

# DHARAVI DWARFED

## 78% Of Mumbai Lives In Slums, Including Four Newer Settlements Three Times Asia's Erstwhile Largest Slum

Clara Lewis | TNN

Dharavi, the famed slum settlement of Mumbai, has serious competition from at least four contenders in terms of size.

Provisional data from the 2011 census shows there are 3.1 crore people in the island city and 9.3 crore in the suburbs, while nearly 78% of the city's population lives in slums. Population density in the suburbs is the highest in the state, at 20,925 persons per sq km, whereas it is 20,038 person per sq km in the island city.

"This exercise has been done because the current trend of slum redevelopment is leading to anarchic development in the city. What is required is comprehensive planning and a master plan for the entire city so that slum redevelopment leads to an improvement in the quality of life," architect P K Das, who did the city's slum-mapping, said.

According to the 2001 census, Mumbai had a total population of 11.9 million, of which 64.5 lakh or 54.5% lived in slums. There were

only 23.3 lakh slumdwellers in 1991, which was 24.5% of Mumbai's total population of 99.6 lakh, whereas in 1981 the 22.8 lakh slumdwellers comprised 27.7% of the total 82.5 lakh population.

Das, who super-imposed Google maps on the 1991 development plan of Mumbai prepared by the BMC, said it was a misconception that all the slums were on land reserved for open spaces. "Nearly 55% of the slums are on land reserved for housing. Only 17% are on land reserved for open spaces and 10% on land designated as natural reserves," he said.

A few weeks ago, Das had made a presentation of the slum mapping to chief minister Prithviraj Chavan. A senior bureaucrat from the housing department said the government was keen to prepare a master plan for the city's slums but is undecided on who should do the mapping and prepare the plan. "Under the Constitution, the right vests with the local self-government body, that is the BMC. But we also have a Slum Rehabilitation Authority. The government is still deciding who should do

it," said the official. "That 78% of the city should reside in slums clearly indicates that there is something wrong. How can such a vast majority be illegal residents of a city?" added the official.

Amita Bhide, chairperson, Centre of Urban Planning, Policy and Governance in the School of Habitat Studies, Tata Institute of Social

**Comprehensive planning and a master plan for the entire city is required so that slum redevelopment leads to an improvement in the quality of life**

P K Das | ARCHITECT, CIVIL ACTIVIST

Sciences, said the trend of slums moving northwards was visible since the 1981 census. "With realty prices climbing, both the middle-class and the low income groups began moving northwards," she said.

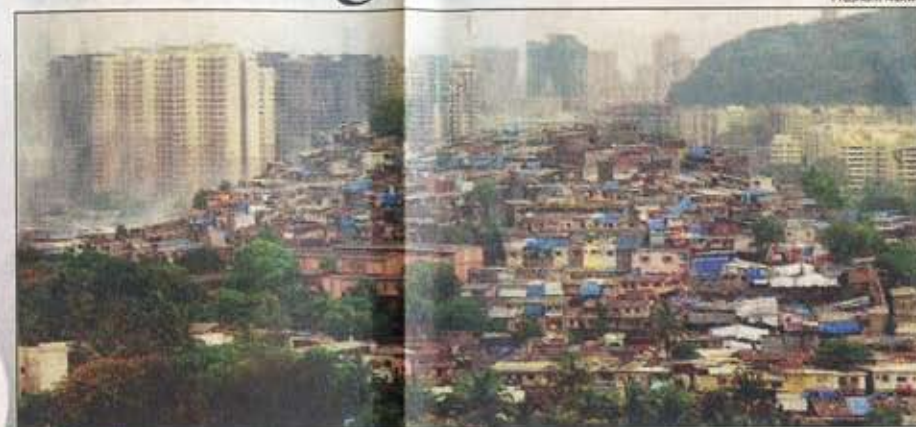
Das said the government must reserve all slum land for affordable housing. "Instead of allowing a part of

the land to be commercially exploited in exchange for free housing, the government must construct affordable houses ranging from 300 square feet to 600 sq ft, following town planning norms that are now completely absent in all slum rehabilitation projects," said Das.

Officials said while the government wants to ensure housing for the urban poor, there are legal issues as the Slum Redevelopment Act mandates free housing for all structures protected up to 1995. "This is one of the reasons why it has been difficult for us to even take up a pilot project under the Rajiv Gandhi Awaas Yojana in the city that requires slumdwellers to pay part of the cost of construction," said an official. However, urban development officials attributed the lack of progress to the strong builders' lobby that opposed the scheme as the present SRA scheme ensured a profit of nearly 40%.

Bhide said Mumbai's slums were unique as there were not just issues of poverty but of land and businesses that are run from these settlements.

# Kurla-Ghatkopar belt is king of Slumbai



SPOT THE HILLS: The slums along Kurla-Ghatkopar have grown into one contiguous belt

Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: It is difficult to imagine that the Kurla-Ghatkopar belt on the eastern side is a range of hillocks. But every monsoon, one is reminded of this reality when people die in landslides in a slum that has overshadowed Dharavi.

The Kurla West-Ghatkopar West belt, part of the L and N civic wards, comprises at least 75 large slum settlements, said Anil Galgali, a social activist and local resident. The BMC said the L-ward population is approximately 7.78 lakh, with nearly 80% in slums. In N-ward (Ghatkopar), 70% of the seven lakh population lives in slums. In Ghatkopar West, nearly four lakh people reside in slums.

P K Das, architect and civic activist, who did a slum mapping of the city, said understanding the size and variation in the densities of slum pockets is crucial for planning. "There is a housing crisis in the city and there is no addi-

tional land available for housing the urban poor. Slum land must therefore be reserved for affordable housing," he said.

To understand the spread of slums in the area, one can start walking from the Kuria side of the airport. It is a continuous stretch of settlements starting from Kajupada right up to Surya Nagar on Ghatkopar-Vikhroli Link Road. The slum curves towards Powai, ending at the IIT-B, Powai market area. "It is an uneven circle. What made the hillocks an ideal settlement for slums? Galgali points out to the quarrying of the hills and their abandonment resulting in flat land ideal for houses. "The entire stretch from Sakinaka to the LBS Marg from Kurla to Mulund is an industrial belt. Along with industries came labour. With the exception of Godrej and Tatas (Swadeshi Mills) none of the others thought of creating quarters for their employees," said Galgali. Slums, he said, were a natural fallout

of the government's failure to facilitate construction of rental housing in the area.

There are approximately 75 large slum settlements from Kurla to Ghatkopar, like Khadi No 3, followed by Milind Nagar behind the hillock and Mohili village, which ends near Sangharsh Nagar. If one moves towards Mulund from Kajupada, first comes the Sunderbaug slum, then Gaiban Shah dargah slum. Between the slums, is coming one of Mumbai's biggest malls. After the mall is Narayan Nagar and Azad Nagar in Ghatkopar West, which is infamous for landslides. Less than 1 km from the mall is the Premier Automobile site where the airport slums are to be rehabilitated. Then comes the Bhim Nagar slum.

This is followed by the Vikhroli Parksite slum, which starts from Amrut Nagar in Ghatkopar West along Ghatkopar-Vikhroli Link Road right up to Surya Nagar. This turns and ends near IIT Powai market.

## Hovels keep homing in on land reserved for housing purposes, not open spaces

Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: With approximately 9.6 million people living in slums in the city, it is expected that a majority of Mumbai's open spaces has been encroached upon. But the slum mapping carried out by architect and civic activist P K Das, shows most settlements are on land reserved for housing.

Das super-imposed the city's development plan map on the slum map. "It shows slums are overwhelmingly on land reserved for housing. Even land reserved for commercial and industrial activities is allowed to be converted to housing. So 55% of slums can be rehabilitated at the place where they have come up," he said.

Around 18% of land reserved for open spaces is encroached and another 10% of nat-

ural assets such as hills, forests, mangroves have slums.

"The current trend of slum redevelopment needs to be reworked with a comprehensive master plan that covers all of Mumbai," he said, adding that slum rehabilitation and creating affordable housing would not need FSI of more than 2.

Neera Punj, covener of Citispace, said, "Slumdwellers living on land reserved for open spaces are miniscule and can be accommodated in tenements for project-affected people."

A bureaucrat said civil society would have to be involved in deciding how to rehabilitate slums on such land. "Nearly 50% of the slums are on environmentally sensitive land. Also, which bank will offer a loan of Rs 4-6 lakh per tenement to a slum-dweller?" he argued.

### Home Shanty Home

● Total area of Greater Mumbai   <b>482 sq km</b>	● Mumbai's population   <b>12.4 million</b> (2011 census)
● Total slum area   <b>42.30 sq km</b> (Approx 9%)	● Slum-dweller population (Provisional)   <b>9.6 million</b> (78% of city)

### Slums On Reserved Land

Category	Area	Percentage
Housing	20.07 sq km	47.6%
Industrial	2.55 sq km	6%
Commercial	0.72 sq km	1.7%
Services (depots, sub-stations etc)	1.02 sq km	2.4%
Amenities	2.37 sq km	5.6%
Open spaces (recreational ground, playground and ground)	7.47 sq km	17.7%
NDZ	4.22 sq km	10%
Natural assets (hills, forests, mangroves, wetlands)	0.32 sq km	0.8%
Airports, railways, ports and defence land	0.44 sq km	0.4%

(Source: P K Das /Nivara Hakk Sangharsh Samiti)