

Characteristics of Slum Population in India

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Abstract

Slum population being a global phenomenon poses several challenges relating to the society, culture, economy, politics and environment. Increasing slum in the developing countries like India is a result of unplanned and haphazard way urbanization. In the last few decades slum population has tremendously grown in most of the major cities of India and has posed serious threat to sustainable urban development. This paper aims at investigating and mapping out the demographic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics of slum population in India with a view to arrive at certain conclusions for formulating viable plans and policies for upgrading slums towards the well-being of the poor slum dwellers. The analysis of this paper is exclusively based on the secondary data collected from various published sources. The findings of the study shows that there is high density of population characterized by low general sex ratio, high child sex ratio, high growth rate of population, large share of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population, low level of literacy, low income with high poverty, high work participation with large share of working population in informal sector of urban economy. The analysis of the paper is supported by the cartographic representation.

Keywords: Slum, urbanization, sustainable, informal sector, urban economy.

Introduction: Slum is a commonly used term for thickly populated urban areas with dilapidated and substandard housing and squalor. Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia defines slum as densely populated area of substandard housing, usually in a city, characterized by unsanitary conditions and social disorganization. Three types of slums have been defined in Census 2011, namely, Notified, Recognized and identified.

- i. All notified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State, Union territories Administration or Local Government under any act including a 'Slum Act' may be considered as Notified slums.
- ii. All areas recognized as 'Slum' by State, Union territories Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act may be considered as Recognized slums.
- iii. A compact area of at least 3000 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. Such areas should be identified personally by the Charge Officer and also inspected by an officer nominated by Directorate of Census Operations. This fact must be duly recorded in the charge register. Such areas may be considered as identified slums.

The slum population in India was counted as 65.49 million during 2011 census spread over 2613 cities/ towns, which was 17.4 per cent of the urban population and 22.4 per cent of the cities/ towns' population reporting slum. Maharashtra accounted first with 22.9 percentage share of total slum population in India followed by Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal with 12%, 11% and 8.9% respectively. Four states/UTs namely Manipur, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep do not report any slum population in 2011. The level of urbanization and the rate of urban expansion may not always be caused by the 'pull' of economic prosperity and opportunity in the cities; it is sometimes caused by the push from the rural areas due to significant changes in the agriculture practices effected by the use of mechanized farming techniques needing relatively lesser

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proportion of labour force thus compelling the surplus labour to seek a living in urban areas. Any pragmatic strategy to prepare developmental plans for the slum area would require in-depth analysis of at least socio-economic conditions of slum dwellers. The socio-economic characteristics of slum dwellers would provide sound foundation for a sustainable development plan; it would educate the general mass and the tax payers about the efficacy of the programs in more transparent way.

Review of Literatures: Several studies have examined various aspects of slums and come out with diverse findings. While some studies have concluded the impact of the government Programmes to be ineffective or moderate in reducing growth of slums, others indicate that socio economic condition of the slums are worse and yet others suggests that the utilization of health services are inefficient. Asker R, Aslam K.S and Akthar M (1992, pp. 56-62) points out that socio economic condition of the migrants in slums of Faisabad city. The study empirically proved that socio economic factors affecting living conditions of rural migrants. Based on NSSO and Census data Chandrasekhar S (2005) gives a picture of difference in the conditions of slums in India and compared the conditions prevailing in the non slum urban, rural areas and the slums. The study found that slums are similar to rural areas in some aspects and dissimilar in some other aspects. Bala and Kumar (2013, p.74) argued that the social interaction of slum dwellers was loosened because their relatives would not visit them due to lack of space. Madhusoodhanan V (2008, pp. 16-62) showed that both the pull and push factors were influenced for the growth of slums. The push factors are family specific and the pull factors consist of employment linked migration, political support and hope of access to better social infrastructure. Victor S. D'Souza (1975, pp.1-12) stated that the urbanization of Scheduled castes in Punjab follows a set pattern; in the rural urban migration, fewer people among the Scheduled castes go to the cities than among the rest of the population and the greater the occupational complexity of the city the lower is the representation of Scheduled caste population.

Objectives: This paper aims at investigating and mapping out the demographic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics of slum population in India and suggests appropriate measures to abridge the demographic, socio-cultural and economic status of the slum dwellers in India

Data Sources and Methodology: The data for this study has been gathered from secondary sources mainly from Census publications, brought out by Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India. These are:

- Primary Census Abstract Data Highlights – 2011 (India & States/ UTs).
- Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Caste (SC) – 2011 (India & States/ UTs- District level).
- Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Tribes (ST) – 2011 (India & States/ UTs- District level).
- Primary Census Abstract for Slum – 2011 (India & States/ UTs- Town level).

Data obtained from the above sources is processed using following techniques for the analysis purpose:

Literacy Rate: Literacy rate of population is defined as the percentage of literates to the total population age 7 years and above. This is calculated by using following formula:

Literacy Rate = (Number of literates/ Population aged 7 or more years)*100

Sex Ratio: Sex ratio is used to describe the number of females per 1000 of males. It is calculated by using following formula: *Sex Ratio* = (Number of females/ Number of males)*1000, *Child Sex Ratio* = (Number of girls below age 6/ Number of boys below age 6) *1000

Work Participation Rate: (Number of Workers/ Total Population)*100

All the above indicators are calculated separately for rural, slum and urban population. Here urban population means the population living in urban area excluding slum areas.

Analysis:

1. *Literacy:* In a country like India, literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth. In 2011 (Table 1.1) literacy rate in India is found to be 85.43% for urban people, 67.77% for rural people and 77.7% for slum people. These Figures suggest that literacy rate among slum population is higher than that of their rural counterpart this is because higher number of literate person have migrated from rural area to slum in comparison with illiterate person. This also validate the general notion that literate person are more mobile than illiterate persons because of their easier accessibility of the information of the job opportunities available in particular area in comparison to illiterate person.

Table: 1.1: Literacy Rate of Urban, Rural and Slum Population in India:

Category	Urban	Rural	Slum
Male	89.81*	77.15	83.74
Female	80.74	57.93	71.24
Total	85.43	67.77	77.7

Source: Census of India 2011.

*

Percentage to total urban, rural or slum population.

Now, if we consider female literacy of slum population in India then it is lower than that of their male counterpart. The male literacy of slum population is 83.74% while the female literacy is about 71.24% which means in both the cases the slum population falls between urban population and rural population as far as literacy is concerned. Here one thing is worth mentioning that the gap between male and female literacy is highest in rural population while it is lowest in urban population but the gap in slum population is compatible with the urban population which suggest by in large literate women are mobile than the illiterate women. The female literacy rate is worst in rural area because many parents do not allow their female children to go to schools. They get married off at a young age instead. Though child marriage has been lowered to very low levels, it still happens.

Table 1.2 shows the correlation coefficient of literacy rate among urban, rural and slum population in India. Overall in the entire category the correlation coefficient show that there is positive relationship between literacy rates across different states in India which means if the literacy rate is higher in any category in a particular states the it is also higher in other categories.

Table 1.2: Correlation Coefficient between Literacy Rate across Urban, Rural & Slum Population among Different States in India.

Category	Correlation Coefficient Between		
	Urban & Slum	Urban & Rural	Slum & Rural
Total	0.85	0.82	0.65
Male	0.82	0.71	0.55
Female	0.85	0.88	0.70

Source: Census of India 2011

The highest value of correlation coefficient is 0.88 which is between the literacy of urban and rural females that means if the literacy rate of urban female is high then there is 88% probability that literacy rate of rural people would be high. The correlation coefficients between rural area and slum area are comparatively low in almost entire categories that is because of the inter states migration from rural area to slum area for example very large number of rural population and even in some cases urban population though low in number of the economically backward states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar migrated in the city like Mumbai and Delhi and due to scarcity of space forced to live in slum area and hence due to this reason there is not very high positive relationship exist in the category of literacy of slum and rural population in comparison to the others. In the category of slum and rural population the correlation coefficient between male literacy is lower in comparison to that of the female literacy this show that there is higher number of male selective inter-state migration from rural to slum area in comparison to the female counterpart.

Spatial Pattern of Literacy Rate & Male-Female Literacy Gap of Slum Population in India: Figure 1.1 presents state wise literacy rates and gap between male-female literacy rates of slum population in India. Overall it can be said that as far as literacy rate of slum population is concerned the southern and north eastern region of the country have highest literacy rate because these states are able to facilitate the required number of schools and educational

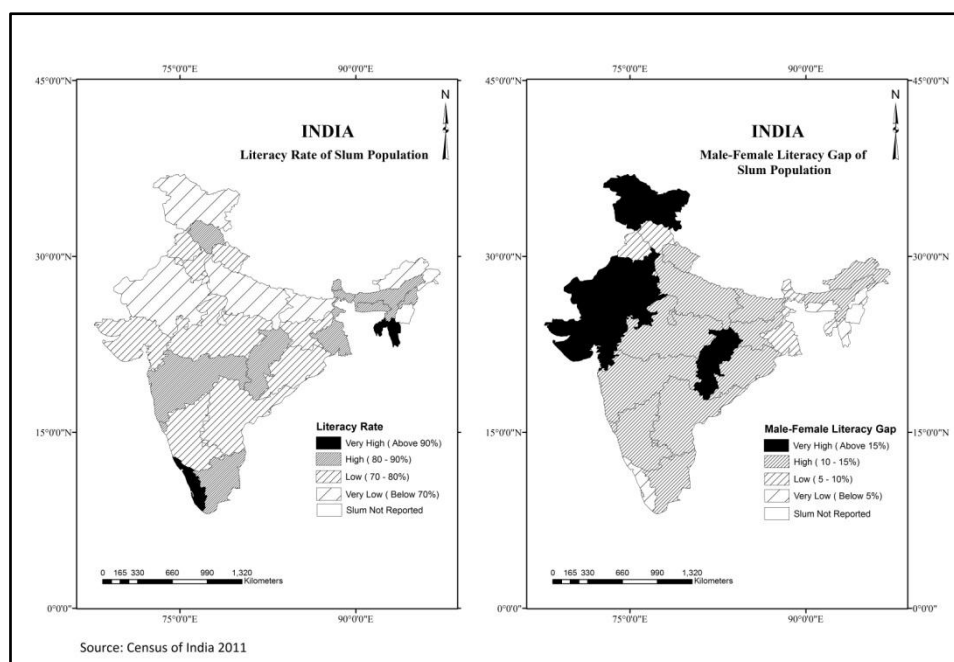


Figure 1.1

centres at least up to the primary level while the northern, north western, central, and northern part of the country have lowest literacy rate is because of the high density and population in these states and the number of schools and educational centres are less. The western and eastern region of the country falls in between them. As far as gap between male-female literacy rate of slum population in India is concerned all most all states have male literacy higher than that of female literacy rate but the gap between male female literacy rates are lower where overall literacy rate is high. For example the state like Mizoram, Kerala, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have very high literacy rate and in these states the gap between male-females literacy rates are low. Similarly the states like Rajasthan, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir and Chandigarh have very low literacy rate and in these sates the gap between male-female literacy is very high. So it can be said the literacy rate of slum population is a bridge between the literacy rate of rural population and literacy rate of urban population. Since the literate people are more mobile than the illiterate people so more literate persons have migrated from rural to urban area and because of unplanned and haphazard way of urbanization these people are forced to live in sub human conditions of slum areas and this resulted into higher rate of literacy in slum areas in comparison to rural areas.

2. *Sex ratio*: Sex Ratio (defined as the number of females per thousand males) is an important social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing equity between males and females in a society. The female population in the India does not hold a sound status in the society except few states like in Kerala and North-Eastern States. Overall India is males dominated society and majority of the women in the rural areas are married before attaining the legal age of 18 years. In the Population Census of 2011 it was revealed that the general sex ratio in India 2011 is 940 and child sex ratio is 918 females per 1000 of males. As far as sex ratio of slum population is concerned it is 928 and child sex ratio is 922. This shows that in general sex ratio slums are more or less similar to urban area while in the case of child sex ratio it is more or less similar to that of rural area.

Table 2.1: General and Child Sex Ratio by Residence in India:

Category	India	Urban Area	Slum Area	Rural Area
General	940	929	928	949
Child	918	902	922	923

Source: Census of India 2011

The low general sex ratio in slum areas are because of the male selective migration in these area because urban areas are considered to be the hubs of economic activities and had strong pull factors for male fraction of the society who brought in female members of their family at a later phase of their lives after solving the problem of space crisis in the urban landscape and crossing the hurdle of job security. This inflow of male selective migrants in slum area has somewhat affected the overall sex ratio in the city. Since these people are mainly migrated from the rural areas so their behaviour towards girls child remains more or less similar to that of rural areas that is why the child sex ration in the slum areas is more or less similar to that of the rural areas. The general sex ratio in the rural area is quit high in compare to the urban and slum areas does not means the more equity is granted to the rural women in comparison to the urban and slum women but it is due to the illiteracy prevailing in the rural areas, there is a preference for male children in every family and the women are forced to conceive until a male child is born. Similar is the case of child sex ratio the comparatively higher child sex ratio in the slum and rural area is not because there is less biasness towards girl child in these areas but this is because the sex selective abortion in criminal offence in India and the people living in the slum and rural areas are less educated and economically weaker section of the society so they do not have access to illegal sex selective abortion while the economically and educationally well of urban people have approach for sex selective abortion that is why the sex selective abortion is high among urban people which resulted into low child sex ration in urban areas as compare to the slum and rural area.

Spatial Pattern of Sex Ratio & Child Sex Ratio of Slum Population in India: Figure.2.1 shows the Spatial Pattern of Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio of Slum Population in India and it reveals that the southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have higher sex ration in slum population this is because the southern States of India have made progress in the field of human development especially in health and education. Kerala is one of the major Indian States which holds a place of dominance in providing sound health care infrastructure to its population including slum population.

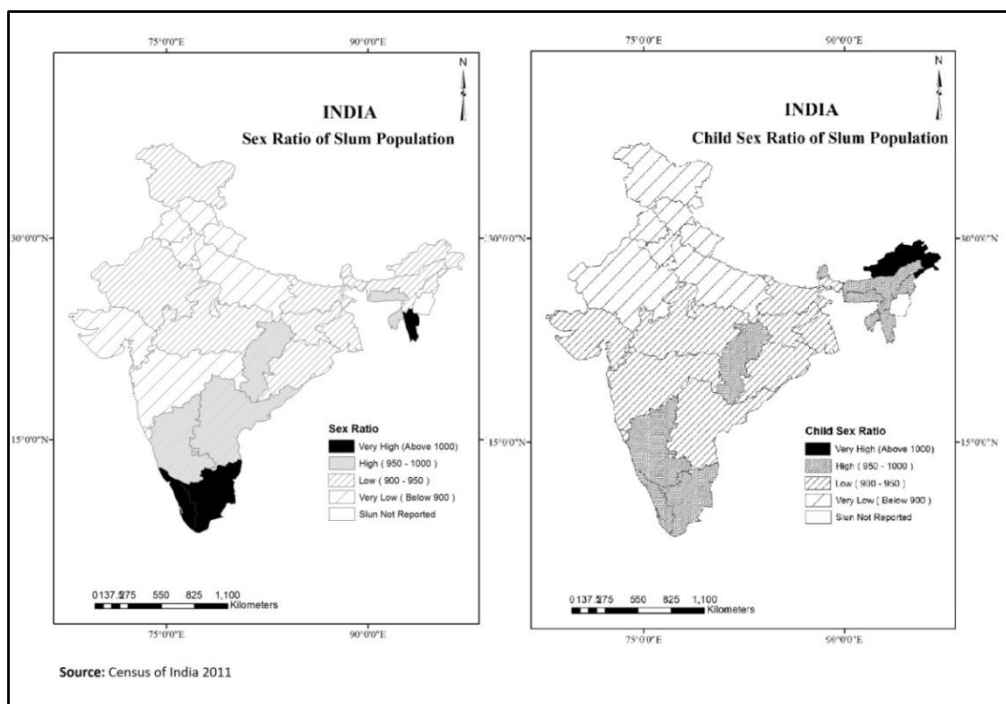


Figure 2.1

The Northern and North Western states like Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Delhi and Chandigarh of the country accounted lowest sex among slum dwellers this is because these state follow conservative and traditional type of society. The male children are still considered to be assets while the female children are liabilities. Incidentally villainous Khaf Panchayat is very prominent in these states. The North Eastern states of the country

like Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh etc. fall in the category of high sex ratio this is because these states are dominated by scheduled tribe population where equal status has been granted to the women. Overall it can be said that the sex ration in the Indian state is linked with the status of female literacy, age of marriage, incidences of female foeticide and infanticide as well as female work participation rate.

3. *Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe Population*: Table 3.1 shows the distribution of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population in India and it is very clear from the table that scheduled castes population have share of 20.39% in slum areas whereas its share in urban and rural area is 10.97% and 18.45% respectively. One of the significant features of the distribution of the Scheduled castes population in India is that as compared to the total population it is very much under-represented in the urban areas and over-represented in slum areas.

Table 3.1: Pattern of Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe Population in India:

Population Share*	Urban Population	Slum Population	Rural Population	Total Population
Scheduled Caste	10.97	20.39	18.45	16.63
Scheduled Tribes	2.65	3.38	11.28	8.63

Source: Census of India 2011.

*In terms of total population of respective residence.

The low share of Scheduled castes population in the urban areas and very high share in slum area is due to the notion of "push" factor which is supposed to be the cause of the rural to urban migration in India. It is believed that in advanced countries with increasing economic opportunities due to industrialization, people are pulled from the rural areas to the cities. On the other hand, in developing countries such as India, because of pressure of population on land and growing unemployment, underemployment and poverty, people are pushed from the rural areas to the cities even though the cities do not provide adequate employment opportunities. Thus, rural to urban migration in advanced countries is attributed to pull factors and in India to push factors and this is why the Scheduled castes population which is on the lowest rungs of socio-economic hierarchy in the rural areas, is pushed hardest and have been overrepresented in the slum areas relative to the total population. The push factor is hardest for the scheduled castes population because most of them do not have agricultural land and are mainly agricultural labour and due to the increasingly use of technology in agriculture the they are becoming more and more unemployed and have no option other than to migrate into slum areas for the search of the employment.

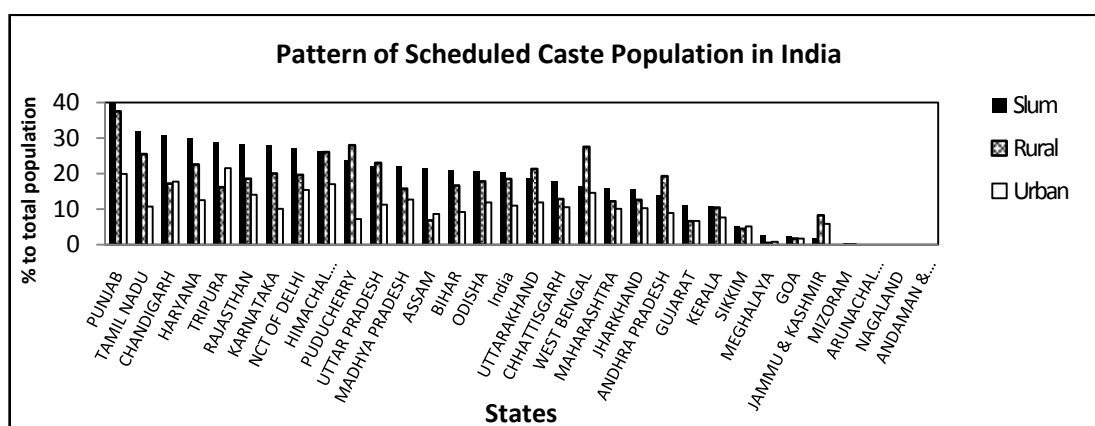


Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1 represents the share of scheduled caste population across different states/ UT in India. The graph shows that in the majority of the states/UT except few like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu Kashmir, and Uttarakhand have higher share of scheduled casted population in slum areas in comparison to the rural and urban areas. The states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh and Haryana have more than 30% share of scheduled caste population in the slum areas. The four states/UT namely Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Andaman & Nicobar Islands do not share

scheduled caste population neither in slum nor in other areas. The states like Sikkim, Meghalaya, Goa and Jammu & Kashmir have less than 10% share of scheduled caste population in slum areas. The above mentioned graph also shows that the states which have higher share of scheduled castes population in rural areas also have higher share of scheduled castes population in slum areas. That means the intra state migrations from the rural to slum areas are more prominent. The least represented people in the urban and slum areas are the scheduled tribes. The table 3.1 shows that their representation in urban and slum areas are merely 2.65% and 3.38% respectively while its share in rural areas is 11.28% this signify that the majority of the scheduled tribe population are still living in rural areas.

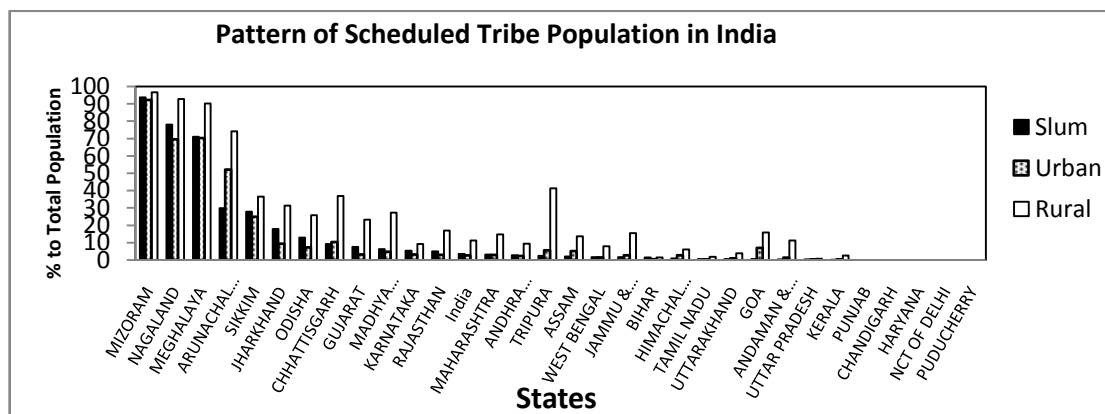


Figure 3.2

Figure 3.2 represents the state wise distribution of scheduled tribe population in India. It is clear from the chart that the concentration of scheduled tribe population in slum areas is mainly in north eastern states because in these states the share of scheduled tribe population is very high. Apart of North Eastern three States namely Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh have significant share of scheduled tribe population in urban and slum areas and also these are the states which have higher share of Scheduled Tribe population. So we can say that the majority scheduled Tribe populations are still living in rural areas and their share in total population is high in slum and urban areas only in those states which have higher share of scheduled tribe population.

4-Work Participation Rate and Type of Workers: Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes a. effective supervision and direction of work; b. part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity; and c. cultivation or milk production even solely for domestic consumption. Accordingly, as per Census of India, all persons engaged in 'work' defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit are workers.

Table: 4.1 - Work Participation Rate of Urban, Rural and Slum Population in India.

Work Participation Rate								
Urban Population			Rural Population			Slum Population		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
35.08	53.65	15.10	41.83	53.03	30.03	36.40	54.33	17.08

Source: Census of India.

Table 4.1 shows the work participation rate of rural, urban and slum population in India. The work participation rate for total and female category is high in among rural population while in the category of male it is high among slum population. The higher female work participation rate in rural areas in comparison to slum and urban areas is due to the following reasons: (a) Most agricultural operations are simple and do not require any special training or skill; (b) female employment in agriculture is of seasonal nature and does not require being away from home for long periods; (c) the wages paid for female labour in agriculture being generally less than wages paid for male labour, it pays to employ female labour for operations in which males do not enjoy any particular advantage.

Spatial Pattern of Work Participation Rate of Slum Population in India: Figure 4.1 shows the work participation rates of the slum population in the states and union territories in 2011. It may be seen from the map that work participation rate is the highest in Sikkim followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Mizoram (all above 40 percent). Almost all states of north and north-eastern regions except Assam, Mizoram, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, the work participation rates of is found to be below 35 percent. This is mainly due to the agrarian type of economy existing in these states and agricultural activities are mainly concentrated into the rural areas. Industrialization in these states are still very low which is the main source of employment in urban and slum areas and hence the work participation rate in the above mentioned states are very low.

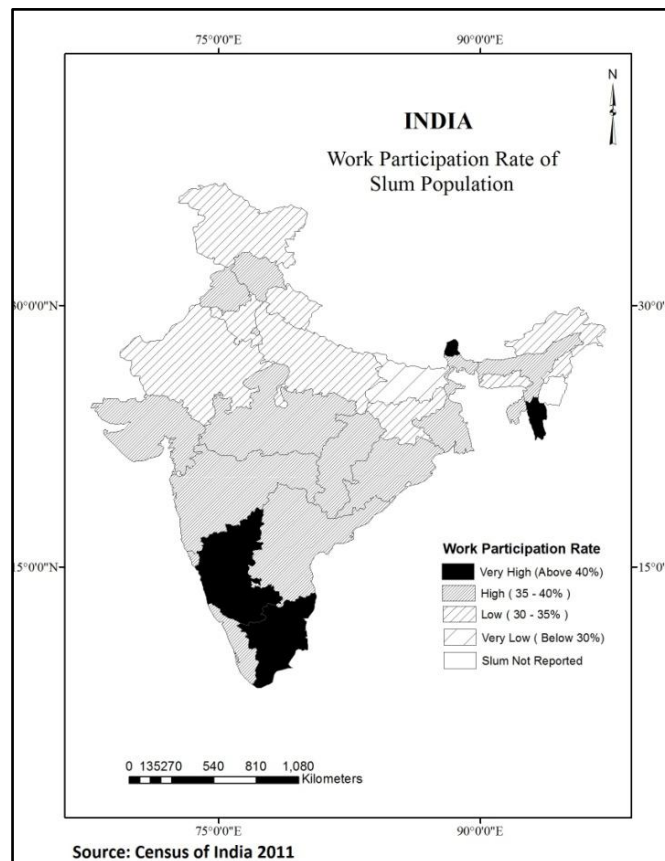


Figure 4.1

All the southern, Central, Western and Eastern states show more than 35 percent of work participation rates in slum areas in 2011. All these states are more urbanized and industries than the northern and north eastern states and the secondary and tertiary type of economic activities are more prevalent in these states and hence the demand of the labour in these sector is very high. Due to the above mentioned demand of labour the immigration is more from rural to urban areas in these states and due to the lack of space the migrants are forced to live in subhuman conditions in slum areas. So the work participation rate in these states is higher than that of north and north eastern states of India.

Conclusions and Suggestions: From the above analysis it can be said the literacy rate of slum population is a bridge between the literacy rate of rural population and literacy rate of urban population. Since the literate people are more mobile than the illiterate people so higher number of literate persons have migrated from rural to urban area and because of unplanned and haphazard way of urbanization these people are forced to live in sub human conditions of slum areas and this resulted into higher rate of literacy in slum areas in comparison to rural areas. The sex ratio of slums is more or less similar to urban area while in the case of child sex ratio it is more or less similar to that of rural area. because these people are mainly migrated from the rural areas so their behaviour towards girls child remains more or less similar to that of rural areas that is why the child sex ration in the slum

areas is more or less similar to that of the rural areas. The above study also observes very high state wise variation in sex ratio and literacy rate. The performances of southern states are best while that of north and north western states are worst. One of the significant features of the distribution of the Scheduled castes population in India is that as compared to the total population it is very much under-represented in the urban areas and over-represented in slum areas. Majority of the scheduled Tribe populations are still living in rural areas and their share in total population is high in slum and urban areas only in those states which have higher share of scheduled tribe population. The characteristics of Work Participation Rate and type of workers of slum population more or less similar to the urban population in comparison to the rural population because the economic activities in slum areas more or less similar to that of urban areas. Overall it can be said that the social characteristics of slum population is more similar to the rural population while economic characteristics of slum population is more similar to the urban population.

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