CHAPTER – II
THE SLUMS

2.1. Concept of slum

Slum is a commonly used term for densely populated urban areas with dilapidated and substandard housing. Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (BCE) defines slum as densely populated area of substandard housing, usually in a city, characterized by unhygienic conditions and social disorganization. The census of India 2011 has defined Slum as “a compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities”.

Though life in slums is a human disaster, yet the slum population is growing with alarming rate all over the world especially in the developing countries. A report published by UN-HABITAT (2003) reported that one billion people - approximately one third of the world’s urban population and a sixth of all humanity, live in slums. India alone constitute about one third of the worldwide slum population. The report has warned that the slum population of the world will double to two billion within 30 years. The key reasons behind the growth of slums are migration of disadvantaged rural population to the economically affluent cities in search of jobs and livelihood. They finding it difficult to afford accommodation in regular areas of cities and tend to occupy space in unattended government land and existing slums. In this process, rapid urbanization feeds to miseries and growth of slum population, particularly, in absence of suitable transformation of the cities in terms of availability of infrastructure and
affordable accommodation. Now slums have come to form an integral part of the phenomena of urbanization in India.

Urbanization is an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one. It is a progressive concentration (Davis, 1965) of population in urban unit. Quantification of urbanization is very difficult and it is a long term process. Davis (1962) has explained urbanization as the process of shift from spread out pattern of human settlements to one of concentration in urban centres. It is a fixed process - a cycle through which a nation passes as they evolve from agrarian to industrial society (Davis and Golden, 1954). The National Commission on urbanization has described that urbanization in India emerged in response to the push and pull factors, which resulted in a large migration from the villages to the urban areas. The illiterate, semi-skilled and manual workers have been migrating in search of better employment opportunities to the urban areas. Poor agricultural productivity and frequent crop failures have also added to the pressure for rural-urban migration. In India, every year a large number of poor migrant workers come to the cities like Delhi and Mumbai with the hope of assured income and better employment opportunities. Some migrate to get better educational opportunities for their children. Still city planners never anticipated the large influx of the migratory population and their civic needs. They could not provide adequate facilities at affordable costs, which has led to the emergence of slums, where people prefer to live without basic facilities for various obligations (Aggarwal and Chugh, 2003).

2.2. History

Slums were common in the nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries in the United States and Europe. New York City is supposed to have created the world’s first
slum, named the Five Points in 1825, as it evolved into a large urban settlement. The term Five Points slum used by a lake named “Collect”. Five Points was occupied by successive waves of unconstrained slaves, Irish, Italian, Chinese, immigrants. It housed the poor rural people leaving farms for opportunity, and the victimized people from Europe pouring into New York City. Violence and crime were most common things in those areas. Slums like Five Points was started the thoughts of affordable housing and slum removal. At present, Five Points slum has transformed into the Little Italy and Chinatown neighbourhood of New York City. (Baker, 2001)

Slums are often associated with Victorian Britain, particularly in industrial, northern English towns, lowland Scottish towns and Dublin City in Ireland. Engels described these British neighbourhoods as "cattle-sheds for human beings". These were generally still inhabited until the 1940s, when the government started slum clearance and built new council houses. There are still many examples left of former slum housing in the United Kingdom, but many have been removed by government initiative, redesigned and replaced with better public housing. (Lawrence, 2007)

The concept of slum came in the field of Anthropology from the works of William Foote Whyte and Oscar Lewis. Whyte’s Street Corner Society is an ethnography published in 1943. In the late 1930s, Whyte lived in a slum district of Boston which was mostly inhabited by first and second generation immigrants from Italy. Whyte lived in that district for three and half years, including 18 months he spent with an Italian family and throughout all his experiences by participant observation the book Street Corner Society has been published. As well as Whyte became a pioneer in Participant Observation Method. Oscar Lewis, an American anthropologist, was
renowned for his studies of poverty in Mexico and Puerto Rico and for his controversial concept *Culture of Poverty*. Through studying slums in cities of both the North and South, Lewis developed his thesis *Culture of Poverty*. This theory was developed by Oscar Lewis in his book *Five Families: Mexican Case studies in the Culture of Poverty*, published in 1959.

Early protagonists of this theory argued that the poor are not only lacking resources, but also acquire a poverty-perpetuating value system. According to Lewis, "The subculture [of the poor] develops mechanisms that tend to perpetuate it, especially because of what happens to the worldview, aspirations, and character of the children who grow up in it" (Moynihan, 1969). The term "subculture of poverty" (later shortened to *culture of poverty*) made its first appearance in *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. Lewis struggled to explain the poor as legitimate subjects whose lives were transformed by poverty. He argued that although the burdens of poverty were systemic and, therefore, imposed upon these members of society, they led to the formation of an autonomous subculture as children were socialized into behaviours and attitudes that disseminated their inability to escape the underclass.

Lewis gave some characteristics that indicated the presence of the culture of poverty which is as follows:

“The people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging. They are like aliens in their own country, convinced that the existing institutions do not serve their interests and needs. Along with this feeling of powerlessness is a widespread feeling of inferiority, of personal unworthiness. This is true of the slum dwellers of Mexico City, who do not constitute a
distinct ethnic or racial group and do not suffer from racial discrimination. In the United States the culture of poverty that exists in the Negroes has the additional disadvantage of racial discrimination.

People with a culture of poverty have very little sense of history. They are a marginal people who know only their own troubles, their own local conditions, their own neighbourhood, their own way of life. Usually, they have neither the knowledge, the vision nor the ideology to see the similarities between their problems and those of others like themselves elsewhere in the world. In other words, they are not class conscious, although they are very sensitive indeed to status distinctions. When the poor become class conscious or members of trade union organizations, or when they adopt an internationalist outlook on the world they are, in my view, no longer part of the culture of poverty although they may still be desperately poor”. (Lewis 1998)

In recent times, slums have been predominantly found in urban regions of developing and underdeveloped parts of the world, but are also found in developed economies. According to UN-HABITAT (2003), around 33 percent of the urban population in the developing countries lives in slums. The proportion of urban population living in slums are highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (61.7%), followed by South Asia (35%), Southeast Asia (31%), East Asia (28.2%), West Asia (24.6%), Oceania (24.1%), Latin America and the Caribbean (23.5%), and North Africa (13.3%). Among individual countries, the proportion of urban residents living in slum areas in 2009 was highest in the Central African Republic (95.9%). The largest slum city in the world is in Mexico City.
2.3. Definition of slum

There is no universally agreed definition of slums. According to Oscar Lewis (1961) poverty is a subculture, which reflects both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position. He regards poverty as a defense mechanism without which the poor could hardly carry on.

However, slums often refer to poor housing conditions within cities. The word slum is generally used to describe “a wide range of low-income settlements and / or poor human living conditions”. (UN-HABITAT, 2006). The United Nations defined slums as communities characterized by insecure residential status, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding and inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and other infrastructure (United Nations Human Settlements Program, 2003).

The Oxford dictionary defines slum as “a street, alley, court etc. situated in a crowded district of a town or city and inhabited by the people of low income class, or by the very poor; a number of these streets and courts forming a thickly populated neighborhood of a squalid and wretched character”. The Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English explains the “slums as court, street or alley of dirty crowded houses”.

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India has released a report of a nationwide survey carried out during July 2002-December 2002 on the condition of urban slums. For the purpose of the survey, a slum was defined as a dense 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. Such an area was considered as “non-notified slum” if at least 20 households lived in
that area. Areas notified as slums by the respective municipalities, corporations, local bodies or development authorities were treated as “notified slums”.

Whereas the Government of India has defined slum as areas where buildings are unfit for human habitation by reason of collapse, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangements of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors detrimental to safety, health or morals. These fundamental features with minor variations are retained in all the state legislations (Mohanty and Mohanty, 2005). According to Khan et al. (2008), slums are the spatial manifestations of urban poverty, social exclusion, and inappropriate government policies and often characterized by one or more of these shortcomings, deteriorated or poorly structured houses crowded together, insecurity of tenure, poor environmental management such as deficient access to safe drinking water and sanitation, stagnation of water and poor drainage with open sewers, excessive amount of uncollected rubbish, severe overcrowding, flies and poor lighting.

For the purpose of Census of India 2011, the slum areas broadly constitute of:

(i) All notified areas in a town or city notified as ‘Slum’ by the State, Union territories Administration or Local Government under any Act including a ‘Slum Act’ may be considered as **Notified slums**;

(ii) All areas recognised as ‘Slum’ by the State, Union territories Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act may be considered as **Recognized slums**;
(i) A compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with insufficient infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Such areas should be identified personally by the Charge Officer and also inspected by an officer nominated by Directorate of Census Operations. This fact must be duly recorded in the charge register. Such areas may be considered as Identified slum. (Census of India, 2011)

2.4. Causes of formation of slum

Different reasons are involved in the formation of slum area which is as follows:

1. Rural-urban migration: This is one of the important causes attributed to the formation and expansion of slums. Many people move to urban areas mainly because cities promise more jobs, better schools for poor children, and different income opportunities than subsistence farming in rural areas. But, some rural migrants may not find jobs immediately because of their lack of skills and the increasingly competitive job markets, which lead to their financial problem. On the other hand in many cities do not provide enough low-cost housing for a large number of rural-urban migrant workers. Some rural-urban migrant workers cannot afford housing in cities and then settle down in affordable slums. Apart from this some people migrate to cities because of their connection with relatives or families. Once their family support in urban areas is in slums, those rural migrants propose to live with them in slums. (Ali et.al., 2004)

2. Urbanization: The formation of slums is closely linked to urbanization. Rapid urbanization drives economic growth and attracts people to seek working and
investment opportunities in urban areas. Urban growth is intense in the less developed countries, where a large number of huge cities have started to appear; which means high poverty rates, crime, pollution and congestion.

3. **Poor housing planning:** Lack of affordable low cost housing and poor planning encourages the formation of slums in the railway tracks. Whenever there is a significant gap in growing demand for housing and insufficient supply of affordable housing, this gap is typically met in part by slums.

4. **Poor infrastructure, social exclusion and economic stagnation:** Social exclusion and poor infrastructure forces the poor to adapt to conditions outside his or her control. Poor families that cannot afford transportation, or those who simply lack any form of affordable public transportation, generally end up in squat settlements within walking distance or close enough to the place of their formal or informal employment. A growing economy that creates jobs at rate faster than population growth, offers people opportunities and incentive to relocate from poor slum to more developed neighbourhoods. Economic stagnation, in contrast, creates uncertainties and risks for the poor and encouraging people to stay in the slums. Economic stagnation in a nation with a growing population reduces per capita disposal income in urban and rural areas, increasing urban and rural poverty. Rising rural poverty also encourages migration to urban areas. A poorly performing economy, in other words, increases poverty and rural-to-urban migration, thereby increasing slums.

5. **Informal economy:** Most of the slums grow because of growing informal economy which creates demand for workers. Informal economy is that part of an economy that is neither registered as a business nor licensed, one that does not pay taxes and
is not maintained by local or state or federal government. Informal economy grows faster than formal economy when government laws and regulations are opaque and excessive.

6. **Poverty**: Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums. With rapid shift from rural to urban life, poverty migrates to urban areas. The urban poor arrives with hope, and very little of anything else. He or she typically has no access to shelter, basic urban services and social amenities. Slums are often the only option for the urban poor.

7. **Natural disasters**: Major natural disasters in poor nations often lead to migration of disaster-affected families to the unaffected areas which results the creation of temporary tent city and slums, or expansion of existing slums. These slums tend to become permanent, because the residents do not want to leave, as in the case of slums near Port-au-Prince after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and slums near Dhaka after 2007 Bangladesh Cyclone.([https://en.m.wikipedia.org](https://en.m.wikipedia.org))

2.5. **Characteristics of slum**

Slums have been defined from various angles. But the most common characteristics of slum across the world are as follows:

1. **Lack of basic services and poor access**: This is one of the main characteristics of slums. This includes lack or inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation. This is a very common feature of the slums around the world.
2. **Sub-standard housing and inadequate structure**: Slum areas are associated with a high number of sub-standard housing usually constructed by using non-permanent materials such as plastic and straw roofs. In some areas, floors are usually made of earth. Poverty amongst slum dwellers means that they are unable to afford decent housing structures. Such structures usually do not meet any building regulation requirements.

3. **Hazardous locations**: Slums are usually found in hazardous locations such as foreshores, hillsides, near industrial areas, along railway tracks and river basins.

4. **Overcrowding and high density**: Overcrowding refers to low space per person and high occupancy rates. Many slum units have five or more persons sharing a single room, which is also used for cooking, sleeping and living.

5. **Security of tenure**: Most slum dwellers do not have security of tenure. This means that they can be evicted at any time. This could be seen as a long term strategy of maintaining the units as the occupants are more likely to invest their limited income on carrying out the necessary maintenance, knowing they are not mere tenants at will. (UN-HABITAT, 2006)

### 2.6. Risk factors among the slum dwellers

1. **Vulnerability to natural and unnatural hazards**: Slums are often found in the places vulnerable to natural disasters such as landslides and floods. In cities located near lagoons, marshlands and rivers, they start at banks or on stilts above water or the dry river bed; in flat terrain, slums begin on lands unsuitable for agriculture, near city waste dumps, next to railway tracks and other undesirable locations. These
strategies protect slums from the risk of being noticed and removed when they are small and most vulnerable to local government officials.

2. **Unemployment and informal economy:** Due to lack of skills and education as well as competitive job markets, slum dwellers face high rates of unemployment. The limited job opportunity causes many of them to employ themselves in the informal economy, inside the slum or in developed urban areas near the slum. This can sometimes be licit informal economy or illicit informal economy without working contract or any social security. Examples of licit informal economy include street vending, household enterprises, product assembly and packaging, embroideries, domestic work, shoe polishing or repair, driving, construction workers or handicrafts production etc. In some slums, people sort and recycle trash of different kinds (from household garbage to electronics) for a living – selling odd usable goods or stripping broken goods for parts or raw materials. These licit informal economies require the poor to regularly pay a bribe to local police and government officials. (Gupta and Mitra, 2002)

There is many risk factors are involved of the slum-dwellers engaged in informal economies such as income insecurity and lack of social mobility. There is also absence of legal contracts, protection of labour rights, regulations and trading power in informal employments.

3. **Violence:** Some scholars suggest that crime is one of the main concerns in slums (Kabiru *et al.*, 2012). Empirical data suggest crime rates are higher in slums than non-slums. According to UN-Habitat report slums are more exposed to crimes with higher crime rates. Women in slums are at greater risk of physical and sexual
violence (Go et al., 2003). Sometimes due to unemployment leads to insufficient resources in the household can increase marital stress and therefore exacerbate domestic violence.

4. **Disease:** Slum dwellers usually experience a high rate of disease (Desai et al. 2003). Diseases that have been reported in slums include cholera, HIV/AIDS, measles, malaria, dengue, typhoid, other epidemics etc. Due to high population density, poor living condition and lack of vaccination slum people suffers from different type of chronic diseases.

### 2.7. Slums in India

In India slums are the main feature of urban centres. During the post-independence period there has been a rapid growth of urbanisation and it results in the growth of slums. Today, slums have become an integral part of the Indian cities. Overcrowding in agriculture, cash starving rural economy and ever expanding tertiary sector in the urban centres are the key reasons of continuous rural urban migration. Slums are illegal urban settlements on public land and generally grow over a period of time and surround the city from all sides. Slums are more prevalent in the metropolitan cities, but are slowly coming up in other cities and towns of India also. One of the best planned cities in India is Chandigarh in North-West of the country, which is also being afflicted with slums in its periphery. (Sawhney, 2013)

Slums are known by different names in different places. In New York, slums are known as *harlem*, in Chicago 'black-belt', in London 'east end' and in Bangkok 'pile village'. In different regions of India slums are known as *bustee, jhonpri, juggi ahatas* and *cheris* etc. In Southern they are called *cheris* which usually consists of mud walls.
and thatched roof. In Maharashtra slum people are known as *jhoperputtis* and in Northern India it is known as *juggis* (Choudhury, 2000).

It is estimated that in India, 15 percent of total urban population have no option but to get their shelter in slums. Marked disparity is also observed with regard to literacy level between non-slum dwellers and slum dwellers in many parts of India. Slums are physical and spatial manifestation of increasing urban poverty and intra-city inequality (Kumar *et al.*, 2007).

According to Census of India 2011, among 789 lakh households 17.4 percent slum households and 82.6 percent non-slum households were indicated, of which 38 percent of the slum households are found in 46 Million Plus Cities in India. The following table shows that in 2011, slum population in India estimated as 22.4 percent.

**Table II.1: Slum population in India**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>5,23,71,589</td>
<td>6,54,94,604</td>
<td>1,31,23,015</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2,77,59,224</td>
<td>3,39,68,203</td>
<td>62,08,979</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>2,46,12,365</td>
<td>3,15,26,401</td>
<td>69,14,036</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>23.3</td>
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Source: Primary Census Abstract for Slum 2011, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.

At present India has witnessed a number of slum localities in and around the biggest metropolitan cities. Greater Mumbai is the home to the country’s largest population of city slum dwellers in the country, which is followed by Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. According to the report of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, there were nearly 64,75,440 slum dwellers in Greater Mumbai in 2006,
while Delhi has 18,51,231 people living in slums, around 14,85,309 slum dwellers live in Kolkata and 89,873 people live in the slum clusters of Chennai. Hyderabad has around 6,26,849 slum people and Patna has the smallest population of slums. Mumbai is also home to Dharavi, Asia’s biggest single slum locality, which is estimated to house more than a million people. Some of the biggest slum areas of India are Bhalwa slum in Delhi, Nochikuppam Slum in Chennai, Basanti Slum in Kolkata, Rajendra Nagar Slum in Bangalore, Indira Nagar in Hyderabad, Saroj Nagar Slum in Nagpur, Satnami Nagar Slum in Bhopal, Parivartan Slum in Ahmadabad etc.

2.7.1. Government schemes for slum development

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) is a national level authority of Government of India for formulation of housing policy and programme, review of the implementation of plan/ scheme, collection and dissemination of data on housing, building materials/techniques and for adopting general measures for reduction of building costs. This authority is also entrusted with implementation of the specific programmes of urban employment and urban poverty alleviation, including provision of basic amenities to the urban poor and support for establishment of micro-enterprises by skill development of the poor. Various programmes implemented by MoHUPA for the benefit of urban poor, especially for slum dwellers. Some of the major programmes of this Ministry are as follows:

1. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM): The Ministry is achieving higher levels of attainment with the implementation of this Mission. Under the Scheme of Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) and the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP), the Government of India has
sanctioned more than 15.40 lakh housing units with supplementary basic services. Under the BSUP Scheme, more than 477 Projects have been approved and under the IHSDP, over 966 Projects have been approved.

2. **Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY):** SJSRY was launched by the Government of India on 01.12.1997, to provide gainful employment to the urban unemployed and underemployed through setting up of self-employment ventures or provision of wage employment. This scheme subsumed the earlier three urban poverty alleviation programmes, namely Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP).

3. **Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP):** “Affordable Housing for All” is an important policy agenda of the Government of India. The Government of India has launched this scheme to create a supportive environment for expanding credit flow to the housing sector and increasing home ownership in the country.

4. **Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY):** To make the country slum-free by providing slum-dwellers basic services and access to decent shelter, Government has launched a new scheme called ‘Rajiv Awas Yojana’ (RAY). This scheme aims at providing support to States that are willing to provide property rights to slum dwellers.

5. **Urban Statistics for HR and Assessment (USHA):** The scheme aims at the development and maintenance of national database, MIS and knowledge repository relating to urban poverty, slums, housing, construction and other urbanization related statistics. Its key objective is to support the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation and other Ministries with an information base and knowledge
inputs for the purpose of planning, policy-making, project design, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the context of programmes relating to urban poverty, slums and housing.

6. **Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Scheme (ILCS):** This scheme basically aims at conversion of individual dry latrine into pour flush latrine thereby liberating manual scavengers from the age old, obnoxious practice of manually carrying night soil.

7. **Projects/ Schemes for the development of North Eastern states:** Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation is also concerned with the project proposals for the North Eastern States in some identified areas like Housing projects (predominantly for the urban poor), Poverty alleviation projects, and Slum improvement/upgrade projects. (HUPA, 2010-2011)

Other than these programmes, a special scheme was launched under Axom Sraba Siksha Abhijan Mission regarding education of out of school slum children which is mentioned below:

**Deprived Urban Children (DUC):** A large number of out of school children are found among the slum people and most of them are working. They are most vulnerable and elusive group and require cautious and concentrated attention to ensure their protection and educational rights. Therefore, a centre named *Jyoti Kendra* has set up in urban area for street and slum children of age group 6-14 years where children are given education and then mainstreamed in nearby formal schools.