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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Poorest of the Poor: A Comparative Study of Two Slums of Central and North East Delhi, India

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**Slums are considered as illegally occupied houses and creating a nuisance of environmental pollution and degradation of urban living conditions. Slum dwellings signify as common phenomena of degraded life of urban dwelling itself occupied by urban poor. The presence of slum as a part of urban habitat refers to a condition of defective physical, social and economic environment. The present study is for two slum areas of Delhi i.e., Balmiki Kabristan ITO and Janta Colony, Seelampur. In India, Delhi accommodates 4.8% of the total slum population of India as per 2001 which is relatively above the India's average of 15% slum population. This is due to rapid in migration of unskilled and illiterate persons from rural areas from densely populated states like West Bengal, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. Since all the slums are not lying at same level of infrastructural development, it is necessary to know about the basic services and facilities like drinking water, electricity, sanitation, education and health services etc between and within the slums of Delhi. Therefore for this purpose, primary survey through random stratified sampling was carried out for 100 households for these two slum areas taking 50 households of each slum. The basic aim of the study was to compare the living conditions within the slum through access to basic amenities facilities and to compare variation between the slums. Since the study is empirical, no initial hypothesis is formulated. The data is analysed by applying appropriate statistical and cartographic techniques. The major findings of the study is that the inhabitants of the slums are facing problems like water supply condition, drainage system, disposal of garbage, lack of sanitation. Irrespective of the size and location of slum, conditions are found to be not conducive for human survival in these slums.**

**Keywords:** Slums, Migration, Degraded life, Urban Dwelling, Environment.

## INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is known for rapid urbanization and unplanned physical expansion of cities all over the world. During the last 200 years world population has increased six times, whereas urban populations have increased to over 100 times their original count (Leao et al. 2004). It has been observed that nearly 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas (Stalker, 2001). In the year 1951, 881

million i.e., 54.5% population lived in the urban areas in developed countries. It reached up to 1024 million i.e., 77.7% in 2011 and further is expected to be 1030 million i.e., 82.1% in 2030 (United Nations, 2012). This growth is mostly taking place in developing countries as stated by World Development Report (2003) and is going to be the most significant event of the present century especially in

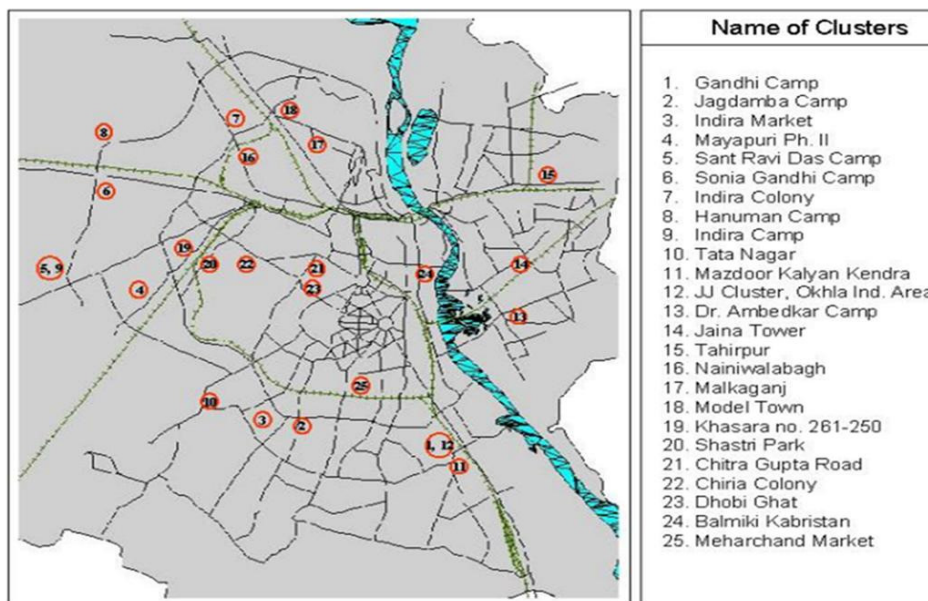


Figure 1. LOCATION OF SLUMS IN NCT OF DELHI (Source:NIUA, 2004)

India with almost 50% of its population being projected as urban by 2030. Here urbanization has caused accelerating rate of urban poverty in face of rapid urban growth. Thus, urban poverty in its apparent and disguised form as reflected in lack of basic facilities, amenities and assets, in other words lack of access to the trinities of social service, physical amenities and employment opportunities is a marked phenomenon of nearly all metropolitan cities of India. This happens due to uncontrolled migration from rural areas to urban areas as well as small urban centres to large urban centres. In this process, the poor settle for informal sector of economy inhabiting areas of their own convenience and affordability, thus resulting into mushrooming of slums in general. NCT of Delhi tops in terms of net migration per day amongst the metro cities in India. From NCR, both permanent settlers and daily commuters are moving towards the NCT of Delhi for job, business and commerce and education. From the last few decades, NCT has not recorded an increase in the area.

Therefore high cost of land and low paying capacity in case of semi-skilled labour with marginal education have resulted in uncontrolled encroachment upon any vacant part of the land within NCT. Therefore JJ Clusters and Slums are still a common sight despite government effort for relocation of Slums and rehabilitation of slum dwellers.

The manifestations of urban poverty are not uniformly distributed over the slum dwellers. They are pockets of abject poverty within some slums which are pathetic and need attention of the concerned authorities for their up gradation.

The present study is for two slums within NCT of Delhi i.e., Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum where in effort has been made to carry out the comparative analysis of these two slums in terms of socio-economic status and living conditions of its dwellers. Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum which has got all the advantage of location and is accessible for availing urban benefits like communication, medical facilities or other infrastructural facilities. While in Janta Colony, Seelampur, a part of Trans-Yamuna area is deprived in terms of locational advantages and facilities and amenities. In addition, it is mainly dominated by the poorest of the poor population as was noticed during the field survey. The study also analyses the income-wise health and hygienic condition of the slum dwellers under varied and pathetic living conditions.

### Study Area

The present study area i.e., Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum and Janta Colony, Seelampur lies in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi lying in the Northern Great Plains of India is surrounded by district Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh) in the east, district Rohtak in the west, district Sonapat in the north and district Gurgaon in south (Haryana). It is situated between 28°24'17" and 28°53'00" of north latitude and 76°50'24" east to 77°20'37" east longitude (Figure 1).

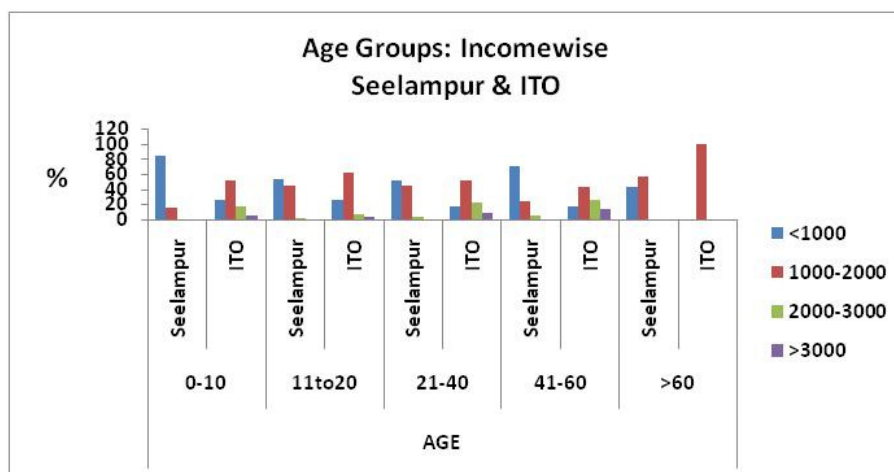


Figure 2

## DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on the primary sources of data which was collected by household surveys of the study area through a well-structured, uniform questionnaire with a sample population of 50 households from each slum was taken on random basis. The survey was conducted through self observation, discussion with the head of the household or a knowledgeable person from the selected households within the slum.

The indicators selected for the study are mainly concerned with the demographic, social, economic, health and hygiene and disease pattern of the slum dwellers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study incorporated the social and economic parameters for studying the discrepancies among the two slum areas of the study area. The social parameters included are Age groups, Sex Ratio, Marital Status, Literacy Status and Educational Level. The economic parameters used include Working Status, Duration of Work, and Income Levels. The other important parameters used include the availability of basic amenities and facilities e.g., Place of Bathing, Place of Defecation, Garbage Disposal. Further the study analysed the availability of Diseases and Medical Facilities like Permanent Disease, Seasonal Disease and the Daily Complaints.

### Comparative Analysis on the Basis of Demographic and Social Profile

*Age Groups:* Age group reflects the comparison of population in working capacity. It also shows the status of

migration as well as birth rate in the population. Considering this parameter, the age groups of the surveyed population in the Janta colony, Seelampur shows a dominance of (0-20) juvenile population (53%). While in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum the percentage came to only 43%. Considering the active age group Janta colony, Seelampur slum showed 45% of population lying within 20-60 age groups while in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO it is 55%. The old age groups (>60) is very less in both the slums having only 2% population. Therefore, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum have less juvenile population and more population in working age group (Figure 2).

When income-wise break up in both the slums are compared it is found that within <1000 per month category, the population in Janta colony, Seelampur is more. Both within the age group of 0-10 and 11-20 within 1000-2000 per month category, it is the Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slums which are dominating in all the age groups. From juvenile to active and senile population within 2000-3000 per month category while Janta colony, Seelampur shows a very small percentage within the age group of 41-60, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO shows this income level from 10-60 years in varying amount. In >3000 category, there is no population in Janta colony, Seelampur in the surveyed area. While, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO shows a negligible proportion from 20-60 years. Therefore, income wise break up of age groups are more well-off in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO than Jantacolony, Seelampur.

*Sex-ratio:* Sex-ratio reflects the proportion of females to males while join their male counterpart in the migration process afterwards. In Janta colony, Seelampur, the sex ratio is around 911 per 1000 males while in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO it is around 933 females per 1000 males. Therefore Balmiki Kabristan, ITO has a better sex ratio (Figure 3). The reason for better sex ratio in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO is education and the improvement in society

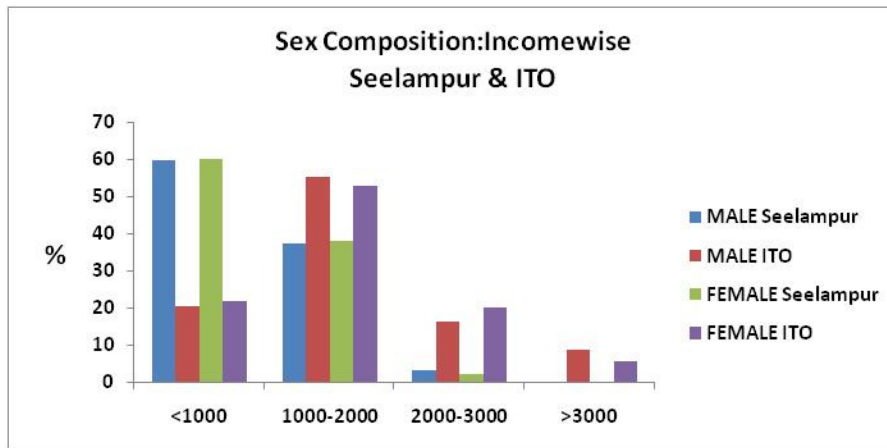


Figure 3

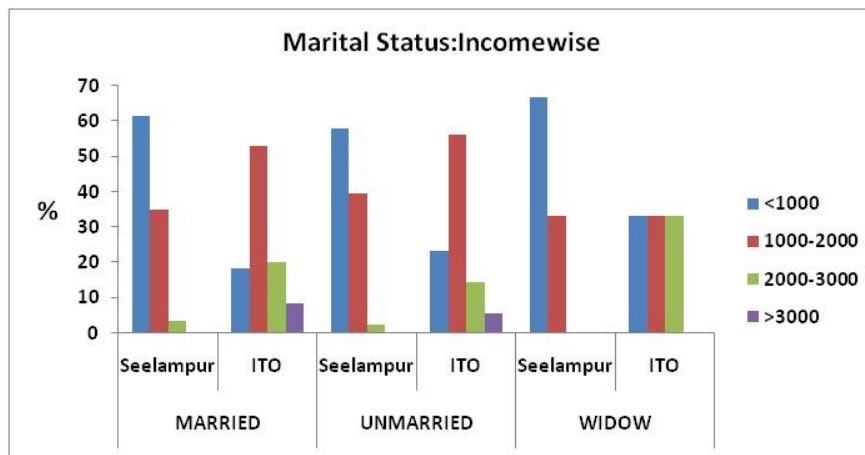


Figure 4

as compare to Janta colony, Seelampur where people are still not aware of education and think girl child as burden for their family

However, the sex composition in >1000 Rs per month group go on increasing in case of Balmiki Kabristan, ITO. Within 10000-2000, the proportion of males and females increases to 55% and 52% in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO as compare 37% and 38% in Janta colony, Seelampur. Where as, >2000 group is mainly dominated by Balmiki Kabristan, ITO.

**Marital Status:** While Janta colony, Seelampur slum has a dominance of unmarried, widow and widower(64%) in the survey locality while Balmiki Kabristan, ITO has only 36%. Therefore, this category reflects in a way, the number of dependent or less urban population (Figure 4).

Among the married category Janta colony, Seelampur records lowest of <1000 income category while in Balmiki

Kabristan, ITO has married people within 1000-2000. Amongst unmarried category, again Janta colony, Seelampur tops within <1000 category followed by Balmiki Kabristan, ITO, within 1000-2000. Even widows are more within <1000 income category while Balmiki Kabristan, ITO shows 1000-3000 category for widow group.

Therefore, Janta colony, Seelampur shows as a poverty stricken area in comparison to Balmiki Kabristan, ITO.

**Literacy Status and Educational Level:** Illiteracy and education enhances the earning capacity of persons. It is found that in Janta colony, Seelampur, more females are illiterate(55%), Balmiki Kabristan, ITO is better off with 45% females as illiterate. While, Janta colony, Seelampur has only 16% of males with Higher Secondary Education(10<sup>th</sup>), Balmiki Kabristan, ITO is accommodating males with 18% of males, with either graduation or post graduation diplomas, while 7% of females have up to graduate

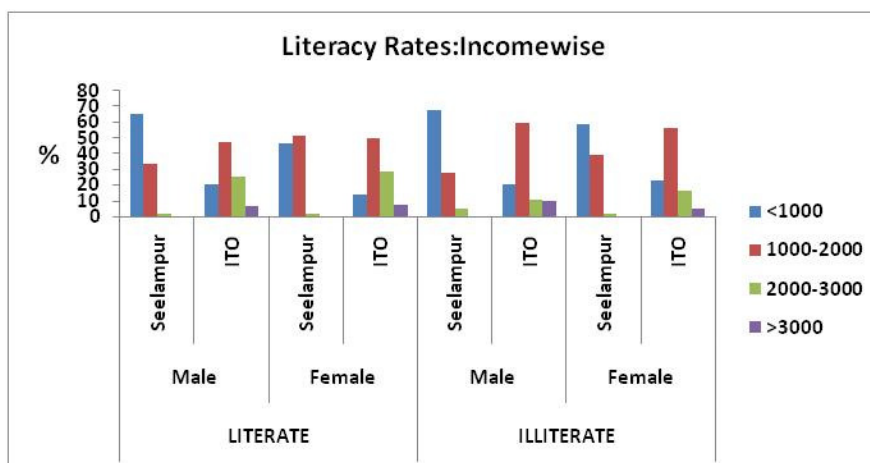


Figure 5

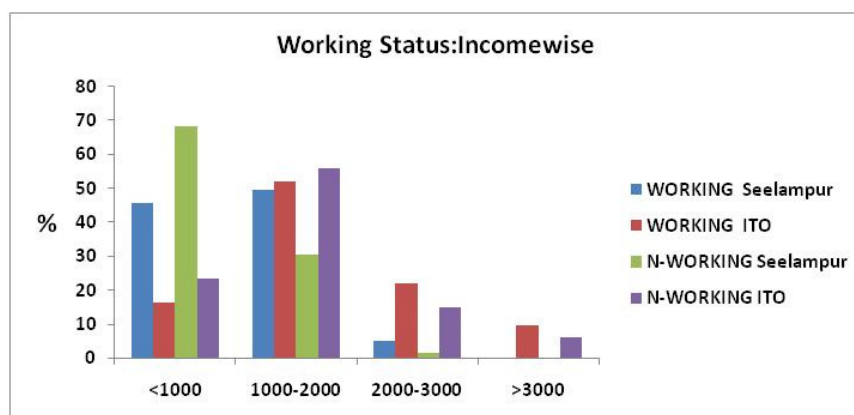


Figure 6

knowledge(4%) (Figure 5). The reason for high literacy rate and educational levels in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO is because the people found much aware about the education of males as well as females. In fact the people concern about female education and show their encouragement to educate their girls as well. But reason for low literacy rate in Janta colony, Seelampur is that the people mostly belong to minority section of the society and have still conservative ideology.

Both literate and illiterate female and males are more within <1000 income category in Janta colony, Seelampur. This makes a comparison with BalmikiKabristan, ITO in which 1000-3000 income group are more common within literates Whether males or females. Even for illiterates, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO accommodates 1000-2000 income group even 2000-3000 and >3000 are also living in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO though in small proportions.

### Economic Profile

*Working Status:* Working status determines the dependency levels which are generally more in case of more number of females, children. As found in Janta colony, Seelampur, around 59% of the population is working in Janta colony, Seelampur and only 41% in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO (Figure 6).

However, the survey has shown that in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum, although the income levels are quite considerable, 2000-3000 or even more, due to high additions of various types, generally the population is non-working (68%), In Janta colony, Seelampur, it is the low-level of income (within 1000-2000) in which 34% of population is forced to work for feeding themselves, still 66% are non-workers dependents in which mostly are females and children.

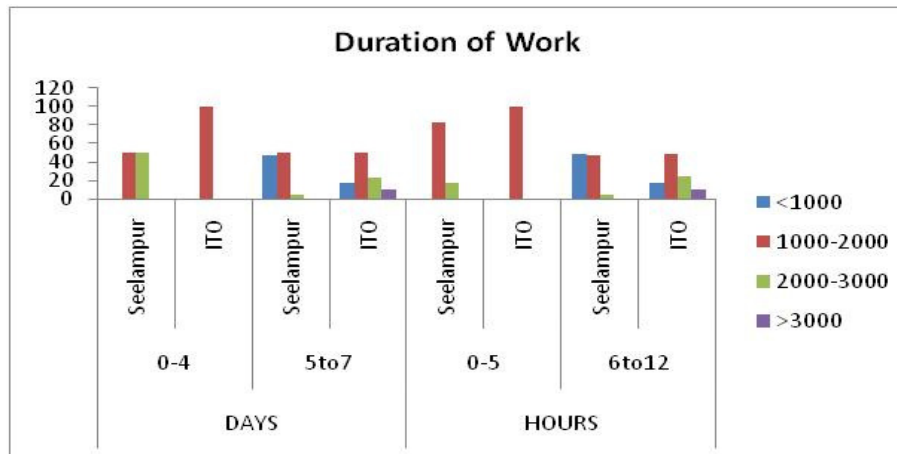


Figure 7

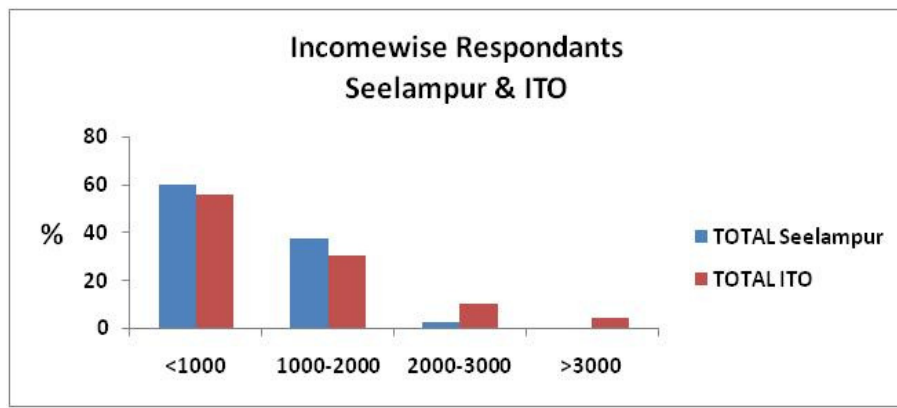


Figure 8

*Duration of Work:* In terms of number of days per week, 59% of slum dwellers of Janta colony, Seelampur have to work for 5-7 days a week in comparison to Balmiki Kabristan, ITO with 41%. While in Janta colony, Seelampur, 60% of population has to work 6-12 hrs per day, it is only 40% in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum (Figure 7).

While at Balmiki Kabristan, ITO, the number of days are mainly upto 4, that also 1000-2000, at Janta colony, Seelampur it is mainly <1000 or upto 2000 per month for which the slum dwellers have to work all seven days a week, that also 6-12 hrs per day.

*Income Levels:* Within 1000-2000 income category, Janta colony, Seelampur records 52% while Balmiki Kabristan, ITO 48% of population. More than 2000 Rs per month income group is most dominant in Balmiki

Kabristan, ITO (25%) as compare to Janta colony, Seelampur (6%) striking is the fact that Janta colony, Seelampur records 0% of population within >3000, compare to Balmiki Kabristan, ITO with 16% of the population in the surveyed area (Figure 8).

### Amenities and Facilities

*Place of Bathing:* While Balmiki Kabristan, ITO has better bathing facilities indoor with 84% of population having private bathroom, Janta colony, Seelampur has only 16%. Consequently in terms of community bathroom, Janta colony, Seelampur has 66% of population using this

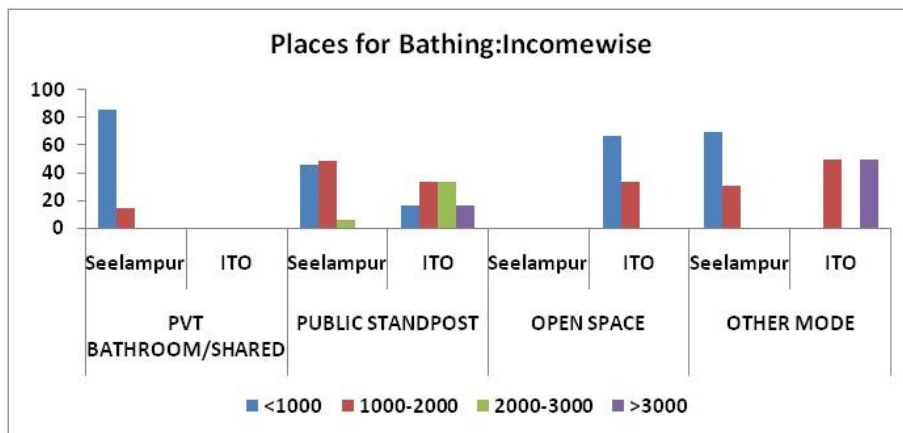


Figure 9

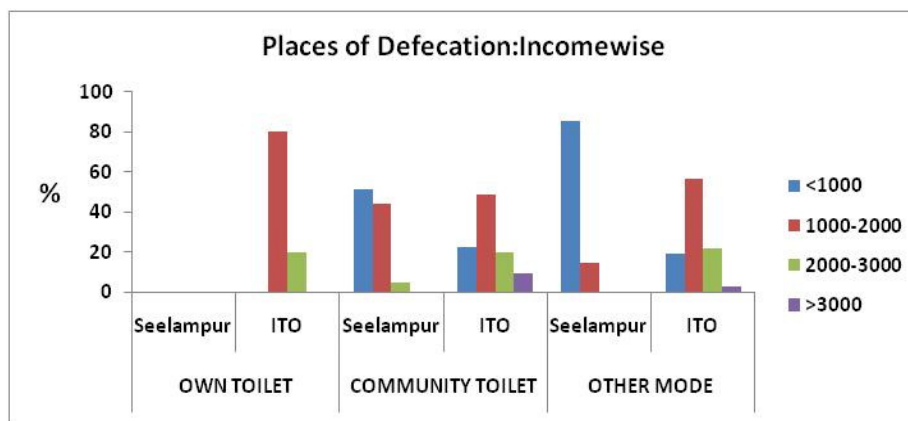


Figure 10

facility, while only 33% at Balmiki Kabristan, ITO are using this facility (Figure 9).

This pattern is almost consistent in all the income groups in both the slums.

*Place of Defecation:* As found that 0% of the Janta colony, Seelampur surveyed area do not have own toilet, while 10% of the population of both Balmiki Kabristan, ITO have own toilets. However community toilets are equally common in both Balmiki Kabristan, ITO and Janta colony, Seelampur, around 85% (Figure10).

Therefore the scene of sanitation is very pathetic in both surveyed areas. Same results are observed overall income group in the surveyed area.

*Garbage Disposal:* While Balmiki Kabristan, ITO visibly has more availability of personal dustbins (i.e.66%) as compare to Janta colony, Seelampur as compare to which is very less (Figure 11).

It is found that in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum, the frequency of daily collecting the garbage is more than the Janta colony, Seelampur. The garbage disposal and collecting problem is very pathetic in Janta colony, Seelampur than Balmiki Kabristan, ITO.

**Diseases and Medical Facilities**

*Permanent Diseases:* While Janta colony, Seelampur population is mostly suffering from permanent diseases like Asthma, T.B, Blood Pressure etc(62%) in comparison toBalmiki Kabristan, ITO with only 38%.While Asthma and Cancer are prominent in Janta colony, Seelampur<1000 category, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO records Diabetes and TB within the income group 1000-2000. The next important disease is Skin problem and Blood Pressure (BP) in which

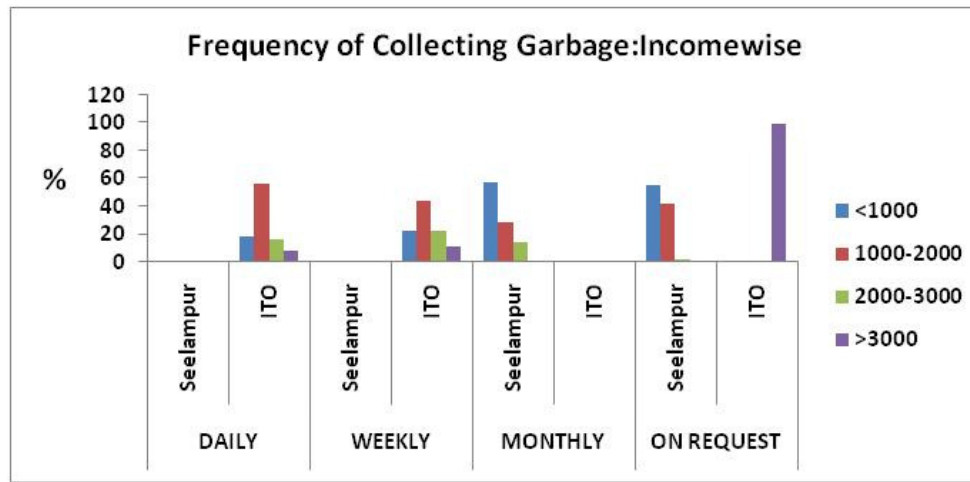


Figure 11

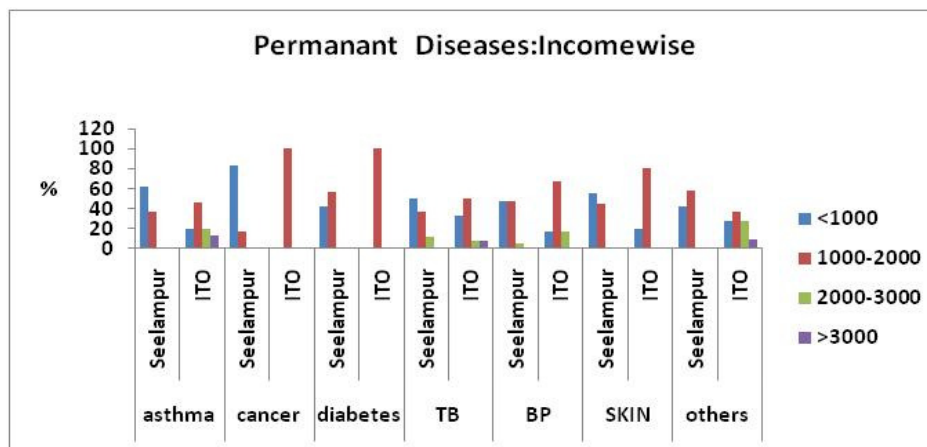


Figure 12

Balmiki Kabristan, ITO slum is recording more number of cases within 1000-2000 income category. Even Janta colony, Seelampur is showing considering number of cases with Skin diseases (Figure 12).

*Seasonal Diseases:* In case of seasonal diseases like Dengue, Viral, Malaria etc, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO (48%) is better off than the Janta colony, Seelampur (52%) slum dwellers (Figure 13).

In seasonal diseases Janta colony, Seelampur tops within <1000 income category while within 1000-2000 income category, Balmiki Kabristan, ITO is recording more number of cases than Janta colony, Seelampur. Similarly within 2000-3000 and >3000 Balmiki Kabristan, ITO suffers more from seasonal diseases.

*Daily Complaints:* Daily complaints like fever, cold and cough, stomach ache etc are more or less same in both

Janta colony, Seelampur and Balmiki Kabristan, ITO surveyed areas (Figure 14).

While, Janta colony, Seelampur records stomach problems in <1000 and also 1000-2000 income category. In Balmiki Kabristan, ITO cold, cough and fever is more dominant in 1000-2000 income category.

### Major Findings

- In the Janta colony, Seelampur slum, the females and children are more while in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO it is less.
- The Janta colony, Seelampur has more dependency on earning members as the non-working group (females and children) are more as compare to

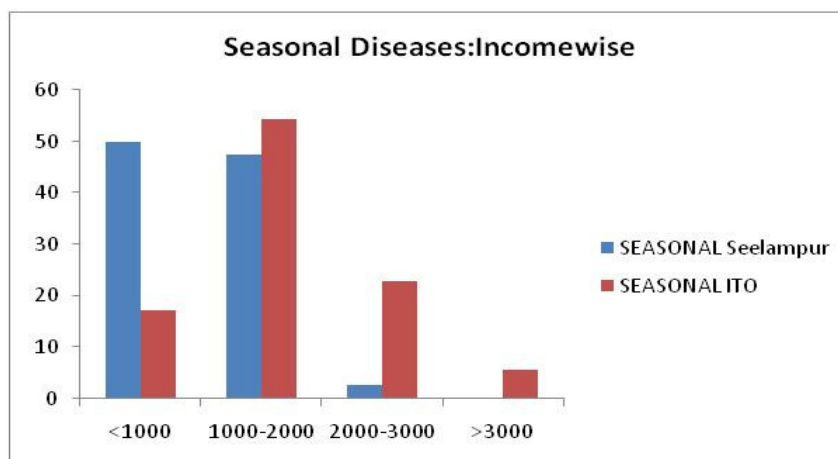


Figure 13

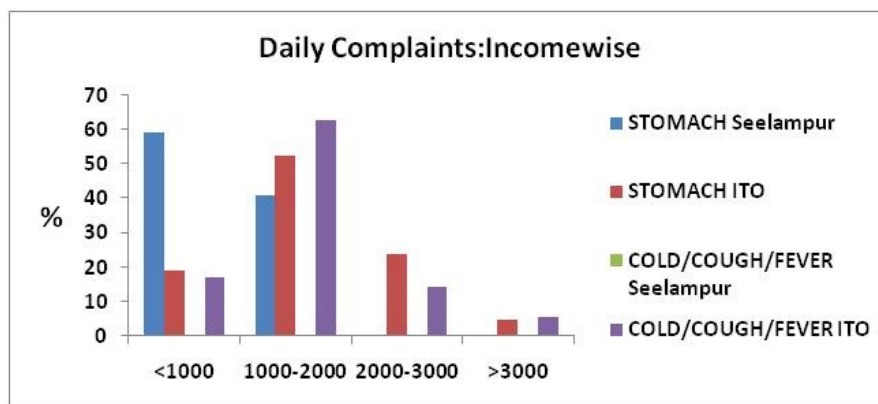


Figure 14

Balmiki Kabristan, ITO. Janta colony, Seelampur are working 5-7 days a week and 6-12 hrs per day while in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO it is less.

- It was found that in Janta colony, Seelampur, the active age group is more in <1000 and 2000-3000 income group but we find working population in >2000 category.

- But in case of in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO, the working population is more in 2000-3000 and >3000 per month category.

- Janta colony, Seelampur slum people are availing more government facilities and it is slightly less accessible in case of Balmiki Kabristan, ITO.

- The diseases are more prevailing in Janta colony, Seelampur while in Balmiki Kabristan, ITO it is less.

- The scene of sanitation is very pathetic in both the slums. Unhygienic environment make their life prone to diseases like dengue, Malaria, diarrhoea etc.

- Mostly people defecate themselves in community toilets.

### CONCLUSIONS

Poverty mainly exists in slums. The above study of analysis examining the provision and accessibility to urban basic services in the slums of Delhi city points towards the fact that, the slums are devoid of water supply connections, toilets, garbage and waste water disposal system,

electricity and connectivity. There is acute problem of water supply through municipal taps. Similarly there is shortage of toilets which is especially faced by women and children. The drains are devoid of cover and the roads are usually unmetalled. Cities need to invest in housing, water, sanitation and other urban services such as garbage and waste water disposal. These services must reach the poor living in the slums. To conclude this, we find that Janta colony, Seelampur slum people are suffering from abject poverty and the living conditions are very alarming and need attention for the concerned authorities for reducing the pain and problems of the section of slum dwellers living in Seelampur area.

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