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Impact of Poor Waste Management and Other Services in Urban Slums and Unauthorized Settlements

- Urban slums or unauthorized colonies and settlements have a great impact on the environment.
- Explosion of world population resulted in urban slums and continuous development of urban slums over the years poses an urgent environment threat due to unsanitary conditions and rampant disposal of untreated waste water and municipal solid waste in drains, rivers and other water bodies polluting them.
- People in these slums live in poorly constructed houses lacking vitals like social amenities and environmental services especially those related to water and sanitation. Hence, they are susceptible to dangerous diseases such as typhoid, hepatitis, cholera.
- There are 675 slums in Delhi and 82 have been provisionally added, i.e., they are yet to be notified under section 2(g) of Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) Act, 2010 with cut-off date of 2006. All clusters prior to 1.1.2006 will be notified under section 2(g).
- There is a policy for their rehabilitation and relocation. For this the cut-off date is 1.1.2015.
- Clusters are unauthorized settlements, which come up on vacant land parcels which are intended for development of parks, schools, hospitals, which could not otherwise be developed. This is mostly government land.
- People who come for employment squatted upon these vacant land pockets.
- Government has launched schemes to provide basic facilities till they are rehabilitated or relocated such as community toilets, cement concrete paved lanes, drains on both sides of the roads, small parks for children to play, Basti Vikas Kendras for social activities, streetlight connections, water is supplied through hydrants and in some areas through regular connections by Delhi Jal Board (DJB), sanitation is being taken care of by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).
- Initially their expansion was horizontal, now the clusters are also proliferating vertically.
- The government has evolved many schemes for their rehabilitation and relocation.
- Earlier the people living in these slums were given plots in peripheral areas of Delhi. Then the government thought of providing them housing (EWS flats) instead of plots under Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission scheme launched in 2005. After 2007, a scheme came up jointly by Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (DSIIDC) and DUSIB, and lot of flats were constructed. Around 52 k flats were constructed and 16 k are still under construction.
- Very few people were relocated and people continue to live in these urban slums.

- Although lots of facilities have been extended, there is a problem of coordination between various departments in these slums.
- A concept of “Aadarsh (Model) Basti” was introduced and few NGOs were actively involved. Few clusters have benefited but rests are continuing to live in the same manner.
- Most of the flats constructed are in the periphery and people don’t want to go to far-flung areas.
- There is a large population which is already staying in slum areas. It is difficult to shift them as source of income is attached to these areas.
- There is a clause in DUSIB Act that any relocation will be done within 5 km radius of their cluster, so that their livelihood is not uprooted.
- Constructing new flats and providing facilities is not difficult. The challenge lies in maintaining them once they have been constructed to keep them functional such as sanitation.
- Year to year monitoring and maintenance is very important especially in these high-density areas.
- Fire safety is another important issue. Untreated garbage lying in the open is a source of methane.
- Implementation of policies is poor. Despite providing many services, finances and lot of hard work, slums are not being improved.
- Because of the narrow lanes, vehicles cannot go in to collect waste and if it is collected manually, there is no space to keep it till it is picked up by vehicles. Proper waste disposal is the responsibility of every citizen living in that particular locality.
- We are not complying with the components of the Master Plan.
- Integration between functional areas of development is missing.
- Slum is a byproduct of development, but they are not an inevitable byproduct. They are an avoidable byproduct. It is an unorganized sector. There is a need to educate and train people.
- The vision should be to reduce the slum population.
- As population density increases, so does the waste that is generated and sewage. More infrastructure and trained manpower are required to manage them.
- Environmental burdens are addressed but not mitigation measures leading to accumulation of problems and health hazards.
- Integration, attachment, association and development have to go together.
- There are around 3.4 lakh jhuggis. Relocating them is a gigantic task.
- Most of the workforce in development projects are from outside, who settle down and establish a slum even after the project is over. There is a need to create workforce within the city.
- Similar problems are being faced in resettlement colonies.
- In 2020, the affordable housing rental scheme was launched. The flats lying vacant can be used as rental housing. This may take care of the labor which comes from outside. Through rent, maintenance and other expenses can be met.
- Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is taking up many *in situ* rehabilitation projects. The contractor who is taking up the *in-situ* project will pay Rs. 6000 rent per month to DUSIB for 3 years and later on it will be reverted to DUSIB.
- However, the problem is that people do not want to go to these houses even if they are within 5 km radius.
- Slums are a social and political problem.
- There should be a common minimum program for urban cities cutting across all party lines, e.g., if there is to be zero tolerance for slums, then all parties should agree to it.
- If slum is an unintended result, this means that there is some error in the project either planning or implementation.
- Therefore, urban planners have a lot to think about this to see that this byproduct does not appear in society.
- There has been too much focus on urban development. Instead, it should have been an integrated development of a region.
- Migration has increased due to the wide difference between urban and rural amenities.
- Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) would have balanced this difference and would have reduced migration to urban areas reducing slum generation.

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