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MIGRATION TO CITIES REVS UP PROFITABILITY IN HOUSING SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

With industrialisation, infrastructural development happens in tandem. One thing leads to another; taking place in a series, until a conglomerate is formed. Urbanisation results in increase built up area which requires workers, usually migrants. With heightened housing requirement to accommodate each new wave of migrants and in the absence of any legalised housing construction system, many alternative constructions take place like illegal squatter settlements or informal construction by local landlords living nearby to their work place. This study primarily focuses on the positive side of migration of poor to cities as a source of income generation for local landlords in rental housing sector. The study was conducted in Delhi NCR region – Noida, New Delhi and Gurugram. Sample comprises of both landlords and tenants. Separate questionnaires were formed for tenants and landlords, respectively. It was found in the study that local landlords or Gram head of nearby villages to factories, industries and corporate offices encourage migration as it has become their source of income generation by constructing multi-stories on their plot ranging from one room set – 1BHK unit for rental purposes. Therefore, like multiplier effect migration of poor to cities results in further urbanisation of cities besides overcrowding it.

KEYWORDS

landlords, migration, rental housing, urbanisation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

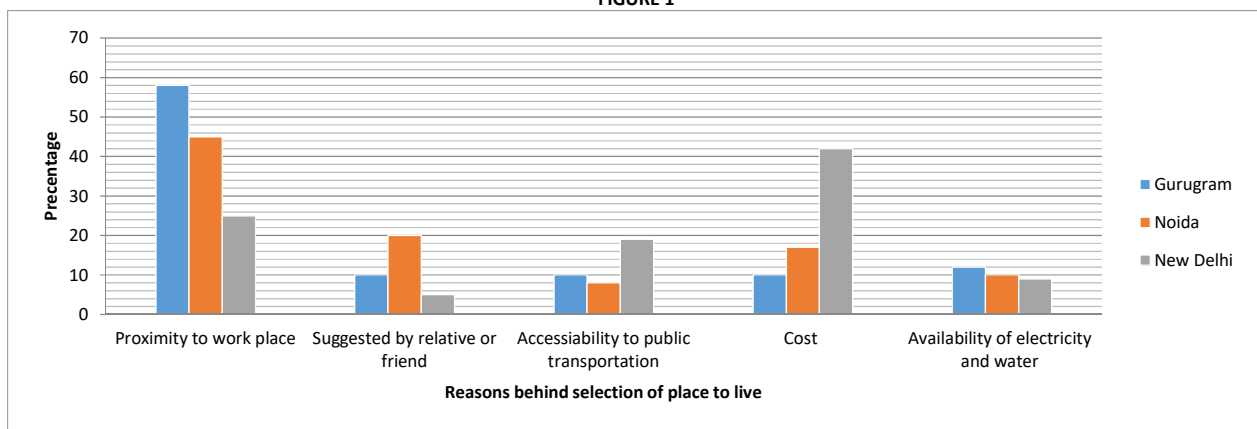
It is the known fact that cities form the backbone of economic expansion, and urbanisation can be seen as an engine of economic growth and socio-economic development not only of the cities but of other areas adjoining to cities. Despite being an instrument of economic, social and political progress, urbanisation has led to serious socio-economic problems. Rapid growth of urban population, through urbanisation and migration, has put a lot of pressure on public utilities viz., housing, electricity, water, sanitation, health, education, drainage, etc. This has also resulted in haphazard and unplanned growth of urban areas, under sheer need of infrastructure, to accommodate ever-increasing number of migrants. Informal settlements, as we know, come into existence when poor migrants to the city and look for space- usually near to work area - to live [1]. Often the only open land close to job opportunities is land which has been alienated from formal development because of its unsuitability. Examples include: floodplains and low-lying ground (high water table, flooding problems), former waste disposal sites (toxic gases, unpredictable settlement), etc. Therefore, these places are usually devoid of drainage, sanitation, clean water, electricity, etc. To avert such squatter settlements, the Government, every year, initiates a host of schemes to provide affordable housing to poor migrants [2]. But, despite that, the major push has been given by the local residents who become landlords and provide affordable rental housing to this section of the society. This kind of arrangement not only help the poor migrants to attain affordable living in the city but also act as a source of income generation for these local residents turned landlords. Therefore, on one hand incessant migration to cities results in haphazard growth of informal settlement and overcrowding of the cities but on other hand it creates an income opportunity for residents who are into rental housing business since generations now.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE RENTAL SYSTEM IN DELHI NCR

The study was conducted in Delhi NCR region (Gurugram, Noida and Delhi); mainly, urban villages and unauthorized colonies were covered for the study purposes. It was found that due to lack of affordability of the formalized housing sector [3], migrants prefer to live in urban villages and unauthorized sectors [4], mainly on rental bases. In Gurugram, three areas were selected for conducting the study - Kanhai village, Jharsa village and Chakkarpur village. The local community in Jharsa were mainly landowners and have had given their land for rent as shops and flats. Rent proceeds are the main source of income to these landowners. Unlike Kanhai, where the original population used to live in Sushant lok, here the landlords live in the same building with their tenants. Many landowners have built grocery shops and multi storeyed one room set above that for the tenants. There is no concept of lending flats or shops through middleman or broker. These villages come under the Municipal Corporation Gurgaon. They have population of around 40,000-60,000 landlords and about 1, 00,000 tenants or migrated persons were living in the area.

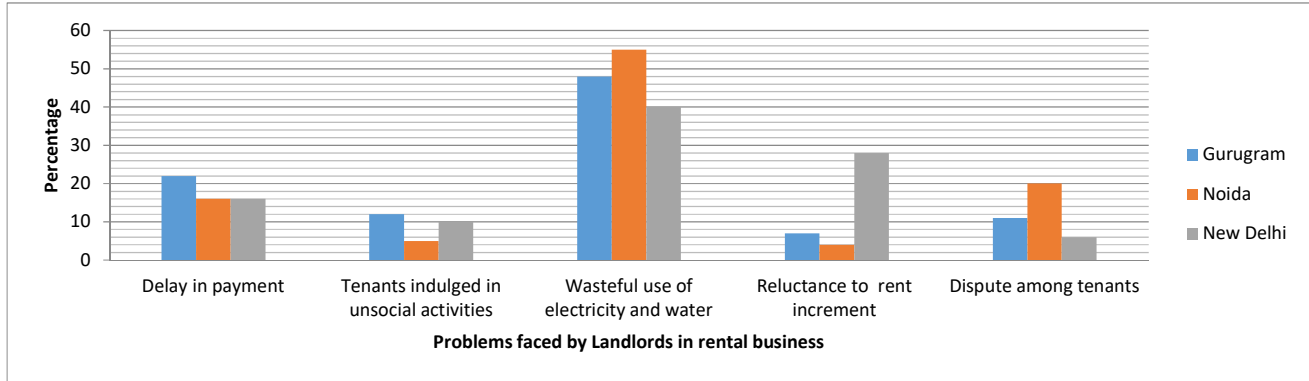
In Noida, three areas were selected for conducting the study- Harola village, Noida Sector 11- Jhundpura Village and Noida Sector 8(slum dwellings). These are urban villages [5] wherein, village panchayat system is functional and therefore, Panchayat head a.k.a. Pradhan is responsible for carrying out all the developmental activities in these areas. It was found that Pradhan himself is the landlord [6] and have many residential units on rent. In Delhi, three areas were selected for conducting the study – Dabri Village, Badli village and New Sagarpur.

FIGURE 1



Among many, one of the main reasons for these urban villages to be very popular [7] among poor migrants is its proximity to their work place i.e. factories, institutions and offices. As shown in figure 1, after proximity to work place cost of the residential space is the second important consideration for the migrants before finalising the place to live in the cities. Also, it was found that in Noida and Gurugram the main concern is proximity to work place whereas in Delhi cost is the main factor behind selection of rental space for the poor migrants. Besides, they could get work in the village itself in shops or as domestic helper or rickshaw puller, auto driver, etc. It was found that landowners live in the ground floor and tenants live in the above multi-storeyed residential units that range from one room to 1 BHK. It was found that the monthly rent often got waived off for the tenants who work for the landlord. Besides, rent proceeds were mainly use for buying more property and raising stocks for farming. Electricity was fairly available 24 hours in all the areas. Eight tube wells and two booster pumps along with many individual bore wells have been installed for uninterrupted supply of water for the villagers and tenants. Various other facilities such as a dispensary, Anganwadi, Government school, post office, police station, etc. were available. All the areas are well connected with all the modes of transportation.

FIGURE 2



Besides, all the monetary benefits that these local residents cum landlords derive from the rental business but there are some serious problems too that they have to face every day, while dealing with migrant tenants. As highlighted in Figure 2, incessant (wasteful) use of electricity and water was found to be the most severe problem among other problems like delay in payment, unwillingness to pay higher rent, dispute among tenants, etc. that landlords suffer from in this rental business.

III. SWOT ANALYSIS OF RENTAL BUSINESS

TABLE 1

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional income • Protection from illegal land encroachers • Potential workers as shopkeeper, domestic helpers, drivers, beautician, rickshaw pullers, etc. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular rent payments • Poor usage by tenants • Difficulty in increasing monthly rental amount • Disputes with tenants • Difficulty in verifying tenants background information
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall infrastructural development of that area [8] • Draws attention of Government for speedy release of welfare funds 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure from private developers for land accusation • Land requirement for Metro or highway construction

In the SWOT diagram above, analysis of the rental business has been done from the landlord or local residents' perspective. It highlights the problems that local landlords have to face while dealing with migrant tenants. Among many, the one major difficulty faced by many landlords relates with the identity verification or background check of the migrant tenants. It was found that many times these migrants were proclaimed offender in some crime and have allegedly fled from their home town. Besides, the diagram discusses about the various benefits that act as a driving force for these local residents to become landlords and make arrangements to accommodate these poor migrants by providing all necessary facilities to them at affordable prices. It was also found during informal discussion with Pradhan and local landlords that private developers have their eye on their land from long ago, and in the past many discussions, reconciliatory attempts have been made to impinge on their land. Nevertheless, under the present governmental intention to bring as many welfare schemes as possible, there is a prevailing hope for overall formalised infrastructure development of these areas sooner than later.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study has mainly highlighted the growing propensity among landowners or local residents to become landlords and enter into real estate rental housing business [9]. This study has also brought forth the paradigm shift in the attitude among the locals towards every new wave of migrants. Many socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects have been touched upon in this study. This paper is merely an attempt to put forth the scope of growing rental business in informal housing sector and how it has resulted in the overall infrastructural development of that area, like a chain reaction. Not only this, it has further created income opportunities for many locals who got into petty businesses like grocery shops, stationary shops, boutiques, coaching institutes, etc. to cater to the needs of growing tenants in their area. These poor migrants have acted as the catalyst in initiating the chain reaction of development of the area and simultaneously all other infrastructural, welfare activities got kick started.

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