



By Maulik Jain and Abhishek Mardia

Challenges in Making Mumbai Slum-Free by 2022

An investigation of the Mumbai Slums by two IBDP students



An Overview of the Mumbai Slums

Mumbai has long been hailed as the city of employment, with job opportunities unlike those seen in rural parts of India. As a result, since the beginning of the 20th century, people from all parts of the country have been attracted to this urban metropolis. This has led to the inevitable occurrence of slums, characterized by their inferior housing, squalor, lack of clean water and poor electricity and sanitation facilities. The influx of migrant labour has resulted in the encroachment of public and private land, resulting in several urban problems and land scarcity. It must be emphasised, however, that slums are an integral part of the city's landscape and have contributed to its industrial, commercial and economic growth.

As of 2015, there are 1,959 slums in Mumbai. From Dharavi, one of the world's largest slums, to Dhobi Ghat, Mumbai today houses more than 50% of its population in 6.13% of its area. According to a World Bank estimate, this number will equal 22.5 million people by 2025.

The Shiv Sena, an Indian regional party led by Bal Thackeray, first initiated a slum rehabilitation scheme in 1995 as the ruling party of the state. The scheme essentially allowed real estate developers to access land for development at market rates in exchange for providing housing for slum-dwellers. However, due to restrictions on the market rate, the scheme was largely unsuccessful. However, the Slum Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1995, aiming to protect the rights of slum dwellers and the development of slum areas. Thereafter, the state housing policy unveiled by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on May 2015 proposed to amend the Maharashtra Slum Areas Act 1971 and introduce stricter provisions and timeframes in order to meet the stated agenda of a 'Slum-free Maharashtra by 2022'.

In light of this scenario, the Government of Maharashtra gave us, Maulik Jain and Abhishek Mardia, the opportunity to offer a fresh perspective on the challenges of the stated agenda for Mumbai, India. Through this report, we aim to focus our investigation on a particular slum in Mankhurd, Mumbai, which we will use to extrapolate to draw the larger implications for a slum-free Mumbai by 2022. We hope you find this report useful in highlighting the challenges in achieving this objective.

The Slum in Mankhurd, Mumbai

In order to gain a better understanding of the matter, we personally visited the slum in Mankhurd, Mumbai. Comprised of three different societies, the slum houses 4500 people. However, as per the law, residents must possess documents proving their residence in the slum since at least January 1, 2000 in order to be eligible for a new home. Redevelopment can only begin once the consent of 70% of the eligible residents is received, a figure that we discovered is incredibly difficult to achieve. The Slum Rehabilitation Authority must then review the proposal before implementation can begin.

Below are a few pictures of the particular slum:

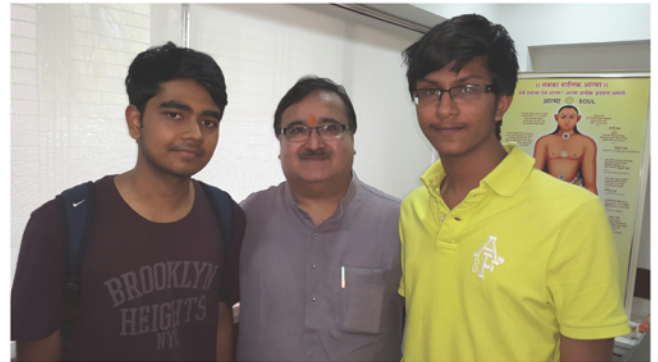


Why is Slum Rehabilitation Important?

Following our visit to the slum, we prepared a questionnaire for Mr. Prakash Mehta, Minister of Housing, Labour and Mines, Government of Maharashtra. A discussion and additional research helped us understand the importance of slum rehabilitation.

The reasons for its importance include:

- **Lower Danger of Disease:** Slums are a catalyst for several diseases such as tuberculosis, leptospirosis and rheumatic heart disease. The new tenements have a 25 square meter carpet area with improved sanitation facilities, electricity and water supplies and general living conditions, thus reducing the incidence of disease and increasing average lifespan.
- **Equality:** The new tenements are a step towards equality as slum-dwellers are housed in buildings, contributing to an improved sense of self-worth and equality.
- **Liveability index:** The improved standards of living lead to an improved position on the liveability index. The squalor and substandard housing in slums are avoided as well.
- **Employment:** Construction of the new tenements requires manual labour, raw materials and transportation, leading to increased employment within these local industries. This contributes to an increased productive capacity of the local economy. Moreover, it would contribute to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- **Foreign Direct Investment:** As slums are demolished and their residents rehabilitated, business confidence increases, leading to an increased foreign direct investment in domestic industries.
- **Increased Safety:** The low-lying slums are exposed to floods and other natural disasters alongwith higher chances of injury. The apartments are safer due to the improved facilities and the elevation above the ground.
- **Reduced Land Scarcity:** Slums cover large amounts of space. Their demolition would mean large spaces could be used for productive purposes, such as the building of schools, parks and hospitals.



Interview with Mr. Prakash Mehta, Minister of Housing, Labour and Mines, Government of Maharashtra

- **Positive Effect on Government Budget:** As jobs are created, the government has to spend less on unemployment benefits and can allocate the budget to more productive purposes. Also, with more people living in sanitary conditions, the government will have to spend less on health care services. This would positively affect the government budget.
- **Growth in Ancillary Industries:** Ancillary industries such as the tourism industry would flourish as slum removal makes the city less prone to diseases, attracting a larger number of tourists. This would lead to an increased aggregate demand, resulting in greater disposable incomes and spending by the domestic people.

After reviewing these factors, the ideal of a slum – free Mumbai seems perfect. However, slums pose a few advantages too. Slums foster a strong sense of community, with their residents engaging in religious activities and practices such as pottery and recycling. Dharavi, in particular, recycles everything from cosmetics and plastics to computer keyboards. As a result, Mumbai recycles 80% of its plastic waste as compared to 23% in the UK.

However, the on-ground situation is very different. During our visit, we witnessed the extremely poor standards of living, with open drainage systems, houses made of only thin metal sheets, and the slum-dwellers' frequent exposure to the unhygienic environment. This convinced us of the advantages of slum rehabilitation as compared to the disadvantages. The grave challenges in achieving this aim are discussed in the next section.



Grave Challenges

There are numerous challenges preventing complete slum removal. Below we have highlighted the challenges faced by each of the three stakeholders, namely the government, real estate developers and slum residents.

One common hurdle faced by each of the three stakeholders is:

Eligibility criteria: As mentioned previously, the need for 70% of the people in the slum to possess documents since at least 2000 makes slum redevelopment difficult to achieve. The failure to present these documents adversely affects all the stakeholders as the project is halted.

Hurdles faced for the redevelopment of slums

There are several hurdles faced by the government, real estate developers and slum dwellers during slum rehabilitation:

- **Cultural Beliefs:** Some slum dwellers are unwilling to shift from their slums to the newly constructed apartments, as they are unwilling to have 'people living above them.' This is considered unacceptable because it violates their cultural beliefs.
- **Tenement Living Conditions:** Several residents are apprehensive of the living conditions in the apartments. They often prefer to stay close to one another in the tightly knit slum community.
- **Number of people in the lower income segment:** Although the state has specified that seniors and single women in slums should receive subsidised housing, banks are often hesitant to provide loans to these groups of people. These residents are also unable to pay maintenance charges in the high-rise slum buildings.
- **Lack of viability of slum scheme in certain locations:** In some areas such as distant suburban districts, sale prices are not high enough to cover private developers' required profit margins therefore those slums are sometimes neglected. Since some slums are built on reserved plots, developers cannot incorporate the sale component in the redevelopment project either causing the project to be stalled.

- **Lack of trust:** Most slum dwellers are reluctant to put their faith in a private developer when the matter is about their homes. Although they may possess the documents, they do not hand them to the developers. Thus, the eligibility criteria set by the government becomes difficult to achieve.
- **Recent development:** Since the eligibility criteria requires development to precede 1st January, 2000, thousands of slum homes built in the past 15 years cannot be included in the SRA free housing policy. This acts as a major hurdle to complete slum rehabilitation.
- **Confusion:** Slum residents often get confused about giving up their homes in order to get the slum redeveloped. Governments and developers might encourage them to do so, but they are often reluctant to let go of their houses. This causes delays for long periods of time.



Suggestions for Implementation

The task of making Mumbai slum-free in such a short time frame is a huge one. Therefore, all actions and processes must take place with utmost efficiency and care. Here are a few aspects that we feel, if implemented, would make the slum scheme a huge success.

- **Increased FSI:** The government should allow developers a higher Floor Space Index (FSI) in unfeasible locations in order to provide incentives for redevelopment. Builders would experience higher revenues and profits and this would also have the additional effect of more reduce the housing shortages in those areas.
- **Increasing relocation percentage:** As o015, developers are allowed to relocate 10% of slum households. An increase in this percentage, coupled with higher FSI, could produce remarkable results. More slum dwellers could be shifted to one building, reducing the developer's cost of making extra buildings to accommodate them. This would mean faster removal of slums in that area.
- **Eligibility date:** The state government should increase the eligibility date as many slums have been built soon after. This would make the process much faster and more slums could be redeveloped in short periods of time.
- **Reduce the consent percentage:** If the consent percentage were to be reduced from 70% to 51%, the slums would be redeveloped faster, while still maintaining the majority.
- **Redraft land acquisition policy:** In the case of slums built on private lands where owners do not co-operate, the process of land acquisition should be made faster, simpler and easier through government intervention.
- **"Ghar ke badle ghar":** The government should allow 'ghar ke badle ghar,' in the scheme with only a single proof. This would quicken the process and would result in higher consent percentages, as peoples' faith in the government would be reinforced. Each and every slum dweller would be tracked with "Aadhar" and biometric techniques so that free housing is not claimed for the second time. This prevents slum dwellers from selling their free houses illegally and building slum hutments somewhere else.
- **Take strict action:** The government should take strict action against local political interest groups who try to interfere in and influence such projects. This would make slum redevelopment quicker and more hassle free.

- **Approval to only financially sound developers:** Only financially sound developers should be approved to take up large scale projects (5 acres) within Mumbai, as there are less chances of there being financial problems that hinder the redevelopment project. Foreign Direct Investment should also be encouraged for slum redevelopment projects.

What are the Alternatives?

In order to gain a better understanding, we have explored the models in other metropolitan cities, namely Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New York, USA.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Slums in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil are called Favelas. They are illegal homes that were built by homeless soldiers. Today, 22% of Brazil's population lives in favelas. In order to improve the residents' living conditions, the Brazilian Government introduced Programa Favela Bairro, deciding to build better favelas for the people to live in. 147 such settlements were made, housing a total of 710,000 inhabitants. The Government also launched Programa Morar Carioca, a project with the goal of urbanising all city slums by 2020.



A set of unambiguous criteria for eligibility and prioritization of slums has also been established by the Government, with the goal of creating a synergy between investments made for Olympics and investments made for slums. As of 2015, the Government has made investments of up to US\$ 6.4 billion for 933 settlements with 342000 homes.

New York, USA

Alternatively, slum rehabilitation schemes in New York have been very successful. New York slums are far more hygienic and sanitary than those in Mumbai. These slums are actually properties rented out illegally by landlords to tenants. In 2013, New York's average rent climbed above \$3,000 per month, which may explain why illegal subletting and subdivisions are the only option for the city's poorest residents. Half the city's population spends more than half their income on housing costs.

How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York, an early publication of photojournalism by Jacob Riis, explained not only the living conditions in New York slums, but also the sweatshops in some tenements which paid workers only a few cents a day. As a result of public reaction, New York's worst tenements were torn down. The government has also made several improvements in Lower East Side conditions, with sewers, garbage collection, and indoor plumbing all being corrected.



In conclusion, a synthesis of all the above-mentioned points above leads to one inevitable conclusion: Slum redevelopment by 2022 is a burdensome task, but with a few alterations in the system and the process can be very smooth and efficient.

We hope you found this report useful and that Mumbai can truly be slum-free by 2022!

Who We Are

Maulik Jain



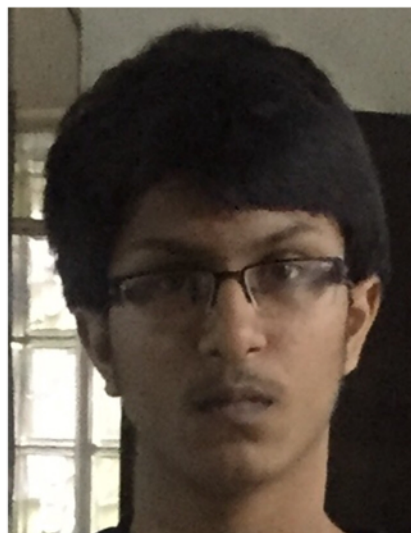
Student, Author and Co-founder of CARES

Presently studying in Grade 11 (IBDP) at Dhirubhai Ambani International School (DAIS), Mumbai, I have diverse interests ranging from art and music, to sports and writing.

At 14, I was one of India's youngest authors to publish my maiden book titled *Imagination Unplugged*; a collection of short stories covering varied fiction and non-fiction topics, which was well received by teachers, parents and students alike. I have co-founded CARES (Creating Awareness in Real Estate issues in Society); along with a Legal Consultant and Advocate at the High Court of Bombay, a social initiative under which this report is my contribution.

I am extremely fond of Economics and aspire to pursue it at the undergraduate level. I am determined to make a significant and positive contribution to the global economy in the future.

Abhishek Mardia



I am a grade 11 student currently studying the IBDP curriculum at Jamnabai Narsee School.

My hobbies are reading, playing the piano, handball and table tennis. I have played at the district level in both sports and have come third in the DSO in TT and second in the DSO in handball.

I have given the Trinity grade 2 examination for the piano and am currently preparing for grade 3.



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www.facebook.com/CARESInitiative

Appendix 1: Certification from the Government of Maharashtra



SLUM REHABILITATION AUTHORITY

No.SRA/Admin/table-2/2325/2015

26 JUN 2015

To WHOM SO EVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Abhishek Mardia of Jamnabai Narsee School and Mr. Maulik Jain of Dhirubhai Ambani International School were assigned by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority to study the challenges in making Mumbai slum free by 2022.

Under our supervision, they have worked on this project for a period of 10 days from 17 June to 26th June 2015. Thereafter, they have presented us with a detailed report on the same, which is under review.

We would like to congratulate the boys on their on-ground effort and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

Date : 26th June 2015

Yours sincerely

**S. S. BHISE
SECRETARY**

SLUM REHABILITATION AUTHORITY