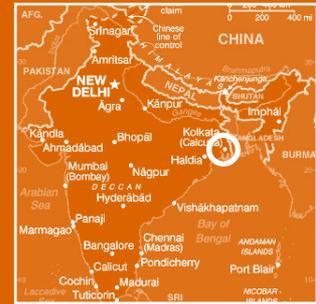


The case of Kolkata, India

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Source: CIA factbook

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the urbanisation process is widely acknowledged to be associated with increasing levels of national production and higher levels of per capita GDP, poverty remains a persistent feature of urban life in India, both in terms of income and immigrants' living conditions. Economic growth in cities has been found to be insufficient to achieve poverty alleviation. Government action has focused on welfare and habitat improvements under various poverty alleviation programmes but has been unable to make linkages between these improvements and increases in productivity and income for the urban poor.

The weaknesses of current policies of poverty alleviation at the national level are due to certain misconceptions about poverty: firstly, that the poor represent a drain on the urban economy rather than a source of productivity; secondly, that poverty can be seen as a welfare question, with income-raising objectives left largely to national economic growth reports and assumed trickle-down development processes.

A. URBAN CONTEXT

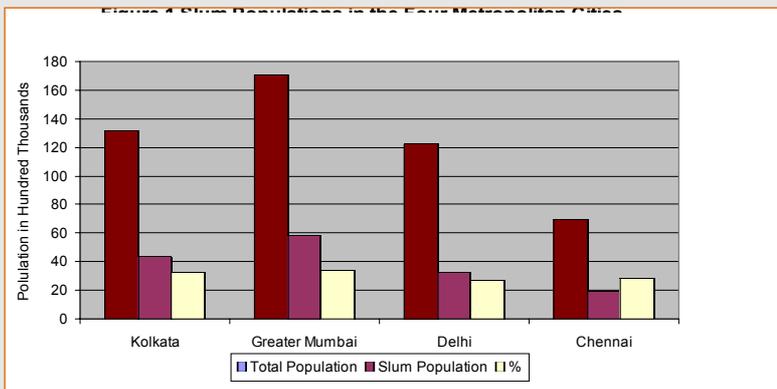
1. India, a National Overview

According to the 2001 census, in India around 285 million people, or about 28 per cent of the population live in the urban areas. In 1991 there were 300 Class I cities accommodating about 65.2 per cent of the total urban population, while 1,135 Class IV cities accommodated only 7.7 per cent. In most of towns of other class sizes a declining trend was discernible. In Class I cities however, a steady growth was registered with 44.6 per cent of total urban population living there in 1951, 57.2 per cent in 1971, and 65.20 per cent in 1991. Amongst the Class I cities the million plus cities of India were growing at an alarming rate. According to the 1991 Census there were 23 such cities comprising 32.5 per cent of the total urban population. Some of the Indian Metropolitan Areas have the world's highest population density.

Urban areas form the backbone of the country's economy, acting as major attraction zones and reservoirs of skills for the millions of migrants from the rural areas. In India, about 29 per cent of GDP was contributed by the urban sector in 1950-51 and since then the share has steadily increased, to 47 per cent in

1980-81, 55 per cent in 1990-91, and had passed the 60 per cent mark by the year 2001. Thus, a little more than a quarter of the population generates more than half of the country's total GDP. Nevertheless, urban growth, especially in the metropolitan areas, has been exploitative and chaotic, resulting in rising unemployment and low productivity work-sharing in the informal sector, squatting in teeming slums, congestion, encroachment on public space, water and air pollution and deteriorating infrastructure and services. In this context another important aspect is that of the inequality of distribution of resources especially income which has led to the deterioration of the living standards of a section of urban people. This is one of causes of the origins of slums in cities. **Figure 1** shows the conditions of the four major cities of India with their total population, their slum population and the proportion of slum to total population.

Figure 1: Slum populations in the Four Metropolitan Cities of India in 2001



2. The History of Kolkata

Less than three centuries ago the present-day city of Kolkata was no more than a rural district in Lower Bengal, a flat rice swamp interspersed with patches of jungle with a few scattered villages on the riverbanks. No one would have ventured to forecast that a “city of palaces” would shortly arise here. But the nineteenth century ushered in a new era of development in commerce, which ultimately made this city a centre of trade and capital.

In fact, the Kolkata region was thought to have potential as early as the Mughal period. However, it was in 1690 that Job Charnock realised the potentials of this region and laid the foundations of British Calcutta on the site of the Sutanuti, Govindapur and Kalikata villages on the eastern banks of the Hugli River. This was in the early days of the East India Company’s mercantile adventures. In fact it was due to the need to station the British population that the city was built. But the port facilities nearby were also a great advantage. These not only allowed the British to travel conveniently to their

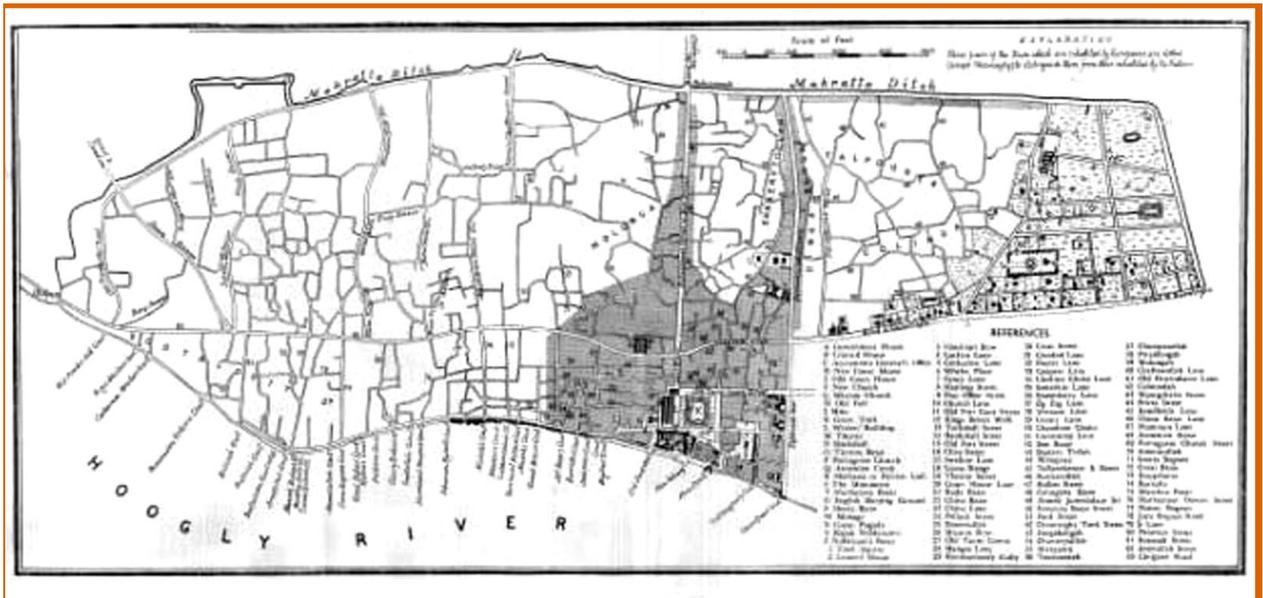
hometown, but also served as an easy way to import finished goods and export raw materials, since the main purpose of the British in coming to India was to expand international trading opportunities.

With the growth of trade, attention was given to the improvement of systems of communication, and mercantile activities in Calcutta received a tremendous stimulus with the opening of railways and other new lines of communications. Naturally the port of Calcutta called for further improvements, and docks were built. It must be noted that up to 1860 the port of Calcutta had a very small hinterland comprising only Howrah, Hoogly, 24 Parganas, and a small part of Eastern Bengal. But the establishment of jute and cotton factories in Calcutta and its suburbs and the opening of the new lines of communication expanded this hinterland. By 1900 Calcutta’s port supplied the whole of Bengal and Bihar, Assam and a portion of the North-Western Provinces with salt and other goods from Britain. With the advent of heavy machinery, European manufactured goods were distributed throughout Northern India from Calcutta, while the principal articles of export from the region were opium, indigo and cotton, with opium and indigo accounting for more than half of the total value of all exports.

The opening of the Suez Canal gave a tremendous impetus to India’s foreign trade which in the five years from 1869, was running at an average annual value of exports and imports of ca. US\$ 19 m (See **Map 1**). The Growth of industries in the nineteenth century changed the face of the region. The jute textile industry, was located here and finally the rapid development of a coal industry from 1895, added a new dimension to the port. Manganese ore and iron ore were other export items.

The growth of the port and commerce attracted the rural poor to Calcutta in search of jobs. Since the communication system did not allow them to commute daily they had to live in the city itself in unsanitary and sub-human conditions which gave birth to the so-called slums. Part of the slums consisted of the areas where the British population’s servants lived with not even minimum facilities.

The Europeans, in particular the British, made their influence felt in the 18th century social life of Calcutta. Though the settlement was polarised into at least two distinct sections - the White and Black Towns - the native and foreign elements could not remain in a state of complete isolation from each other. A common interest in trade began to bring them closer. The aspiring Indians found in contacts with the British a sure means of amassing wealth, first as collaborators and then as dependants. The British generally preferred to live in isolation. There arose a ‘Babu’ class of Indians who were



Map 1: Plan of Kolkata, showing its boundary and Settlement of Slum population as on 1784-35

Source: Willima Baillie (1792), as Stated in Ref. Kamal. Kar, *CMC Findings*

the outcome of British education. These people worked for the British and were their followers. There was another class of Indians who were educated and understood how the British were exploiting the country's people and its resources and this class began to move against them, joined by the common masses who were subjected by British rule, and slowly unrest began to develop. But despite the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, the British continued to suppress the local people and it was only in 1947 that they were compelled to make India independent.

3. The Physical City

The Kolkata Municipal Area is flat with some depressions. It is located at 5.3m above MSL. The slope is not uniform, but is primarily away from the river, to the east and south-east. Kolkata is located very near the Tropic of Cancer, and experiences hot and humid weather conditions throughout the year. The weather may be divided into 3 seasons: a hot season from March to mid-June; a rainy season from mid-June to mid-September, and a cold season from November to February. The maximum average temperature in the hot season varies from 35° to 38° C. May experiences the highest temperatures, sometimes around 42° C. In this period occasional spells of heavy rain with thunderstorms are very common. This occasional heavy rain gives some relief from the extremely humid climate. Relative humidity varies from 70 to 80 per cent during this period. Rainfall varies from about 27mm in March to 259mm in June with a wind speed of about 7kmph on average.

With the appearance of the south-west monsoon from June to September, the city experiences heavy rainfall.

But in most cases the temperature does not fall much. The highest rainfall is in the month of August (306mm) decreasing to about 160mm in October, with the retreat of the monsoon. More or less from October to Mid February the city experiences pleasant weather with comparatively low temperatures and no rainfall. Winter rainfall is very occasional. January is the coolest month (11°C). In general, the weather in the Kolkata area is hot, and almost every year it experiences floods in the rainy season.

4. The Urban Economy

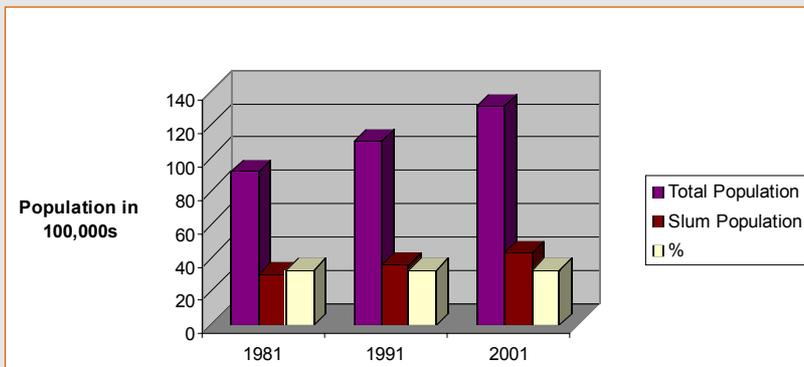
A special feature of Kolkata's regional location is that there is no other major urban centre within hundreds of kilometres. The other cities in the Eastern Region of India are provincial centres with small populations and limited economic and employment opportunities. The development of India's coal and steel industries at some distance to the west of Kolkata has undoubtedly created other possible urban growth points, but on a such a small scale that they can hardly counter the overwhelming attraction of Kolkata within the Eastern Region. Kolkata's importance as the economic centre of Eastern India is due to the concentration of industry, financial services and commercial activities within the city and in the Calcutta Metropolitan Area (CMA), that began with the East India Company.

One of Kolkata's most striking characteristics is its fantastic overcrowding. In the metropolitan area, the rate of open unemployment is higher, and the waste of human resources is therefore perhaps greater, than in any other urban centre in India.

5. Demography

The advent of the British and the prospect of trade gave an impetus to the growth of Calcutta's population, which was estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000 inhabitants in 1710. In 1831 it was 187,081 with 70,076 houses, increasing to 229,714 in 1837 and 415,063 in 1850. The next census in 1866 reduced the figure to 358,662, but in 1872 it returned to 409,036. The population grew most rapidly in the early years of British Rule, multiplying nearly tenfold during the 40 years from 1710 to 1750. Housing statistics shows that, although the population in the old town area increased, on the whole, about 50 times in about two centuries, the number of houses increased only 11 times during the same period. It also appears that the increase in the number of houses during the 19th century was only 14 per cent, although the population multiplied not less than 5 times. Even in more modern times, buildings have multiplied at a much lower rate than the population. The enlargement of houses in length, width and altitude accommodated the excess population to some extent. While pukka (solidly-built) buildings increased from 14,230 in 1821 to 38,574 in 1901, ie by 178 per cent, and huts decreased from 53,289 to 49,007 the

Figure 2: Decadal Change in Total and Slum population in Kolkata



population increased from nearly 180,000 to close to 600,000, by 233 per cent. It is, therefore, not a matter of surprise that there should be considerable overcrowding in the oldest areas of Kolkata particularly when it is remembered that the "house" in the census of 1901 was but a fractional part of the "house" as understood in 1850. 1947 marked a rapid change in population dynamics due to the partition of Bengal.

The 2001 Census reports a total population of 4,580,544 in Kolkata with a slum population of 1,490,811. The present population growth rate is 0.4 per cent, which means that the growth due to natural causes or immigration is matched by the decrease in the population due to death or other factors (Institute of Local Government and Urban Studies, 2001). One

thing to be noted is that the population density increase is due to the enlargement of the Calcutta Metropolitan Corporation (CMC) area (from 100 wards to 141 wards) and the subsequent urban development in the added area. This may mislead the trend.

The decennial growth of urban population in the CMC area was 22 per cent in 1981 and 33.7 per cent in 1991 while the decennial population growth rate in the State in 1981-91 was 24.7 per cent and the average urban population growth rate was 29.5 per cent during the same period. The population density per km² in 1961 was 28,144 and in 1971 and 1981 30,279 and 31,615 respectively. It rose to 42,308 in 1991 and 44,458 in the 2001 census. About one third of the population of the CMC lives in the slums. There are 2,011 registered, and 3,500 unregistered slums in Kolkata.

6. Governance

The governance system in Municipal Kolkata is one of Local Self Government. This approach has a long history. Even in the days of British rule, the popular representative system was so powerful that nationalist leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose could be elected as the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation. Even after independence, the Local Self Government of Kolkata has remained very strong.

Presently the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, under a new law, is governed by a parliamentary cabinet system approach. In this system there is a mayor and a council of members for different departments collectively responsible to the people of Kolkata. The mayor and members of his council are elected by the people. Of course the CMC has to work under the Federal Government.

II. SLUMS AND POVERTY

B. TYPES OF SLUMS

1. Categories of Slums

In Kolkata, there are two broad categories of slums: those that are officially authorised are called bustees. There are also a large number of squatter settlements, which are not authorised. These squatter settlements have grown up by the side of canals, large drains, garbage dumps, railway tracks and roads. The living conditions of the people living in these shanties are the worst. They do not have proper access to any basic

amenities such as sanitation or water. There is always a stench in these areas, with many people usually being involved in rag picking, with garbage dumped outside their houses. In other words, this type of settlement not only faces tremendous problems regarding basic facilities but also causes environmental pollution

1.1 Types of Authorised Slums

The authorised slums can be classified into four broad groups. The first kind of slums existed during the British period when middlemen took land from the landowners usually for a long term and built hut type settlements which they let out to migrants. As mentioned earlier these migrants needed a place to live and had no alternative but to accept accommodation without basic amenities. There is another type of slum called “*thika* tenant slums” where the slum dwellers have taken possession at a fixed rent and have constructed their houses. A third type of slums are those constructed by *zaminders* (landowners) themselves and let out to the slum dwellers.

These types of slums are locally called *bustees*. The fourth type of slums are Refugee Resettlement Colonies (locally called *udbastu* colonies) where land has been leased out for 99 years to the refugees from present-day Bangladesh by the government at nominal rents. (See **photos** on the following pages)

1.2 Types of Unauthorised Slums

Among the unauthorised slums types are those which are simply encroachments on the roadside (locally called *jhupri*), canals (called *khaldhar*), or any vacant place (called *udbastu*) by the poor people either displaced from the city itself or retrenched from their work place. Another type of displacement is reported as displacement due to an excessive increase in family size.

It has been found that the predominant structure types in the slum areas are *pukka*, *semi-pukka* and *kutch*a (crude or imperfect). The percentages of these structural types in Kolkata are *pucca* (85.1 per cent), *semi-pucca* (12.8 per cent), *kuccha* (2.1 per cent). There are houses with roofs made of tiles and asbestos which have floors which are *kutch*a or *pukka* both. According to the 1981 census, the numbers of people living in inferior grade shelters in the CMA are as shown in **Figure 3**.

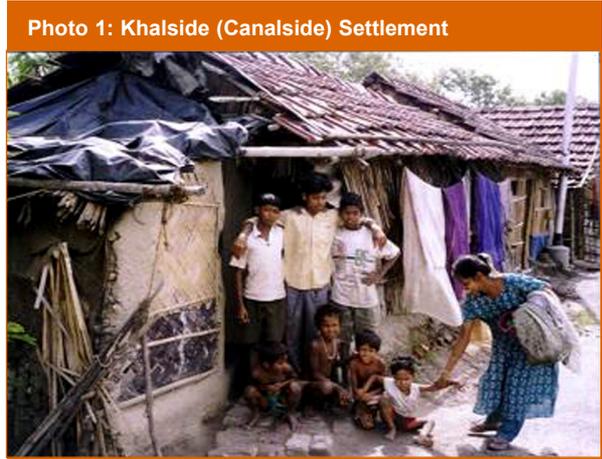


Photo 1: Khalside (Canalside) Settlement

These types of houses are called *Berar Ghar*. Their walls are made of bamboo sticks and their roofs are tiled with polythene covering.

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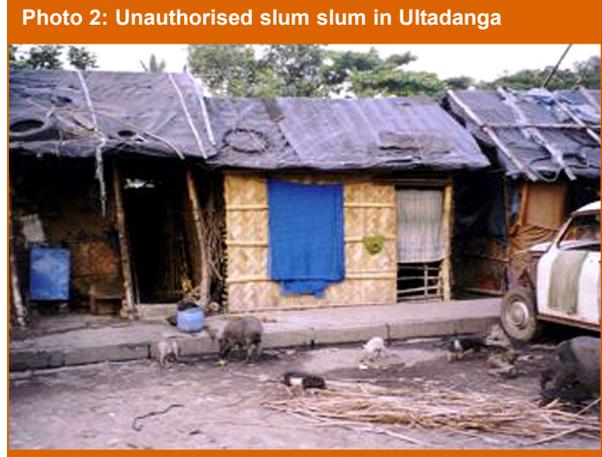


Photo 2: Unauthorised slum in Ultadanga

Dwelling in Ultadanga, by the side of Kestopur Canal in Ward 13 with no entrance door. The roof is covered by polythene sheets to ward off the rainwater.

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Figure 3. Occupancy of Slum Types in Kolkata

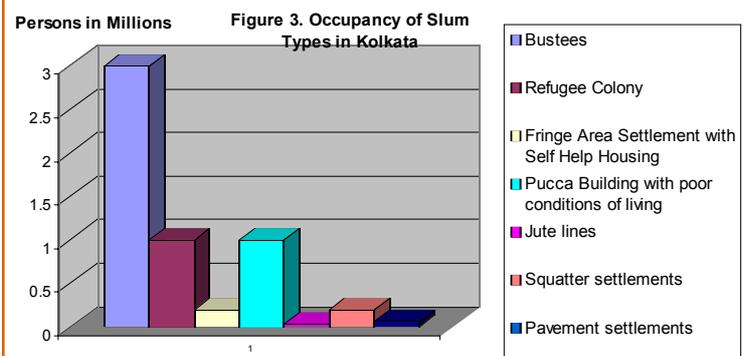
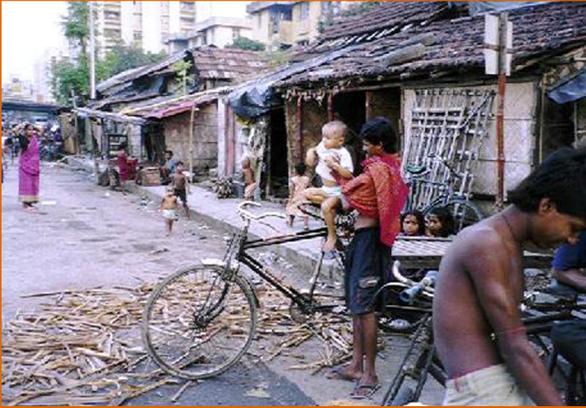


Photo 3: Squatter settlements in Ultadanga



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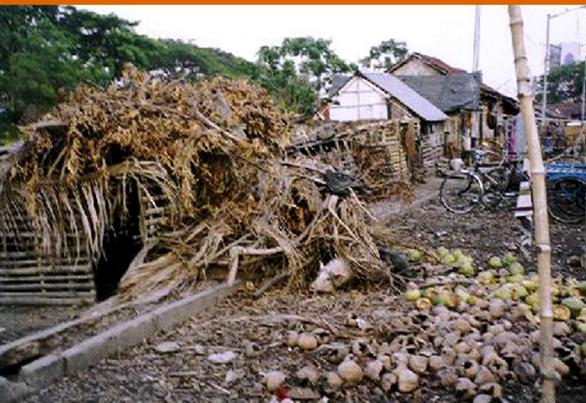
Photo 4: Ward 59 in Park Circus



Ms. Mausumi Pal

The dwellings of this slum are mud walled *kutchha* huts with tiled roofs. The majority of the people of this slum are muslim urdu speaking.

Photo 5: Slum dwellings and open spaces



Ms. Amrita Basu

This unauthorised slum is located in Eastern Kolkata. The dwellings are *kutchha* or bamboo structured huts with tinned or tiled roofs. The coconuts shells lying on the ground, drying in the sun, are collected by the poor, dried and used as fuel. The shed made of leaves seen on the left, houses the pigs. This slum is notorious for its links with heroine selling and its thriving wholesale market.

The census also reveals that:

- In the CMA, about 3 million people live in 5,000 slums
- 90 per cent of these slum dwellers have one room per family
- Usually each slum consists of 9 “hutments” and each “hutment” consists of 5 huts. In the CMA, there are at least 225,000 huts, where one room is shared by at least 13.4 people (on average)
- About 1.7 million people out of the total of 3.3 million in the CMC lives in 13 million huts (338,000 slum rooms).

The average area of the slum huts is 450 sq.ft (45 sq m) and on an average 13 people share this space. Most of these bustees were developed by thika tenants during the process of industrialisation.

A study was conducted under the Calcutta Slum Improvement Project covering 185 slums located in 15 wards. Of these, in 80 slums the project has implemented some development work for at least one year through its Bustee Improvement Department and Health and Community Development Department. 15 per cent of the samples were chosen randomly from different geographical regions of the city: north, south, east west. This study was conducted in 1997 and covered three categories of slum-dwellers, namely, the highest income group (monthly income of Rs2300 - ca. US\$50 and more), the medium income group (Rs 1500-2300 - ca. US\$ 33-50) and the lowest income group (below Rs1500 - ca. US\$33).

The following questions were put to the *bustee* dwellers:

- What had been the environment of their slums before the project intervention?
- What changes had taken place due to the project intervention?
- Their views on ‘best’ and ‘worst’ slum environments, and which represents their present living environment.

The results of the study are presented in **Table 1**, as they help to clarify the two main categories of slums found in Kolkata.

2. Origins of Slum Types

The origins of Kolkata’s slums can be classified under two broad categories: slums which developed during the early period of British rule particularly before industrial development and urbanisation in the city and slums which developed after the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. The first group of *bustee* dwellers entered the city long before industrialisation. They came to serve the imperial rulers and their families who had lavish living standards. This set up gave rise to the first slums of Kolkata. Their dwellings developed near the

Photo 6: Khaldar squatter slums in North East part of Kolkata



Dr. N Kundu

Another of the Khaldar unauthorised settlements in eastern Kolkata

Table 1. Results of Kolkata Slum Survey

Slum Type:	Type 1	Type 2
Age:	Old (up to 150 years)	Recent (11 or 12 years)
Geographical location:	Within main city shown in the map	Outskirts, by land used for cultivation and canals
History:	Pre-independence unplanned development to serve Zamindaries or industrial migrants	Planned settlements for West Bengal partition or Bangladesh war refugees
Population Density:	High, 19 people (4 families) per katha (2,812 people per ha), acute shortage of space	Lower, individual plots of 1.5-2 kathas (0.01-0.013 ha), one to three "hutments" (families) per plot
Ownership:	Mostly thika tenancy with no fear of eviction; also floating and seasonally migrating populations	Some owners, few uncertain tenancy rights, stronger sense of permanency.
Migration:	In separate heterogeneous waves from neighbouring districts and states	Together, homogeneous groups
Politics:	Reflects ward politics	More homogeneous support of local Left Front Parties
Livelihoods:		
Male	Reflects ward politics	Fewer occupations, informal sector manual labourers, casual seasonal labourers, hawkers
Female	Domestic servants, piece rate work in nearby manufacturing units, self-employed semi-skilled work (beauticians, masseurs etc)	Higher income women not in paid work, seasonal and temporary workers in local factories, domestic servants, self-employed crafts production for supplementary income
Economic Perspective	Income categories include per household per month (high Rs 1500-5000, medium Rs 800-2300, low Rs 500-1500). 80 % of the population in both types earn between Rs 500-1700	

British quarters, to render services easily to the British families whenever demanded. Their dwellings, according to the spokesman of the Local Bodies, could even be seen "within the walking distance of most posh areas of the city".

The second group of bustees resulted from the industrialisation process. The large flow of British capital led to the development of jute and engineering industries in and around the city. Railways, postal facilities, banks and dock facilities also led to the diffusion of the population over forty miles on the bank of the Hugli River. Another type of squatter settlement (locally called jhopri) developed after independence. These unauthorised settlements are found near roadsides and canals.

As a result of the industrial growth and rapid urbanisation of Kolkata, workers from all over Eastern and Northern India poured into this city in search of employment and income. The thirties and forties witnessed a significant enhancement of the industrial base in and around Kolkata to support the British war effort. This led to the migration of cheap labour from the hinterland. These people found cheap accommodation, mostly in huts made of mud and bamboo constructed by middlemen, popularly known as thika tenants, on land leased out to them by landlords. The production of huts without basic infrastructure facilities eventually led to the growth of slums in certain parts of the city. This growth continued unabated not only in CMC but in the CMA as well, and the vacant areas were rapidly filled up.

3. Age and Location of Slums

The slums of Kolkata can be divided into groups, the older slums located in the heart of the city, some as old as 150 years, and the more recent slums mostly located in the outskirts of the city. Most of the slums are located in residential areas within the city. Few slums exist on the western side of the bypass while there are slums on the eastern and north-western side of the bypass which are located on raised land that was previously low-lying wetlands (Bheri region). This area is still surrounded by vast water bodies into which sewerage flows from the city. The remaining land is utilised for vegetable and flower cultivation, while fish cultivation occurs in the water bodies. Many slums developed along the canals (Jagarani, Netainagar, Sri-Haripally) and wetlands (Chit Kalikapur). Along with these many slums have arisen around the garbage dump in Dhapa.

4. Population Characteristics and Ownership

Population density in the slums is extremely high averaging around 19 people per katha (2,812 people per ha). There is an acute shortage of space often with one room being rented to one family with the veranda being rented to another.

In most of the slums in Kolkata recognised by the CMC, slum dwellers pay land tax and have secured tenancy or ownership rights. Ownership varies according to the history of slum development. There are three main categories:

Slums developing on vacant or government land occupied on their own. These people have no legal documents (*pattas*) and have uncertain legal rights to the land they occupy. Some are covered by CMC amenities while others are not. This includes Narayan Pally, Netaginagar and Jagarani.

Small plots of land bought from a single landowner by the local residents, on which "hutments" were raised, land tax is paid and dwellers have legal ownership and are entitled to amenities such as potable water and electricity. This includes mainly the newly developed slums.

Land owned by large landowners leased out to middlemen who raised "hutments" and collected rents. The middlemen gradually became the direct landowners paying tax to the CMC and collecting house rent. These pockets were later covered under the Thika Tenancy Act (1981) of the Government of West Bengal, protecting the residents from eviction. The residents pay land tax and can sublet rooms. These slums mainly have a high proportion of floating and seasonally migrating tenants.

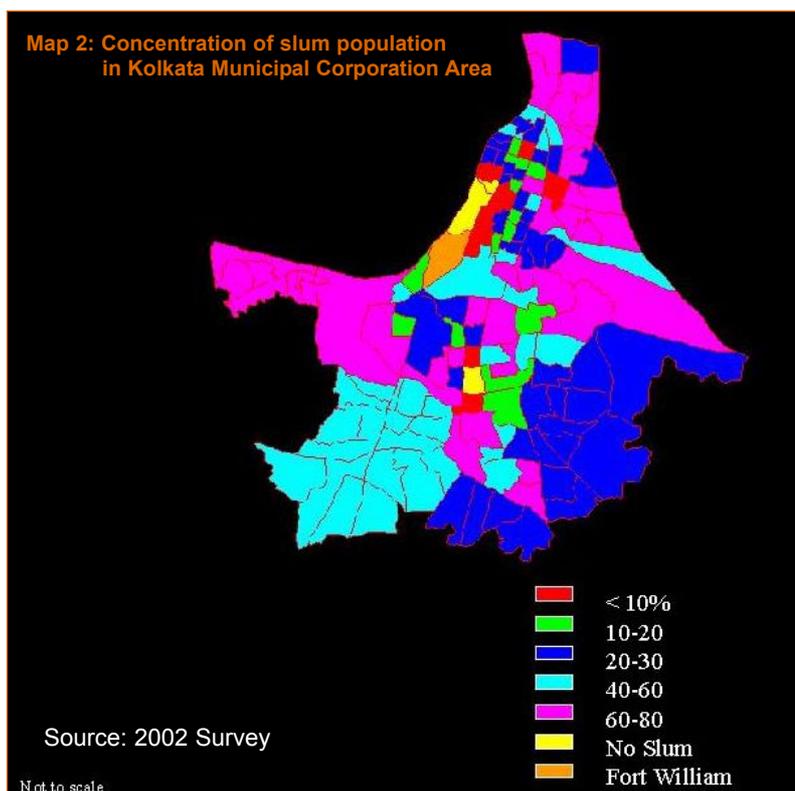
C. OFFICIAL DEFINITIONS OF SLUMS

According to the Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956, enacted by the Government of India, slums have been defined as those areas where buildings are in any respect unfit for human habitation. Physically, slums consist of clusters of huts comprising several rooms constructed with temporary building materials, where each room is inhabited by a family sharing a common latrine, without arrangements for water supply, drains, disposal of solid waste and garbage within the slum boundaries. Apart from the degrading slum conditions, slums in Kolkata are also characterised by almost total absence of community and recreational facilities hindering the mental development of the young.

Registered slums, locally called *bustees* are recognised by the CMC because of the title of the land, which was owned by local *zamindars* from whom it was taken on the basis of an agreement, after which houses were built on it. In some cases the land including its structures (small housing units) belonging to *zamindars* was let out. These settlements were taken over by the CMC in 1980 and let out directly to tenants. These types of settlements are called registered slums. But other settlements have arisen by encroaching either on government land or on roads, canals etc, and are called unregistered *bustees*.

New definitions have been introduced for the term "bustee". As per the definition of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act, 1980, a bustee was defined as "the area containing land not less than seven hundred square metres in area occupied by or for the purposes of any collection of huts or other structures used or intended to be used for human habitation. (The CMC Act, 1980 under Section 2, Subsection 8 of the Act). Thus under the definition, the words '10 cottahs' as specified in the Calcutta Municipal Act 1899 have been changed to 700 m². while no other significant changes in the *bustee* definition have been introduced.

In the Statistical Abstract we find, as per the definition in the 'Compendium of Environment Statistics, 1997' Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Government of India, a slum is defined as an aerial unit having 25 or more *katcha* structures mostly of temporary nature or 50 or more households residing mostly in *katcha* structures huddled together or inhabited by people with practically no private latrines and inadequate public latrines and water facilities. (see photos on previous pages)



D. OFFICIAL DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

The history of the poverty line approach in India dates back to 1962, when a study group set up by the Planning Commission of India came up with the finding that per capita consumption expenditure of Rs20 per month at 1960-61 prices, excluding expenditure on health and education which were supposed to be provided by the state for free, would constitute the "minimum" for the non-poor. This minimum was defined as the poverty line, the minimum income required to attain desired biological nutrition. Although the Planning Commission accepted this overall norm for planning purposes, the economists differentiated between the minimum income in urban and rural areas. Poverty lines were fixed at the levels of Rs 15 (ca. US\$ 0.33) per capita per month and Rs 22.50 (ca. US\$ 0.5) per capita per month at 1960-61 prices, for rural and urban areas respectively (Dandekar and Rath 1960). These calculations were based on the presumption that an average Indian would require 2,150 calories per day as his minimum nutritional requirement.

Later the Task Force of the Planning Commission developed the "Poverty Line" approach on the basis of 2,400 calories per person in rural areas and 2,100 calories in urban areas. In the 7th Plan Document the poverty lines in rural and urban areas were defined as PCE Rs 107 (ca. US\$ 2.35) per month and Rs 122 (ca. US\$ 2.68) per month at 1984-85 prices, in rural and urban areas respectively. Dubey and Gangopadhyay carried out the latest study on absolute poverty in India. This study gave estimates in rural and urban India, by states/union territories and by regions within them, using NSS household budget data for rounds 43 (July 1987-June 1988) and 50 (July 1993-June 1994). It used as many as six different poverty lines, each representing some minimum of per capita total consumer expenditure, with a view to showing that changes in poverty between the two periods were more or less the same whichever poverty line is used.

For working out estimates of the number of poor households living in Kolkata slums, three different criteria are used, namely daily per capita calorie intake, monthly per capita income and monthly per capita expenditure. The data generated during the survey indicate household distributions according to monthly per capita incomes, expenditures and daily per capita calorie intake. The problem faced here is that people are reluctant to reveal their actual income. Also a large cross-section of the slum dwellers are employed in the informal sector where proper records of profits and earnings or wages paid are not maintained. The household members especially those who are not literate sometimes do not have ideas on total family income. In a sample of 20 slums, in overall terms, 52.7 per cent of slums were found to be below the poverty line. According to the per capita income category, 42.4 per cent of households in the 20 slums were found to be under the poverty line.

E. UNOFFICIAL DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty can be described from two perspectives: absolute poverty, which reflects the lack of satisfaction of basic needs and relative poverty which is due to the unequal distribution of income. Certain indicators can be used to identify the poor and thereby measure levels and changes in the patterns and magnitudes of poverty over time. Two general types of indicators are those focusing on the absolute deprivation, the basic need indicators, and those giving stress to relative deprivation, or inequality in access to income, services and material benefits of development. Concerning absolute deprivation, the poverty line indicator uses income levels needed to fulfil the nutritional requirements for sustaining life. Poverty has been described in different literature in different ways but its exact extent is hardly revealed.

F. HOUSEHOLD INDICATORS

1. Household Types

Slum dwellers' families have been categorised into four types of living units: single family, mess, nuclear and joint family. The survey report of 1991 reveals that 39,446 people live in 7,810 households located in 20 slums. In 2001 the slum population had increased to 1,490,811 (Census 2001). The majority of these people are members of nuclear families followed by joint families as the second largest category. It is also seen that they are predominantly Bengali speaking (53 per cent) the majority of whom have come from Kolkata's main hinterland. The Urdu speaking population accounts for 27 per cent whereas the share of the Hindi speaking group is estimated to be 19 per cent of the total number of slum dwellers. The balance of the population comes from almost all the major linguistic region of India or the neighbouring countries.

It has been found that more than 41 per cent of households have been living in Kolkata's slums for two generations or more. The next group of 24 per cent originated from adjoining states while about 14 per cent of these households have come to the Kolkata's slums from different states. Again 17 per cent of households in the slums were seen to have migrated from Bangladesh. The process of settlement in these slums started long ago and has proliferated over time. Also most of the households are settled on a permanent basis and they are likely to continue to live here.

2. Male-Female Ratio

In the 2001 census the male-female ratio was 55:45. The ratio is different for the two largest language groups, the Bengali speaking population (52:48) and the

Urdu speaking population (54:46) but their ratios indicate that they stay in these slums with their families. For other language groups, most people have come to the city for jobs, hence their tendency is to maintain a minimum family, saving more so that they can send more to their native place.

3. Income

Income categories identified by studies made during a wellbeing exercise include high (Rs 1500-5000 per month - ca. US\$ 33-110), medium (Rs 800-2300 per month - ca. US\$ 17-50), and low (Rs 500-1500 per month - ca. US\$ 11-33). 80 per cent of all households have been found to be earning between Rs 500 and Rs 1700 (ca. US\$ 11-37) per month. This shows that with an average family size of 5-6, more than 70-80 per cent of slum families live below the poverty line. (See **Figure 5**)

4. Household Size

Comparing the surveys, it appears that the percentage of households having 3, 4 or 5 members appears to have gone up, while percentages of households having 2 members and households having more than 5 members indicate downward trends. The average size has been found to be 5.05 people with variations for different household types. The average sizes for different types of households have been estimated as shown in **Figure 6**.

5. Literacy rates

The sample population has been classified into six groups based on educational levels of individuals.

These are:

- a. literate
- b. below primary
- c. primary
- d. middle level
- e. secondary
- f. graduates and above

Generally the educational levels of females were seen to be lower than the males in all groups - while the overall literacy rate is 28.5 per cent, the same for women is 25.2 per cent. While 14.5 per cent of males have attained secondary level and 3.9 per cent of males have attained graduation or above level, corresponding levels for women are 7.3 and 1.3 per cent respectively. Any purposeful literacy programme in slum areas in Kolkata should consider completely illiterate people and people with below primary level of education as its target group. This group includes 37.7 per cent of males, 51.9 per cent of females and 44.2 per cent of the total population.

Also we find the illiteracy rates are higher for higher age groups. The illiteracy rates for the age groups 5-14 years, 15-44 years and 45 years and above are 23.8, 25.5 and 44.5 per cent respectively. This denotes a healthy trend suggesting a positive change of attitude of slum dwellers towards education and increased coverage of slum dwellers in education/literacy activities over time. The information generated during the field surveys strongly emphasises the need for special literacy programs exclusively for women in the slums of Kolkata. Also the educational levels of the Bengali-speaking people are generally higher than those of the Hindi or Urdu-speaking people living in the Kolkata slums. In 2001 it has been found that 67 per cent of the slum

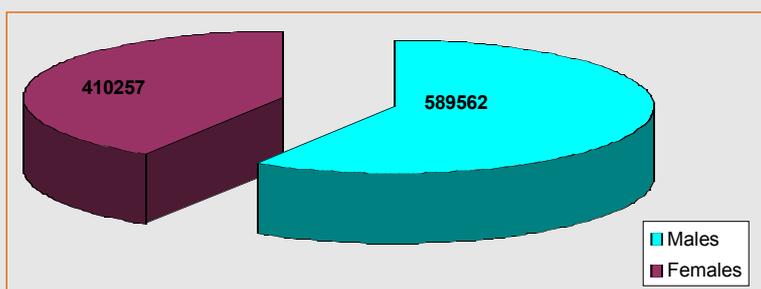
Figure 5. Percentage Of Population by Wellbeing Category

CATEGORY	%
Lowest income group	42 %
Middle income group	48 %
Highest income group	10 %

Figure 6. Household Size by Types

Household Type	Arithmetic mean	Median
Nuclear families	4.59	3.94
Joint families	6.45	6.03
Mess	6.17	2.61
Others	7.20	6.65
All	5.05	4.31

Figure 7. Literate Population of Slums in Kolkata 2001



population is literate with 59 per cent of these literate slum people being male and the remaining 41 per cent being female. On the other hand we find that the literacy rate for the whole of Kolkata is 82 percent. In the total population 85 per cent of males and 78 per cent of females are literate (2001 Census).

According to the 2001 census the literacy of the child population in the majority of wards is between 80 and 90 per cent. The ward with 70 to 80 per cent of the literacy level of this group of children is second in position. Only in one single ward is the literacy level comparatively low (less than 50 per cent). A comparative analysis of child literacy using the 1991 and 2001 census data shows an interesting trend. In almost 75 per cent of the Kolkata wards low improvement is noticed (where the improvement rate is less than 20 per cent). In the added area of Kolkata Corporation the improvement rate is moderate (above 20 per cent). A depressing scenario is noticed in the central and old areas of Kolkata. In the port area no change is recorded in respect of child literacy.

6. Livelihoods

The slum people work in a wide range of occupations; servicing the urban middle-classes, working in small businesses, garment production units, government jobs and in the organised sector. Men whose families have resided in Kolkata for several generations are able to use contacts and links with their own father's employers to find jobs. Some small production units are located within the slums themselves. The self-employed men are among the better-off section of the slums, with manual labourers such as rickshaw-pullers and construction labourers being among the lowest paid.

Again in other slums opportunities for employment in the informal sector as manual labourers (unskilled and semi-skilled), casual labourers (e.g. construction workers seasonally unemployed during the monsoon), hawkers and vendors, some family workers and traditional craftspeople are available. The higher income groups tend to be factory workers whose wages are low but whose income is regular and secure. The skilled workers earn more but are regularly unemployed due to the seasonal nature of their work.

The majority of households are engaged in what is termed as the "mainstream" informal sector. The occupations of 36.5 per cent of households are found to be service related. The second major group in the mainstream informal sector appears to be sales related occupation with its share of 22.1 per cent. The percentage shares of profession and production groups are comparable i.e. 6.4 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively. The survey data reveals that a fair number of slum dwellers are now engaged in cottage and small scale industries like tailoring, carpentry, blacksmithing, manufacturing shoe and sports goods, chemicals, handicrafts, engineering goods and other petty trades.

The production activities of many of these entrepreneurs appear to be seriously crippled for lack of capital and working space, obsolete production techniques, difficulties in procuring raw materials and getting markets for the products etc.

In the marginal sector on the other hand, the major occupational group is "casual labour" constituting 22.2 per cent of the aggregate household occupations i.e. about one fourth of the group do not have any regular or steady source of income. These labourers often become victims of exploitation. The category "others" include pensioners, renters' domestic servants, beggars, rag-pickers etc. This group, which is the poorest among the urban poor, constitutes 3.5 per cent of the households in the slums surveyed. It was seen that in some slums a good number of families are dependent on begging and charity from philanthropic organisations for their livelihood. As regards the extent of unemployment, it is learnt that about 34 per cent of the labour force in Kolkata slums are actively searching for jobs or available for employment and they fall under the unemployed category.

7. Length of Household Residency in Slums

More than 41 per cent of households have lived in slums for more than 30 years. More than 70 per cent of the households have lived there for more than 15 years. The newcomers to slums with a duration of stay of up to 5 years constitute only 4 per cent of the sample surveyed. About 16 per cent of the population has been living from 6-15 years in unauthorised slums such as Khalpar, Udbastu and Jhupri.

G. LIFE PROFILES OF SLUM DWELLERS

This section presents profiles of a number of slum dwellers to give an idea of the daily life of a Kolkata slum dweller.

Safi Ahmed

The place where the interview was made is his workplace in a slum called Parsibagan. His work is laminating paper with a machine. His residence is in a slum in Narkeldanga. His mother tongue is Urdu but he can speak Bengali fluently because he was born in Kolkata. Previously he used to live in a slum in Park Circus with his parents but after his marriage he started living with his family in Narkeldanga. He has been in this occupation for about 9 years now. He has seven members in his family and is the sole earner in the family. His weekly income is Rs 300 (ca. US\$6.5) and his working period is from 9am to 6pm. Of this income each month he has to give Rs 300 as rent. His perception about slum condi-

tions is that they are bad from the environmental point of view but comfortable in the context of social relations. Regarding poverty he says that it is the gift of God and hence its eradication lies with God only. Of course the government may help to minimise the misery.

Rajan

Rajan has been a Bidi Worker for seven years in ward no 38. His is originally from Bihar. His father was a Munshi at a Zamindar's place and when the zamindari system was abolished, he found it very difficult to make a living and started to live in the slums of Kolkata, so he set up his family in the Kolkata slums. The people living with him here are thika tenants. They have a structure occupying 2-3 kathas with a Bariwala who is the owner of the house. All members share a single room and hence male members sleep outside. In many cases these male members also sleep on the pavement. He does the work of making *bidis* which he has been doing for more than 10 years. On an average he makes about 500 to 600 *bidis* in a day and he gets Rs 70 (ca. US\$1.5) for that. He is more than 70 years old, but has to work for his livelihood. His perception about living in slum that it is acceptable to him since no other option is available. According to him poverty is part of slum life people live in slums because they are poor.

Malabika Balmiki

This child is only seven years old. She works in folding paper known as bhajai. She has been doing this work since she was even smaller and was doing it like an expert sitting by the side of the narrow lane at the entrance of the slum in which her family lived in a room. In fact this was very common and all children of the family did this work along with the women of the family whenever they got time. The small girl even went to a primary school and studied in Class I. The girl was very shy did the work in a mechanical way. It is known that the slum in which she lived was a Bengali speaking slum which has been there for many decades and fell within the Thika Tenancy Act. There were lots of mosquitoes in these slums which caused malaria and other transferable diseases. As regards her perception about slum she is comfortable since she was born and brought up here and is accustomed to this environment. Regarding poverty she has the opinion that the government should create employment opportunities so that they can improve their living environment.

Rupali Ghosh

Rupali Ghosh is a 37 year old female sex worker and resides in Rakhai Dutta Bustee in the Kalighat area. She migrated from the Budge Budge area about 50 km from Kolkata. Initially she was a housewife with two children. When her husband left her she had to come to Kolkata in search of a livelihood. In Kolkata she was sold to a mahajan (a money lender in the sex trade) and

after that she had to take the profession of sex worker. Her earnings vary from time to time, on an average her daily income is Rs 100 to 150 (ca. US\$ 2- 3). From this income she has to give Rs 30 to 40 to different people who help in different ways. Ultimately, her monthly income is calculated as Rs 2,000 to 2,500 (ca. US\$44-55). As regards expenditure for her family it is as follows:

Room Rent : Rs 500 per month (US\$ 11)

Electricity: Rs 150 per month (US\$ 3)

Private tuition fees for two children: Rs 300 per month

Food: ca. Rs 600-700 per month (ca. US\$ 13-15)

She has to collect her drinking water for the community tap and the distance between her working place and her children's school is about 10 minutes walk. There is no separate latrine for her family. There is a primary health unit in the bustee where free medical facilities are available in the morning every day except Sunday. One NGO has opened a school for the education of the children of the bustee. It is to be noted that bustee is inhabited mostly by sex workers. A major problem in the bustee is water-logging during the monsoon. This bustee is located beside the Adiganga popularly known as Tolly Nullah. Regarding her perception of the bustee she is of the opinion that if there had been no bustee like this, she would have died of starvation with her children. Though her income is uncertain she can manage with it. It would be very beneficial if the government arranged some kind of social security in her old age when she will be out of her profession.

H. COSTS OF LIVING IN SLUMS

1. Commuting

Since the slum population reside near their work places, they normally travel either by foot or by bicycle. Occasionally they travel by public transport.

2. Prices of Water and Other Services

The households' electricity charges were surveyed. They pay electricity charges either to the corporation or directly to the electricity authority when they have a personal meter. The average monthly electricity cost is less than Rs 100 (US\$ 2.2).

Slums which come under the Thika Tenancy Act pay 70-80 Rupees per month for electricity. Generally every family has a television with cable connection. Each month the cost of the cable is 150 rupees (US\$ 3).

3. Rental Rates

Most slum people live in rented houses and usually these houses consist of about 8-10 rooms where one family lives in one room. The rent is in most cases Rs 300–500 (US\$ 6-11) and in many cases where we find the rent is given to the Rent Control Board, the rents have not changed for decades.

4. Drainage Facilities

The drainage facilities in the slums / *bustees* of Kolkata are:

- No Drainage: 85.4 per cent
- Open Drainage: 6.9 per cent
- Covered Drainage: 7.7 per cent

5. Availability of Housing Finance

Availability of housing finance for the slum people exists through the CMC but it has been stated by the CMC officials that because of the disputed nature of ownership in many cases and also because of the banks' disinterest this facility is unavailable in most cases. Recently the CMC has actively considered a housing programme known as Balmiki Griha Yojona - though it has some technical problems relating to ownership but it will be solved by joint meetings with slum dwellers, locally elected representatives and funding agencies.

6. Health Problems

The slums present the worst forms of health conditions. Their deplorable environmental and economic conditions result in malnutrition among children. Infant as well as maternal mortality rates were very high in the slums. Due to poor hygiene conditions people died of hepatitis, encephalitis, typhoid and rabies. The incidence of respiratory diseases like fever, viral infection, tuberculosis, skin diseases, diseases of the kidney and urinal diseases were high in the slums. The most conspicuous and highest degrees of incidence could be noticed for some special diseases: the incidence of tuberculosis was ten times higher in the slums than in the city as a whole, viral infections were 2.5 times higher, skin diseases 2 times, respiratory diseases 1.4 times, heart and circulatory system about 10 times and allergic diseases 1.9 times higher. As the slums have no open spaces and playgrounds, children in the slums developed mental complexes and physical imbalances.

7. Performance Levels of Health Services in Slums

In a study of 12 slums, honorary health workers of CSIP (Calcutta Slum Improvement Project) were placed close to the slum dwellers. The local Health Administrative Unit (HAU) of CSIP was said to be the nearest institution providing health services. In the Muraripukur slum primary health care services were already being provided under Calcutta Urban Development Programme (CUDP) III. The services of HAU/ESOPD were appreciated by some slum dwellers, as they were located in close proximity to the slum.

Figure 9. Causes of Fatality of the Slum Population

Cause of Death	%
Accidents, suicide and poisoning	6.4
Diseases circulatory system	9.1
Diseases of digestive system	26.1
Bacterial and parasite, excluding tuberculosis	5.6
Metabolic diseases, nutritional and vitamin deficiency	5.0
Neoplasm-malignant	9.7
Diseases of respiratory system	11.4
Tuberculosis	6.7
Others	12.5
Unknown Diseases	7.5
Total	100.00

Figure 8. Percentage of Slum Population Affected by Different Diseases

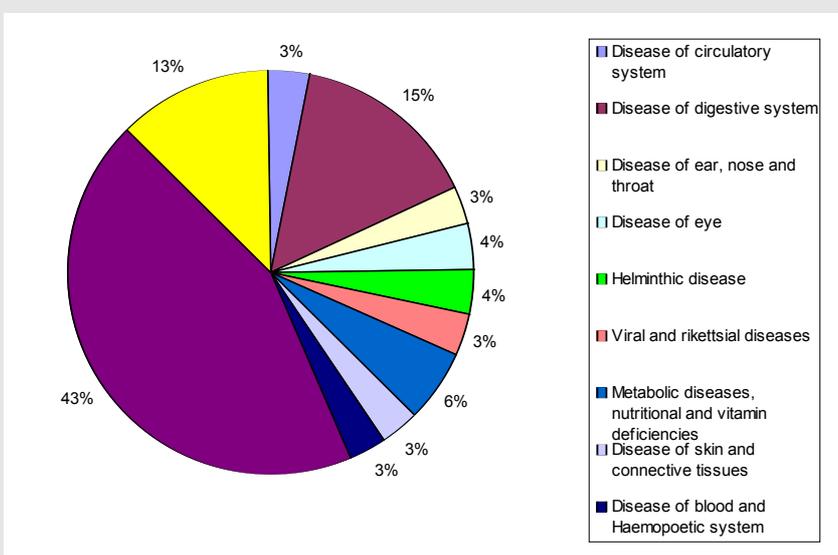


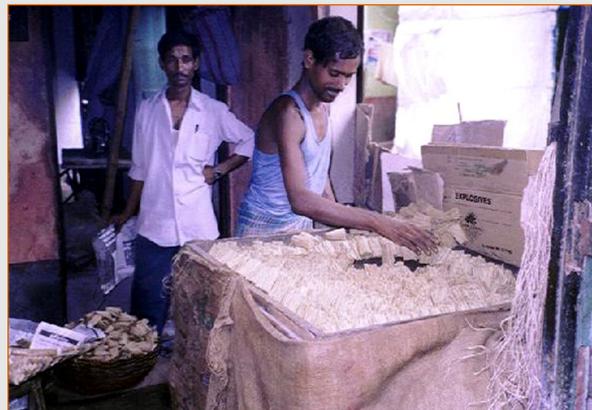
Photo 7: Sticker making



Ms. Maushumi Pal

The making of stickers in a slum in Central Kolkata

Photo 8: Making bidis



Ms. Amrita Basu

The making of Bidis (a type of locally used cigarettes made of a local leaf called *bidi*)

Box 1. CINI-ASHA

CINI-ASHA or Child in Need Institute was set up in 1989 to work with the deprived urban children in the central and eastern fringes of Kolkata. Its activities are directed towards the improvement of their living conditions through education and social mobilisation. The target group consists of street children, child labourers and children of sex workers. The strategies adopted by the organisation to ensure basic rights for this target group in accordance to CRC are drop-in centres, night shelters, half-way houses, pre-vocational training centres (upavan), preparatory centres, awareness programmes, sick bays and an emergency telephone service. Through its activities it tries to check on the use of child labour in unrecognised sectors (leather, rubber, recycling etc). These children hail from the squatter settlements and slums of the central and eastern part of Kolkata whose parents migrated to the city for work. These slum children between the ages of 6-14 are mostly illiterate. The strategies undertaken for creating an environment at micro and macro levels in terms of the shift of child labourers to formal schools are sensitisation of community youth at micro level through meetings, drama and folk songs.

The support system to set up such an environment required coaching centres, teacher training, counselling, and mobilisation.

In order to set up a sustainable environment the organisation worked for upgrading the local school and sensitisation of teachers of the formal schools and the community-based apex communities.

- The impacts of the program in the community are as follows.
- The number of children placed in formal schools is more than 3,000.
- Creation of consciousness and thus demand for education among parents and children
- Change of attitude among formal schoolteachers.
- Community raised local funding is encouraged for purchase of educational goods.
- Local factory owner had also helped increasing the fund through donations
- Trade union leaders have also extended help to work with this organisation.

Thus the experience of the CINI-ASHA Organisation shows that willingness of the community and parents to enter formal schools is essential or else the attempt to eliminate child labour will not be successful.

Box 2. Sabuj Sangha, The Green Organisation

This organisation was established in 1954 at Nandakumarpur, in 24 Parganas nearly 80 km from Kolkata. Initially the organisation was involved in cultural activities, games and sports. This organisation opened an urban branch at Sonarpur adjacent to Kolkata in 1975 for mobilising the urban poor as a group through micro-saving and credit. This organisation is funded by the national government, the Government of West Bengal, UNICEF, GOAL Ireland, Railway Children U.K., Child Hope U.K. and many other National Organisations. Presently this organisation is involved in managing a night shelter for unattended girls, providing education for poor children in the slums in Kolkata's fringe and promoting of self-help groups of women through micro-savings and credit in the slums in the south-eastern parts of the city.

Presently 50 groups consisting of 12-15 women are involved. Every member after joining the group is asked to save Rs 10 for 6 months.

After six month the organisation sanctions a loan of Rs 500 for any business. After six months she pays back Rs 57.50 monthly for ten months.

After the repayment of this loan the organisation again sanctions up to Rs 1500-2000 if required. In this process the poor slum dwellers can avoid private moneylenders whose rate of interest is more than double. This self-help group is engaged both in production and trading. They produce jute bags, paper packets out of newspaper, rice flakes, baskets prepared from bamboo sticks and other handicrafts. They are involved in trading such as vegetable vending, fish vending, rickshaw pulling etc.

They have organised self-help groups with three age groups: 18-30 years, 31-50 years and above 50 years to make the groups homogeneous. They have also made provisions for literacy in leisure time

In two slums the role of local NGOs and clubs in organising medical assistance were also highlighted. Apart from these, the better-off section of slum dwellers in almost all the slums made use of the services provided by local allopathic practitioners and homeopathic practitioners. They are generally approached for treatment. The importance of established Government Medical Colleges and hospitals were duly recognised by the slum dwellers especially for cases where emergency and prolonged treatment is required.

8. Status of Women

The victimisation of women is very common in slums and the usual situation is one of women putting up with it. A Participatory Impact Assessment Study on the status of women was carried out in fifteen slums using a number of Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA)/PALM exercises like FGD (Focus Group Discussions) and SSI (Semi-Structured Interviews) before and after the exercise, social mapping, livelihood analysis, matrix scoring and cause-effect analysis. The factors responsible for bringing changes to the lives of the slum women, which have also affected their status, are analysed by the women themselves and this helped them greatly in becoming independent which helped their development but according to most slum dwellers such activities take place in very small selective areas. There is a need for expanding such activities. In this context the role of NGOs is very important.

I. ASSETS AVAILABLE

1. Social Capital

The Government of West Bengal has been working for the poverty stricken people through the CMC. This sector of the population includes not only the slum dwellers but also the street children and the pavement dwellers. Apart from the CMC there are a number of NGOs and Self-Help Groups who also try to help of the people. Some of the NGOs which have made a significant contribution towards the improvement of the street children's and slum dwellers' conditions are Focus, CINI-Asha, Garden Reach Slum Development (GRSD), Joint Citizen Forum, Bikashbhar, Janasiksha and Sabuj Sangha, as well as numerous other such organisations. Most of these look after the health and the literacy of the people. They set up night schools and schools for adults. Sabuj Sangha is involved in micro-financing and formation of self-help groups.

J. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Slums have generally been seen as something that should be eliminated from the city. They have been treated as an eyesore and nuisance to be dealt with. However, with rising concerns about the safety, security, health and hygiene of the urban elite at both national and state levels they have become a concern to be seriously looked at. To overcome the situation policies and strategies have been considered. The policy interventions so far undertaken have focussed mostly on clearance and removal of the poor and ugly housing structures from different parts of the city to keep the city clean. How far this could be successful in addressing the problem in a correct manner is a debatable question.

In the fifties the successive programmes of the Government of India began to stress the need for a policy approach in addressing the slum problem. The national policies on slums were projected through the Five-Year Plans. Urban management tended to address the slum problem as a barrier for urban development. Thus, the First, Second and Third Five-Year Plans laid emphasis on slum eradication and removal. Borrowing ideas from developed countries, attempts were made to re-house the slum dwellers in single-room tenements to be constructed in four storey walk-up buildings in suitable places. It was thought that the slum dwellers would welcome the idea of moving to one room permanent tenements with proper sanitation and environments. Subsequently, the vacant slum lands could be used for area development projects to raise funds for construction of these 4 storey buildings. Detailed cost-benefit analyses were made which indicated that the sale of developed slum land would generate enough resources

Photo 8: Sorting paper



Sorting out shredded paper collected as byproducts from different industries into white and coloured piles. These will be sold to paper industries.

Ms. Maushumi Pal

for the projects. Accordingly, available land was purchased and four storey buildings were constructed. But contrary to the expectations of the town planners, the slum dwellers refused to move to the new buildings because they were too far away from their work places. Another reason was that those who were offered tenements on 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors refused to move because most of them reared livestock and engaged in cottage industries. In the 3 tier system of the slums the landlord was given compensation and the actual occupier was provided with alternative accommodation. In this case the *thika* tenant lost his livelihood. So, naturally the *thika* tenants opposed the scheme very strongly. This model of slum clearance faced the problem of new land acquisition and the development of erstwhile slum land. So, this model ultimately was abandoned.

Under the fourth plan the slum policy of the national planners was incorporated in the Environment Improvement Scheme (EIS). It was from the fourth plan that a shift was noticed in the strategy, which now aimed at the improvement of slum conditions rather than the earlier eradication. The aim was to shift the slum pockets to the rehabilitation of sites for improvement. Hence the idea of a Slum Redevelopment Model emerged. This model envisaged that the slum dwellers were to be provided accommodation in single storied small tenements in walk ups constructed on the same sites, and that by increasing the density of occupation it should be possible to obtain some free land for subsequent sale at market price to meet part of the cost of construction of the tenements. This time the slum dwellers agreed to move but opposed paying extra rent for the maintenance of the new tenements. The project also faced constraints because of litigation concerning the acquisition of land and the demolition of slums. The landlords and *thika* tenants wanted to be handsomely compensated for loss of their incomes. The cost effectiveness of

the model was hampered because the slum dwellers refused to pay any more than they paid as *thika* tenants and because the landlords and the *thika* tenants were to be compensated at market rates. The slum dwellers were not in a position to pay extra costs and the payment of extra costs for environmental improvements, health care facilities etc were of limited priority to them.

In the Fifth Plan, the EIS which had been incorporated in the Fourth Plan was also included, along with the Minimum Needs Program (MNS). In this plan, along with the environmental factors, improvements in the social needs of the slum dwellers were also considered. In the Sixth Plan the EIS remained and there was now a concentration on setting up small and medium sized towns and creating employment opportunities. The Seventh Plan continued with the EIS policy and the improvement of the slum situation and environment (Bardhan Roy, 1994).

In the Eighth Plan economic and physical infrastructure is to form a part of the urban development programmes. The development of the small and medium towns will be integrated into a spatial context with the existing district planning process keeping in view the concept of Generators of Economic Momentum (GEMs). The strategy of the Eighth Plan is to dovetail the activities in the employment generation program with infrastructure development.

1. Policies Implemented by Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC)

A number of policies have been proposed and implemented by the government for the alleviation of poverty. In many cases these programmes are targeted at the slum dwellers.

It has been seen that the standard of living of the slum dwellers did cause concern even during colonial rule. Despite statutory provisions for planned interventions in slums, nothing much was actually done by the civic administration. Only after the birth of the Calcutta Improvement Trust in 1913 was some attention paid to 'area development' and slum clearance, as part of a policy of major surgical operations on the malignant social formations. It was found that their aim was to satisfy the interests of the affluent classes.

The experience of the Slum Clearance and Slum Redevelopment Models led to the more limited Slum Improvement Model. This can better be termed the Sanitation Model, as it was aimed at providing basic infrastructure facilities to slum dwellers. The ingredients of the action programme included conversion of service latrines, providing potable water supply connections, surface drainage facilities, construction of paved roads and pathways, arranging street lighting and providing garbage vats and dustbins in adequate

Photo 9: Canal side latrine



Unregistered slum by the canal. A structure erected on four poles and covered by a thin cloth acts as the latrine for the people of the nearby dwelling. This slum has grown along the canal and is several km long.

numbers in slum areas. This model did not involve the interference with the rights and interests of the landowners and thika tenants or the physical shifting of slum dwellers further from their places of employment. This model of development is considered to be the least expensive and can be done in stages. The programme was designed to decongest the central area of the city by forceful removal of urban slums to the outskirts of the city. The slums were thus "cleared" from the city's locations, opening prime locations. In Kolkata, the administration forcibly relocated the urban poor from the central part of the city through the implementation of the Slum Areas [Improvement and Clearance] Act 1956.

In one way the Kolkata Slum Improvement Project (SIP) is unique in comparison to other cities in that Kolkata considers the slum problem as a totality - improvement of living environment keeping in mind employment generation whereas in other cities managers look at the slum problem from the mere sanitary point of view, providing only living facilities, and not livelihoods for slum people.

The EIUS (Environment Improvement In Urban Sector) scheme was introduced as a central sector scheme in 1972 but has been in operation in the States since 1974 as an integral part of the State Plan under the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The EIUS aims at improving the living environment of the slum dwellers by providing them with basic civic facilities like water supply, storm water and side drains, community baths and latrines, widening and paving of existing lanes, and street lighting. The per capita expenditure under the scheme is Rs 800 (ca. US\$ 17), revised from the Rs 525 (ca. US\$11) fixed earlier, and additional inputs pertaining to community facilities, garbage removal and maintenance. The EIUS scheme provides only for physical infrastructure and does not include social services like health, education, community development etc. Though this scheme has been partially successful in improving the living environment of slum dwellers, it has not helped in preventing growth of new slums, arising due to say fresh migrants or natural increases in the existing slums. The scheme suffers lack of community involvement in planning implementation and monitoring. The per capita expenditure ceiling under the EIUS, though it has been revised from time to time, has always been considered to be inadequate by the States. In the CMA in many cases this could not be implemented because the type of ownership in many places is still disputed and cannot be solved.

The centrally sponsored Urban Basic Services (UBS) scheme was initiated during the Sixth Plan with the primary objective of enhancing the survival and development of the women and children of the low-income urban communities. Based on the experiences of this scheme, a new centrally sponsored scheme of Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) was introduced in 1990-91.

Another programme was also launched entitled Neheru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) in 1989 to cater the economic needs of the urban poor by providing them with employment opportunities through skills upgrading and assistance in setting up their own enterprises. Under this programme there were other sub programmes. The Scheme of Urban Micro Enterprises (SUME) was designed for technical training and providing financial assistance for setting up micro enterprises with government subsidies and bank credit.

The Scheme for Housing and Shelter Upgrading (SHASU) is a programme under NRY for providing technical training to construction workers in urban areas and financial assistance to economically weaker sectors of the population for housing and shelter upgrading with government subsidies and housing loans.

The Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) was launched as a part of NRY in 1994 to improve the quality of life of the urban poor by creating a facilitating environment through community-based planning and implementation. Thus the scheme was thought of as an effective achievement of social sector goals, community empowerment, convergence through sustainable support system employment generation and environmental improvement.

As well as these, certain other programmes have been introduced which can be seen to benefit the poverty-stricken people of Kolkata. Of these the National Slum Development Programme (NSDP) was seen to be effective. This contains a number of sub-programmes. The National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOPS) has been seen to benefit people over 65 who will get Rs 700 (US\$ 15) per month. For this 75 per cent is funded by the central government and 25 per cent by the State Government. Rs 10,600,000 (US\$ 233,200) have been allotted in one year. The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) was aimed at pregnant women with two children only. They could apply in the 6th month of their pregnancy and after the birth of the child. The mother could receive Rs 500 (US\$11). But it would only be given if the child was the first or the second issue. Rs 250,000 (US\$ 5500) have been allotted for Kolkata for the ongoing period.

For the Family Benefit Programme aimed at the Below the Poverty Line category, Rs 10,000 (US\$ 220) would be given to the close family of a working person aged under 60 falling in the Below Poverty Line category who died accidentally. This is possible provided the person taking this facility is also below 60 years of age. Rs 300,000 (US\$ 6600) have been allotted in the ongoing year for the CMC region.

There is also a Programme called the Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana which has been long pending implementation. This is because this falls under the Urban Self Employment Programme with a greater emphasis given to women and in fact here more auton-

omy has been given to women than even to the councilors. This programme has been seen to be successful in other places as it has been noted that women have been better organisers than others.

2. Impacts of the Schemes Implemented

Figure 10. Status of the Slum Improvement Programme (March 1990)

Description	In CMA	In HMA	In Other Areas	Total in CMA
Total Bustee Population (in hundred thousands)	18.31	4.68	6.80	29.83
Slum population (in hundred thousands)	15.91	4.11	2.44	22.45
Expenditure incurred (In tens of millions of Rs)	45.63	9.11	8.69	63.43
Bustee population yet to be covered (in hundred thousands)	5.44	0.58	4.36	10.38

different Calcutta Urban Development Programmes (CUDP) with good outcomes. But after the completion of the programmes, the CMC could not continue the progress due to improper institutional arrangements.

Since slum improvement and poverty eradication require a comprehensive approach by pulling together different departments of the CMC, a sense of convergence needs to be built up. Unfortunately, this is lacking in the CMC. As a result the CMC is not in a position to implement the NSDP and SJSRY programmes. Further, slum improvement and poverty eradication under NSDP and SJSRY will require community participation.

Finally, private-public partnerships have been proved to be helpful in solving the local problems especially in slums and in promoting self help group activities. ■

K. MONITORING, FEEDBACK AND ADJUSTMENT

The funds from the central and state governments are finally transferred to the CMC, which is actually responsible for its distribution and implementation. Ward Councillors (elected representatives) recommend and ask for funds required for the implementation of the programme.

A ward survey is being done by the CMC of the actual number of slums, their socio-economic characteristics, the concentration of the slums, the people and all other details regarding the amenities available and their poverty status. This survey is the first of its kind by the CMC which is not yet completed. According to the officials after the database is completely available, they will be able to allot the funds to proper people and these will ultimately be helpful in implementing the urban poverty eradication and slum improvement programmes.

Ward level committees consisting of different political parties and CBOs, NGOs have been constituted in most cases.

To address the issues of slums, programmes have been set up by the Government National Slum Development Programme (NSDP) and the Swarna Jyanti Sahari Rojgar Yajana (SJSRY). In Kolkata the implementation levels of these programmes are not satisfactory for the following reasons:

The Slum Improvement Programme and poverty eradication activities were taken up by the CMDA under

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ACRONYMS

CMA	Calcutta Metropolitan Area
CMC	Calcutta Metropolitan Corporation
CSIP	Calcutta Slum Improvement Project
EIS	Environment Improvement Scheme
MNS	Minimum Needs Programme
GEMS	Generators of Economic Momentum
SIP	Slum Improvement Programme
EIUS	Environmental Improvements in Urban Sector
MNP	Minimum Needs Programme
UBS	Urban Basic Services Scheme
UBSP	Urban Basic Services for the Poor
NRYP	Neheru Robgar Yojana Scheme
PMIUPES	Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Scheme
NSDP	National Slum Development Programme
NOPS	National Old Age Pensioners' Scheme
NMBG	National Maternity Benefits Scheme
CUDP	Calcutta Urban Development Programme

GLOSSARY

<i>Babu</i>	Gentleman
<i>Bidi</i>	Hand made local cheap smoking items
<i>Bigha</i>	13.33 ha
<i>Katha</i>	An area of land (There are approximately 150 <i>kathas</i> in a hectare)
<i>Kutcha</i>	Crude or imperfect
<i>Mahajan</i>	Money lender in the sex trade
<i>Patta</i>	Legal land title
<i>Pukka</i>	Genuine, solidly-built
<i>Zamindari</i>	Landlordship

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