



A Study On Social Dimensions Of Resettlement On Urban Poor In Chennai, Tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT

Urbanisation has resulted, among other things, in the large-scale prevalence of slums, which are crowded habitations of urban poor, with a glaring lack of basic amenities. Affordable housing with essential amenities is one of the important Sustainable Development Goals, and it is imperative to resettle the urban poor from slums in order to achieve this goal. The Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956 defines slum clearance as “the clearance of any slum area by the demolition and removal of buildings therefrom.” In Tamil Nadu resettlement works are undertaken by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board, which has constructed over 1.7 lakh storied tenements constructed for the resettlement of urban poor. Post resettlement in a new location, there are several economic and physical impacts on the resettled poor, but there are also several often-intangible social losses. This study aims at identifying the important factors underlying the social dimensions of resettlement of urban poor, and estimating their impact on their psyche and lives post relocation. A convenience sample of 112 residents resettled to a multi-storeyed tenement in Chennai were randomly selected as the sample for study and descriptive research design was used to gather primary data for analysis. Percentage analysis, mean scores and anova were used to analyse the results and arrive at conclusions about the impact of the factors that contribute to the shock of resettlement, and cause stress and trauma to the resettled people.

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations statistics division assessments, 55% of the world’s population currently resides in urban areas, and it will touch 70% by 2050. In 2020, a whopping 1.1 billion urban poor lived in slums, with this number growing at over 180,000 per day across the world. 2011 Slum Census report estimated that 28% of India’s urban poor live in slums, whereas by 2022 some estimates put this figure at 41%. Tamil Nadu is the most urbanized state in India and it also has the largest number of towns reporting slum population in India. Over 20% of Tamil Nadu’s population is estimated to be living in slums. The Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1971 (Tamil Nadu Act 11 of 1971) envisages improvement in slum areas by providing the requisite amenities and access to affordable housing for urban poor, and clearing out the slums where in situ improvement and development are not possible.

The Revenue Department clears out the residents from slums in objectionable government land where in situ development is not possible, and they are relocated to multi-storeyed tenements constructed by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board. Over 4.40 lakh tenements or houses were constructed or reconstructed by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in urban areas of Tamil Nadu. Currently, it is maintaining 1,73,607 multi-storeyed tenements including 1,15,500 tenements in Chennai. Where in situ rehabilitation is not possible, the urban poor are resettled in a new location, which impacts their livelihood and income directly, and they are also impacted by a multitude of social factors. This study was undertaken to identify the factors that contribute to these social aspects of relocation and their impact on the resettled urban poor. The following losses were identified as the social dimensions of resettlement – loss of social circle and network, loss of common land, loss of cultural sites and buildings, and loss of routine and rituals.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Resettlement of urban poor to a new location brings with it a lot of stress and trauma to the urban poor, and in addition to the tangible losses such as physical assets and jobs, there are several impactful social and cultural losses as well that contribute to making their transition a challenging process. It is important to understand these social dimensions of resettlement so that the process is seen as more than a mere logistical exercise and goes deeper into ensuring the social welfare and wellbeing of the resettled urban poor. When relocating to a new place, the urban poor lose their network and connection to the larger community where they were previously located, and they also lose public buildings, common areas, places of worship and their very lifestyle including rituals and routines. They lose their friends in schools, neighborhood and workplaces and are shifted to a new place without any strong roots or identity to help them contribute to the society and develop a sense of belonging. Understanding these factors is imperative to designing optimal policy measures that address these aspects of resettlement, and make the transition as smooth as possible for the urban poor.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are

- To identify the factors signifying the social dimensions of relocation in resettled urban poor
- To study the impact of such factors on the resettled urban poor
- To identify the demographic profile of resettled urban poor
- To offer suitable policy suggestions for improving the welfare of resettled urban poor

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In a largely urbanized state like Tamil Nadu, resettlement processes need to be nuanced with an understanding of the social and cultural factors that also contribute to the plight of the resettled urban poor. It is imperative that the transition is made as effortless as possible and the concerns are addressed at every level including the social aspects, to facilitate integration into the larger society of the new locality as productive individuals. This study aims to provide objective insight backed by data so as to facilitate informed decision making when it comes to policy decisions that impact the resettlement of urban poor from slums.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was taken up in one of the largest tenements of resettled urban poor in Chennai. A convenience sample of 112 residents was selected and they were questioned to gather primary data. The scope was limited to the perceptions regarding factors that underpin the social dimensions of resettlement, and how these factors impacted their lives post resettlement. The factors were arrived at after observation and open-ended discussions with residents, and the impact of these factors was assessed through questionnaire. The study can be a useful tool in policy making in the field of resettlement of urban poor.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A sample of 112 residents who were resettled from various areas of Chennai were studied. Responder bias towards questions cannot be ruled out. Respondents are not very experienced in articulating their intangible losses and only those factors that were expressed could be captured for study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used with a questionnaire used to identify the factors representing the social dimensions of resettlement and their impact on the resettled urban poor. Open ended questions were used to gather more insight into the reasonings for the choices exerted by the individuals.

Sampling Techniques

A sampling unit is taken as an individual who is a resident of one of the resettled tenements constructed by Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in Chennai.

Sampling Size

112 individuals residing in a large multi block, multistory tenement of resettled urban poor, were used as the sample for this study.

Sampling Type

Convenience sampling was adopted for this research. It is a non-probabilistic sampling referring to a sample selected on the basis on convenience.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through discussions to identify the factors representing the social aspects of resettlement and further interviewing the tenement dwellers with a questionnaire schedule regarding the perceived impact of each factor in their lives post relocation. Secondary data was collected using Government policy documents, journals, magazines, newspapers, the internet etc.

Sampling Framework

Tools used for the study	Attributes of the study
Percentage analysis	Demographic profile of the respondents
Mean score value and paired test	Loss of social circle Loss of cultural sites Loss of routine and rituals Loss of common land
One way anova	Loss of social circle, cultural sites, routine and common land on the resettled urban poor

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-35	47	41.96
	36-50	49	43.75
	51-70	16	14.29
	Total	112	100
Marital Status	Single	34	30.36
	Married	78	69.64
	Total	112	100
Education	Below 8 th	38	33.93
	8 th to 12 th Grade	61	54.46
	College Degree	13	11.60
	Total	112	100
Income Level	0-20000	95	84.82
	20000-40000	17	15.18
	40000 and above	0	0
	Total	112	100

Interpretation

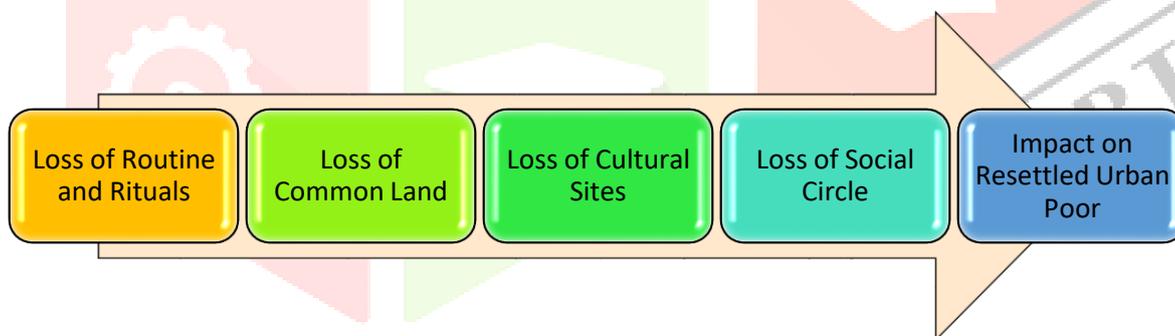
The respondents are primarily in their earning years and there is about a 50-50 split in terms of gender. Most are married and the single persons include widowed people, divorced people and unmarried individuals. Education of older respondents especially is limited to primary school, whereas the younger generation is more interested in obtaining degrees. All the children are enrolled in schools and scholarship for higher education is given to tenement residents. Women headed families, elderly people, differently abled people and destitute widows are also extended all the government schemes they are otherwise eligible for. All residents have aadhaar and ration cards. Their income levels are below 20,000 per month for the most part, and between 20 and 40,000 for about 15% of respondents. They are primarily unskilled labourers, domestic workers, petty traders, street hawkers, and so on. Various skilling and training courses are underway in the tenements regularly. The respondents are aspirational and wish for a brighter future for their young generations.

Table 2: Mean scores related to factors affecting social dimensions of resettlement

Sl No	Factor	Strongly Affected	Affected	Neutral	Not Affected	Strongly Unaffected	Mean
1	Social Circle	32	43	33	4	0	3.92
2	Cultural Sites	21	38	41	12	0	3.61
3	Routine	0	6	20	64	22	2.10
4	Common land	0	15	69	28	0	2.88

Interpretation

Resettlement has brought with it a host of tangible and intangible social and cultural losses. Loss of social circle is one of the most damaging losses for the resettled poor. They are taken away from the locality where they had grown roots, and they lose their networks, social circle, friends and support system. This includes the informal placement networks of women, school friends, local baby sitting and other social support arrangements and friendships. This makes the resettled urban poor feel lost and their sense of identity takes a hit. This also has an economic impact as they don't have connections to give them recommendations for jobs or gigs. This loss is identified as the most major impact on urban poor, with a mean score of 3.92. Relocation also results in loss of cultural sites including burial grounds, places of worship, and so on. This causes a deep seated sense of loss and it results in some resentment and affects the transition process. Loss of common land and public buildings is another factor that affects the psyche of resettled urban poor. This includes community halls and other structures in the slum as well as common land in their neighbourhood which acted as informal spots for social gatherings. Resettlement also causes a loss of routine, rituals and a familiar lifestyle. This change is scary, especially for older people and results in a sense of loss of security. They feel uprooted and feel like they don't have a comforting and familiar routine to fall back on, and feel like they need to start from scratch.



This shows that for the resident, loss of social network has the most impact, followed by loss of cultural sites, loss of common land and finally loss of routine. In order to mitigate these losses, conscious efforts must be undertaken to provide common land, common structures, connections with the larger community of the new area, and handholding till they are established in their new areas. Counseling services must be extended to those most affected by the move.

Analysis of Variance

One way anova of perceived impact on resettled urban poor's psyche on the following factors – loss of social circle, loss of cultural sites, loss of routine and loss of common land – is given below.

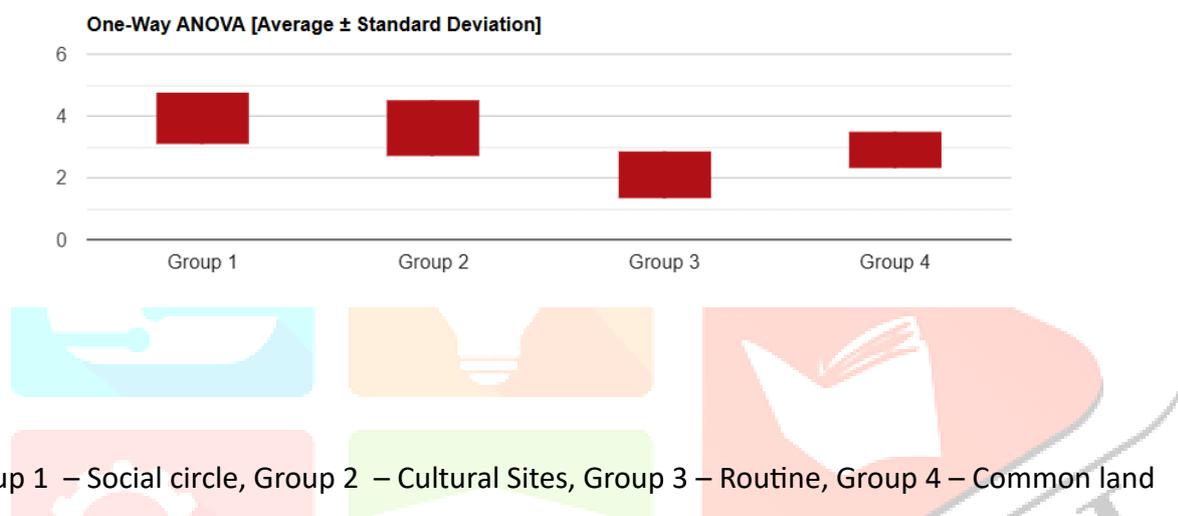
F-statistic value = 118.25533

P-value = 0

Table 3: Analysis of Variance – One way Anova

Factors	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error
Social Circle loss	112	3.9196	0.8504	0.0804
Cultural Sites loss	112	3.6071	0.9139	0.0864
Routine loss	112	2.0893	0.7659	0.0724
Common Land loss	112	2.8839	0.6114	0.0578

ANOVA Summary					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Stat	P-Value
	DF	SS	MS		
Between Groups	3	223.3967	74.4656	118.2553	0
Within Groups	444	279.5875	0.6297		
Total:	447	502.9842			



Tukey HSD / Tukey Kramer

Pair	Difference	SE	Q	Lower CI	Upper CI	Critical Mean	p-value	Group	x2	x3	x4
x1-x2	0.3125	0.07498	4.1676	0.03904	0.586	0.2735	0.01771	x1	0.31	1.83	1.04
x1-x3	1.8304	0.07498	24.4105	1.5569	2.1038	0.2735	1.251e-10	x2	0	1.52	0.72
x1-x4	1.0357	0.07498	13.8127	0.7623	1.3092	0.2735	1.252e-10	x3	1.52	0	0.79
x2-x3	1.5179	0.07498	20.2428	1.2444	1.7913	0.2735	1.251e-10				
x2-x4	0.7232	0.07498	9.6451	0.4498	0.9967	0.2735	3.043e-10				
x3-x4	0.7946	0.07498	10.5977	0.5212	1.0681	0.2735	1.274e-10				

Interpretation

This one way anova calculation was done to find out the effect of the following four social factors on the resettled urban poor – Group 1 – Social circle, Group 2 – Cultural Sites, Group 3 – Routine, Group 4 – Common land

One Way ANOVA test, using F distribution $df(3,444)$ (right tailed)

1. H0 hypothesis - Since $p\text{-value} < \alpha$, H0 is rejected. Some of the groups' averages consider to be not equal. In other words, the difference between the sample averages of some groups is big enough to be statistically significant.

2. P-value - p-value equals 0, $[p(x \leq F) = 1]$. It means that the chance of type1 error (rejecting a correct H0) is small: 0 (0%). The smaller the p-value the stronger it support H1
3. The test statistic F equals 118.26, which is not in the 95% region of acceptance: $[0 : 2.625]$
4. Effect size - The observed effect size f is large (0.89). That indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the averages is large. The η^2 equals 0.44. It means that the group explains 44.4% of the variance from the average
5. Tukey HSD / Tukey Kramer - The means of the following pairs are significantly different: x1-x2, x1-x3, x1-x4, x2-x3, x2-x4, x3-x4.

SCHEMES

Under the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board, resettlement involves in situ rehabilitation into multistoreyed tenements in case of unobjectionable government lands, and relocation into tenements located farther off, in case of slums located in objectionable government land like watercourse areas. These relocated tenements are developed along the lines of integrated townships with all amenities including roads, electricity, water, lift, ramps, community halls, and so on. Extensive livelihood training and skilling programs are organized in each tenement. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana scheme operates in two modes with beneficiary contribution - Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) scheme for in situ construction of tenements in slums, with 1.5 lakh by Government of India and 7 lakhs by Government of Tamil Nadu given as grant to each beneficiary; and Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) of houses with Government grant of 2.1 lakh for construction of houses. Reconstruction of dilapidated tenements and maintenance of through schemes such as Nam Kudiyruppu Nam Poruppu is also undertaken by TNUHDB. World Bank and Asian Development Bank are also providing financial assistance for construction of affordable housing for urban poor. Community Development Activities in tenements is undertaken in partnership with TN Skill Development Corporation to impart training in driving, sewing, IT, etc. Through Tamil Nadu Urban Livelihood Mission, skilling is imparted to selected youth from the tenements via empaneled institutions. For participative development of tenements with relocated communities, 6 social work institutions such as Madras Christian College, Madras School of Social Work, etc., have entered into MoU with TNUHDB so far. Higher education scholarship of 30,000 per head is given to poor students living in the tenements by TNUHDB. Camps for various Government schemes, awareness campaigns, medical camps, sports training and various community engagement activities are undertaken in each of the resettlement locations.

FINDINGS

1. The new resettled locations are often far off from their earlier dwellings.
2. Resident associations formed in the tenements are active, but the participation of the tenement population is very limited. Only the leaders meet and a lot of their communiques are not given much attention.
3. The unit of identity in tenements is the block, and not the tenements as a whole. There is not much sense of inter block camaraderie.
4. People are able to freely express their opinions and experiences on loss of livelihood or income. However, they are unable to express their intangible losses with ease. It is unclear whether they are even completely aware of their own losses.
5. There is not much sense of ownership among the tenements for the common areas and public property within the tenements. There is an obvious lack of cleanliness and barely any participation in the beautification or upkeep of the tenements. Repairs are considered to be a Government responsibility.

6. There are a host of schemes and training programs being conducted in the tenements. There is some awareness about these schemes and programs, however, it is limited and not universal.
7. People are nostalgic about the place they left behind, even as they appreciate of better amenities such as private toilets in each household, and differently abled friendly construction.
8. The residents are vocal about the infrastructural changes needed in the tenements. They are resilient and aspirational.
9. Resettlement itself was not wholly participative, and the level of information and participation of the residents in shifting was different from location to location.
10. There are NGOs present and working with Government officials to continually engage with the community and contribute to their upliftment, even years after the resettlement.

SUGGESTIONS

Resettlement, especially when it involves relocation, must be viewed as a long term and holistic process that goes beyond the construction of tenements and physical shifting of people. A participative, consultative approach is a must especially in involuntary relocation, to understand the needs of the populace being shifted, their unique concerns and needs. The social dimensions of resettlement need to be understood and mitigated to the maximum possible extent through extensive and long-term community engagement activities. There should be counseling services provided to the resettled poor free of cost, in order to help them cope with the potential stress and trauma caused by resettlement. In order to facilitate building fresh social networks and overcome the stigma often associated with resettlement, the neighboring larger community must be engaged meaningfully. There must be inter and intra block ice breaking and networking sessions, and constant community engagements within the tenements must be fostered. Highly vulnerable groups like the differently abled, destitute widows, single women parents and elderly must be given adequate support systems including support in childcare and health care to make up for the lost social circles. Communal structures must be included in all tenement complexes and their upkeep should be entrusted to the residents. The residents must be encouraged to be responsible for their own units and the common areas in their tenements. Constant care and attention are needed till the community integrates well into the larger social fabric of their new locality, through both Government machinery and dedicated NGOs.

CONCLUSION

While it is essential to ensure access to affordable housing and essential amenities for the urban poor, resettlement is not often possible in situ and requires transition to a new locality altogether. Resettlement in a new location has several social dimensions, which affect the mental and emotional wellbeing of the resettled urban poor. These include loss of social circle, loss of common land, loss of routine and loss of cultural sites. Several of these losses are intangible and their mitigation is a long-term and subtle process. From the beginning, the entire process of resettlement must be consultative and participative, with detailed information gathering and sharing, and an understanding of the needs of the resettled urban poor that goes beyond the physical house. Post resettlement, continued counselling, trust building and community building activities as well as empowering the resettled urban poor is a must to address these social dimensions of resettlement, to enable them to feel ownership and a sense of belonging, and take responsibility for their lives and premises, as well as assimilate into and productively engage in their new environment.

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