



Another variable which could reflect the health condition of people is safe drinking water. It is reported that 90% of the sample draw water from community taps. This clearly indicates that there is still lack of basic amenities in slums. Lack of individual taps has led to the non-availability of sufficient safe drinking water. Given the depletion of underground

water, irregular rains, the picture is becoming increasingly precarious. Only 4.4% of the total sample is able to possess individual home based taps which shows the poor accessibility of the facilities by the respondents and also their inability to avail the existing facilities. Another reason for this could be lack of space for having taps inside the house, as the living space available is very little and inadequate even for proper accommodation. 3.2% of hand pumps are there including 2% of common and 1.2% of individual pumps. The depletion of ground water level drastically in the last decade may be attributed for less number of hand pumps along with high cost factor involved in getting an individual hand pump through digging of bore-well. The roads in the slum are still mud ones and during rainy seasons the potholes fill up with water proving dangerous to both pedestrians and riders.

### **Conclusion**

The factors helping for maintenance and improvement of environment such as Greenery which improves air quality, protection of water quality, increased potable water availability, stabilization of climate, preservation of biodiversity, prohibition of noise and vibration has to be stressed upon so as to bring awareness about the importance and need of the hour to address these aspects much seriously and to ensure a safe and healthy living environment for the slum dwellers in particular and city dwellers in general.

### **Findings:**

Inadequate housing stock and poor housing conditions create lot of environmental hazards. Poor families often lack the resources that they are unable to avoid situations which might be degrading of their environment. From the point view of clean environment, community hygiene, family hygiene, and personal hygiene, toilet and bath-room facilities play a very important role.