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Beyond the Stereotype of 'Slum': A Sociological Perspective of a Slum in Amritsar

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The slum in a city is considered as a poor area and it is assumed that all slum dwellers are alike. The present paper is an attempt to study the micro level discourse related to the issue of inequality within a slum. Inequality has been studied at various levels: such as national, regional and city, but not within a slum. A slum, like a city, is a heterogeneous entity, in which various categories of poor people share the same space and dwellings. The findings suggest that there are clear-cut inequalities among the slum dwellers as evident in their built environment and social, economic and political spheres.

Keywords: Slum, Inequality, Poverty, Kot Khalsa Slum

Introduction

In the recent years, social scientists are increasingly concerned about the rapid growth of population in the urban areas and their main focus is on analyzing the consequences of this growth. It is to be noted that every year the world urban population is increasing by about 70 million (Sabir Ali, 2005). There are three main determinants such as employment, income and availability of infra-structure which have a bearing on the extent and pattern of migration flows towards the urban areas.

An analysis of the distribution of urban population across size categories reveals that the process of urbanization in India has been large-city oriented (Kundu, 2003). On one side the process of economic development has created numerous job opportunities in urban areas and attracted larger population to the urban center; however, on the other side, it has deteriorated the physical environment and the quality of life.

This massive increase of population in the urban areas has caused deterioration in the physical environment and quality of life (Sandhu, 1995). Thus, a close relationship emerges between the level of urbanization and economic development. The process of economic growth which does not lead to

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sharp reduction in poverty levels creates more problems than it solves (Jha, 2000). The concept of development takes a 'U' turn with an ever increasing population of slum dwellers within the urban segments.

It is estimated that slums represent the speedily growing segments of an urban population at about 5-6 percent per annum (Chatterjee, 2002). According to the census of 2001, the annual growth rate of urban population in India is 2.73 percent per annum (Census Report, 2001). Thus growth in slum population is almost double the growth rate of the overall urban population. The process of urbanization accompanied by rapid population growth of cities has led to overcrowding and congestions in urban localities, which is explicitly visible in dwelling structures. Most of these structures are built illegally, with little or no provision for piped water, sanitation, collection and disposal of household waste or health care. Thereby slum dwellers have an income which is inadequate, irregular and unstable. They are prone to live in poverty, in spite of the Governments' initiated innovative housing and employment schemes. Even as the Indian economy remains one of the bright spots in the world, around 49,000 slums continue to blight the urban landscape forcing lakhs of people to live in pathetic conditions (The Times of India, May 27, 2010).

According to a UNESCO document, "a slum is a group of buildings or area characterized by overcrowding, deterioration, unsanitary conditions or absence of facilities or amenities, which because of these conditions or any of them, endanger the health, safety, or morale of inhabitants or the community." But the general perception in the body of literature is that "Slum is an area where generally poor people live and the poverty is the main characteristic of slum where all dwellers are considered to be poor".

The study intends to explore how postmodernism as a perspective can be used to deconstruct the given social situation in which slum dwellers live. Slum dwellers do not mean that all of them are poor; rather, it has various categories of poor people. It is generally assumed that there may be clear-cut inequalities among them in social, economic and political sphere. Keeping this point of view in mind, the present study has been conducted to understand how inequality prevails among the slum dwellers, taking into account various spheres—social, economic and political.

Inequality and Poverty

The study of inequality has been closely associated with poverty as it has an important bearing over the field of economic and social change. But the relationship between inequality and poverty is neither clear nor direct. Poverty and inequality are analytically distinct concepts. They vary and are independent of each other. It is misleading beyond a point to treat one as a marker for other (Dettelle, 2003). Particularly, in the literature on policy, there is a widespread assumption that poverty and inequality are two sides of the same coin. It is assumed that there is an increase in the number and proportion of those below the poverty line (BPL), the inequalities also increase. It is of course

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recognized that there are inequalities among the poor themselves. Certainly, inequality is far less discussed than poverty, and poverty does not necessarily imply a problem of inequality or inequity. In fact, the 1990s' World Development Report clearly demonstrates this: poverty is the "inability to attain a minimal standard of living," measured by household income and expenditure on basic needs. The same report explores and examines poverty and inequality from close corners, thus drawing distinctions between the two key concepts. Whereas poverty is concerned with the absolute standard of living of a part of society, inequality on the other hand refers to relative living standards across the whole society.

Inequality often highlights the privileged position of higher-income groups in relation to the rest of the population in terms of not only housing quality and safe environments but also in the use of urban land and in the availability of publicly funded infrastructure and services. It is also unsettling to find that unequal access to homes, land and basic services actually affect life expectancy and low-income groups have a far lower life expectancy than high-income groups (Diana et al., 1996).

The concept of inequality can be studied by adopting various perspectives such as those functionalists who argue that a certain degree of order and stability are essential for the operation of social systems. They, therefore, consider how inequalities help to maintain order and stability in society.

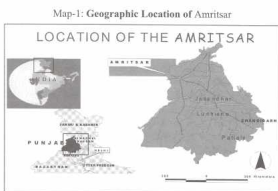
There are others who follow the Marxian approach which provides a radical alternative to the functionalist view of the nature of social inequality. The Marxian school regards inequality as a divisive rather than an integrative structure and views it as a mechanism whereby some groups exploit others and live parasitically rather than as a means of furthering collective goals. Marxists theorize that inequality and poverty are functional components of the capitalistic mode of production; capitalism necessarily produces unequal social structures. Inequality is transferred from one generation to another through the mechanism of services and opportunities which surround each individual (Peet, 1975).

Universe of the Study

Punjab is one of the smaller but prosperous states of India. The urban population accounts for 33.95 percent of the state's population. During 1991-2001, the urban population of Punjab grew at the rate of 37.58 per cent and this growth rate was higher than the growth rate of India (31.31 per cent). During this decade, there was a tremendous increase in the number of towns, i.e. from 120 in 1991 to 157 in 2001. 41 new towns were declared for the first time and a few old towns were merged with urban agglomerations. The new towns added about one-fifth (4.4 lakhs) of additional urban population to the existing urban population. In 2001, Amritsar joined Ludhiana as another metropolitan city of the state. In all, class I cities constitute about three-fifth of the total urban population and class II and III towns together constitute 29.00 per cent of the total population. There was a slight decrease in the population in these towns although their number increased. Similarly, class IV, V and VI towns also increased in number but their share of urban population decreased.

In Punjab there is a higher incidence of poverty in the urban areas as compared to what is seen in the rural areas. The spillover thesis does not hold well in the state. Further, it has been observed that the incidence of rural poverty has also been declining at a faster rate than that of the urban poverty. As a result, the incidence of rural poverty in Punjab has now reached almost a negligible magnitude. In the mid-sixties, the proportion of urban population below poverty line (48.07 per cent) was less than double the proportion of rural poverty. But in the early nineties the same was more than three times the proportion of rural poverty (Shergill et al., 1998). The housing shortage in the state was around 6.5 lakh units by the year 2000. Housing provided by the public agencies contributed only 10 per cent to the new housing stock. Even Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority (PUDA), the premier public agency that builds houses for the urban people, allocates no more than 6.8 per cent of its resources to the housing for the urban poor. None of the public corporations and institutions assisting housing in Punjab satisfies any of the efficient criteria in terms of profit, administrative expenses, subsidization, rates of recovery of loans etc. The government agencies should get out of the business of constructing houses, townships and urban estates and leave the field open to the private sector (Sahota, 1997). An analysis of the level of services in the towns of Punjab shows that nearly one-half of the urban households do not have tap water supply within their premises, about one-third are without toilet facility and about one-seventh of them have to do without electricity (Krishan, 1994).

Situated on the north-western border of the country Amritsar is one of the biggest cities of Punjab state, (Map-1). It is also the gateway to India for the visitors coming on the overland route through Wagha Border (Pakistan). Amritsar, the city of 'Golden Temple', lies between 31°07' and 32°03' north latitudes and 74°02' and 78°02' longitudes on the National Highway No. 1. It is situated in a depression in the middle of the Bari Doab occupying an area of 11,500 hectares with a population of 10, 11,327 (in 2001). The population of a town is an important indicator of its dynamism and the study of the population and growth of Amritsar city indicates that it has grown over a period of time.



It was being served by a Class I Municipality since 1868 which was converted into Municipal Corporation in 1977. Established in 1577, the development of Amritsar is now well identified through its two parts i.e. walled city and the peripheral city which developed as a manifestation of various ups and downs experienced during the long history of more than 400 years.

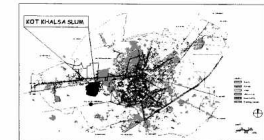
According to Sandhu (2006), the Municipal Corporation has been spending a sizeable amount of money on slum improvement but when we analyse it in relation to the total development budget of the Corporation then it constitutes merely 1 to 8 percent, but one need to mention here that the slum population constitutes one fifth of the total population in the city. In 1975, the Municipal Committee of Amritsar identified a few slums within the city on the basis of The Punjab Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1961. But in 1976, The Town and Country Planning Department, Government of Punjab, also conducted a study on slum dwellers in Amritsar city. According to this study, there were 32,632 slum dwellers living in 19 localities. In the 1981-82 survey the Corporation identified 1, 00,069 persons as slum dwellers living in 52 localities in the city. Thus figure to more than a three-fold increase in the number of slum dwellers. Now according to census 2001, there are 2, 00,000 slum dwellers living in 63 notified slums of the city.

The Amritsar Municipal Committee hardly did anything to ameliorate the living conditions of slum dwellers till 1976. In 1976 the Municipal Corporation started implementing the Environmental Improvement Programme. According to the municipal records, under this programme, the Corporation has partially improved about 80 per cent of the notified slums in the city. Most of the slums have been provided with the basic essential services of water supply and sewerage, street pavement, surface drains and street lights (Sandhu, 2006).

Selected Slum of the City

The study has been conducted in one of the notified slum of Amritsar, named "Kot Khalsa" in which the primary field work was conducted to know the inequality within its dwellers.

Map 02: Location of KOT KHALSA Slum in Amritsar City



Source: Map based on Google Images and Primary Survey, (2011)

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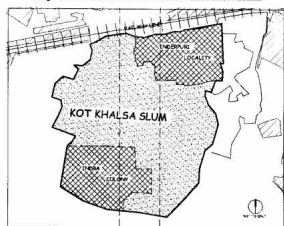
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Kot Khalsa: An Introduction

"Inder Puri and Indra Colony" are the main slum localities of Kot Khalsa which are investigated for the collection of primary data. Before its inclusion into the Municipal Corporation, Kot Khalsa was a small village towards the West of Amritsar. The village was mainly inhabited by Jat Sikhs and Mazhabi Sikhs but after its inclusion in the corporation, it has grown numerically and now hosts people from other communities also. New residents from the adjacent areas as well as from the remote areas have come and settled here to earn their livelihood.

It is approximately 6 kilometers from the city centre. Towards the South, it is only 0.5 kilometers from the Amritsar Attari G.T. Road and bounded by Guru Nanak Pura in the East, and by Indra Colony in the other adjacent colony in the West. Towards the North, there is the railway line and towards the South there are the agricultural fields. The streets of the area are brick-paved but in a bad condition due to installation of sewerage, after which they were not re-laid properly. Even the boundary road (Phaimi) in the southern part of the slum is unpaved and this creates problems during the rainy season. During monsoons, rain water not only enters into the houses but gets accumulated on the low lying vacant plots thus becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes. The houses in the slum are mostly semi-pucca. The numbers of pucca houses in the slum are very low. The streets too do not exhibit any particular pattern and in addition to the above the sanitation is very poor.

Map 03: Localities within the KOT KHALSA Slum.

Source Map based on Google Images and Primary Survey (2011)

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Methodology

The research methodology in the present paper is a combined form of theoretical and empirical methods. At the first stage, we probed into the sociological and demographic literature related to poverty and inequality so as to develop empirical enquiries to collect relevant data. In the theoretical part, various sociological theories have been used. Subsequently, the research was followed by canvassing one hundred and twenty interview schedules. 60 samples/respondents were chosen from Indra Colony and an equal number of samples/respondents were chosen from Inder Puri, another locality of same slum. Direct interview schedules were canvassed by the researcher in May, 2011.

As qualitative research is becoming increasingly popular in social sciences, interviews with some of the respondents were used to elicit views.

Findings

It is a well known fact that socio-economic situation of a person plays a significant role in the formation of his/her attitude and values. So, in order to have deeper insight into the problem, an effort has been made to understand the social characteristics of the respondents. Social characteristics studied here for the purpose include age, sex, caste, marital status, religion, education, family type and family size, etc.

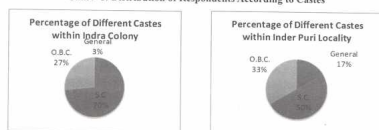
In a majority of the cases the opinion has been given by the head of the household which invariably are males, and they constituted about 94.2 percent. Analysis of data reveals that an overwhelming majority i.e. 90 percent respondents are married. The remaining 5 percent are divorcees or widows and 5 percent are unmarried. Inder Puri has 86.7 percent married respondents and in Indra Colony 93.3 percent respondents are married. Inder Puri has doubled the percentage of divorcees/widows than what Indra Colony has, which is 6.3 percent for the former and 3.3 percent for the latter.

Caste and Religion

Caste is an important variable to understand the social system of any society in the Indian sub-continent. Risley defines caste as "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine professing to follow the name, professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give as forming a single homogeneous community" (Kerkar, 1979).

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Chart- 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Castes

Data reveals, that 60 percent respondents belong to scheduled castes (i.e. Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Balmikis, Churas, Bhangi, etc) and 30 percent are Other Backward Castes (Parajaput, Ramgarhias etc) and the remaining 10 percent of respondents come under the General category (Jatts, Aroras etc). A majority of the respondents (90 percent) come from the lower strata of society. Chart-1 shows that Indra Colony is mainly inhabited by Scheduled Castes (70 percent) and Other Backward Castes (26.7 percent) with only 3.3 percent respondents from the General category. But in Inder Puri 50 percent of the respondents belong to Scheduled castes and 33.3 and 16.7 percent respondents are from Other Backward classes and General Castes respectively.

Religion has existed throughout the history of human society. It is a part of one's culture and an important aspect of human social life which shapes human behavior and social morality.



Mainly respondents belong to three religious categories i.e. Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. A majority of respondents (68.3 percent) are Sikh and the remaining 30 and 1.7 percent are the followers of Hinduism and Islam respectively. Chart-2 indicates that the majority of people (90 percent) of Indra Colony are practitioners of Sikhism and only 10 percent adhere to Hinduism. Hardly any house of the Muslims is found in this locality. On the other hand, 50 percent respondents from Inder Puri are Hindus and 46.7 percent respondents are Sikh while the remaining 3.3 percent are Muslims.

Indra Colony is mainly inhabited by scheduled castes and a majority of them belong to the Sikh

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religion. It is generally believed that the ranking of caste is made on local basis, and the locally dominant caste exercises more authority in this respect. Indra Colony, where a majority of scheduled caste Sikh population lives, is socially and politically more united and also works more when seen in comparison to for their welfare, and Inder Puri, where people belong to a variety of castes, communities and religion do not assemble at a single platform.

Education

Education is an essential component of human resource development and an indispensable tool for learning and communication. It is a precondition for the growth of an individual as well as for a nation. However, in the 21st century, overcoming the problem of illiteracy is one of the most pressing challenges facing the world because nearly one third of the world's population still cannot read or write. According to a UNESCO report, 98 percent of illiterate people live in the Third World. Africa has the highest rate of illiteracy at 54 per cent of the adult population as compared to 36 percent in Asia and 17 percent in Latin America. The majority of adults who are illiterate are women (The Tribune, 5 February, 2008).

Slum dwellers are the least educated amongst all social classes within the city. Analyzing the various levels of education received by the slum dwellers, as stated by the respective head of the households, it was found that 33.3 percent people were illiterate, 35 percent had middle level education and 30 percent had matriculation level education. Only about 1.7 percent attended even senior secondary school. The data indicates inequalities with respect to the gradient of educational qualifications in both the localities. Nearly 42 percent respondents from Inder Puri are illiterate, whereas only 25 percent respondents are illiterate in Indra Colony. Those who have passed matriculation examination numbered around 20 percent in Inder Puri, the corresponding figure for Indra Colony is about 40 percent, which is twice the previous settlement.

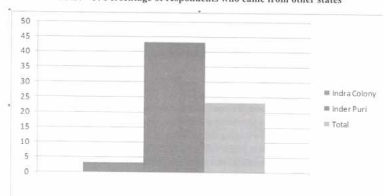
Migration

In India, many people migrate to some richer states from comparatively poorer states in search of greener pastures. A majority of them tend to live in settlements which are at the periphery of the city, or in unhealthy surroundings devoid of the basic amenities of life. It is usually accepted that a majority of slum dwellers are migrants and that they come from far-off places due to the push factors of the native places and the pull factors of the city concerned.

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Chart - 3: Percentage of respondents who came from other states



An immigrant in this study refers to those households whose head of the family was born in a place away from the present residence in the slum or community. The following observations can be drawn from the data. As highlighted in the chart, it appears that 76.7 percent of the respondents migrating to the city are from within the parent state of Punjab; whereas the rest of 23.3 percent are migrants from other states of India. In Indra Colony there is a preponderance of migrants from within Punjab, which is about 96.7 percent of the total respondents. However, in the case of Inder Puri only 56 percent of the respondents are from Punjab, which indicates a heterogeneous social composition of the community living in Inder Puri.

Differences have been observed at the socio-demographic level in both the localities of Kot Khalsa slum on various accounts. It is pertinent to mention here that Indra Colony has a different character in terms of caste, religion and region of origin. The majority of population of this locality belongs to scheduled castes, Mazhabi Sikhs. They are natives of this area and hence enjoy harmonious relations amongst themselves. This is the hallmark of their social position in the local hierarchy. A majority of the respondents from Inder Puri lack social cohesion as they belong to different sub groups within the migrant community. This area has a higher incidence of nuclear families, because they have left behind their families for economic reasons. The education gradient appears to be higher among the people of Indra Colony than those of Inder Puri.

Income and Occupation

The economic status of the respondents play a major role in planning for the future, and it also affects their social status. The household survey data on income is often understated and hence the obtained

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information does not necessarily reflect the actual income of the household (Islam et al, 1996). Alternatively, researchers frequently choose consumption expenditure as proxy immune to weaknesses, as sometimes expenditure met by loans or credit result in inflated expenditure (Karn et al, 2003). In this study, we followed a combined approach. The data on average monthly income and expenditures are collected separately and the real income is considered as the higher of the two. This might have resulted in some positive biases in income calculation, but the minimum percent of households under poverty line could be better ensured.

On the basis of the data, respondents were divided into four income categories, up to Rs. 1500, Rs. 1501 to Rs. 3000, Rs. 3001 to Rs. 4500 and the fourth and the last category included those with monthly households' income of more than Rs. 4500.

The data indicates that the maximum number of households fall within the income bracket of Rs. 1501 to Rs. 3000 a month. It has been stated by 46 percent of the respondents. From the data, it emerges that the income differential among various income brackets in case of Inder Puri is proportionately distributed. However, in the case of Indra Colony, there are larger income differences found among the respondents. The average monthly income of the inhabitants of Indra Colony is higher than that of Inder Puri, which is aptly reflected in usage of bank accounts. About 38.3 percent respondents from Indra colony and 20 percent respondents from Inder Puri have bank accounts.

Table - 1
Distribution of Respondents According to Monthly Income

Income	Indra Colony	Inder Puri	Total
Less than 1500 Rs.	00	05 (8.3)	05 (4.2)
1501-3000 Rs.	30 (50)	26 (43.3)	56 (46.7)
3001-4500 Rs.	06 (10)	13 (21.7)	19 (15.8)
More than 4500 Rs.	24 (40)	16 (26.6)	40 (33.3)
Total	60 (100)	60 (100)	120 (100)

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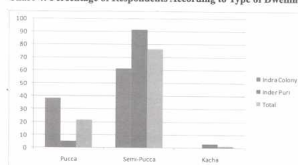
A gainful employment, from which money is received, is called occupation. In Sociology, occupation is defined as an economic role separated from household activity as a result of the growth of markets for labour. Such roles form part of a wider economic division of labour in an industrial enterprise, formal organization, or socio-economic structure.

From the data the following occupational categories can be constructed. Wage earners, (regular workers in construction factory) 66.7 percent; service (clerical or technical job in public offices), 7.5 percent; self-employed or business 23.3 percent and remaining 2.5 percent are doing house work. The majority of respondents in Inder Puri (61.7 percent) and Indra Colony (71.7 percent) work as labourers. This substantiates the fact that education level and location of residence have an influence on the employment type. The major businesses run by slum dwellers here are street vending, hawking, petty shop-keeping, selling handicrafts and auto rickshaw driving. Women are engaged in earning as housemaids (domestic worker). Among the slum dwellers, rag picking is another common occupation among females and children. Here we can see that hardly any of the dwellers are out of work; some of them work within Indra colony. It has more number of labourers and government employees. But the number of self-employed is less as compared to Inder Puri.

Land and Housing

In the case of a city, public land mainly belongs to three governmental authorities; Municipality, State Government and the Central Government. The nature of tenure system in Inder Puri is of mixed type; some have bought the land and built houses by themselves, while others live as tenants. In Indra Colony, mostly people got the land for housing from the Government under various welfare schemes. The tenants probably pay rent to the owner. In this study, 93.3 percent households in Indra colony and 85 percent in Inder Puri own a house while 6.7 percent in Indra Colony and 1.5 percent in Inder Puri have tenants. Housing in slums and squatters has both the problems of extreme congestion and weak structures of houses.

Chart-4: Percentage of Respondents According to Type of Dwelling.



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From the chart it is obvious that majority of the households i.e. 76.7 percent, are semi-pucca, 21.7 percent have pucca houses, 1.7 percent have kacha houses. In Indra Colony 61.7 percent households have semi pucca houses and 38.3 percent have pucca houses but none of them have kacha houses. The comparison of housing conditions shows that, Indra Colony is much better than Inder Puri, as Indra Colony has no kacha house.

In Inder Puri the majority of households (91.7 percent) have semi-pucca house, only 5 per cent houses are pucca and 3.3 percent households have kacha houses.

Indra Colony is a southern part of the Kot Khalsa slum. Most of the people originate from Punjab itself. The housing space has been provided by the government to them. There are about 120 houses. The pathways are paved by bricks. The houses have a simple construction. Many of the houses of this locality have plastered brick walls and plinths of concrete.

Three categories are made according to the size of plot. The first category is of the plot size which is less than 400 sq. ft., the second, 401 sq. ft. to 600 sq. ft. and the third category is of more than 600 sq. ft. size.

Table-2
Distribution of Respondents According to Plot Size

Plot Size	Indra Colony	Inder Puri	Total
Less than 400 sq.ft	02 (3.3)	47 (78.3)	49 (40.8)
401-600 sq.ft.	07 (11.7)	09 (15)	16 (13.3)
More than 600 sq.ft.	51 (85)	04 (6.7)	55 (45.8)
Total	60 (100)	60 (100)	120 (100)

When we consider both the localities on the basis of plot size, we find that a majority of the respondents as a whole (45.8 per cent) have more than 600 sq. ft. plot size. However gross irregularities can be seen in the distribution of plot size within these two localities. The residents of Inder Puri lack affordability of decent housing as a majority of the respondents (78.3 percent) have less than 400 sq. ft. of residential plot as compared to those in Indra Colony where the majority (85 per cent) has more than 600 sq. ft. of plot size. This reflection from the data helps us to analyze how social issues play an important role for negotiating the standard of basic quality of life.

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The dimension of covered area of a house reflects how space is being used for various functions such as cooking, washing, and for other purposes. However, it is found that a single unit is being used for multiple functions. This is obvious from the data as most of the respondents (90 percent) from Inder Puri have less than 300 sq. ft. whereas more than 50 per cent of the residents of Indra Colony have an area falling between 301 sq. ft. and more than 450 sq. ft.

Table-3
Distribution of Respondents According to Covered Area of house

Covered Area of House	Indra Colony	Inder Puri	Total
Less than 300 sq.ft.	29 (48.3)	54 (90)	83 (69.2)
301-450 sq.ft.	16 (26.7)	02 (3.3)	18 (15)
More than 450 sq.ft.	15 (25)	04 (6.7)	19 (15.8)
Total	60 (100)	60 (100)	120 (100)

From the study it emerges that 28. 3 percent of the respondents have only one room, 50 percent have two rooms and 21.7 percent respondents have three or more than three rooms. In Indra Colony a majority of the respondents (53.3 percent) has two rooms and independent courtyards, whereas in Inder Puri the majority of the respondents (46.7 percent) have one room and common courtyards.

Table-4
Distribution of Respondents According to Per Capita Floor Space

Per Capita Floor Space	Inder Puri	Indra Colony	Total
Less than 45 sq.ft.	41 (68.3)	12 (20)	53 (44.2)
46-60 sq.ft.	08 (13.3)	17 (28.3)	25 (20.8)
More than 60 sq.ft.	11 (18.3)	31 (51.7)	42 (35)
Total	60 (100)	60 (100)	120 (100)

(Percentages are given in parentheses)

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Basic Facilities and Utilities

In slums many residents defecate in the open and unhygienic surroundings, as a majority of them lack accessibility to a toilet/bathroom. Hence, they are prone to suffer from gastrointestinal problems. This finding correlates with the situation in others cities, as nearly 60 percent of the people in all cities do not have access to toilet facilities (Renu, 2000). Fear of abuse, rape and molestation force women to move at times in a group. This also increases the probability of communicable infections. Environmental conditions in these settlements are both deplorable and unhygienic, with drains choked on account of uncollected garbage and open sewers becoming main source of disease. Municipal sanitation services do not reach many such localities. Especially in Inder Puri, the waste is dumped in the surrounding open tracts of land or thrown on the wayside. These two large communities do not even have a large toilet complex, tucked away at one end of the locality, as seen in metropolis slums.

As stated above, the residents of Indra Colony have a larger plot size thereby greater floor space for various basic functions; therefore about 63.3 percent of the households have a kitchen, in comparison to just 50 percent of the households in Inder Puri. Similarly, a majority of the respondents (93.3 percent) of Indra Colony have toilet facility in their houses, whereas it is a mere 66.7 per cent in case of Inder Puri. Sewerage connections have improved (with the size of urban centers) in Amritsar city, but the situation is poor in Inder Puri where dry latrines and open defecation are common.

A majority of the respondents have electricity connections in their houses but most of the times electricity is tapped from the neighborhood transmitter poles or overhead wires, but these have been procured illegitimately with the help of the local electricity mafia.

Water Consumption

Almost all households in the slums and on pavements rely on the municipal water supply for all purposes from drinking, bathing kitchen work, and for laundry. The Municipal Corporation is responsible for the delivery of water in Amritsar. Unlike in other civic resident quarters, water tap connections in slums, are generally given to a group of households to be shared in common. Therefore, the set criterion is five households per tap connection. But in reality, the number of households per tap is much higher. It could not be known if the situation was due to residents' own choice or due to the authority's failure to supply taps in adequate numbers. As per the data obtained, Inder Puri locality is not connected to the Municipal Corporation water supply and they use ground water for all purposes. 66.7 percent people own a hand pump and 33.3 percent get water from a common

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hand pump. Whereas, in Indra Colony 75 percent people have municipal taps, 15 percent have a hand pump and 10 percent also have a common tap for water.

The data shows that 65.8 percent respondents have gas connections. 56.7 percent of the respondents from Inder Puri and 75 percent of the respondents from Indra Colony have gas connections. For transportation purposes 61.7 percent of the respondents of Inder Puri have a bicycle, 8.3 percent have a scooter or a motorcycle but the rest 30 percent do not have any mode of transportation. In Indra Colony 55 percent of the respondents have a bicycle, 28.3 percent have a scooter or a motorcycle and just 16.7 percent of the respondents do not have any mode of transportation. The data with regard to classification of occupation reflects that in Indra Colony higher proportions of respondents are engaged in labour and in governmental and semi-governmental institutions as compared to Inder Puri.

From the above figures it emerges that inequalities have been experienced by the majority of the respondents with regard to housing, nature and size of dwelling, basic amenities, especially in the case of Inder Puri in comparison to those living in Indra Colony.

Therefore one can assume that economic prosperity leads to social prosperity and it determines the position of a person in the society. Thus, the economic aspect is an important measuring unit to find out the inequality within a slum.

Political Aspects

Slum dwellers are believed to have little interest in politics and little awareness of the political events (Lewis, 1969). But every slum, whether it is small or big, has an organization. Its basis may be caste, religion or political party. If a caste is numerically preponderant then its members organize themselves in the form of biradari and its leader also acts as the leader of the locality.

Political Awareness

Political participation as well as political awareness is associated with levels of income. Political participation refers to a process by which people voluntarily take part in political activities and affairs. Political parties treat slum dwellers as their vote banks and for their own vested interests have always wanted the problems of slums to persist.

Here, the term 'political awareness' is applied in the sense of knowledge of the respondents about the visits of the political leaders to their locality, about the various office holders from

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the local to the national level and the degree of that interest they have in mass media.

For political socialization, a majority of the residents of these localities form their opinion on the bases of biradari lines which are attuned with organizational goals of any community. In case of Indra colony caste factor plays a decisive role as a majority of the respondents are Mazabi Sikhs. They have links with caste-based associations in the city and at state levels.

Around 49.2 percent of respondents listen to news and read news papers in their leisure time. This figure for Indra Colony is above the half way mark as 61.7 percent follow this trend, whereas for Inder Puri it is a mere 45 percent. It has been observed that there have been occasional visits by the respective M.L.A and M.C. to the Indra Colony where as in Inder Puri residents hardly get any chance to meet higher officials so as to complain about their problems and concerns.

With the above analysis of the data, it can be stated that the political awareness and the involvement of the politicians in the Indra Colony is much higher than in Inder Puri. This may be due to the socio-political unity of the people of Indra Colony where a majority of the people belong to the same caste and religious group.

Summary and Conclusion

The phenomenon of rapid urbanization coupled with industrialization has further aggravated the growth of urban slums. Urban poverty is a significant phenomenon in the world today. The existence of slums is essentially a manifestation of poverty and with economic growth and industrial developments slums will continue grow further. Having migrated to the city in hope of a better livelihood, most end up living in poor, under serviced environments because of skyrocketing prices of land and lack of affordable quality shelters in cities. This situation poses a serious challenge for planning and management of urban areas in the light of liberalization and globalization.

Due to the prevailing market economy and the lack of political will of the governing elite, the poor are excluded from the housing market and from receiving public services like water supply, sanitation and health care. The interplay between market oriented reforms, globalization (or international integration), and technology are likely to play a major role in the unequal growth.

However, increase in the level of inequality is not a story of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, rather it is the rich getting richer faster than the poor (Asian important

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Development Bank, 2007). There can be two ways to improve the situation; first, an important way forward to minimize existing inequalities is to look at the developing countries where growth has not been equal for all and has produced unequal results. And second option is to study the conditions in developed countries and apply relevant measures in our situation. After detailed studies and analyses we must take steps to overcome the pitfalls.

The present study is a micro level study of a particular area of a second biggest city of Punjab. The findings of our study reveal that the slum dwellers are not alike. Slum is not a place or area where all the residents have same economic and social conditions. In fact there are various categories of poor within a slum and there is inequality among them in terms of social, economic and political sense.

Most of the general literature about urban poverty and slums--books, papers and research reports--state that poorer households live in 'slums' or in 'slums and squatter settlements'. These types of studies have shown an inaccurate and an over-simplified picture. Not only do a large number of poorer households live in slums but the very concept of 'slum' is open to question.

Data reveals that the Kot Khalsa slum, its localities i.e. Indra Colony and Inder Puri have lots of inequalities among their dwellers. On comparing these localities on the basis of caste, religion, education, income, housing, its condition, plot size, covered area of the house, per capita floor space of the covered area, number of rooms and other basic facilities, it has been found that the former is better than the latter. Even on the basis of income the former is leading.

When we compared these localities on issues such as political connections and awareness, we found that the respondents of Indra Colony are better aware about the political personalities and actively participate in and interact with the existing political system.

Hence, the study reveals that slum not only exemplify urban poverty but also inequality-differential within the system owing to its socio-economic and political heterogeneity. The paper would be particularly useful for research of practitioners focusing upon micro level studies and interventions in slums.

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