

Slum Population and Housing Conditions in Karnataka State: A Sociological Analysis

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Abstract—Urbanization is considered a major indicator of development; however, it is often accompanied by the growth of urban poverty and slum settlements. In Karnataka, the increase in urban population has been accompanied by a rise in the number and population of slums. This paper analyzes the demographic profile, district-wise distribution, housing conditions, basic amenities, and socio-economic characteristics of slum populations in Karnataka. The study is based on data from the Census of India 2011, the National Buildings Organization (NBO), and reports of the Karnataka Slum Development Board.

Index Terms—Slums, Urbanization, Karnataka, Urban Poverty, Housing Conditions, Basic Amenities, Demographic Characteristics.

I. Introduction

The pace of urbanization in India has increased significantly over the past few decades. Migration from rural areas to urban centres, industrialization, and expanding employment opportunities have contributed to rapid urban population growth. Consequently, the number of slum settlements has also increased. Slums are generally characterized by poor-quality housing, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic deprivation. Although Karnataka has given considerable importance to urban development, the issue of slums continues to remain a major challenge.

II. Status of Slum Population in Karnataka

The urban population of Karnataka increased from 17.96 million in 2001 to 23.62 million in 2011. During the same period, the slum population increased from 2.95 million to 3.29 million. However, the proportion of slum population in the total urban population declined from 16.34 percent in 2001 to 13.93 percent in 2011. On the other hand, Karnataka's share in India's total slum population increased from 3.92 percent to 5.02 percent.

According to the Karnataka Slum Development Board Report (2017–18), approximately 4.05 million people live in slums, accounting for 18.58 percent of the state's urban population. The state has a total of 2,804 slums, of which 2,397 are notified and 407 are non-notified slums.

III. District-wise Distribution of Slums

Karnataka has a total of 746,206 slum households with a slum population of 3,536,038. Bengaluru Urban district has the highest concentration of slums, with 387 notified slums accommodating 321,296

households and a population of 1,386,583. Bengaluru is followed by Shivamogga (172), Ballari (154), Kalaburagi (116), Hassan (109), and Mysuru (104) in terms of the number of notified slums. In contrast, Kodagu (11), Dakshina Kannada (18), Udupi (26), Chikkaballapura (31), and Uttara Kannada (33) have comparatively fewer slums.

IV. Demographic Characteristics of Slum Population

According to the 2011 Census, Karnataka had 728,277 slum households with a total slum population of 3.29 million. Of these, 1.65 million were males and 1.64 million were females, resulting in a sex ratio of 994 females per 1,000 males. Children aged 0–6 years constituted 418,295 of the slum population, with a sex ratio of 964. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population in slums was 922,589, while the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population was 172,129. the literacy rate among the slum population was 75.6 percent. Male literacy stood at 81.8 percent, whereas female literacy was 69.4 percent, indicating a gender gap of 12.4 percent.

V. Employment and Work Participation

The total working population in slums was 1.328 million, comprising 1.143 million main workers and 185,116 marginal workers. The overall work participation rate was 40.4 percent. Male work participation stood at 57.0 percent, while female work participation was only 23.6 percent, highlighting significant gender disparities in employment.

VI. Housing Structure of Slum Households

Among slum households in Karnataka, 525,565 lived in permanent houses, 169,594 in semi-permanent houses, and around 29,000 in temporary structures. regarding ownership status, 458,305 households owned their houses, while approximately 250,000 households lived in rented accommodations. Household-size data indicate that four-member families constituted the largest category, numbering about 186,000 households.

VII. Physical Infrastructure and Housing Quality

The majority of slum houses had floors constructed using burnt bricks, stone, and cement. Walls in about 543,000 houses were made of burnt bricks, stone, and concrete. Roof structures in 294,000 households consisted of concrete, stone, and bricks, while approximately 202,000 houses used GI sheets and asbestos roofing. these statistics suggest that housing quality in many slum settlements of Karnataka has shown gradual improvement.

VIII. Availability of Basic Amenities

Drinking Water

According to the data, 491,339 households had access to treated tap water, while 117,819 households depended on untreated tap water. Approximately 75,900 households relied on hand pumps, tube wells, and borewells for drinking water.

Drainage Facilities

About 357,117 households had open drainage systems, whereas 253,874 households had closed drainage facilities. However, nearly 117,286 households had no drainage facilities at all.

Sanitation Facilities

Sanitation is one of the most essential basic amenities for human well-being. About 461,029 households had toilet facilities within their premises, while 85,387 households depended on public toilets. However, nearly 182,000 households still practiced open defecation.

Electricity Facilities

Although government welfare schemes have improved access to electricity, universal coverage has not yet been achieved. Around 672,297 households had electricity connections, indicating a relatively high level of electrification in Karnataka's slums. Nevertheless, 50,129 households still depended on kerosene lamps for lighting.

IX. Conclusion

Urbanization in Karnataka has led to a significant increase in the slum population. Bengaluru Urban district accounts for the largest share of slum residents in the state. Although notable progress has been achieved in literacy, permanent housing, and electrification, challenges remain in areas such as drainage systems, sanitation facilities, and access to safe drinking water. Therefore, integrated policies focusing on housing, health, education, and employment are essential for the comprehensive development and upliftment of slum communities in Karnataka.

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