

Darkness under Lamps: Urban Slums and Food Entitlements in India

Harsh Mander and V Manikandan

The Indian government implements some of the largest food schemes in the world. However, the reach and quality of implementation of these programmes is often most feeble and insufficient in areas that are physically the most proximate to centres of public policy formulation, namely cities and towns. This study seeks to empirically observe and assess the implementation of all existing food, livelihood and social security schemes in various indigent and deprived urban contexts, and based on the findings of coverage and gaps, suggest directions for initial strategies for effective implementation.

‘Darkness under Lamps’: Urban Slums and Food Entitlements in India

Report based on the field study done in four Indian cities (Delhi, Cuttack, Jaipur and Anantapur)¹

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Introduction

The Indian government implements some of the largest food schemes in the world, including supplementary feeding programmes for infants and small children, feeding and maternity benefit schemes for nursing and lactating mothers, school meal programmes, subsidised rice and what through government retail shops, pensions for the aged and wage work guarantees for able bodied workers. These schemes penetrate some of the most distant, remote and dispossessed rural and tribal interiors of this vast and teeming nation.

However, paradoxically, it is observed that the reach and quality of implementation of these programmes are often the most feeble and insufficient in areas that are physically the most proximate to centres of public policy formulation, namely cities and towns. Most Government schemes for the welfare and rights of indigent people (especially food, livelihoods, social security health and education schemes) are designed and implemented with rural social and economic environments in mind. Some programmes are exclusively rural in their very design, such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and the National Rural Health Mission. But the majority are theoretically mandated to cover both rural and urban poor populations, but in practice the implementation in urban slums and for homeless populations of cities and towns tends to leave large gaps. It is truly an illustration of the popular and ironic Hindi proverb: *diya tale andhera* or darkness right under the lamp.

According to the 2001 Census, 27.8 per cent of India’s total population of 1.027 billion live 5,100 towns and over 380 urban agglomerations². In Tenth Five Year Plan’s poverty projections, the urban poverty ratio is estimated to be 15.1 per cent or in other words 49.6 million people in urban areas are estimated to

¹ This paper is based on field research undertaken by the Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi with 1685 slum households in 400 urban poor settlements in 4 cities: Delhi, Jaipur, Cuttack and Anantapur during 2008. The research

be impoverished³. Experts believe that this is likely to be an under-estimate, because of the illegality and denial that conventionally surrounds their existential realities. But even if these figures are accepted, it is unconscionable that such large numbers of the impoverished women, men, boys and girls who live in the cities and towns of India continue to be excluded from State programmes for food and social security – and these are only likely to expand with the current patterns of economic growth. This has also become legally untenable, because the Supreme Court has issued in the writ petition 196/2001 (PUCL vs the Union of India and others, popularly known as the right to food case) a series of directives for universalising several of these schemes, especially school mid-day meals and ICDS centres (which provide supplementary feeding to children below 6 years, and nursing and expectant mother). It has directed that ICDS centres should be opened in every settlement in the country, with priority also to full coverage of urban slums, and to reach with food and other complementary services child in all these habitations. The central government, in the same spirit, has universalised old age pensions to all women and men above the age of 65 years who are officially designated as ‘below poverty line’ or BPL.

The moral and legal imperatives (because Supreme Court directives have the force of law) to reach these food and social security protections to hitherto neglected indigent and deprived urban populations remain substantially unmet by most governments in the country. This noted with concern in the reports to the Supreme Court of the Commissioners appointed by it, in the writ petition 196/2001, to monitor the implementation of its orders, and in their communications to state governments (which are in the public domain⁴). They have observed with growing disquiet that most governments do not have even authentic information and mapping of their slum and homeless populations, nor are either the state or municipal governments motivated, geared or equipped to implement these entitlements for residents of slum colonies and streets. There are clearly formidable challenges of both design and implementation of these programmes for impoverished populations in cities and towns, which are often very different from those that apply in the rural context, and which are still very imperfectly understood by policy makers and implementers, as well as by academics and activists.

Urban poor populations are very heterogeneous, comprising as they do of homeless and slum populations, single men, women and children as well as families, short and long term migrants, various unorganised livelihoods, and people from various corners of the country and region. Omnibus state schemes tend also to neglect this heterogeneity.

³ Poverty Projections for 2007, Tenth Five Year Plan, Volume I, Planning Commission of India

⁴ Visit: <http://sccommissioners.org/>

The problems are compounded because the nature and experience of urban poverty is significantly different from that of rural poverty, and this diversity tends to not be considered and reflected in the ways that the schemes are designed and implemented for urban poor populations. Urban poor men and women, boys and girls tend to be forced to live in unhygienic and brutalised environments in shanties and streets, often ruptured from kinship, caste and community networks. Their frequently unstable and sub-human settlements, and efforts for livelihoods, are mostly deemed as illegal, even criminal by state authorities. These combine to create formidable barriers to the implementation of food, livelihoods and social security programmes for the urban poor.

It is possible to also speculate that this extraordinary neglect and exclusion of urban slum and homeless residents by most governments from their entitlements to food, livelihoods and social security, derive from a deep-rooted middle class hostility to these city residents. They are perceived to be somehow less legitimate residents of the city, stigmatised for their own poverty, and blamed for their makeshift untidy tenements and the lack of facilities for drainage and sanitation. Land and housing policies exclude them from the legalised housing stock of the city, which are hopelessly unaffordable to them, and they are forced into the arms of criminal slum lords or the dehumanised environment of the city streets.

The present study was thus undertaken by the Centre for Equity Studies⁵ to empirically observe and assess the implementation of all existing food, livelihood and social security schemes in various indigent and deprived urban contexts, and based on the findings of coverage and gaps, it suggests the direction of a few initial strategies for their effective implementation which would in turn help the urban poor to better their difficult lives.

Outline of study design

The study was undertaken in slum settlements in four towns and cities, chosen to represent diverse sizes, regions and socio-economic profiles. One of the selected cities was Delhi, a teeming metropolis of over 10 million people spread over 700 square kilometres, and the national capital. The second was the historic and beautiful city of Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, with a population according to the 2001 census of 2.3 million residents. The third was yet another historic city, the largest industrial city in the picturesque but impoverished eastern state of Orissa: Cuttack, with a population of just over half a million. And because we also wanted to include a small town, we incorporated in the study the district town Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh, with a smaller population of less than a quarter million, located within a drought prone rural hinterland.

⁵ The lead researcher of the entire study in 4 cities was V. Manikandan.

Within each city, slum settlements were selected for the survey to mainly to ensure diversity of the dominant occupational profile of the various slums, and geographical dispersal. Some were selected because they were dominated by diverse socially vulnerable populations, such as dalits, adivasis, Muslims and disabled people.

The sample in Delhi included a colony Kalandar with a large numbers of traditional snake charmers and street performers, Madanpur Khadar and Seemapuri mainly populated with rag pickers, Tagore Garden with rickshaw pullers, Vikalang Basti with a large presence of disabled adults and their children living by alms taking, Sultanpuri with sewage and sanitary workers, a resettlement colony Balaswa, and 3 settlements of precariously homeless people: Okhla Zakir Nagar, Mithai Pull and Nizamuddin Dargah.

In Jaipur, Bhatta Basti was selected for its Muslim population and the '*nagina*' works (a kind of ornament, the work also include stone cutting, polishing, etc) that many people, including children, are employed in. Jawahar Nagar, Royalty Basti and Triveni Sitaram Nagar are among the largest slums of the city, and Manoharpura Beed, a resettlement colony with a significant population of Bengali Muslim residents, who are alleged to be Bangladeshi migrants. Buxawala and Paldi Meena are recent resettlement colonies. People of Valmiki Basti are dalits working as sanitary workers. VT Road is a homeless settlement with many nomadic tribespersons.

In Cuttack, Coolie Sahi is situated near the Railway station and the majority of the inhabitants work as railway porters. Deer Park and Killa Basti house mostly wage labourers. Sweepers' Colony is of sanitary workers in the Government hospital and Muradhkhan Patna has sanitation workers employed in the Municipal Corporation. Malgodown and Pilgrim Road Das Sahi are the oldest and largest settlements and in the very centre of the city. Potapole Muslim Basti was selected for its high Muslim population. Satichoura Imamapada has a large number of rag pickers. There are rickshaw pullers and trolley pullers in all these settlements.

Only in Anantapur, the selection of slums on the basis of occupation was not possible as there were inhabitants of several of these unorganised occupations in all the slums. Kalpana Jose Colony, Canal Kottalu and Arvind Nagar are among the largest and oldest slums in the city. Baba Nagar has a dense Muslim population. CPM Colony and Bhagya Nagar were selected for their strong political mobilisation (mainly around communist leanings) and their location amidst the rich settlements of the city. In Bindala Nagar live precariously homeless settlers. There is also a strong tribal presence in Buddappa Nagar. Maruva Komma Kottalu is a kind of resettlement colony, but they were relocated a very long ago and

there is a completely new generation which lives there, with few people who remember the past. Maruthi Nagar was selected as it is located along the railway and in a continuous threat of getting evacuated at any time as the land on which their shanties are built is owned by the Railways.

Within each of these slums, researchers surveyed every fifth household. They interviewed all those they found in the household who was either benefiting or eligible to benefit from the food and livelihood schemes included in the study. For instance, all households were deemed to be eligible for subsidised grain from the Public Distribution System, all children below 6 years for ICDS, all expectant mothers for ICDS as well as maternity benefit, all aged men and women above 65 years for pensions, and all families who lost bread-earners eligible for life insurance grants under the NFBS. If they were actually accessing these schemes, they were asked to evaluate the benefits. If they were enrolled under the schemes, the barriers to their access to these programmes were explored. These interviews were also supplemented with focus group discussions, observation of the functioning of institutions like the ICDS centres and PDS ration shops, and discussions with the functionaries.

Summary of Findings

The survey of 1685 randomly selected slum households in the 4 cities, supplemented by direct observation by the researchers, confirms that the implementation of food and livelihood schemes for the large majority of urban poor residents of slums is highly unsatisfactory, often abysmal. In many instances, they are completely excluded from their entitlements to these schemes, and where they are able to access their rights, serious problems are encountered in the implementation of the programmes. However, what also emerges is that this is not a uniform picture, and that there are significant and instructive differences between cities, and indeed sometimes between slums within cities. The metropolis of Delhi often emerged as the worst performer, which is doubly ironical as it is the country's capital. Among the cities included in this survey, whereas implementation of these programmes was generally weak – and with large holes – in Delhi, Jaipur and Cuttack, the performance of all the programmes was much better in the smallest city in the sample, the southern district town of Anantapur. This difference underlines that in fact given administrative will and arrangements, it is possible to implement these food and social security schemes even for urban slum populations. The relative success of the Anantapur administration only throws into sharper relief the failures in the other 3 cities.

It is possible to speculate that many things worked for Anantapur. One was its small size, therefore it was as close to the rural context where these schemes tend to work much better, as the giant metropolis of Delhi is distant and detached from its rural surroundings. The survey repeatedly points to the role of local elected councillors of the municipality in assisting slum residents to access their entitlements, unlike the other cities; and this suggests the contribution of stronger traditions of urban local self-governance. The state of Andhra Pradesh has stronger traditions of pro-poor administration than northern and eastern states, and there is also influence of Dravidian and left political movements. These have also led to stronger organisation of slum residents to access their rights. However, these reasons are still in the realm of hypotheses, which need deeper analysis. What is undisputed is that the schemes do function – not perfectly, but satisfactorily – in Anantapur, which establishes that the schemes even as currently designed *can* work in urban slum habitations.

The detailed findings of the survey of the coverage and functioning of various food and social security programmes in the slums of the 4 cities selected for the survey are elaborated in the attached report. However, here we only highlight some of the significant findings, and try to draw out from these recommendations for public policy. We will summarise these findings for each food and social security scheme included in the study.

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

Independent studies have established the high levels of poverty and poor access to public facilities in urban slums⁶. It can therefore be safely speculated that the large majority of urban slum residents would be below the officially designated poverty line (BPL). Yet unlike for rural India, in which there have been 3 country-wide censuses to list all rural BPL families, and preparation is under way for a fourth such rural BPL census, not a single such census has been undertaken of urban BPL families. Therefore the selection of BPL families who are eligible for BPL ration cards (or Antyodaya – literally meaning the emancipation of the ‘last’ - AAY ration cards for the poorest of the poor) is left to individual official discretion, without reference to any authoritative list of the kind that is available - with all its flaws - for rural India. Our

⁶ Refer a) Bapat Meera and Indu Agarwal. (2003) *Our needs, our priorities; women and men from the slums in Mumbai and Pune talk about their needs for water and sanitation*, Environment&Urbanization 15(2), b) Swaminathan M.S. (2002) *The Food Security Atlas of Urban India*, M.S, Swaminathan research foundation and World Food Programme, Chennai, c) Murali Kanta. (2003) *Food insecurity in Urban India*, Frontline: 20(1), d) NSSO. (2002) *Survey on the condition of urban slums*, Government of India and e) Sundar R, Mahal A and Sharma A. (2002) *The Burden of ill health among the urban poor: The case of slums and resettlement colonies in Chennai and Delhi*, NCAER; 25: 38-84.

survey shows that in most cities, this official discretion is widely used against the residents of urban slums, resulting in their wide exclusion from BPL or AAY cards.

By contrast with Anantapur, in which nearly 80 per cent of the slum residents surveyed had BPL and AAY cards, in Delhi the ratio was as low as 23.9 per cent, in Cuttack 30 per cent and Jaipur 13.7 per cent. In this massive exclusion, even within cities, slums in which the most impoverished residents lived, often relying on rag-picking and very precariously housed – almost homeless – tended to suffer greater exclusion. Even within Anantapur, the colonies that had lowest coverage were of near-homeless families. In Cuttack, the least served slums included those inhabited by stigmatised sanitary workers, and Muslims. In Jaipur, the most poorly served settlements were VT Road, a semi-homeless colony on a highway pavement, and significantly 3 resettlement colonies where residents of slums which were demolished were resettled, but denied most facilities including BPL cards.

In Delhi, not a single card has been distributed in Mithai Pull, which is a 20 year settlement of very poor virtually homeless migrants from Bihar who live under a busy highway bridge near Old Delhi Railway Station. Madanpur Khadar is a colony of ragpickers, who live as a group in a demarcated area, for which they pay rent to the recycling wholesaler contractors (*kabadi-wallahs*), who purchase the waste collected by rag pickers. They are treated with suspicion and derision, because of their extreme poverty, vocation of rag-picking, minority faith and suspicions that they are from Bangladesh by the middle-class community living around. Nizamuddin Dargah, Sultanpuri and Okhla Zakir Nagar are also destitute nearly homeless settlements are situated amidst middle class urban settlements, and yet excluded from all schemes, including PDS. Sultanpuri residents are likewise is fully denied BPL cards; it is a dalit settlement, a segregated ghetto from the Sultanpuri main habitation. Vikalang Basti (which literally translates as Colony of the Disabled) is situated just near to the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium, and the mainly disabled residents live by alms- seeking. There are almost 450 families living here with a population of 1000. It is significant that a colony of destitute disabled beggars has only around 10 per cent households with ration cards. Only 46 families have ration cards, more BPL and a few Antyodaya. But the ration dealer does not provide them with their quota properly and they reported having to bear his abusive language and insulting behaviour.

In Anantapur, Cuttack and Jaipur slum residents were mostly in physical possession of their cards. By contrast, In Delhi 30 per cent card-holders had deposited these with their ration retailers, suggesting that these could be misused for selling the grain in the black-market. In Anantapur, the state government tops up the central government subsidy to ensure that all BPL and AAY card holders get rice at two rupees a

kilogram: the difference is that BPL card holders get 25 kg and AAY 35 kg monthly. The surveyed families in the slums in Anantapur broadly endorsed that they were getting this grain at the due price, and the shops opened regularly. By contrast again, in Delhi the experience of how much grain they were able to get was mixed, ranging from 15 to 35 kg per month. Everywhere AAY ration card holders – the poorest of the poor - reported that they received their monthly quota of 35 kg without much harassment. In most cities, the grain quality was rated as average or bad. In Delhi only a fourth of the respondents said the shop was opening regularly and more than a third said it opened only 2 or 3 days a month. In Jaipur, two-thirds of the slum respondents, and in Cuttack a fourth, said it opened only once a month. The research team also found most of the fair price shops closed in and near Cuttack slums, during their visits at times when these shops were expected to be open. In Jaipur, only 27 per cent of ration card holders said they got any grain at all from PDS shops. This suggests the greatest break-down of PDS in Jaipur, among the surveyed cities.

A majority of slum residents in Anantapur and Cuttack who had ration cards acknowledged the assistance meted out by their elected municipal councillors in assisting them with the formalities to apply for and receive their cards. In mirror contrast, it was the councillors who were most blamed for being responsible for denying them their PDS card entitlements, closely followed by government officials themselves. In Delhi, the government officials alone were blamed: perhaps a reflection of the weak local government presence in these slums. Interestingly, the late (recently departed) former Prime Minister VP Singh was personally named by 36 per cent of the slum respondents in Delhi to be mainly responsible for ensuring they got ration cards. They also relied a lot on local community leaders, even in colonies like Kalandar Colony of traditional street artistes.

Where they were able to access cards, the voters' identity card was the most important document that they were required to submit, but in cities where they were widely denied cards, many said that the procedures were too complicated and cumbersome, and in particular they were unable to establish their identity and address proof (indications of contested citizenship). In Cuttack, many former card-holders among the slum residents lost their cards during the periodic renewal drives organised by the government, for no transparent reason. Some lost their cards during a flood, but the administration refused to replace their lost cards. Many report being denied cards because informal 'quotas' apply on the number of cards that can be issued, and these have already been accessed by non-slum residents.

In Valmiki Nagar in Jaipur – a colony of dalit sanitary workers - the research team met a widow who had lived there for 10 years. Life is harder for her as she is sending both the children to school (the elder one

is a girl), instead of making them work. She had a BPL card, with which she gets grain but not regularly: she gets 15kg or 25kg or 30kg sometimes. Once she recalls even getting 40 kgs. It still helps her as she lost her husband and is struggling alone to bring up her children.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

Once again a diverse picture emerges from the survey, of coverage of children below 6 years by services of ICDS, particularly supplementary feeding. Cuttack records the best coverage of 80 per cent children below 6 year found in the randomly selected slums homes enrolled in ICDS centres, with only the Sweepers' Colony recording just 5 per cent coverage of children. This is followed by Anantapur with a relatively satisfactory 74 per cent. In Jaipur, 55 per cent infants and children were enrolled. In most cities surveyed, people were incorrectly informed that children below 3 years could not be enrolled in the ICDS centres. But in Delhi, amazingly we found a total of just 11 children who attended ICDS centres in all the 527 slum households surveyed in 10 slum colonies.

In fact 5 of the slums in Delhi had no ICDS centres servicing the slums. The case of the ICDS centre of Okhla – Zakir Nagar illustrates how even slums which are notionally served by ICDS centres actually are barred to children of the slums. The ICDS centre in this settlement is situated in a middle class residence that is owned by the ICDS worker herself. It is a small room, where she allows only the children from middle class houses to enter. Other children of the precariously homeless settlers there are not allowed the privilege to enter the centre in her home. Some of them are allowed to collect the supplementary nutrition from outside. When we met many of these virtually homeless parents, they said that they were not willing to send their children to the centres, though they were registered. This was not surprising, given the neglect and humiliation that their children faced in the ICDS centre. It is important to note that there are two centres in the settlement with 200 children registered. No wonder that only 2 among 45 parents who had children below 6 years in the surveyed households had tried to register their children in the ICDS centres. Both these children were denied enrolment, on the basis that there was no vacancy and they were of ages below three (neither of these are legitimate grounds to deny admission).

Although the Cuttack ICDS covers many children, the centres were found to be closed several months in a year, and even when they opened, the supply of supplementary nutrition was highly irregular. The ICDS staff report receiving grains and finance only sporadically, so they are unable to sustain services. The centres were located in cramped and insecure locations: in one, the centre was in the 25 square feet of space in front of the ICDS worker's house; in another, it was a flood relief building which also doubles up as the school building; in yet another, it was in the primary school building, and the centre could function

only after or before school hours; in a colony, it was in a small hut offered by a fellow resident, and the ICDS staff was afraid that it could get vacated at any time. In the rare times food is supplied, it is hot cooked by monotonous: mainly dal and rice. Since there is no space to sit and eat, the children tend to take the food home.

In Jaipur, 5 of the 10 slums settlements surveyed did not have ICDS centres located within them, even though they qualified with more than 40 eligible children resident within the slum; some were anyhow serviced by ICDS centres in the neighbourhood. Even the resettlement colonies established by government lacked ICDS centres, reflective of piecemeal resettlement, which left them only with houses but without any other facilities. Only 11 per cent parents testified that supplementary nutrition was supplied every day, and another 40 per cent said it was given once a week. Two-thirds said they got hot cooked meals when food was supplied. The research team records its visit to one of the ICDS centres in Bhatta Basti: ‘It was a very small room, which got crowded when just two of us entered and the ICDS worker was already there. The worker claimed that there were 100 children registered in that centre. When we visited the centre at 11 in the morning, there were no children inside the centre and only few were coming to collect supplementary nutrition (*khichri*).⁷ The ICDS worker herself admitted that none of the children eat their food in the centre as they do not have enough space. A little more discussion revealed that the supplementary nutrition is only for 30 children who are in between 3-6 years old. There were 40 other children who were aged below 3 years and registered in the centre. They were all provided with *panjiri*.⁸ The hot cooked meal came from the NGO Akshaya Patra (which runs centralised kitchens); ...the Anganwadi staffs are happy with the present arrangement, except a small worry that the staff of Akshaya Patra leaves the food on the main road’.

Once again, Anantapur had the best functioning ICDS among the surveyed slums in 4 cities. 7 of the 10 surveyed settlements had at least one ICDS centre of their own, and 2 of the remaining 3 had one in close proximity. Some settlements had more than one centre and almost all those parents stated that the ICDS centre opens every day. Likewise all but two parents said that the ICDS workers of their area have visited their homes, and all except one said that there are regular pre school activities in the ICDS centres. When asked whether they had to face any conditions or restrictions in getting their children enrolled in ICDS centres, again all except two answered in negative, that they faced no barriers. All the children also attend ICDS centre regularly. The one major blemish on this record is that none of the ICDS centres supply hot cooked meals; instead in Anantapur ICDS centres provide a kind of ‘ready to eat’ food (sweet mixed

⁷ An Indian dish made from rice, lentils, onion, tomato, and spices

⁸ A kind of porridge

powdered cereal) as supplementary nutrition. It is a powder which is to be served preferably with milk or hot water mixed to it. But in most of the ICDS centres they provide the children only the powder. Only 23 per cent of the children who attend the ICDS centre eat the supplementary nutrition in the centre and the rest take it to their homes.

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

Expectant mothers who are designated BPL by the State were eligible for maternity benefits of 500 rupees, under the erstwhile scheme National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). This scheme was modified as the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), more as an incentive for institutional deliveries and family planning. The Supreme Court intervened to protect the maternity benefits of 500 rupees even for non-institutional deliveries, but the evidence from the survey showed that deliberate confusion is maintained at the ground level, to deprive impoverished mothers who are unable to benefit from institutional deliveries from maternity benefits of 500 rupees.

The situation is most dismal ironically in Delhi, where the survey showed a zero percent coverage. There were no beneficiaries under JSY, in even a single of the surveyed households of Delhi's urban poor settlements. The surveyors collected details of 17 child births in the surveyed slum households that last two years. None of them has actually tried applying for the scheme, though they were aware of the scheme. 11 out of 17 did not apply as there was no one to help them out. No one knew the precise financial benefit involved and none of them had any neighbours who had received the maternity benefit.

There were only 21 childbirths in the surveyed slums in Jaipur which the mothers were given maternity benefit. All the childbirths happened in the hospitals and almost all of them are helped by the doctors and medical staffs to access the benefit. On the other hand, researchers were able to locate 62 childbirths in that last two years, where the mothers did not receive any financial assistance from the state. 87 per cent had not tried at all to apply for the benefit and said that they were unaware about the procedures.

In Cuttack, contrary to Supreme Court orders, only institutional deliveries were given the benefit. The myth of no maternity benefit for home deliveries prevails in almost all the slums that researchers visited. Most of the time, it was the ICDS worker who spread this story. In one of the slums, they narrated an incident. A pregnant woman from their slum got admitted in hospital for delivery. She was not getting labour pains and thus she was asked by the doctors to go home and come back later. She then happened to

give birth to her child in the home itself. As a consequence she was informed both by the ICDS worker and the doctor that she is not eligible for maternity benefit since the delivery was not in an institution. Depressingly, women spoke of corruption, as the ICDS worker was reported to take Rs. 200 to 300 as her share from the total benefit of Rs.1000. “If we are not ready to pay her a share, she says there is no form, or asks us to go here and there”, say the people. In a small irony, women of the otherwise stigmatised Sweepers’ colony are spared this extortion. Most of them are working as sweepers in the Government Hospital and they know the concerned doctors personally. This keeps them out of the bribe trap.

Anantapur again managed to show a comparatively better coverage than the other cities of 58 per cent of eligible women found in the surveyed households succeeding in accessing their maternity benefits. But bureaucratic tangles remain unchanged. In Canal Kottalu researchers met Lakshmi Devi, with a baby a few months old, who failed to get her maternity benefits. Her delivery happened in a hospital and she showed us all the documents. She was sent back from the concerned hospital (where she could apply for the benefit) with a phone number and was asked to call and come again. She has then tried calling that number, which no one receives the call. She was planning to go again but waiting for her husband, who has gone out-station driving his truck and would be back soon.

Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDM)

Commentators often rate MDM as arguably the best functioning social sector programme in India. This was largely borne out in our survey for the slum children who were in government schools, except strikingly in Cuttack, where despite the Supreme Court order on 28 November 2001, making it mandatory to provide MDM in all government and government aided schools, the state government has not implemented the scheme in Cuttack city.

In general, the percentage of school-going children seemed to be encouraging in Delhi slums. But many parents did not want our researchers to fill forms about their non-school going children for two reasons. One is the frustration of not getting their children enrolled in schools, even after continuous efforts; and the other was that many of them wanted to conceal that their children were working and earning for their parents. The researchers noted that many of these children are into ragpicking in most surveyed settlements.

The survey could record 101 children from 90 families, who go to schools. The majority of them (68 per cent) were serviced by schools in their own settlements, followed by 30 per cent who could access schools within a kilometre from their settlement. Only 2 per cent of them had to travel more than a

kilometre to reach their schools. All of them were provided with hot cooked meals as all of them were attending government schools. And all except two said that the meal provision is very regular. A majority of 83 per cent said that they got enough quantity of food and they were satisfied with the quality, as there were different menus provided on different days of the week. Most of them (84 per cent) brought their own utensils for getting their food and the rest were given plates from the schools. When asked whether they could ask for a second helping at the meal time, only 4 confirmed, whereas others said they could not.

Researchers observed barriers in practice in getting children of vulnerable slum residents into school in Delhi. Parents said some were denied admissions on the ground of not having enough identity proof (this was true for slum populations in most cities) and one child was refused as he did not speak Hindi, since the parents were from Assam. The researchers illustrate: 'Balaswa is one of Delhi's larger resettlement colonies. There is a Government school in the middle of the settlement. As a part of our field visit, our team decided to visit the school, to investigate the MDM provision, its quality, etc. When we reached the school, we found the gate closed (at 12 noon) and there was a little crowd waiting outside the school. It was the initial week of July, 2008, whereas the academic session starts from June. We then realised that the crowd was of those parents who wanted to get their children enrolled in the school. A woman there started talking to us. She showed some stamp papers, an affidavit for her younger son's age proof. She told, she is coming to the school for the fifth time and the school officials are continuously asking her to come on some other day. Her family does not have a ration card. She was resettled four years ago. She never had a ration card even before her original slum was demolished. The school now was not ready to accept her son, because she had no address proof. They then asked her son's birth certificate too. She arranged an affidavit by paying the lawyer Rs.150 but the school authorities were still not accepting that. Most of those parents crowded there had the same complaints. They knew very well about the MDM provision and saw it as an added advantage to education'.

They found this everywhere in the slums, and children of rag pickers were engaged in the same occupation as their parents and denied education. Homeless people never even thought it possible to get their children enrolled in schools. 'It is true that the MDM in schools are well functioning', the researchers report, 'but for these impoverished slum children, to get enrolled in the school at all is the difficult part'.

In Cuttack, in most of the slums that were surveyed, there was a strong unanimous 'No' to all the questions that the researchers asked related to the provision of mid day meals. No cooked meal, no dry

ration, no question of its sufficiency, regularity, varied menus and quality. The concerned official told the team that the scheme is non-functional in Cuttack municipal areas because the Teachers' Association opposed its implementation. 'Teachers' work would get affected, there is no space for kitchens in schools, the quality of food is not good and many children are from well off families, the children from well off families may not sit on school verandas to have the food', were some reasons that was put forth by the Teachers' Association in opposing the scheme, he said. Hot meals are only served in the special child labour schools, and are relished by the children.

In Jaipur, our survey identified 133 children in the age group of 6-14 who report attending schools regularly. Half of them have to travel more than one kilometre to reach their school. Among them 35 are attending private schools. Another 30 per cent have schools within one kilometre from their settlement and the rest 20 per cent have schools located within their settlement itself. 98 of the children, who attend Government schools, are getting MDM regularly. The majority of their parents said that the quantity provided was sufficient, and there were different menus served on different days of the week. Three-fourths have to bring their own plates or utensils from their home and 42 per cent said they could get second helpings of food if they asked for it.

The researchers found that although the MDM is functioning well in Jaipur schools, the percentage of school going slum children is not satisfactory. In VT Road, a semi-homeless settlement, no children are enrolled in school; and Bhatta Basti's working children stay back in their homes to earn from stone polishing, ornaments making (*nagina*), shaping and cutting stones, etc. Contractors give them orders and purchase their products to sell it to the larger firms. In Valmiki Basti, the percentage of school going children are high, but they are all in a NGO run school in the same settlement, and this provides only biscuits. In Buxawala, people are resettled without any facilities. There is no school near to the settlement, and the children, if at all they want to go to school, need to walk for more than 3 kms to reach the school. RIICO Katchi Basti, a small 25 year old slum settlement, settled by people working in the nearby stone crushing unit in a hillock nearby. There is no government school nearby even though the then state education minister was their MLA, when the survey was carried out.

In Anantapur, there were 106 school going children found in the total surveyed homes, among whom 23 were going to private schools. Their parents wanted their children to study in 'English medium schools', although they charge fees whereas tuition is free in government schools, and there were no MDMs. All the 83 children going to government schools reported getting MDM regularly and 71 per cent parents confirmed that their children get enough food to their satisfaction. All parents mentioned that there are

different menus served in different days of the week, including an egg a week. Half the children reported carrying their plates to schools. Most parents said that there was no restriction for their children in getting food for more than one time if needed. It was, however, rare to find a dalit cook.

National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

All aged persons who are above 65 years old and are designated BPL are entitled to pensions which - as many studies have established⁹ - can be the life-line of the aged to survive at all, in some cases, and to do so with some degree of dignity and self-reliance, in others. Once again, the reach of this critical social security programme is minimal in the slums in cities included in the survey.

The story was particularly dismal in Delhi, in which researchers found an incredible total of only 13 pension beneficiaries in the 556 slum households surveyed. They get their pensions erratically only once in two or three months. 3 complained of paying money to get enlisted for the pension. Most had to travel a long distance to receive their pension, and were uncertain about the outcomes of these journeys.

The survey could record only 43 eligible aged persons who were excluded under pensions in the surveyed houses. In many of the households that were surveyed, able-bodied workers have either left behind their elders in their native villages, or not been comfortable in accepting their existence among them because of their neglect or abandonment. Most did not apply as they were not aware of the procedures and many others also had no one to help them out to complete the procedures.

The performance of the pension scheme was better in Cuttack. There were 37 beneficiaries for NOAPS that researchers were able to locate in the randomly selected slum households. Almost 60 per cent of the pension holders were female. All of them received Rs.200 per month as their pension, and said they got it regularly. Except the problem of travelling a little long distance to collect the pension (for 32 per cent), there are no other problems faced by them, no apathy of officers, no bribe and no family members who take the money away. To get enlisted for the pension too, only one of them has said they had to pay bribe to the concerned officer.

The main problem is that although the scheme is meant to cover all BPL old people, Cuttack officials who are charged with implementing the old age pension scheme, themselves believe that there is 'quota' and

⁹ See a) Beales, Sylvia. (2000) 'Why We Should Invest in Older Women and Men: The Experience of HelpAge International', *Gender and Development*, 8(2), 9-18 and b) Mander, Harsh (2008) *Living with Hunger*, Economic and Political Weekly 43(17)

they cannot provide more pensions than limits communicated to them. Because of this, they refuse to consider the applications of eligible beneficiaries many a time. In many colonies, researchers found many people continuously year after year, but very few got covered. Others were told to try again in the following years. ‘Officers are telling that it will take at least 5 to 6 years for any old person to get listed for the pension’, they said to the team in desperately.

It was hard to find old age pension beneficiaries in Jaipur slums. There were only 7 aged pension holders in the surveyed households. None of them reported paying any money to get enlisted for the pension. None of them faced any specific problem in receiving their pension. There were a great number (97 in total) of excluded eligible non-beneficiaries of old age pensions found in the surveyed households. Only 31 per cent of them had tried to apply for the scheme and others did not. One major reason was that many of the old persons either had no ration cards, or if they did, these cards were APL, therefore they could not even attempt to apply for the scheme. The scheme is restricted to persons who are above 65 years, but officially classified as BPL. In all the slums we have visited, we rarely came across old people who considered themselves eligible to apply for old age pensions, as they knew that the scheme requires their official recognition as BPL.

The overall coverage in NOAPS was not found to be fully satisfactory in Anantapur, especially when compared with other schemes like PDS, ICDS and MDM. Still, Anantapur again gives a more encouraging picture when compared to other surveyed cities. Surveyors found 77 pensioners in the surveyed slums. Two-thirds the beneficiaries were helped by the elected ward members in getting enlisted for the pension. 34 per cent of them complained about the distance they have to walk or be transported to get their monthly pensions. Only 4 per cent of them mentioned paying bribes every month to receive their pensions. Kalpana Jose Colony typifies the NOAPS scenario in Anantapur slums. ‘The payment is very regular and it is paid from the nearby school, which is again at an easily accessible distance. The pension is paid every month on 1st and if someone misses on that day, they can collect it on 5th. Many of them are getting pension for the last few months (6 months or so) as the survey happened very recently, where they just submitted photos and age proofs. Their ward members facilitated the survey. This happened in other colonies as well’.

National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

Undoubtedly the worst performing social security scheme in all cities was NFBS. This is the only life insurance scheme sponsored by government for impoverished people, and it provides for 10,000 rupees to the members of a BPL family that has lost its principal earning member.

In all the slum households surveyed in the 4 cities, there was only one person we could find who had received this benefit. A 25-year-old young widow Nirmala in Anantapur lost her husband last year in an accident. He was 28 at the time of his death. Nirmala received Rs. 10,000, but does not know about any procedures that she had to follow as her brother helped her in getting the insurance. They are dalits. Except for this one beneficiary in Anantapur, the study found not a single beneficiary in any other cities, though there were many eligible families identified by the researchers. In Delhi, most were even unaware about the scheme. In each of the other cities, researchers found a few people who had unsuccessfully applied for the insurance, which suggested that there was at least a little awareness about the scheme among them. But the procedures were opaque, and the prospects of getting the benefit bleak for the urban slum residents who lost their family bread-earners.

Other Findings

In addition to these findings specific to various schemes and cities, it is possible to generalise a few other trends that emerged from all or most of the field reports. These are:

1. There was a remarkably high level of awareness about all the schemes (except the abysmally neglected life insurance programme for impoverished heads of households - NFBS) among slum residents in all slums in all cities. This information extended also to those who were eligible but were denied inclusion in the benefits. There was also a high desire to access the benefits of the programmes (although almost universally, beneficiaries felt that the assistance from these state programmes while welcome was not sufficient for their needs in a city). Therefore such high levels of exclusion of slum populations from their entitlements of food and social security programmes cannot be explained away by lack of awareness, or motivation, or enterprise, or effort by the potential beneficiaries of the programmes.
2. The strongest barrier for inclusion of slum dwellers for most schemes was their failures to be identified and listed as BPL or 'below poverty line' by the government. BPL is an explicit requirement to receive BPL ration cards, maternity benefits under JSY, old age pensions under NOAPS, and life insurance under NFBS. In fact, among the schemes studied here, only the two child feeding programmes of ICDS and MDM did not require the children to come from BPL families. The slum residents, especially those who were destitute or unorganised workers, most of whom would prima facie qualify as BPL, felt helpless to get themselves included in this 'privileged' list, and the

procedures both for selection and grievance redressal are completely opaque in all cities. Unlike villages, in which governments have initiated at least 3 house-to-house censuses to identify BPL households by well-publicised (even if contested and flawed) criteria, selection of BPL families in cities are mostly individual ad-hoc decisions taken at the discretion of local officials, and whenever there is such untrammelled decentralised discretion in government, it is a certain recipe for corruption and arbitrariness.

3. There are other ‘invisible barriers’ that many slum residents face for inclusion for benefits from the schemes, which emerged from this study. Most detrimental to poor and powerless migrants are the requirements for identity and address proof. This often presents a classic Kafkaesque dilemma: the most widely accepted identity and address proof for them are BPL ration cards, but they lack the identity and address proof required to qualify them for BPL cards! Opaque and complicated procedures and requirements of many documents further block access of most schemes to the impoverished slum residents, who are uprooted from their village origins, and possess no documents to prove even their identity and name, their age, address, income levels, and number of years of residence in the city, often on the streets or in unauthorised and illegal slum settlements with a haphazard aggregation of shanties in a way that any specific address is impossible. They have no one to go to even when their denials are patently unjust: many slum residents in Cuttack who lost their cards in floods could not get these renewed, and others lost them when cards were renewed by the government, and no one would explain to them why they were left out. Delhi has taken significant steps to simplify admission procedures for children into schools, but researchers still found residents of slums and resettlement colonies barred in practice because they could not produce documentary evidence of address and age of the child.
4. The survey in all cities suggested that the chances of exclusion seemed to be higher if the residents were from socially or economically powerless and stigmatised segments. In all cities, the already low coverage by food and livelihood schemes in slums was further greatly depressed in settlements of the precariously housed homeless people, who for instance lived on pavements under plastic sheets. Likewise it was generally very low for colonies of ragpickers, for those with high dalit, tribal or Muslim populations, the last aggravated further when they were Bengali speaking and therefore suspected to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. There were greater problems for slum colonies in locations that were surrounded by middle class settlements, presumably because of greater hostility by the more powerful middle class residents of the area to their slum neighbours.

5. The opaque procedures and remoteness of the public authorities who were required to deliver services to the homeless meant that (except some respondents from slums in Delhi) most slum residents felt they could access food and social security schemes only if their applications were ‘mediated’ by others. Significantly most who had accessed the benefits were themselves unaware or foggy about the procedures and documents required. They left this all to their mediators. Those who mediated differed from city to city: in Anantapur and Cuttack, it was often elected municipal councillors, but in other locations it was ‘friends and neighbours’. It is difficult to estimate whether these are euphemisms for touts.
6. The studies also revealed low involvement of local self-government officials in the implementation of most programmes, unlike in many rural schemes in several states. There were also very few community institutions created for implementing or monitoring the programmes. The authorities responsible for each scheme tended to be dispersed and remote in their access to the potential slum beneficiaries.
7. Problems of exclusion were sometimes further aggravated by poor infrastructure. This was particularly evident for ICDS. In Delhi, an ICDS Centre meant to serve a highly impoverished homeless settlement in South Delhi, was located in the middle class home of the worker charged with running the centre. She was unwilling to let the children of the settlement, many of who lived by begging and ragpicking and all of whom were begrimed, into her home, and therefore excluded them from the centre. In many slums, especially in Cuttack which reported a higher number of ICDS centres than other cities (except Anantapur) in the slums, the centres were in rooms so cramped or otherwise inappropriate, that there was nowhere to seat the children, let alone weigh, teach and immunise them. Children came to the centres, if at all, only to collect the highly erratic supplies of monotonous supplementary nutrition.
8. One small and tangential finding, was mainly relevant to MDM. Of the 106 children in school in the surveyed slum houses in Anantapur, as many as 23 (or almost a quarter) were in private schools. This was also a pattern in Jaipur. They were willing to pay fees, travel longer distances, and forgo the MDM for what they perceived to be better quality education. This trend was visible in other city slums even for private kindergarten schools competing with ICDS centres, again with fees and no feeding. This confirms once again that poor parents still tend to value education for their children if they perceive it to be of some quality; and that feeding is an incentive for school (and pre-school)

admissions, but cannot over-ride considerations of perceived quality of education and child care services.

Recommendations

All governments need to address the pervasive exclusion of urban slum and homeless populations from their entitlements to various food and social security schemes, which is a violation of directives of the Supreme Court, of schemes guidelines, and most importantly of the human rights of this large, food deprived and malnourished segment of the indigent population of the land. Some of the critical early steps that are required for this to be possible are listed below:

1. **Mapping of slum and homeless populations:** The most critical barrier faced for inclusion of slum (and urban homeless) residents in most food and social security schemes are their identification and listing as BPL (or AAY). It has already been observed that to date, there has been no census of the urban poor, only estimations of their numbers by organisations like the Planning Commission. Most state governments are observed not to have even an updated mapping of slum and homeless settlements, and estimates of their numbers. Therefore the first requirement is that all state governments must undertake an annual mapping and counting of slums and homeless settlements, and undertake a periodic census of BPL (and AAY) households. For this, transparent, objective, verifiable and measurable definitions, procedures and criteria need to be established.
2. **Census to survey, list and update BPL and AAY families:** The primary reason for using objective and verifiable indicators for identifying the urban vulnerable is primarily that the current income criteria that is being used by most governments is neither verifiable nor measurable. Income as an indicator for identifying the urban vulnerable has been found to be extremely inadequate since incomes are over/ under-reported and there is no objective method that can be used to assess it. Also income alone does not reflect the living conditions, freedoms, opportunities and access to public services that the individual or household actually enjoys. It is therefore necessary to use proxy indicators of income, which are verifiable and measurable and can be clearly quantified, and which also reflect non-monetised aspects of a person's living conditions. It is broadly proposed that the basic premise of this new methodology for identifying urban impoverished and vulnerable individuals and households is that it would depend on proxy indicators of income, social vulnerability and access to public services to calculate the income and define vulnerability around income.

The Commissioners of the Supreme Court in the writ petition 196/2001 (PUCL vs Union of India and others) known popularly as the ‘right to food’ case, worked with the Delhi government and officials of the Planning Commission and other experts to try to develop such objective and verifiable indicators for identifying BPL and AAY families. This method may be used and adapted by other state government, based on local conditions and consultations.

The new methodology proposes that the primary filter that should be used to identify poverty in the context of Delhi is place of residence of the ‘beneficiary’. This has the merit also of automatically addressing and fully reversing the empirically observed very high exclusion of slum and homeless populations from BPL lists and therefore entitlements targeted for BPL and AAY families, especially food and livelihood schemes.

In the first stage, for eligibility to listed as BPL or Antyodaya, the place of residence should be: houseless (including the precariously housed); unauthorised slums; authorised slums; and slum resettlement colonies. It is reasonably assumed that the city’s poor and vulnerable would mostly reside in these settlements. They also have poorest access to public services, with detrimental impact on their health, well-being, and ability to use incomes for a better life. To be prima facie eligible to be considered (after other criteria or filters outlined later) for any scheme of the Delhi Government targeted to BPL and AAY families, this would be the primary (but not exclusive) criteria. This would mean that in the first stage anyone who is not resident in any of the above mentioned locations would be excluded from accessing the benefits that are meant for the vulnerable and marginalised, but not that all who are so resident would be automatically eligible. This turns on its head the current status of exclusion documented in this study, where residence in slums or on the streets tends to exclude rather than include impoverished and vulnerable people from accessing BPL targeted schemes.

The second level of filtering that will be used, will be whether the resident of these areas belong to socially vulnerable group or vulnerable occupational groups that make them vulnerable to income shocks or livelihood insecurities.

Socially vulnerable groups are defined as those who routinely face severe social barriers to livelihood, food and dignified living. They include: households with old people either living alone or as dependents with their children or others (above the age of 60); households with disabled people, both as heads of households and as dependents; households with people who suffer from debilitating and stigmatised ailments (HIV/ AIDS, TB, and leprosy); single women (including widows, unmarried and

separated and deserted women,) living in household(s) as dependents, or alone, or as heads of households; single unprotected children; and child headed households.

Occupationally vulnerable groups are households which are primarily dependent on earnings from occupations and forms of employment or self-employment which are casual, low-end, with low and uncertain wages and irregular employment, unsanitary, unhealthy and hazardous work conditions, and bonded, semi-bonded or other undignified and oppressive conditions of employment. Those households with any members who are in regular employment with public or private sector would not qualify for occupational vulnerability. In urban areas, an illustrative but not exhaustive list of such occupations can be compiled as follows: rag-picking, construction workers, porters and *hamaals*, casual daily wage labour; street vendors / hawkers; casual domestic workers; cycle rickshaw drivers; workers in small household enterprises; workers in household industries; and others.

Those households of Delhi who are houseless or precariously housed are identified as the most vulnerable households, or in the language of the food and social security schemes Antyodaya or the poorest of the poor. This would make them eligible for Antyodaya ration cards and other programs specifically designed for AAY households.

Similarly households of Delhi who are living in unauthorised slums; authorised slums; and slum resettlement colonies and whose members belong to socially vulnerable categories as defined earlier, would be also be AAY and also be eligible for Antyodaya cards, and other programmes for their food, health, education and social security. Dependent old people, single women and adult disabled people will be considered separate household units for the purpose of this identification. Definitions are further elaborated in the Appendix.

Residents of Delhi who are again living in unauthorised slums, authorised slums, and slum resettlement colonies, and belong to vulnerable occupational groups, will be designated as BPL. This would make them eligible for BPL cards, and other programs for their food, health, education and social security.

3. Strengthening Institutional Delivery Mechanisms: If the burgeoning slum and homeless urban poor populations are to be reached fully by various food and livelihood schemes, the present administrative mechanisms for implementing these and other development and social sector programmes, in cities for the urban poor, need great strengthening and rationalisation. There can be

no country-wide solutions, because of the wide diversity of current structures for urban governance, and each state government would need to develop its own mechanisms. Broadly the choices would be for the programmes to be implemented by the local self-government municipal institutions; or the district administration (centred around the office of the District Collector); or by various departments such as for social welfare, education and women and child development; or non-government especially community based institutions like self-help groups and school education committees. The choice is likely to involve a combination of more than one of these. It is recommended that local self-government municipal institutions should be strengthened for this over time, and that for the potential beneficiaries of all food and social security programmes, there should be a converged single which they have to access.

4. Simplifying procedures and documents: Even if all of this is accomplished, urban poor residents of slums and the city streets will still be unable to access various food and livelihood entitlements, if the procedures are complicated, and in particular if they require documentary proof of identity, address and length of stay in the city. The last should be superfluous, because the Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to travel to all parts of the country for work and living. In programmes like ICDS and JSY, all that should be required to qualify a person for access to the benefits is that the person should be of the appropriate age (below 6 years for ICDS, for example) and condition (expectant mothers for ICDS and JSY), with no other papers required. For BPL and AAY ration cards, their identification in the BPL census by transparent and verifiable criteria such as described in sub-section 2 of this section should again qualify them for the cards. It is sometimes argued that maybe some family members would avail of subsidised food in the village from which the slum resident may have migrated, and therefore there would be duplication of benefits. Even if there is such a danger, it would be for a small fraction of the total programme, it would be availed of by rural families which are presumably deprived, and this should not justify more paper work which would only exclude the most vulnerable urban settlers. Despite all this, if there is still an insistence on documents to prove age, identity and periods of residence; self-certification by the applicants, endorsed by 2 or 3 neighbours, should be enough to suffice.

Conclusion

This field study conducted by researchers of the Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi, of the access to food and social security entitlements in city slums in Delhi, Jaipur, Cuttack and Anantapur, confirmed the proverbial areas of significant 'darkness under lamps' (*diya tale andhera*); or in other words, that some of the most profound deprivations and exclusion from government food and social security programmes

occur in settlements which are geographically in closest proximity to offices from which these programmes are designed, funded and monitored. This paradoxical deprivation can end only when governments acknowledge the equally legitimate citizenship of the country and city of the impoverished, sometimes destitute, residents of slum and homeless settlements; map, survey, identify and list the residents of these dispossessed habitations; and reorganise administrative arrangements and scheme procedures to effectively include the long-denied residents of these areas of significant darkness in our own neighbourhoods.

Appendix

Definitions for the purpose of identifying the urban vulnerable:

For the purposes of identifying the urban vulnerable, the following definitions will be used:

Household:

For the purpose of identification of the urban vulnerable, the definition of a nuclear family will be used which is the two adult members and their minor children. For the purposes of the identification, all of old people (any person above the age of 60), even if they are living within an extended household, irrespective of whether they are dependent on their children or not, will be considered as 'old people' and entitled to benefits as under socially vulnerable. Similarly widowed/single women (deserted) living within the household would be treated as independent unit for entitlements and benefits.

Houseless (including precariously housed):

For the purposed of the identification exercise, the definition of the 'houseless' would be that used by the Census of India. The Census of India defines 'houseless people' as the persons who are not living in 'census houses'. The latter refers to 'a structure with roof', hence the enumerators are instructed by Census officials 'to take note of the possible places where the houseless population is likely to live, such as on the roadside, pavements, drainage pipes, under staircases, or in the open, temple-mandaps, platforms and the like'. This would include all households residing in any temporary structures in such locations that are not classified by MCD or the GNCTD as 'slums', 'JJ Clusters' or 'resettlement colonies' irrespective of whether they are in a cluster or located individually.

Single Women:

Single women would include all women above the age of 18 who are widowed, separated, abandoned by their husbands.

Single Women Headed Household:

All households where there is no adult male member in the household or where the principal bread-earner in the family is a woman.

Child Headed Households:

All households where there is no adult member in the household or where the principal bread-earner in the family is a child (below the age of 18).

Disabled:

Disability for the purposes of identification would mean the definition used by the Department of Social Welfare, GNCTD which has used the primary definition as given in the Persons with Disabilities Act 1994, and included categories like autism which are not been mentioned in the Act.

Notified or Non-notified / Authorised or Unauthorised Slums:

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO)¹⁰ in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India has released the report of a nation-wide survey carried out by it during July 2002-December 2002 on the condition of urban slums. For the purpose of the survey, a slum was defined as a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions. Such an area was considered as “non-notified slum” if at least 20 households lived in that area. Areas notified as slums by the respective municipalities, corporations, local bodies or development authorities were treated as ‘notified slums’.

From a layman’s understanding, we can say that the authorised slums are those licensed by governments/owners, permitting the dwellers to remain there until the property is required for some other use. The unauthorised slums have no official sanction and are usually impermanent. These dwellers are far more unsettled because of their impermanent nature.

Slum Resettlement Colony:

Any residential area developed by the Slum Development Board (Slum Clearance Board!) or JJ Department of Municipal Corporations (or any urban local body) for the purpose of resettling the slum dwellers of the city, mainly in the outskirts, as the authorities can use the city space for commercial or other use.

¹⁰ Condition of Urban Slums, (2002).

http://mospi.nic.in/mospi_nssso_58th_rd_press_note_slum_condition.htm