



Slums - Origin and Development in City of Chennai

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Abstract

A slum is a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions. The factors responsible for the growth of slums are the proper planning, formulation of policies, implementation and monitoring. This paper is an attempt on the researcher in knowing the origin and development of slums in the city of Chennai.

Keywords: Slum, Urbanization, Marginalized.

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Introduction

Slum - Derivation

The word slum has been derived from 'Slump' which is used by geomorphologists to describe 'downward intermittent movement of rock debris'. Origin of the slum to the word 'slumber' meaning 'unknown, back-streets or alleys, wrongly presumed to be sleeping and quiet'. Slum is also associated with slavery. Wealth Americans used to keep slaves who work as domestic servants and lived in poorly constructed houses.¹

Slum - Definition

According to National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) 58th Round (July 2002–December 2002), 'A slum is a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions.'

Chennai city

The City of Chennai, the Capital of Tamil Nadu, is situated in the eastern coast of India in latitude 13^o-4' North and longitude 80^o-15' East. It stretches nearly 25-60 Km.along the coast, from Thiruvannmiyur in the South to Thiruvottiyur in the North. Its corporate area is 128.88 Sq.Km. with a population of 24, 69,449 in 1971 and is surrounded by the Chingleput District of Tamil Nadu on all sides except on the eastern side where the Bay of Bengal forms the boundary.²

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Reasons for the growth of slums

The general problems which are the byproduct of certain kind of urbanization characteristic of low Income countries are shortage of houses, critical inadequacies in public utilities similar to power, water, health facilities, sanitation etc deteriorating urban environment, urban unemployment, congestion, acute poverty, slums proliferation.³ The factors identified as causes for the increase of slums were (1) Poverty; (2) Physical conditions (3) Population growth, (4) Industrial growth (5) Development of trade and commerce, (6) Absence of planning and (7) Political reasons. The average size of the slum families also increased from 4.21 persons in 1961 to 4.50 in 1971.⁴ Though such factors are responsible for the growth of slums the proper planning, formulation of policies, implementation and monitoring would prevent the further growth of slums.

S.No	Year	City population	No of slums	No of slum House holds	No. of Slum dwellers
1	1961	1,749,600	548	97,851	4,12,168 (23.5)
2	1971	2,572,967	1202	1,63,804	7,37,531 (28.6)
3	1981	3,276,622	NA	NA	6,33,704 (19.3)
4	1991	3,841,396	564	NA	2,18,595 (5.6)
5	2001	43,43,645	1431	1,78,343	8,19,873 (18.8)
6	2011	46,46,732	NA	3,29,827	13,42,337 (28.8)

Source: Primary census abstract data, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 & 2011.

The researcher analyses that the percentage of slum population has decreased from 23.5% in 1961 to 5.6% in 1991 due to Green Revolution. However the percentage of slum population has increased from 5.6% in 1991 to 28.8% in 2011. This indicates that because of Agrarian crises in rural areas after 2000 the rural poor would have migrated to urban area in search of livelihood. The unskilled labourers could be migrants from rural area arrived to city for source of income. These socially and economically marginalized are unable to live in decent houses. With their low income they are afford to make their survival in slums. Consequently the percentage of slum population has increased from 5.6 in 1991 to 28.8 in 2011.

Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY)

Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) was a vision statement of the president of India in 2009, placed in Parliament for a 'slum free India'. First phase of RAY was initiated in June 2011. The programme ensures basic services, transport facilities, tenure security, making affordable houses along with the provision of basic services like water supply, sanitation and power connection. RAY also insists on giving property right to slum women.⁵ Government through its effective involvement should be able to provide basic facilities to residents of slums.

Conclusion

It is the responsibility of the government, society and every citizen to contribute their wealth, wisdom, talent, effort, ability and potentialities towards the welfare of the neglected ones of the nation. So that everyone can experience the joy of living in an evil free, equal, fraternal and just society. Both rich and poor may have access to urban advantage, availing the benefits with respect to education, health, nutrition, employment, transport, communication and the natural resources.

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