BSUP SECTION

The state of Karnataka is the eighth largest in the country both in terms of its population and its area. Its capital city, Bangalore, is now classified as a mega city and has a population of over five million inhabitants. The last five decades have been a period of rapid growth for Bangalore with a proliferation of multinational companies choosing to locate their operations in the city and its environs in industrial products, consumer durables and more recently information technology.

Bangalore has a unique status on the global map, identified as a nucleus of business, education, and science and information technology. It is recognized all over the world as a major technology hub and the IT capital of the country. Like other metropolitan cities in India, Bangalore has experienced a very fast rate of urbanization and phenomenal growth of population within the past five decades. The city is facing problems of transition from a calm and peaceful city to a busy urban agglomeration.

With an overall rapid increase in population coupled with the seemingly irreversible flow of people from rural to urban areas, Bangalore has been acquiring unplanned and uncontrolled squatter settlements – i.e. slums. The glass walled computer – ready office complexes, exclusive shopping malls and entertainment facilities that rival the best in the country contrast with the dense squatter settlements and their very poor services in central areas of the city.

1.1   Origin of Slums

Slums......the picture that conjure up in our minds is that of a dirty, unhygienic group of make shift shanties with long lines of people waiting at the Municipal water pump, bawling babies literally left on street corners to fend for themselves and endless cries for help.

Rapid, unplanned urbanization is altering the nature and magnitude of environmental risks, sometimes creating new risks. Urbanization renders customary coping mechanisms less effective, but also provides new ways of coping.

Nearly half the world lives in urban areas and numbers are growing day – by – day. Over the next two decades, 90% of population growth in developing countries will be urban.

While slum in any city are not desirably policy objective, it is also true that the existence of slums in many cities can have unintended benefits. For instance, slums are often the first stopping point for rural – to – urban migrants because they provide affordable housing that enables the new migrant to save enough money for their eventual absorption into urban society.

1.2   Dangers of Slums

From a mainstream view, it can be said that slums "spoil" the look of a city. Because slums breed poverty and high unemployment, there is a high crime rate stemming from these neighbourhoods. Since these are illegal settlements on encroached public land, they do not pay the basic or civic utilities taxes expected from any legal settlements in a city. However to be very fair, we should consider the prevalent conditions in these urban slums from another viewpoint – slums have inhuman and dangerous living conditions with a total lack of security and a fear of demolition at any point. They do not have basic civic services like waste collection and disposal, clean drinking water, properly maintained drainage system, electricity or paved roads.

Uncontrolled urban growth exacerbates hazards and vulnerability. The land where slum dwellers settle is often dangerous with steep slopes, flood plains, railway lines and industrial zones. As building spreads, rainwater cannot get soaked. Monsoon floodwater that remains a few days in a well – serviced district can stay for a month in slums.

The slums have also become the source of epidemics in major cities, which are likely to spread to other areas and put the other sections of the city into unforeseen difficulties. Even Municipalities can't keep up. In urban areas, 60 percent of the city's inhabitants occupy 6% of its total area, an average density of 2,000 people per hectare. In some slums, 100 families share a single toilet. Garbage and sewages are left out, since the municipality cannot or will not remove it as in many cases they can't get proper access to it. Diseases from dirty water and sanitation kill 2.2 million people every year worldwide and many of them are slum children. Often they cannot claim services such as refuse collection or clean water and sanitation. As slums and factories often share the same space, floods carry a hazardous mixture of chemicals, sewage, garbage and debris. The density of weak structure means even minor earth tremors or fire can rapidly cause destruction.

Slum dwellers' livelihoods are bound to the market place. Food, water and fuel have to be bought, rather than being found or produced locally.

Poor families lack secure storage space, so they may be unable to access vital supplies during crisis. Urban dwellers have fewer livelihood assets than many rural inhabitants, who can often access some cash, subsistence farming, livestock, communal exchange, saving and family land. The change from rural, communal livelihoods to a market-based strategy reduces scope for social cohesion as livelihoods are less linked. The house, as a place to earn a living and maintain a healthy lifestyle, is vital to slum dwellers. The way slum dwellers boost their resilience depends on how they perceive their risks.

Slum dwellers are also more likely to contact waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid, as well as the opportunistic ones that accompany HIV/AIDS. Slum life, therefore, places enormous social and psychological burdens on slum residents, which often lead to broken homes and social exclusion. Although the common perception is that the slums are breeding ground for crime, the report shows that, in fact, slum dwellers are more often victims than perpetrators of crime.

1.3   Life in Slum

The majority of slum dwellers earns their living in informal but crucial activities and therefore provides services that may not be easily available through the formal sector. Just think of Bangalore without hawkers, domestic workers or roadside mechanics. Many cities and industries would simply come to a halt without the labour provided by slum dwellers. Slums also keep the wheels of many cities turning.

Slums are also vibrant places where the mixing of different cultures often produces new forms of living styles. These unhealthy, crowded environments can sow the seeds of new cultural movements and levels of solidarity unknown among the middle and upper classes. However these few positive attributes do not in any way justify the continued existence of slums and should not be an excuse for the slow progress towards the goal of adequate shelter for all.

Slum life often entails enduring some of the most intolerable housing conditions, frequently including sharing toilets with hundreds of people, living in overcrowded and insecure neighborhoods and constantly facing the threat of eviction.

1.4   Slum and its population scenario in India

As per 2001 census of India for a population of over 1 billion people the urban population comprises of 285.4 million (nearly 30%) of people and the graph is rising continually. The rapid growth of urban population and the inadequacy of City Governments to meet its demands have caused a critical housing and infrastructure shortage. Although there is very little authentic information on the number of growth pattern of poor families within the urban population, it is estimated that there are roughly 100 million slum dwellers in the country.

According to a recently conducted survey, 22% of Indian urban population lives in slums as against 32% for the whole world population; most, if not all of these people earn under the urban poverty line. Data from a study by National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) reported that among the poorest cities were Kolkata (89% below the poverty line), Bangalore (73% below the poverty line) and Indore (68% below the poverty line).

As the contributions of the slum dwellers to the city's economy is substantial as industrial workers, construction laborers, domestic servants, rag – pickers and in a whole range of petty traders like vegetable and fruit selling are unacknowledged and hence little investment has been made in improving the lives of the urban poor. Instead, the urban poor are seen as free riders, as encroachers on valuable land and as entirely undeserving of the most basic necessities. Such prejudices, along with an anti – urban bias in planning, have led both in neglect of urban poverty and a refusal to envision cities as engine of economic growth.

1.5   The scenario in Bangalore

The meteoric rise of the South Indian mega city of Bangalore to a globally integrated location of software development and other modern service industries produce profound changes in the metropolitan landscape, creating aggravating disparities and a highly fragmented and polarized urban society. Bangalore is becoming what is called a multiply divided city where both social and geographical barriers are reinforced. While a relatively tiny stratum of affluent urban elite takes benefit from these transformations, the living conditions of the urban poor will be further marginalized. The recent internationalization of Bangalore has had mainly negative effects on the urban poor.

As per the report of Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB) there are 2509 slum areas in the State, out of which 565 Slum areas are in Bangalore City. It is estimated that out of total urban population of 179 Lakh (2001 census) in Karnataka, 34 Lakh people reside in slums, which works out to be 17.5% of total population. Out of total 1957 declared slums in the state, there are 240 declared slums in Bangalore City.

The vast majority of people living in Bangalore's slums is fragmented from the mainstream planning activities of the city and is therefore subject to tremendous hazards of poverty, inadequate health care, illiteracy and a host of other socio – economic problems. A significant proportion of slum dwellers in Bangalore is engaged in service activities and home – based manufacturing. An increasing number of slum dwellers are indirectly servicing the formal economy as well as the high technology enclaves by engaging in informal construction work, coolie work, hotel work, garbage picking, vegetable and fruit vending, petty hawking and working as domestic servants. Informal activities are also critical for employment generation because they provide proximity to demand, to markets and to suppliers opening up opportunities for financial and subcontracting links.

In Bangalore, most of the slums are developed in low laying areas along storm water drains and railway tracks. In many occasions these slums are inundated during heavy rains. The slums located along storm water drains have serious health hazards on its dwellers due to flow of contaminated water in the drains.

Due to inadequate and insufficient approaches, it is difficult to provide basic amenities such as solid waste management, water and sanitation, health services, education programme, emergency services, etc.

1.6   Role of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike

Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the Bangalore City Corporation, a local self Government, has the statutory commitment to the citizens of Bangalore to provide good roads, sanitation, street lighting, development and maintenance of parks, establishing markets and shopping areas, providing safe drinking water, etc. Apart from the above, the BBMP also undertakes poverty alleviation, cultural developmental activities and other social obligations. It also aims at further elevating the status of Bangalore by providing all amenities that raise the quality of life index. The BBMP is making continuous effort to provide better health to its citizens.

The up gradation of 240 declared slums comes into the activities of KSCB. Improvement of quality of life along with the provision of all the basic civic amenities to the rest of the slums (i.e. undeclared slums) is the social obligation of BBMP. The same has been focused from decades but with the multiple growths of these slums, the patience and the intensive efforts put by BBMP are unable to respond to this situation effectively.

1.7   Need for Improvement

Many slum dwellers become pessimistic due to the magnitude of risk and lack of municipal response. Most are resigned to ill health and premature death. Slum communities are less cohesive than rural villages, as people focus on individual livelihoods. So, even if they have a latent capacity to enhance their resilience, a lack of social cohesion prevents that from happening. Many slum dwellers are opinionated about the fact that there is still a general apathy and lack of political will among Governments to implement policies aimed at improving the living conditions of slum dwellers. It is clear that slum formation is closely linked to economic cycles, trends in national income distribution and in more recent years to national economic development policies.

Many past responses to the problem of slums have been based on the erroneous belief that provision of improved housing and related services (through slum upgrading) and physical eradication of slums will, on their own, solve the slum problem. Solutions based on this premise have failed to address the underlying causes why slums come into being of which poverty is the most significant. It is, therefore, emphasized that slum policies should more vigorously address the issue of the livelihoods of slum dwellers and the urban poor in general, thus going beyond traditional approaches that have tended to concentrate on improvement of housing, infrastructure and physical environmental conditions. This means enabling informal urban activities to flourish, linking low-income housing development to income generation, and ensuring easy access to jobs through proper transport and low – income settlement location policies.

Hence BBMP has taken the responsibility as a dire need to enhance the living conditions both quantitatively as well as qualitatively of the undeclared slums in Bangalore under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Initially BBMP has taken five slums for redevelopment under JNNURM. And subsequently the BBMP has taken up re development work in 13 identified slums

in different parts of Bangalore City under Phase-1, Package-1. The identified slums taken for Phase 1 – Package 1 Project:

1. Samatha Nagar Slum, Ward No. 69, Koramangala.
2. URS Colony, Ward No. 64, Jayanagar 9th Block.
3. Indira Gandhi Slum, Ward No. 68, Egipura.
4. Vinobha Nagar, Ward No. 48, J. C. Nagar.
5. Ambedkar Nagar, Ward No. 71, Austin Town.
6. Ambedkar Slum, Ward No. 65, N. S. Palya.
7. Ambedkar Slum, Ward No. 78, Vasanth Nagar.
8. Anatha Ashrama Slum, Ward No. 78, Vasanth Nagar.
9. Ambedkar Slum, Ward No. 79, Shivaji Nagar.
10. Muniyappa Garden, Ward No. 85, Sarvagna Nagar.
11. Gopalapura, Ward No. 25, Gandhi Nagara.
12. Gowtham Colony, Ward No. 72, Domlur.
13. R. K. Mutt, Ward No. 49, Basavanagudi.

The process of implementation of this project has been already initiated. In its further step, BBMP has taken up the project for the identified slums under BBMP's jurisdiction in phased manner to provide basic services to the slum dwellers including security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, water supply, sanitation and ensuring delivery through convergence of other already existing services of the Government for education, health and social security.