

## **Definition of Slum**

1. A review of the definitions used by national and local governments, statistical offices, institutions involved in slum issues and public perceptions reveals the following attributes of slums.

### **1.1 Lack of basic services**

Lack of basic services is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of slum definitions

worldwide. Lack of access to improved sanitation facilities and improved water sources is the most important feature, sometimes supplemented by absence of waste collection systems, electricity supply, surfaced roads and footpaths, street lighting and rainwater drainage.

1.2 Substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures Many cities have building standards that set minimum requirements for residential buildings. Slum areas are associated with a high number of substandard housing structures, often built with non-permanent materials unsuitable for housing given local conditions of climate and location. Factors contributing to a structure being considered substandard are, for example, earthen floors, mud-and-wattle walls or straw roofs. Various space and dwelling placement bylaws may also be extensively violated.

### **2. Overcrowding and high density**

2.1 Overcrowding is associated with a low space per person, high occupancy rates, cohabitation by different families and a high number of single-room units. Many slum dwelling units are overcrowded, with five and more persons sharing

a one-room unit used for cooking, sleeping and living. Bangkok requires at least 15 dwelling units per rai (1600 square metres).

### **3. Unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations**

3.1 Unhealthy living conditions are the result of a lack of basic services, with visible, open sewers, lack of pathways, uncontrolled dumping of waste, polluted environments, etc. Houses may be built on hazardous locations or land unsuitable for settlement, such as floodplains, in proximity to industrial plants with toxic emissions or

waste disposal sites, and on areas subject to landslide. The layout of the settlement may be hazardous because of a lack of access ways and high densities of dilapidated structures.

### **4. Insecure tenure; irregular or informal settlements**

4.1 A number of definitions consider lack of security of tenure as a central characteristic of slums, and regard lack of any formal document entitling the occupant to occupy the land or structure as prima facie evidence of illegality and slum occupation. Informal or unplanned settlements are often regarded as synonymous with slums. Many definitions emphasize both informality of occupation and the non-compliance of settlements with

land-use plans. The main factors contributing to non-compliance are settlements built on land reserved for non-residential purposes, or which are invasions of non-urban land.

## 5. Poverty and social exclusion

5.1 Income or capability poverty is considered, with some exceptions, as a central characteristic of slum

areas. It is not seen as an inherent characteristic of slums, but as a cause (and, to a large extent, a consequence) of slum conditions. Slum conditions are physical and statutory manifestations that create barriers to human and social development. Furthermore, slums are areas of social exclusion that are often perceived to have high levels of crime and other measures of social dislocation. In some definitions, such areas are associated with certain vulnerable groups of population, such as recent immigrants, internally displaced persons or ethnic minorities.

## 6. Minimum settlement size

6.1 Many slum definitions also require some minimum settlement size for an area to be considered a slum, so that the slum constitutes a distinct precinct and is not a single dwelling. Examples are the municipal slum definition of Kolkata that requires a minimum of 700 square meters to be occupied by huts, or the Indian census definition, which requires at least 300 population or 60 households living in a settlement cluster.

## **Environmental Challenges of Slums**

In recent years, the area is facing many of the common environmental problems which are yet to receive proper attention from the politicians as well as administrators in the town. A major part of these

environmental problems have arisen out of the steady increase of population, harsh topography as well as lack of proper planning for the development. This has obviously led to an ever-growing demand for the basic civic services and amenities. On the other hand, provision for housing and shelter, water supply, sewage and sanitation, health care services, transport facilities etc. are becoming scarce and costly for dwellers of the area. This has a direct effect on the living conditions of the urban poor who were already subsisting on the margins of their existence. These slums and squatters not only create environmental pollution through their unorganized and unsystematic waste and sewage disposal, congested and unplanned houses as well as through unethical socio-cultural habits and values, but they are created only on already polluted places due to people's lack of conscience in occupying unauthorized land at almost no cost. Air and water pollution, lack of personal hygiene, noise and cultural pollutions are among most considerable environmental problems in the area. Some of these problems are discussed in below.

### **Lack of Water Supply, Sewage and Waste Disposal Systems**

Since water is the basic necessity, the sufficiency and quality of its supply directly affects the well being of the society living in that particular city. Safe collection and treatment of waste

water is almost equally important as the supply part, since inappropriate handling of waste water and sewerage create disease prone living environment. In slums of Tabriz, water supply has improved a bit, but sanitation service is still very poor and does not meet the requirements of this huge population. Due to latest survey only 92% of the households currently receive tap water. Lack of water supply and sanitation facilities characterizes urban squatters of this area. People line up at neighborhood standpipes, buy from vendors, or tap pipes illegally to obtain water. Besides, none of the slums get proper sewerage services and only 38.2% of this population manages to get solid waste management services. As a result, both household waste and human generated wastes are released directly or indirectly into the low-lying lands, surrounding open spaces or water bodies and causes a number of problems. Some settlements have community toilets that are generally unsatisfactory. Most frequently, people defecate in pits or in the open or in ditches, canals, or rivers. Accumulated waste creates mountains of garbage that are the homes and work sites of scavengers, who are often children. Biomedical waste poses a special threat to the health of the population and garbage dumps are also breeding sites for rodents and insects, such as mosquitoes, which carry dengue and malaria.

### **Substandard Housing and Construction**

Proper housing is a very important factor for social and psychological development of children, but the practical situation of all these informal settlements indicates a dreadful life with poor lighting, ventilation, high crowding and living and cooking either close to or at the same place. All of the buildings in squatters are made of low quality materials with no construction standards. Most of them hold a single room for the whole family that makes the slums very congested. According to latest survey, population density in these slums and squatters is 1.17 family per dwelling, and a minimum of 5 and maximum of 8 people share a room, which is highly congested and unhealthy. Most of the buildings have been poorly built and now have leaking roofs, draughty windows and crumbling stonework and empty buildings are vandalized; gap sites where buildings have been knocked down turn into derelict land. Harsh topography and the steep slope of area is another dominant and influential feature which along with lack of soil stabilization measures and use of inappropriate and substandard construction materials and techniques, as shown in figures below, has led to substandard constructions worsening above-mentioned problems and their consequences.

### **Lack of Healthcare Facilities**

There exists no hospital, clinic or any kind of healthcare facilities in the area. This makes the dwellers vulnerable to high risk of illnesses and emergence of natural disasters. The overall picture of child health status in the squatter settlements of Tabriz appears alarming, although no study was found that directly addressed the issue. Infant mortality rates in these areas are

almost triple those of other urban areas. There is also evidence of a high incidence of tuberculosis, diarrheal disease, parasitic infections, dengue, and severe malnutrition affecting slum children. Available data support the hypothesis that urban slum child health is generally worse than national and rural averages. Data also show that children under five in slums suffer from the same illnesses as rural children. The public health consequences are severe, especially for young children.

### **Exploitation of Biomass Fuels**

Due to lack of energy supply, most of the dwellers in slums and squatters burn biomass fuel for domestic cooking. Burning of this huge amount of biomass creates several problems for city environment. Some parts of these dwellings have access to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) but still prefer biomass fuel. Some of key problems arising from this issue include deterioration of outdoor air quality, reduction of vegetation coverage, indoor air pollution and deterioration of health.

### **Others**

Conflicts like quarrel, clash and fight in the squatters of this area is a regular phenomenon. This creates noise and violence, leads to lack of security in the area and disturbs the city dwellers, particularly the nearby residents, office workers, and school children. Besides, many of the residents are involved in prostitution, drug trafficking, hijacking, smuggling etc. These activities threaten the social and cultural environments of the city. Factors such as marginalization, illiteracy, class or caste status, and gender can determine whether a group lives in urban poverty or not. Population of this area also has "relative inequality," where poverty is not absolute but rather is measured by the opportunity and resource difference between "haves" and "have-nots" living close to each other. Social and economic heterogeneity weakens the community and some of households are headed by women who must earn a living. This situation has consequences on the health and development of small children and often turning small children into workforce.