

Living With Grey Tones in Grey Zones of Prayagraj: An Analytical Study of Slum Dwellers of Kydganj and Gaughat Area

Ajin Ray and Amna Farooqui

Abstract : *Urban attractions mean better opportunities, be it employment, education or health facilities. But, due to rapid and unplanned urbanization, we find grey areas in cities called 'slum'. In these areas, we find concentrated poverty, inadequate housing and very limited access to the basic services. The living conditions in slum represent the worst of urban plight. Slum dwellers face serious challenges in their survival efforts. In this paper; an effort has been made to focus on their survival techniques without any base. This paper also tries to highlight on their living condition, and problems faced by them and sincerely tries to provide solution so that, government, NGOs and social workers may initiate and work on their betterment and remove the grey tones of the city.*

Key words: *Grey Zones, Grey Tones, Urban Plight, Alienation, Insecurity.*

Introduction

Human beings desire social security, but almost everywhere there exists a lot of insecurity. The concern for social-well-being of man has found an increasing echo in 21st century. It is a condition in which the needs and wants of a given population are satisfied. But the question of social security is not that easy.

Personal security is the goal and personal insecurity is, by and large, the existing fact experienced by the people living in the grey-zones i.e., slums. The social conditions of slum-dwellers are:

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Alienation
- Inadequate education
- Unhygienic living condition, etc.

1 Convener, Department of Geography, Ewing Christian College, Prayagraj, Email: ajinray24@gmail.com

2 Convener, Department of Geography, Hamidia PG College, Prayagraj.

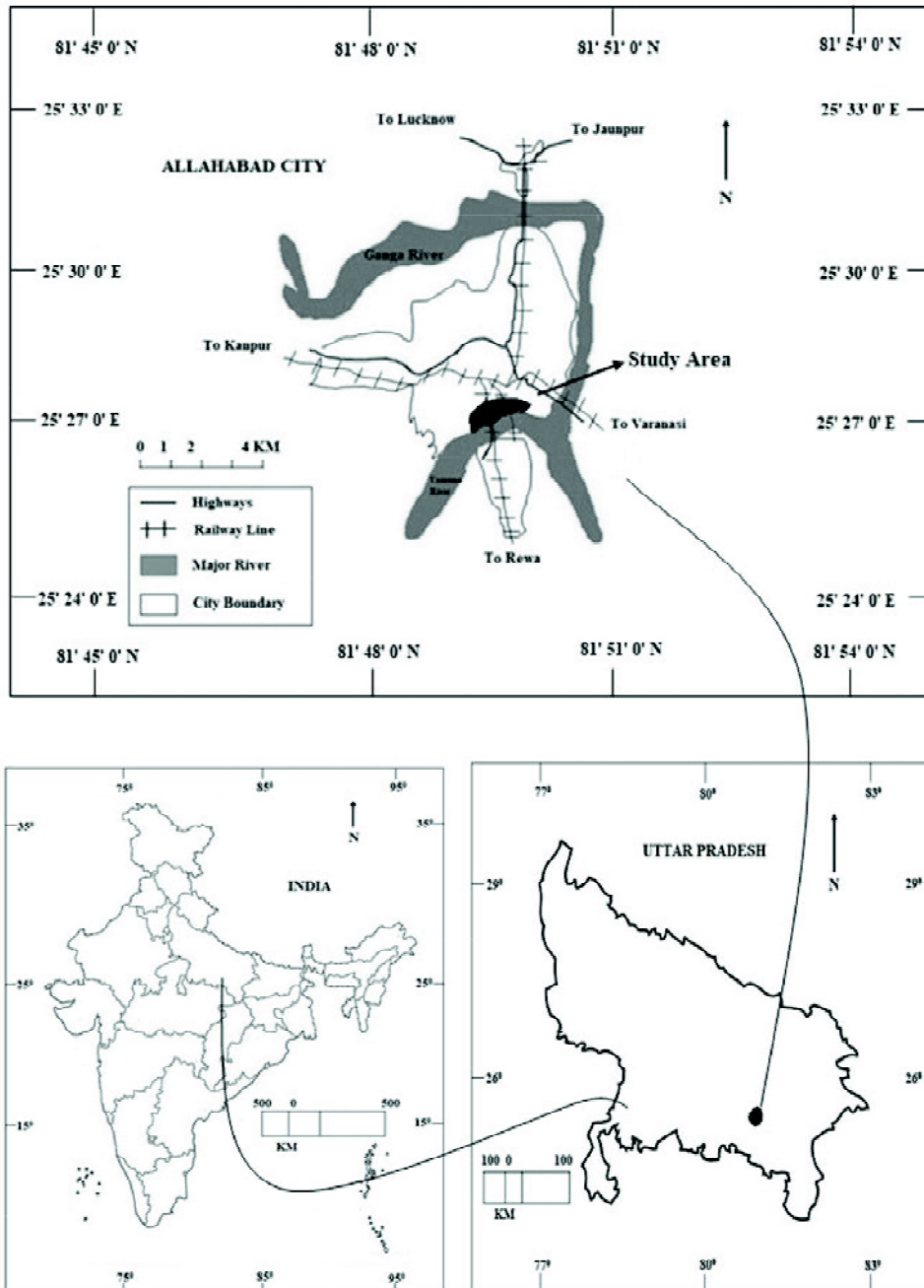


Fig. 1.0 Location of Prayagraj and Study Area

Source : Allahabad District Authority, Prayagraj

The question in regarding the aforesaid conditions cannot be entirely ignored or left out as the 'plight of starving', economic insecurity along with the feeling of deprivation and dejection and above all the consciousness of being insecure needs to be addressed more seriously.

Moreover, what counts is not the momentary situations but, the tendency; things are quite bad today and certainly will worsen in future. In general, there prevails a '*gloom-and-doom*' scenario among the slum-dwellers, as they face serious challenges in their survival efforts. (L.R. Singh, 1985, PP. 2)

Study Area

Prayagraj lies on 25° 30' N and 81° 55' E at the height of 103.63m, above the sea-level at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati.(See figure – 1.0) The rivers have contributed a great deal to the destiny, culture and life of the Indian people. Besides, the rivers have made a protective natural wall around the city, and thus provides a strategic location. It is an alluvial city and the slope is from west to east but, the central part acts as a water divide along with the secondary slopes towards north and south. (Singh, P. 1990)

The Ganga bed is wider as compared to the Yamuna bed and is cultivated during post-monsoon months. Little shift is noticed in the main channel of the river Yamuna, while the river Ganga often swings throughout the bed more comfortably.

Slums of Prayagraj

There are 185 slums in the city and the slum population in 2001 was 126,646. In 2011, the slum population was around 4,70,467 with 91,025 households. The average household size was around 6. About 25% of the slums in the city have been into existence for more than 75 years. (see table 1:)

Prayagraj witnessed haphazard growth. The older parts of the city like Chowk, Ghantaghar, Bans-Mandi, Katghar, Kotwali, Gaughat, etc., are extremely congested. The basic reason has been population increase. The outer growth areas include Phaphamau, Jhunsi, Naini, Bamrauli, Manauri, etc., has also witnessed the growth of slums in open areas. Thus, the slum settlements are almost equally distributed in core and fringe areas. Each slum in the city is characterized by poor physical and socio-economic condition. Since, none of the slums are notified by the respective municipalities, corporation, local bodies so they are not recognized, hence, do not receive higher level of services in their daily routine. (Ray Ajin, 2023, PP. 22)

Most of the slums are near to the places of employment viz., religious places, tourist-places, cottage industries, and areas of residence. The concentration of slums is mostly in the low-lying areas, along open drains, along river banks and hazardous sites. This has further deteriorated their living condition as proper infrastructural services are lacking. Overcrowd, unhygienic

environment and resource crisis made the situation more grim. Following aspects are common:

- Unfit living condition
- Poor sanitation and sewage disposal
- Temporary shelter in an unplanned manner
- Overcrowd and congestion
- Inadequate or no basic services

Table 1[A]: Age of Slums (In Percentage)

0-15 years	16-30 years	31-45 years	46-60 years	61-75 years	Above 75 years
6%	18%	16%	22%	13%	25%

Source: Primary Survey, 2011

Table 1[B]: Area of Slums (In Percentage)

Area of Slums	Less Than 1 hectare	1-2 hectare	2-3 hectare	3-4 hectare	More Than 4 hectare
No. of Slums (in percent)	30%	25%	20%	10%	15%

Source: Primary Survey, 2011.

Table 1[C]: Land Ownership In Slums

Particulars	Local Body	State Government	Railways	Defence	Private	Others
No. of Slums (in percent)	2%	9%	3%	2%	83%	3%

Source: Primary Survey, 2011.

Table 1[D]: Slum – Population

Particulars	SC	ST	OBC	OTHERS	TOTAL
Total Slum Population (in percent)	47%	12%	26%	15%	

Source: Primary Survey, 2011.

Table 1[E]: OCCUPATION

Particulars	Self-employed	Salaried	Regular waste	Casual labours	Others
No. of Slums (in percent)	24%	5%	36%	30%	5%

Source: Primary Survey, 2011.

Data Collection

Nagar Nigam has provided with a list of 185 slums, which exists in the city. From that list selection of the slums were made based on:

- Observed congested area.
- Along the branch of Yamuna by geographic location.
- Near to our college location.

Table 2: Study Area

Zone	Number	Name
State	1	Uttar Pradesh
City	1	Prayagraj
Types of slums	4	Unregistered Slums (Kydganj-near ADC, Kydganj – near Boat Club; Gaughat Upper and Gaughat Lower – near the old bridge along river Yamuna)
Types of Land	1	Government Land
Core Sample	-	Unregistered

Data was collected through interview of the households, observations and focused group discussions. Basically, this area is dominated by hindu population which included variety of lower castes hindus. In other words, multiple methods, such as interview, observation and document analysis have been adopted.

Methodology Adopted

The approach of this study is purely observational which involved observation and description of phenomena without manipulation of the variables, so that their natural behavior, situation and existing condition be understood for upliftment and proper implementation of

government schemes. Apart from it, extensive case studies have been conducted for an in-depth examination of the sample cases.

This research is based on first-hand information gathered through field-survey at micro-level. The sample study area has been divided in to four selection viz.

- Gaughat Upper Area
- Gaughat Lower Area (near old Yamuna bridge)
- Kydganj Slum (opposite Boat Club)
- Kydganj Slum (near Allahabad Degree College)

The statistical information has been given in table below:

Table 3: Sample Size

Slums	Total Household	Surveyed Household
Gaughat upper area	100 approx.	30
Gaughat lower area	100 approx.	30
Kydganj slum(opposite Boat Club)	700 approx.	210
Kydganj slum(near ADC)	800 approx.	240
Total	1700 approx.	510

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In order to collect first-hand information from the field, questionnaire was prepared and filtered for analytical review to draw meaningful conclusion so that positive recommendations be made to the concerned government agencies for their upliftment.

Observation of The Study Area

The slums of Kydganj and Gaughat is the result of unplanned activities in the adjoining residential area. This region is totally disorganized and occupied by socially and economically backward and down-trodden people of hindu caste. Thus, one finds, overcrowd, absence of sanitation, unhygienic environment and lack of essential facilities.

During the floods in the month of August and September, Gaughat lower region slum below and near the old bridge is flooded every year, which further aggravates the grim situation and the slum-dwellers are forced to move out to the safer areas. This happens every year.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to focus on the quality of living of the slum households who live in the *grey-zones* with bare minimum livelihood in an unhygienic condition without any social, community and institutional support. (see table 4 and 5)

The locality of Gaughat is along the bank of Yamuna river. It is a bathing ghat and later with the passage of time people settled here. It is in this region that the historic 164 years old Yamuna bridge was constructed by East India Company (1859). Since then, labourers have settled here and supported the construction work. It is for that reason that the labour-class population dominates here. (see tables 6 and 7).

The region of Kydganj is located along the bank of river Yamuna. The area is very congested and is a part of CBD region of the city with wholesale and retail markets. In this area, slum happens to exist since, British period. Kydganj got its name from British General “KYD”. This area is bordered by the Yamuna river. National Highway 27 passes alongside the locality and community is not so hassle free as it is a congested locality, which borders the CBD region of the city. This locality is near to Mutthiganj, South Malaka and Rambagh. The slum-dwellers of this area use their survival skill to their optimum level. Details have been depicted in tables 8 and 9.

Table 4: Surveyed Cases

	M	F	Total
Gaughat Upper	48	61	109
Gaughat Lower	38	45	83
Kydganj Near Bota Club	45	42	87
Kydganj near ADC	40	30	71

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5: Level of Living Condition

Surveyed Area	Destitution	Survival	Livelihood
Gaughat Upper	2%	37%	61%
Gaughat Lower	6%	58%	36%
Kydganj Near Boat Club	8%	37%	55%
Kydganj Near ADC	6%	35%	59%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Observation is based on socio-economic indications. The total observed slum-dwellers have been divided into three categories viz., destitute, survivors and earning livelihood. The percentage of destitute ranges from 2% to 9%. They are dependent on charity cares as they are paupers in true sense. However, the survivors occupy a sizeable population which ranges from 35% to 58%. They are survivors because of their survival skills which enables them to earn their livelihood. Still, struggle hard in their journey towards survival. Another group of slum-dwellers are engaged

Table 6: Working Population of Gaughat Upper Region

Occupation	Working Population
Rag Picker	03
E-Rickshaw Driver	01
Auto Driver	01
Dairy	01
Daily Wage Labour	04
Tea Shop	02
Scrap Collector	10
Venders	05
Others	02

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 7: Working Population of Gaughat Low Region

Occupation	Working Population
Rag Picker	21
E-Rickshaw Driver	03
Daily Wage Labour	05
Garbage Collector	06
Drain Cleaner	03
Others	05

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 8: Working Population of Kydganj Slums (Near Boat Club)

Occupation	Working Population
Rag Picker	28
Daily Wage Labour	04
Vender	02
Laundry	02
Others	02

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 9: Working Population of Kydganj Slums (Near Adc)

Occupation	Working Population
Rag Picker	16
E-Rickshaw Driver	02
Daily Wage Labour	02
Bamboo Craftsman	10
Garbage Collector	06
Others	03

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

in any odd job to earn and survive and this group has been identified as livelihood earners and their percentage is between 36% to 61%. The following tables depict the status of working population in four regions.

Discussion

Feeling of insecurity and suspicion is very common among the slum dwellers. They are afraid of police, administrators, political leaders and landowners. There is no expectation of justice as they consider themselves as the most deprived section of the urban population. So, denial of social rights is not uncommon to them. (Ray Ajin, 1997)

- a) **Food Habit:** They generally eat low quality food. Most of them are non-vegetarians. They generally eat the residue part of chicken and mutton. They generally purchase rotten fruits and vegetables at low price for consumption.
- b) **Health Problem:** Due to unhygienic conditions of the slums most of the people are affected by water-borne and air-borne diseases. Malnutrition is very common. Women are anemic and young age motherhood without balanced diet have affected their health. Since most of the males are acute tobacco chewers, smokers drug addict and alcoholic, obviously suffer from lung disease.
- c) **Security of Tenure:** Since they don't have any legal right over the land on which they have constructed their temporary dwellings, so they always face the threat of eviction.
- d) **Financial Status:** Nearly all slum-dwellers spend their current income on food, fuel and curative health care, so, they are unable to save money for themselves. For them, life is to live today and not to live for the future. This proves their frustration towards life.
- e) **Identity:** As they belong to the low caste community, (land poor and income poor) so, belong to the socially deprived group with negation of social rights. Every time, they are

denied of opportunities. Due to lack of physical and social capital, movement is hampered, hence, no better job opportunities for them. But, with basic survival skills, they are just crude labourers or sellers or scavengers. Hence, remain stuck at the bottom of the economy of the urban society.

Their identity is associated with '**DIRTY PLACE DWELLERS**', where there is no access to basic provisions like shelter, food, pure-drinking water, education and health-care facilities. Their social identity is not at all good, hence, remain excluded from the main stream.

- f) **Silence:** Unemployment, indebtedness, crime, and juvenile delinquency, alcoholism are the burning issues and problems. For this, aforesaid reasons, they are unable to recover themselves from poverty. Their silence is because of being untouchability and unfair treatment. Since, they belong to the lower strata of occupation, hence, they are unable to emerge as a **strong group** fully aware and able to fight for their basic rights.

Conclusion

Living in the slum is living at the bottom of the urban space with poor physical environment improper condition; dilapidated housing condition; and space crisis. All the aforesaid factors are considered as the grey tones in the life of slum-dwellers. The grey tones are more pronounced during monsoon and winter season. The suffocating environment creates a negative impact on their life. In other words, they become criminals, drug-addict and drunkards. Education is not the priority, rather they remain engaged to ensure for themselves meal twice or at least once a day. From the above tables 6.0,7.0,8.0 and 9.0 about 57% slum dwellers are rack pickers; 10% daily wage labourers; 27% garbage cleaner; and 6% vendors; which proves that they belong to the bottom layer of the society with occasional starvation. They are low paid and are engaged in hazardous jobs risking their health. Irrespective of the age and gender, they try to remain engage in multiple occupation at the same time to earn for survival. Still, they fail to live with dignity as the data proves.

No doubt, government agencies are there to support and uplift them. The major factors that play a crucial role in influencing the design of upgradation process are scale of the problem, the severity of conditions, tenure and relevant support for social and economic development, community participation, the institutional framework, the financial structure, political will and good governance. Apart of this there, are factors that need to be considered in the planning and implementation of initiatives to be taken viz.,

- Provision of basic infrastructure to the slum-dweller community;
- Tenure security; and
- Comprehensive upgradation.

Thus, improvement of basic services should be on top priority, followed by regeneration of land tenure for tenure security which would minimize the degree of threat of forced eviction over slum settlements.

Although, comprehensive upgradation is relatively a complex and time-consuming task. It is also dependent on community participation. In order to remove the grey tones, one has to understand the political-social and economic aspects for positive outcome. It must incorporate the following components:

- Relocation and upgradation;
- Law and legislation for slum-dwellers;
- Community participation;
- Financial framework;
- Institutional mechanism.

For this, a serious thought process should be carried out before the process of implementation. One must not under estimate the challenges of slum-dwellers as they have no base for survival. Upliftment initiatives taken by government and NGOs are not up to the mark. Due to social exclusion and marginalization, they are the '*invisible part of the city*'. But we cannot ignore them. If one has to remove the grey tones of the city, one has to focus on their *employment* and *empowerment* aspects sincerely.

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