

A Geographical Study on Trend and Pattern of Slums: A Case Study of NCT of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the trends and spatial patterns of slums in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, where globalization, industrialization, and rapid urbanization have driven profound demographic and spatial transformations. Delhi's population grew from 1.74 million in 1951 to 16.7 million in 2011 and is projected to reach 34.66 million by 2025, largely due to migration and inadequate planning. This surge has fuelled the expansion of unauthorized colonies, Jhuggi Jhonpri (JJ) clusters, and informal settlements that house socially and economically marginalized groups. These settlements often lack housing, sanitation, water, electricity, and healthcare, forcing residents into environmentally fragile areas. Unregulated land use and land cover (LULC) changes such as the conversion of agricultural land and open spaces into built-up zones further increases slum growth, environmental hazards, and public health risks. Slum populations are thus disproportionately exposed to pollution, flooding, and unsafe living conditions, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability and exclusion.

KEYWORDS: Slums; Migration; Urbanization; Environmental Hazards.

INTRODUCTION

The slum is a relative concept in terms of its geographical setting and outlay. The concept of definition of slum also varies from one society to another and even from one study to another study conducted in a same society. There is no general agreement over the definition of the term "slum" which can be universally accepted or applied to slum all over the world. The term has been defined differently by geographers, economists, sociologists, social workers, administrator, policy makers, town planners, demographers, welfare agencies etc. keeping in view of their own disciplines and professional backgrounds. To the economists, slum is an area of poverty and deterioration. To the administrator, it is an area which is physically as well morally altering. To the town planners, it is an area of complete deterioration, lacking in basic amenities and requiring total demolition and reconstruction. Slum growth has its root in migration marginalized from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities (supported by regular and higher wages, fixed working hours), better living conditions, accessibility to better health conditions etc. but the rapid

urbanization and unchecked land prices force them to survive in filthiest condition. Urban areas are increasingly facing degradation due to rapid industrialization, overpopulation, urban poverty, the proliferation of unauthorized colonies and slums, and ineffective urban planning and management. Currently, more than 55% of the world's population (4.2 billion people) resides in urban areas, a figure projected to rise to 68% by 2050 (WHO, Local Action for Health: A Repository of WHO Resources, 2025). According to UN-Habitat, nearly one billion people worldwide live in slums, and this number is expected to continue growing.

In India, the urban population expanded from 78.9 million in 1961 to 377 million in 2011. Over the same period, slum dwellers increased from 52.4 million in 2001 to 65.5 million in 2011, with nearly 49% of the urban population residing in slums by 2020. These settlements are typically characterized by poor infrastructure, unsafe housing, health risks, and exposure to environmental hazards. Slum residents also face unsafe working conditions, substance abuse, social exclusion, and inadequate access to healthcare

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services. Consequently, the quality of life in slums remains extremely poor, overshadowed by neglect, hardship, and alienation (Govindaraju, 2012). Housing conditions, therefore, exert a profound influence on the health and general welfare of urban communities (Omole, 2011). Furthermore, rapid land use and land cover (LULC) changes in urban regions such as the conversion of agricultural lands, wetlands, and open spaces into unplanned built-up areas have accelerated the proliferation of slums and informal settlements. The spread of impervious surfaces reduces vegetation cover and open space, contributing to flooding, urban heat island effects, air pollution, and overall environmental stress (Waza, 2023; Waza et al., 2023; Waza, Pednekar, et al., 2025; Waza, Rather, et al., 2025). These unregulated LULC transformations not only degrade urban ecosystems but also exacerbate socio-economic vulnerabilities, particularly for marginalized groups living in slums.

The word slum itself is thought to be derived from “Slumber” meaning unknowns is said to describe the people living in black streets on alley. The term “slum” has its origin in the London based east end novels of Charles Dickens like Oliver’s Twist and Black Plight were based on themes such as poverty, crime, vice, class conflict, drugs, etc. The slum was a slang or cant word or term used to describe a back room. Such places were common in London in the early 1800s. (Etymon line, 2015). The word “Slum” originated as part of the London cant and was first defined in convict writer Hardy Vaux’s work on “Vocabulary of the Flash Language” in 1812. In this context, the word “slum” was used interchangeably with words such as racket, criminal trade or room. By the 1830s and 1840s, during the second cholera pandemic years, the term began to be associated with impoverished living conditions rather than criminal activities. Wiseman, known for his writings on urban reforms, is sometimes credited with popularizing the term “slum” among more refined writers, transforming it from street slang.

By the mid of 19th century, slums were recognized as a global phenomenon, identified in many countries such as England, France, America and India. At the

Result and Discussion

Study Area

The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, the capital of India, is one of the country’s oldest historic urban centers, with its origins traced back to 1450 B.C. when it was referred to as *Indraprastha* (Risbud, 2012). Since 1956, Delhi has functioned as a Union Territory, administered by a Lieutenant Governor. Geographically, the city extends longitudinally between 76°50'24" E and 77°20'37" E and latitudinally between 28°24'17" N and 28°53'00" N, with a maximum length of 51.90 km and a width of 48.48 km (Delhi Planning Department).

end of 19th century, the word “slum” was used in the Oxford English Dictionary as “a street, alley, court, situated in a crowded district of town or city and inhabited by people of low class or by the very poor, number of these street or court forming a thickly populated neighborhood or district where the houses and the conditions of life are of a squalid and wretched character, a foul back street of a city, especially one filled with a poor, dirty, degraded and often vicious population, any low neighborhood or dark retreat.” (UN-Habitat, 2003b)

This study examines the spatial and demographic trends of slums in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. Delhi has undergone significant demographic and spatial transformation due to globalization, rapid industrialization, and urbanization, with its population increasing from 1.74 million in 1951 to an estimated 34.66 million in 2025. This growth, driven largely by migration and inadequate urban planning, has led to the proliferation of unauthorized colonies, JJ clusters, and informal settlements that predominantly accommodate socially and economically marginalized groups. These communities often lack access to basic services, including adequate housing, sanitation, clean water, electricity, and healthcare, and are frequently located in environmentally vulnerable areas. As a result, slum residents are disproportionately exposed to air and water pollution, noise, and unmanaged waste, conditions that adversely affect their health, nutrition, safety, and overall well-being.

Methodology

This paper is based on Secondary data and includes quantitative methods of research. The data has been collected from various sources such as Census of India (1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011), Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, Slums in India: A Statistical Compendium 2015, Government of GNCT, various published and unpublished government reports, magazines, newspapers, scholarly articles, books, chapters, journals and many more. The maps have been created with the help of Arc-GIS 10.10 software.

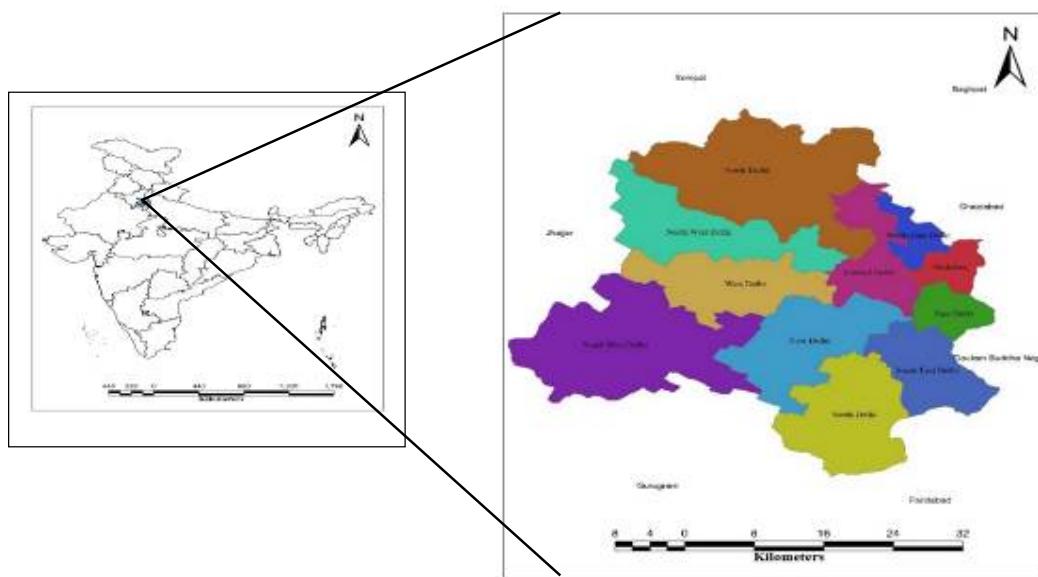


Figure 1, Map of the study area

Covering a total area of 1,483.2 sq. km, Delhi shares its boundaries with Sonipat (Haryana) and Baghpat (Uttar Pradesh) in the north, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar (Uttar Pradesh) in the east, Jhajjar (Haryana) in the west, and Gurugram and Faridabad (Haryana) in the south. Administratively, the territory is subdivided into 11 districts: North Delhi, North-East Delhi, North-West Delhi, West Delhi, South Delhi, South-West Delhi, South-East Delhi, New Delhi, Central Delhi, Shahdara, and East Delhi. Beyond its geographical and administrative attributes, Delhi's historical legacy and evolving political status have had significant implications for its patterns of urban growth and governance. The dual identity of Delhi as both a historic city and a modern capital has created tensions between preservation and expansion, while its Union Territory status has often produced overlapping institutional jurisdictions that complicate urban management. Furthermore, its strategic location within the National Capital Region has reinforced its role as a magnet for migration and investment, thereby intensifying pressures on land, housing, and infrastructure. Thus, Delhi's geographical form, administrative structure, and historical depth collectively shape its contemporary urban development trajectory and planning challenges.

Trend and Pattern of Slums in NCT of Delhi

The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has undergone rapid urbanization in recent decades, a process driven not only by natural population growth but also by large-scale migration from across India. As the country's capital, Delhi has emerged as a center of political authority, industrial activity, commerce, education, and media, as well as a nodal point in the global economy of northern India. These attributes have positioned the city as a magnet for migrants seeking employment, livelihood security, and improved living standards.

According to the Census of India (2001), approximately 1.85 million people resided in slum settlements within the NCT of Delhi. This number increased to around 2.15 million by the 2011 Census, and recent estimates suggest that more than 3 million people now inhabit nearly 675 *Jhuggi Jhonpri* (JJ) clusters distributed across the city (table 2). Table 1.1 illustrates the distribution of slum households and population across different census towns. The data reveal that the highest concentration of slum population is in DMC (U) Part, with 1,617,239 residents, followed by Bhalaswa Jahangir Pur (39,097). By contrast, Gokul Pur reports the lowest population, with only 276 inhabitants. Household data show a similar pattern: the largest concentrations are in DMC (U) Part, Bhalaswa Jahangir Pur (8,080 households), Tigri (4,984), New Delhi Municipal Council (4,412), and Sahibabad Daulatpur (3,886), whereas the smallest are recorded in Gokul Pur (55), Nangli Sakrawati (115), Chhatarpur (140), Kirari Suleman Nagar (216), and Dallo Pora (299).

Table 1: Distribution of Slum Households, Slum Population and Gender wise Slum Population of NCT of Delhi, 2011

Sr. No.	Area Name	Number of Slum Households	Total Slum Population	Male	Female
1.	Delhi Cantonment (CB) (Part)	2771	12260	7145	5115
2.	NDMC (Part)	4412	20002	11287	8715
3.	DMC (U) (Part)	332022	1617239	881315	735924

4.	Mithe Pur (CT)	480	2309	1248	1061
5.	Pul Pehlad (CT)	1599	7332	4138	3194
6.	Saidabad (CT)	691	3022	1743	1279
7.	Tigri (CT)	4984	25687	13726	11961
8.	Chattar Pur	140	591	318	273
9.	Dera Mandi	1018	4982	2708	2274
10.	Jona Pur	651	3397	1892	1505
11.	Sambhalka	1006	4389	2459	1930
12.	Moradabad Pahari	1161	5105	2864	2241
13.	Nangli Sakrawati	115	469	302	167
14.	Dallo Pora	299	1441	762	679
15.	Gharoli	303	1257	681	576
16.	Gharonda Neemka Bangar alias Patparganj	1074	5542	3060	2482
17.	Gokal Pur	55	276	154	122
18.	Bhalswa Jahangir Pur	8080	39097	21740	17357
19.	Sultan Pur Marja	2275	11086	5943	5143
20.	Pooth Kalan	655	3061	1620	1441
21.	Kirari Suleman Nagar	216	1106	578	528
22.	Sahibabad Daulat Pur	3886	15740	8646	7094
Total		367893	1785390	974329	811061

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 2. No. of Juggi Jhonpri in Delhi

Year	Jhuggi Jhonpri
1951	199
1973	1373
1983	534
1990	929
1997	1100
2001	728
2011	685
2014	672
2025	627

These uneven distributions underscore the complex geography of slum formation in Delhi. The concentration of large clusters in specific areas reflects the intersection of migration flows, availability of marginal or low-value land, and the growth of informal labor markets that absorb migrant workers. From a theoretical perspective, this pattern exemplifies what urban scholars such as Ananya Roy describe as *urban informality*—a mode of city-making shaped by both the agency of marginalized populations and the selective tolerance of the state. The persistence and expansion of JJ clusters demonstrate how informality functions as a “quiet encroachment” by the urban poor while simultaneously serving the needs of the city’s labor economy by providing a reserve of low-cost workers. Moreover, the spatial disparities in household size and population density across settlements highlight a center–periphery dynamic, where highly concentrated clusters often emerge in peripheral areas with weak planning enforcement, while smaller clusters survive in central zones under greater regulatory pressure.

Thus, the growth and distribution of slums in Delhi should not be understood merely as a demographic by-product of migration but as a structural outcome of uneven development, state policies, and market forces. They reflect both the demand for affordable shelter by migrant populations and the contradictions of urban governance, where informality is simultaneously criminalized and instrumentalized to sustain the functioning of the metropolis.

An examination of the distribution of slums, slum households, and slum population, as presented in Table 1.2, reveals marked spatial disparities across Delhi’s administrative zones. The West Zone records the highest concentration of slum clusters, accounting for 27.9% of the total, followed by the South Zone with 26.8%. In contrast, the Central Zone exhibits the lowest concentration at 12.8%, followed by the North Zone with 14.3%. Although the West Zone contains the largest number of slum settlements, the South Zone surpasses it in terms of

both slum households (140,164) and slum population (713,119). Conversely, the Central Zone reports the lowest figures, with only 23,662 households and a slum population of 12,674

Table 3: Distribution of Slum and slum Population by Zones

Zones	Slum		Slum Households		Slum Population	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central	61	12.8	23662	5.5	12674	5.9
East	87	18.2	85408	19.7	410065	19.0
North	68	14.3	79128	18.2	361585	16.7
South	128	26.8	140164	32.3	713119	33.0
West	133	27.9	105376	24.3	557090	25.0
Total	477	100	433738	100	2162601	100

Source: CGDR Research, 2010

This distribution highlights important planning and governance implications. The higher density of households and population within the South Zone suggests more intense pressures on infrastructure, housing, and basic services, even though the overall number of clusters is fewer than in the West Zone. In contrast, the prevalence of a greater number of smaller settlements in the West Zone points to a more dispersed pattern of informality, complicating service delivery and regulatory oversight. The Central Zone's relatively lower figures may reflect its more regulated land-use patterns and greater administrative control, but it also signals the displacement of low-income populations to peripheral areas. These spatial variations underscore the uneven geography of slum growth in Delhi, shaped by land availability, governance practices, and socio-economic dynamics, thereby requiring differentiated policy responses that move beyond a uniform approach to slum management.

The spatial distribution of slums across Delhi's zones is intrinsically shaped by long-term patterns of migration into the city. Migrants from other states are attracted to Delhi for diverse reasons, including improved access to urban amenities, business opportunities, educational institutions, employment transfers, career advancement, and the broader economic appeal of the capital city. However, these individual motivations are embedded within wider structural dynamics such as agrarian distress, regional disparities in development, and the concentration of employment opportunities within metropolitan centers. A study conducted by the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) on *Counter Magnet Areas to Delhi and NCR* underscores the scale of this trend: migration contributed an additional 14.07 lakh people to Delhi's population during 1961–71, rising sharply to 44.30 lakh during 1991–2001. The uneven pressures created by this sustained influx have significantly influenced the geography of slum formation, with higher concentrations emerging in zones that combine affordable housing options, proximity to informal labor markets, and relatively weak regulatory enforcement. This indicates that slum distribution is not merely a demographic outcome but also a manifestation of structural inequalities in India's urbanization process, reflecting both the pull of metropolitan opportunities and the push of underdevelopment in sending regions.

Table 4: Trend of migration along with last place of residence in NCT of Delhi

Place of last residence	Percentage of total migrants			
	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001	2001-11
Uttar Pradesh including Uttarakhand	50.09	48.25	45.16	33.77
Haryana	12.93	11.51	7.87	5.91
Bihar	5.77	10.69	19.9	16.52
Rajasthan	7.63	6	4.06	3.08
Punjab	6.4	5.28	2.33	1.55
Others states & UT (include outside India)	17.18	18.27	21.49	39.17

Source: Census of India, 1971,1981,1991,2001,2011

The majority of migrants residing in Delhi originate from a limited number of states, notably Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Punjab, along with smaller proportions from other states, union territories, and even neighboring countries. Migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in particular, are often concentrated in the lower-income segments of the labor market and face constraints in accessing formal housing due to the high cost of land and rental accommodation in the city. As a result, they are compelled to reside in informal settlements, where comparatively affordable housing options are available, leading to the proliferation of slum clusters across different parts of Delhi.

In Delhi, slum settlements are predominantly situated on public land administered by multiple governmental agencies, reflecting the fragmented nature of urban land governance. As illustrated in Figure 1, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) accounts for the largest share, with 51% of slums located on its land,

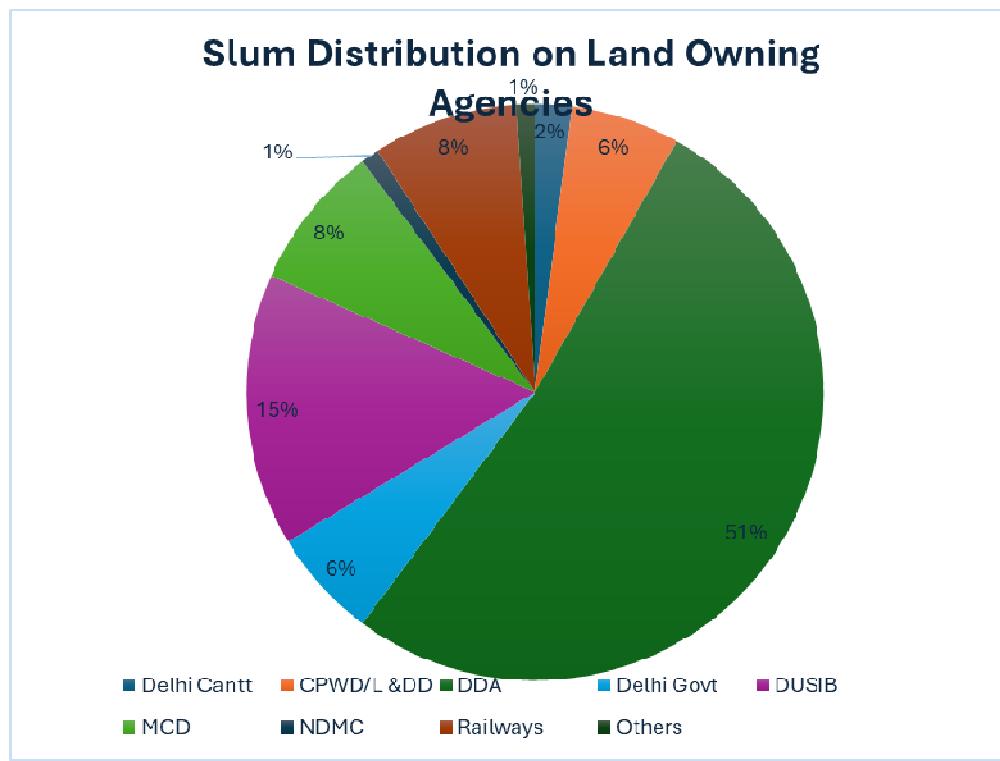


Figure 3, Slum Distribution on Land Owning Agencies Delhi, 2011

followed by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), which holds 15%. Smaller proportions are found on land under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (8%), the Railways (8%), the Central Public Works Department or Land & Development Office (6%), the Delhi Government (6%), and the Delhi Cantonment Board (2%). Only 1% of slums are situated on land managed by the New Delhi Municipal Council and other minor agencies.

An examination of the spatial distribution of slums in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi reveals distinct locational patterns that reflect broader processes of urban marginalization. Approximately 55.86% (34,100) of slum clusters are located in proximity to residential areas, suggesting an informal extension of housing in response to demand for affordable shelter near established neighborhoods. A further 39% (24,184) of slum clusters are situated along major roads and drains, highlighting the occupation of marginal and environmentally vulnerable spaces that are often neglected in formal urban planning.

Table 5: Site and Situation of Slum

Site of Slum	Number of JJ Clusters	Percentage
Residential	34100	55.86%
Road Berns	24184	39.62%
Park/Open Space	966	1.58%
School	500	0.82%
Market	1093	1.79%
Railways	200	0.33%
Total	61043	100%

Source: Sabir Ali, Environmental Scenario of Delhi Slum, Centre for Social Development, 1998

Only 1.79% of clusters are concentrated near market areas, while 1.58% are located in parks and open spaces, and 0.82% are situated close to schools. Additionally, 0.33% of slum clusters are positioned along railway corridors, underscoring the reliance on precarious land parcels with limited tenure security. These spatial configurations, as presented in Table 4, not only illustrate the functional adaptation of slum dwellers to the urban environment but also reveal structural inequalities in access to planned residential land. The clustering of slums

in environmentally hazardous and socially peripheral sites indicates systemic exclusion from the benefits of regulated urban development, thereby reinforcing the cycle of spatial and socio-economic marginalization

The growth of slums in Delhi can be better understood when examined across distinct historical and socio-economic phases, as reflected in Table 5. In 1951, the city recorded only 12,749 slum clusters, occupying a modest 21.1 hectares. However, this number expanded steadily in the subsequent decades, driven by a combination of demographic and structural factors. The proliferation of slums can be broadly categorized into three overlapping phases:

1. Early Urbanization Phase (1950s–1970s):

During the early decades after independence, Delhi began to expand as both the administrative and economic hub of the nation. Industrialization and state-led development attracted large inflows of rural migrants, many of whom were employed in low-wage and informal sectors. With limited access to affordable housing, these migrants were compelled to settle in informal settlements. The growth

Table 6: Trend and growth of slum clusters in NCT of Delhi

Year	JJ Households	Area in Hectare	Population
1951	12749	21.1	63745
1973	98483	164.1	492415
1983	113000	188.3	565000
1990	259000	431.7	1295000
1997	600000	902.1	300000
2001	429662	650.2	2148310
2011	440000	800	2160000

Source: Slum Department of MCD, 1951-2001, CGDR Survey 2010 and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2011

of slum clusters during this period was closely associated with urban expansion and the inability of formal housing schemes to accommodate rising populations.

2. Intensification Phase (1970s–1990s):

The acceleration of industrial growth, coupled with the expansion of infrastructure and services, further increased migration into Delhi. This period also witnessed the emergence of large-scale unauthorized colonies and resettlement policies that indirectly encouraged informal housing in peripheral zones. Slum clusters grew both in number and size, with their spatial footprint expanding significantly. By 1997, the geographical extent of slum clusters had increased to 902.1 hectares, reflecting the increasing occupation of marginal and unplanned spaces within the city.

3. Globalization and Post-Liberalization Phase (1990s onwards):

With India's economic liberalization in the early 1990s, Delhi strengthened its role as a globalizing metropolis, attracting both national and transnational flows of capital, labor, and services. The accompanying influx of migrants—drawn by opportunities in construction, service industries, and the informal economy—further strained the housing sector. Formal housing policies largely favored middle- and upper-income groups, leaving low-income migrants dependent on slums and squatter settlements. As a result, the persistence and spatial expansion of slums became an inevitable outcome of the city's unequal development trajectory.

In summary, the increase in the number and geographical spread of slum clusters—from 21.1 hectares in 1951 to 902.1 hectares in 1997—not only illustrates the quantitative rise of informal settlements but also reflects deeper structural dynamics of urbanization, migration, and socio-economic exclusion in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The temporal pattern of slum growth underscores the complex interplay between economic development, housing inadequacies, and migration flows, which together have shaped the city's uneven urban landscape

The trajectory of slum development in Delhi demonstrates two contrasting phases: an expansionary phase prior to 1997 and a densification phase thereafter. The pre-1997 period was marked by both numerical and spatial growth, with the number of clusters and the area under slum occupation increasing significantly—from 21.1 hectares in 1951 to 902.1 hectares in 1997. This expansion reflected the city's inability to provide adequate formal housing in the face of rising rural-to-urban migration, industrialization, and the pressures of globalization, resulting in the occupation of peripheral and marginal lands.

In contrast, the post-1997 phase reveals a shift in dynamics. While the number of slum households continued to rise (429,662 in 2001 and 440,000 in 2011), the geographical extent of slum settlements declined, contracting from 902.1 hectares in 1997 to 650.2 hectares in 2001, with further reductions thereafter. This indicates a process of intensification, where population growth is accommodated not by the creation of new clusters but through the densification of existing settlements. Such overcrowding exacerbates conditions of congestion, environmental vulnerability, and infrastructural strain, further entrenching socio-spatial inequalities.

The transition from expansion to densification has important implications for urban planning and policy. First, it underscores the persistent inadequacy of affordable housing mechanisms, which continue to exclude low-income migrants from the formal housing market. Second, it highlights the limited effectiveness of relocation and slum clearance policies, which, rather than reducing informality, often push populations into already saturated clusters. Third, the trend points to the urgent need for integrated urban housing strategies that address both the quantitative shortage of housing and the qualitative deterioration of living conditions within slums.

In sum, the post-1997 phase of slum development reflects a critical juncture in Delhi's urban transformation, where the challenge is no longer only the expansion of informal settlements but also the intensifying pressures of density and congestion within existing clusters. Addressing this dual dynamic requires a paradigmatic shift in housing policy—from a focus on clearance and relocation to one that emphasizes in-situ upgradation, provision of basic services, and inclusive urban planning.

Between 1951 and 2025, the National Capital Territory of Delhi has experienced considerable fluctuations in the number of slums, reflecting the interplay of migration dynamics, urban poverty, and state-led interventions. In 1951, the city reported 199 slum settlements, which expanded rapidly to 1,373 by 1973, largely driven by rural-to-urban migration and the growing demand for low-cost housing. However, during the 1980s, slum clearance, eviction drives, demolition policies, and initiatives for redevelopment and rehabilitation led to a decline, reducing the number of slums to 534 by 1983.



Figure 4: Slum Department, MCD Delhi, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, 2011, PIB Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2025

The downward trend was temporary, as structural factors such as persistent urban poverty, the influx of labor migrants, and overall population growth once again accelerated slum proliferation, with numbers rising to 929 in 1990 and 1,100 in 1997. Recognizing the magnitude of the issue, both the Delhi government and the central government introduced a series of slum improvement and housing development schemes, including the Indira Awas Yojana, Rajiv Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). These programs contributed to a gradual reduction in the number of slums, declining from 728 in 2001 to 627 in 2025.

This historical trajectory highlights the cyclical nature of slum growth in Delhi, shaped by a constant tension between the forces of migration-driven expansion and policy-driven reduction. It also underscores the limitations of clearance-based approaches, while pointing to the importance of sustained, inclusive housing strategies in addressing the challenges of urban informality.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of slums in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, tracing their historical evolution, spatial

distribution, and socio-economic characteristics. The findings reveal that slum formation is not merely a by-product of rural-to-urban migration but a complex phenomenon shaped by structural inequalities,

urbanization pressures, and the uneven implementation of housing policies. Over the past seven decades, Delhi has experienced both expansion and densification of slum settlements, reflecting the city's inability to provide adequate formal housing for low-income migrants. The concentration of slums in peripheral, environmentally vulnerable, and poorly serviced areas underscores systemic exclusion and highlights the spatial manifestations of socio-economic marginalization.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes that slums are characterized not only by substandard housing and inadequate infrastructure but also by overcrowding, poor sanitation, environmental hazards, and limited access to basic services. These conditions adversely affect residents' health, safety, and overall quality of life. Policy interventions such as slum clearance, eviction, and relocation have provided only temporary relief, often exacerbating overcrowding in existing settlements. The persistent growth of slums, despite redevelopment programs, underscores the need for inclusive, integrated urban planning approaches that focus on in-situ upgradation, provision of basic amenities, and equitable access to affordable housing. In conclusion, addressing the challenges of slum development in Delhi requires a paradigm shift from punitive clearance policies toward sustainable strategies that recognize slums as integral components of the urban landscape, ensuring both social equity and improved living conditions for marginalized populations

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