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RESEARCH ARTICLE

URBANISATION PROBLEMS AND GROWTH OF SLUMS IN SRINAGAR URBAN CENTRE OF KASHMIR VALLEY (J &K)

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ABSTRACT

Urbanisation is at its peak in the last few decades, due to rapidly growing population and economic activities. This has resulted in unplanned and unorganized growth in most of the towns and cities. The major fallouts of this rapid urbanization are the emergence and growth of slums, environmental problems, unemployment, housing shortage and increasing traffic congestion etc. Slums are no longer considered merely as physical or economic categories, but have the complexities of social structure in which attitudes, ideas, ideals and beliefs play an important role. Srinagar city is the largest urban centre amongst all the Himalayan urban centres. The city has experienced a rapid growth in terms of population as well as areal expansion during the recent decades and is having a primate dominance over the other small sized towns and villages. The present study is an attempt to analyze the growth and characteristics of slums in Srinagar during recent census decades as a result of unplanned rapid expansion of the city. The study also includes the analysis of various economic and social characteristics of the slum areas. The results showed that over the recent census decades, not only the urban population but the slum population has shown an exponential growth. The population of the slums has increased from 2.8 lacs in 2001 to 3.4 lacs in 2011 showing a decadal growth rate of about 19 percent. Further analysis of the socio-economic data reveals that not only has the number of urban poor increased but their living conditions point out to the deprived and degraded conditions in these areas of blight. The study summarizes that the quality of life of the people living in slums has further deteriorated and the various initiatives taken by the government have not achieved much in improving their living conditions.

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation represents the demographic transition or change from rural areas to urban areas. It is a spatial concomitant phenomenon involving the complex process of change in population concentration, structural transformation and psycho behavioural patterns affecting both places and people. Ever since the emergence of first urban settlements in the world, the urban population has been growing more rapidly than the rural population. During the last 200 years, while the world population has increased six times, urban populations have increased to over 100 times their original count (Leao *et al.*, 2004). It has been observed that nearly 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas (Stalker, 2001). The ever increasing rate of urbanization has its own drawbacks. Urbanisation favours the development of a massive built up environment which suffers from the ill effects of technological overdose. Usually over urbanisation occurs when the population of a city exceeds its carrying capacity. It gives birth to environmental problems and socio-economic ramifications

including unemployment, housing shortage, traffic congestion and increase in crime rate etc. It has its side effects not only on the city proper but also on the surrounding fringe areas which nowadays have intruded into the villages near the major cities. The valley of Kashmir is a mountainous area with Srinagar as the major city having a primate dominance over the other small sized towns and villages. Srinagar city is the largest urban centre amongst all the Himalayan urban centres (Bhat M.S.2008). The city commands the central position and acts as a hub of civic, economic and commercial life in the valley. It has experienced a rapid growth in terms of population as well as areal expansion since recent decades.

METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on the secondary data. The data has been collected from Srinagar Municipal Corporation (S.M.C), Srinagar Development Authority (S.D.A) and Census of India. Data collected has been thoroughly analysed with respect to slums. Various cartographic and statistical techniques have

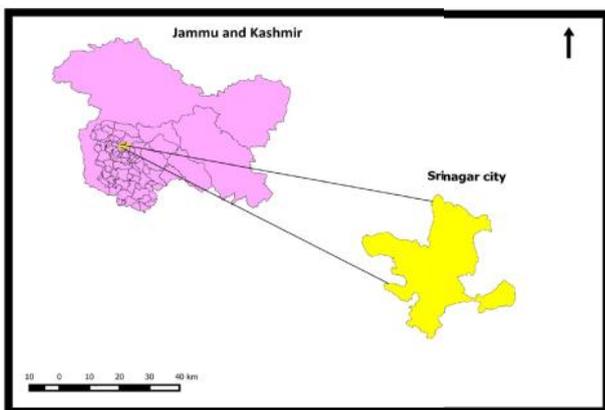
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been used to compute various socio-economic and population characteristics of slums in Srinagar city and accomplish the objectives of the study.

Study Area

Srinagar city is located at an average elevation of 1586 meters above mean sea level and its spread over in the heart of the oval shaped Valley of Kashmir. It is situated between 74°-56' and 75°-79' East Longitude and 33°-18' and 34°-45' North Latitude. The city as well as its hinterland is bounded by natural wall of mountains (sub-mountain branches of Pir Panjal Ranges and Zaskar mountains). In the east city is bounded by Zabarwan mountains with lush green vegetation, locating famous Dachigam Sanctuary and Mughal Gardens and is envired by the shallow and swampy lakes of Dal and Nigeen with the eminence of hillocks of Takth-i-Suliman in the east and Kohi-Maraan (Hariparbat) in the centre adding to its beauty and making surroundings of the city invigorating.



Because of its locational advantage of being located in the heart of Kashmir Valley, it has acquired greater degree of centrality despite the constraints which the surroundings and physiography of the region pose to the physical growth of the city. Being the capital city and the largest urban settlement, it has become hub of major administrative, political, economic, commercial and other activities. It constitutes 73.18 per cent (Srinagar Municipal Corporation 2011) of the urban population of Valley and 48.55 per cent of the urban population of the State which has given it complete supremacy in urban settlement system in Kashmir with pronounced regional urban primacy.

Urbanisation Scenario in Kashmir

The State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes three distinct geo-physical, regional identities, namely Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh, which have marked variations in terms of physical, socio-economic and religio-cultural framework. The conspicuous differences have generated imbalances in the level of urbanisation and macro-cephaly with excessive primacy of major cities. The overall urbanisation trend in the State shows that it had altogether about 56 urban centres of different sizes, with 21 per cent of total population in 1981 which increased to 67 centres in 1997 constituting roughly about 24 per cent of the population (SMC). The distribution pattern of towns show that Jammu region constitutes as many as 32 urban centres while Kashmir Division (including Ladakh) constitutes 35 urban

centres. A notable feature of distribution of urban population in the State is that Jammu region constitutes 33.30 per cent and Kashmir Division accounts for 66.67 per cent in 1981 (Srinagar municipal Corporation, S.MC). One of the serious concerns of urbanisation in the State is distributional pattern of urban population amongst the settlements classified under different categories of towns. Srinagar and Jammu, the Class I urban settlements, account for 73.18 per cent and 53.17 per cent of urban population, in their respective regions (Census of India 2011).

In Kashmir, about 1.22 lakh people in 1901, and 8.28 lakh in 1981 were living in one, and 23 urban centres respectively. The percentage of urban population to total population of the valley was 11.20 per cent in 1901 and 26.42 per cent in 1981 (Census of India 19801-1981). Since 1901 to 1941, growth of urban population showed a haphazard trend. It was during the post independence period, especially after sixties that Kashmir Valley experienced a consistent and phenomenal growth in its population. The urban population has increased from 10.27 lakhs in 2001 to 12.69 lakhs in 2011 with a decadal growth rate of 24 percent (Census of India 2011).

Urban population is growing more rapidly in major urban center (Srinagar) along the Valley floor than small and medium towns located on hills and rim lands. This trend has resulted in three visible divisions of Kashmir Valley, each beset with a set of individualistic problems:

1. Areas of excessive concentration along Valley floor with rapid urban growth including urban centers of Anantnag, Srinagar, Baramulla and Sopore. These urban settlements act as centres of higher order facilities and are growing at an unprecedented pace. The trends of growth and development of Srinagar City are such that in near future Srinagar will merge with other small and medium towns along the Valley floor and form a single urban entity/conurbation.
2. Areas of transition in rim land, i.e. foot hills and Kerawas with medium urban growth including Budgam, Pulwama, Shopiyan, Tral, Bandipora, Handwara, Kupwara, Awantipora, Ganderbal and Kulgam etc.
3. Slow level of urbanisation in mountainous parts ,e.g. Leh, Kargil and tourist towns of the Valley.

Urbanisation Scenario and its Implications in Srinagar urban centre

Regional urban primacy is more pronounced and is developing at an alarming degree with Srinagar emerging as the major city with a primate dominance over other towns in whole of the valley of Kashmir. This trend of urbanisation is leading to distorted urban settlement pattern and dis-economies of size and agglomeration. Decline/stagnation of small and medium size towns resulting in dis-equilibrium in human habitation on the one hand and problems of congestion, over-crowding, deforestation, encroachment, pollution of water bodies, uneconomic use of scarce resources, depressing housing conditions, inadequate neighborhood facilities, lack of diversified economic base and unbalanced economic profile on the other hand is the factual reality of the urban Kashmir.

Phenomenal unidirectional migration of people has occurred from rural areas, small and medium urban centres to Srinagar city which is evident from the fact that migration alone constituted about 29.41 per cent out of the three components of population growth in the Srinagar City 1981-91. Recently the urban population has increased from 10.27 lakhs in 2001 to 12.69 lakhs in 2011 (Census of India 2011) with a decadal growth rate of 24 percent thereby showing the alarming increase in urban population which exceeds the city's carrying capacity giving rise to overurbanisation and its associated problems.

The stupendous growth in the population of Srinagar urban centre has led to unprecedented area expansion in the same with slow and sluggish growth in other small and medium sized urban centres.

This twin process has made urban growth a very complex phenomenon and a challenging task for city planners to ensure a reasonable quality of life and environment to the inhabitants. Urbanisation in the city is not taking place at a proper pace and with proper planning.

The state lacks the proper land use policy on one hand and the population is increasing on the other hand beyond the carrying capacity of the city. The growing and unplanned drift of population from rural and small urban centres, to main city is taking place at an astonishingly fast pace.

This un-precedented influx of people and unplanned accretion is adding to the complexities of the main urban centre i.e Srinagar with strained urban services, increased demand for housing and transport, generating environmental problems and deterioration in quality of urban life. The impact of such a process of urbanisation is directly manifested in the distorted settlement pattern which results in the growth of spurious, unplanned and unhygienic housing units scattered in almost all of the urban centre with no area being spared.

In Srinagar around 3.4 lakh (Census of India 2011) people live in overcrowded buildings, dilapidated structures with unhygienic living conditions, inadequate basic amenities, poor layout, accessibility and poor ventilation. These substandard, deteriorated, decaying and dilapidated housing are usually occupied by the poor, the unemployed and the immigrants giving rise to slum like conditions.

The quality of life in slums is very poor because of being under the shadows of neglect, sufferings and ignorance or alienation (Govindaraju, 2012). It must be borne in mind that the slum like conditions arising in the Srinagar urban centre are not by birth rather by lack of basic urban services.

They arise as an anecdote to the increasing population levels and to survive in the urban scenario giving rise to urban poor. Due to the absence of developed/affordable land and clear policy to address their problems, the urban poor in Srinagar suffer from many inadequacies in terms of access to the basic services and socio-economic needs. Most of these people live in informal housing sector or in the core of the city where

dilapidation, congestion, lack of services and facilities is a prevalent problem.

The definition of Slums adopted for Jammu and Kashmir by Srinagar Development Authority (2011) is as under:

A contiguous area with 10-15 households having slum like characteristics identified as

- ***Predominant roof material*** : any material other than concrete(RBC/RCC)
- ***Availability of drinking water source*** :not within the premises of the census house
- ***Availability of latrine*** :not within premises of the census house
- ***Drainage facility*** : no drainage or open drainage

Slum areas here are to be identified on the basis of total living conditions. The slums in Srinagar have been divided in two categories viz. Kacha - Pucca areas and "Kohperi and Pahari" (tented/small illegal structures) settlements. Barring a few good localities, most of the old residential areas in the inner city and traditional urban villages have slum conditions.

The population figures in the slum areas of present Municipal Corporation limits stands at 3.4lacs (census 2011) in view of inclusion of more areas.

Total slum population

Recognized slums : 3.24 lacs = 31.88%
 Unrecognized slums: 0.96 lacs = 09.44%

Table 1 Population statistics of Srinagar slums

Total population	2001	2011	Decadal Growth Rate(2001-11) in percent
	1027670	12,69,751	23.5
Slum population	286084	340577	19
Number of Slum Households	18425	53215	
Number of Slums	349.0	Identified :912 Recognised: 714 Total: 1626	

Source: Census of India; 2011

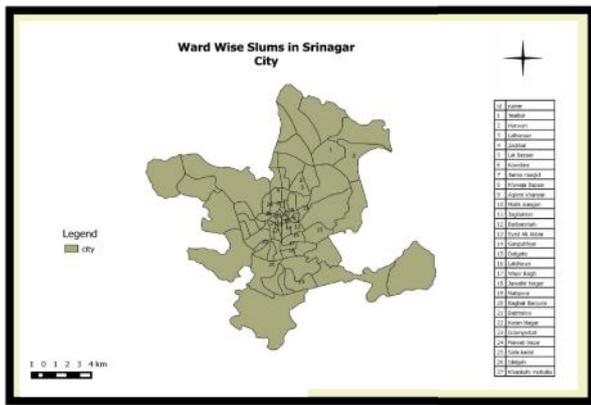
Distribution of slums in Srinagar city

The slum areas in the city of Srinagar identified in the year 1999 in the Municipal Council limits areas, then comprising upon 33 Municipal constituencies.

The population figures in the slum areas of present Municipal Corporation limits stands at 3.4lacs (census of India 2011) in view of inclusion of more areas with the city comprising of 64 wards (S.M.C 2011).

Profile of Srinagar Slums

Following physical and socio-economic characteristics have been commonly found in the slum areas of Srinagar city:



Source: S.M.C 2011

Physical characteristics

House types and housing conditions

The house type obtaining in slum areas of the city conforms to old Kashmiri patterns met with in other parts of valley. The houses in the substandard parts of the inner city are mostly 2-3 storeyed and the doors and windows are of substandard size. The rooms are found to be dingy, small and unventilated. Bath rooms and latrines are generally not attached to the houses. 34 - 50 per cent structures in identified areas are in dilapidated condition may need redevelopment and even clearance.



Fig 1 Urban Slums ,a testimony of dilapidation and deterioration



Basic amenities

The following points give us an idea about the basic amenities in the substandard areas of Srinagar city:-

1. Complete absence of open spaces, educational and health amenities.
2. Width of approach road varying from 1 - 3 meters.
3. Disposal of waste and night-soil in surface drains generating unhealthy and unhygienic environment and water bodies.
4. Poor condition of streets with most of them in a state of despair.
5. Poor ventilation and nearly 85 - 90 per cent households living in a space less than 50 sq. meters (about 500 sq.feet) per unit and a sizeable (25-30%) household are living in single room units.
6. Nearly 48 per cent get water from community tap and 15 per cent from water bodies.

Socio-Economic conditions

Family size

Average household size in city is 5.5 persons, however, more than 30 per cent households in slum areas have size of more than 8 persons and 45 per cent residential houses have 2 - 3 households per residential house.

Literacy

Slums are normally inhabited by the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, although it is often maintained that neither all slum dwellers are the poorest of the poor nor all the urban poor live in slums. Still a majority of them are placed at the bottom of economic and social hierarchy.

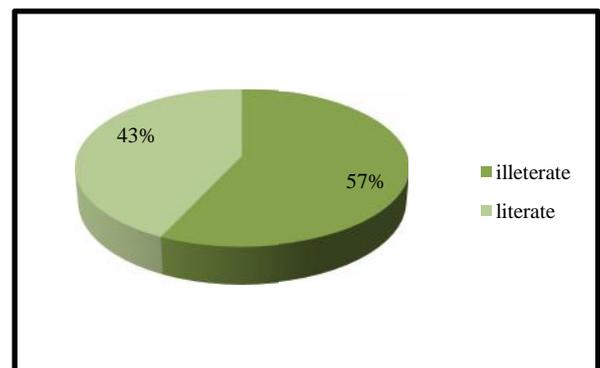


Fig.2 Literacy rate in slums

This becomes explicit once we look at the educational qualifications of the slum dwellers. Most of the slum dwellers of the Srinagar city are illiterate or have obtained meagre education mostly upto primary or middle standards. In case of the Srinagar city slums, nearly 57 per cent people are illiterate.

Occupational structure/income levels

The low level of educational attainments shows its impact upon the occupational status of the slum dwellers as the two variables are intimately related. The respondents in these slums are mostly engaged in the jobs hardly requiring any skill or training. A vast majority of the slum dwellers of the Srinagar city are engaged in informal sector, generally through self employment. Most of the slum dwellers are engaged as construction workers working on the daily wage basis, without a secure income, rickshaw drivers, hawkers, sweepers and small shopkeepers. Since the wages of these informal workers depend upon the demand for labour, thus their economic security is uncertain.

About 29 per cent slum people are workers which gives a dependency ratio of 1:2.4. Out of the total workers, 27 per cent are self employed in transport, petty sellers, 10 per cent are running their own household industry, 30 per cent in service sector, 18 per cent work on daily wage basis as casual laborers and 15 per cent are carrying their own business. 21 per cent are living in rented houses and 79 per cent in their own houses.

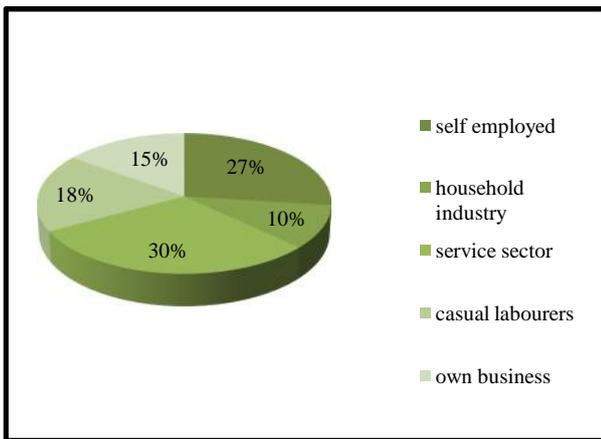


Fig.3 Occupational structure of City Slum Dwellers

Khoperi-Pahari settlements

Till recent times phenomenon as a “Khoperi-Pahari” (comparable to Juggi-Jopdis) was missing in Srinagar City. However, in view of sudden spurt in the migration of non-state subjects from Rajasthan, Bihar, UP and from other parts of the State including Jammu and parts of Valley, about 7 such sporadic Khoperi-Pahari settlements have come up in the city e.g near General Bus Adda Batamaloo, on the both sides of Bye-Pass road near Fruit Mandi, near Iqbal Park in front of Naaz Cinema, at river Jhelum bund near Abiguzar, Bus Terminal Panthachowk and in Doodhganga Channel. In these settlements there are about 561 units with a population of 3981 persons (S.D.A 2012).

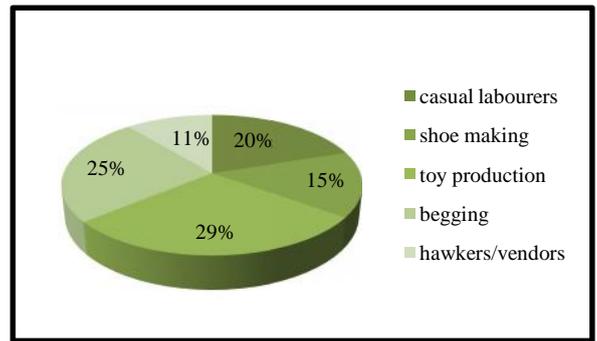


Fig. 4 Occupational structure of Khoperi-Pahari

Dwellers

The main occupation of these “Khoperi-Pahari” dwellers is casual labours 20 percent shoe-making 15 per cent production toys and small household items - 29 per cent, begging- 25 per cent and rest are working as hawkers/vendors. About 29 per cent are from Rajasthan, 21 per cent from Bihar, 18 per cent U.P, 28 per cent from within the State and 4 per cent from other States. Because of the harsh climatic conditions most of the settlements are temporary in nature except near Bus Stand, Batamaloo and Fruit Mandi where these people have erected temporary structures and stay there even during winters.

CONCLUSION

Slums are an urban reality. They are shocking spaces of deeply entrenched poverty, class and gender inequality, crime and diseases . Slums of Srinagar city are no different and in terms of these negative implications of urbanization, these fulfill the criteria in all respects. As such, the slums have become the most undesirable places. But at the same time, these are an important reality of our socio-economic fabric and constitute an important segment of our urban landscape. Slums are too complex phenomenon to be ignored as a considerable population in the Srinagar urban centre are housed in these shanty houses. Out of the total of 64 wards, 26 wards have slum population (SMC, 2011).

The slum residents of these areas lack the bare minimum basic amenities like clean water, proper sewage disposal, proper ventilation, clean air and health facilities etc. A good planning strategy needs to be evolved to deal and cope with these areas of despair and deprivity. Central and State Governments can play an important role in this regard. These agencies should be focused on providing better basic services to Urban poor, which include providing of housing facilities to homeless, Improvement of living environment in slums, provisions of basic amenities and services in urban poor colonies and other schemes related to upliftment of these weaker sections of the society both socially & economically. So far as the Urban poor living in the slums of the study area are concerned, various Central Govt. initiatives have been launched through state govt. which includes Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM 2005), with a sub scheme of a basic services for Urban Poor (BSUP), Rajiv Awas Yojana (2010),with a sub scheme of Interest Subsidy Scheme of Housing for Urban Poor (ISHUP)etc. Despite the various opportunities offered to the most disadvantaged sections of the

society, many a times a complete ignorance about these and low motivational aspirations held by them may result in little appropriation of these facilities by target group (Gill Rajesh 1994). Here N.G.O's can also contribute in tackling the problems faced by these people ,by spreading awareness among them regarding, population control, increasing literacy rates and boosting their motivational morale.

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