



SLUM SCENARIO OF DIBRUGARH TOWN, ASSAM

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Abstract: Rapid growth of unplanned urbanization, authority's inability to provide basic facilities, lack of job opportunities in rural areas had led to growth of slums. An estimated 35.2 percent of urban population of India lives in slums as per World Bank collection of development indicators report. Indian cities have witnessed over the years massive influx from rural areas within and outside the states without any proportionate up-gradation of urban infrastructure. This pushed the overcrowded population to live in slums with denial of basic services, shelter and security etc.

Dibrugarh is a one hundred and thirty years old town. It has a glorious history with a rich culture and traditions. It is the tea city of India and an upcoming industrial hub of north-east India. In the last couple of years, Dibrugarh is growing in many folds and becoming a hub of fast growing urban centers of upper Assam. The improvement of physical infrastructure, health and education sector along with functioning of Brahmaputra Cracker Polymer Ltd. (BCPL) and opening of much awaited Bogibeel Bridge over mighty Brahmaputra river connecting northern and southern part of upper Assam resulting in the growth of slums and squatters. It is high time the authorities formulate proper policies and guidelines of urban governance to streamline this extra burden of population before it goes out of control. This paper attempts to highlight the existing socio-economic condition of Dibrugarh urban agglomeration and its slum dwellers in order to find ways and means for inclusive urban development that acknowledges the presence of poor in the town with their constitutional rights.

Keywords: Slums, Population, Tea garden, Brahmaputra Cracker & Polymer Ltd (BCPL), Dibrugarh Municipal Board (DMB), Dibrugarh Master Plan Area (DMPA), Oil India Ltd (OIL).

I. INTRODUCTION:

Location:

Dibrugarh is situated in a picturesque ambience above 342 feet mean sea level. It is surrounded by tea gardens with the misty outlines of the Himalayas in the background. The town, as its name implies, was built on the south bank of the river Dibru, a small tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra, at 27.28° N and 94.35° E. But in course of time, the river Dibru was encroached upon by Brahmaputra thus bringing the town to its bank. Dibrugarh town is situated in the north-eastern corner of India 434 km. towards east from state capital Dispur. Dibrugarh is situated at a distance of 48 Km. from the important commercial town of Upper Assam – 'Tinsukia' and a distance of 80 Km. from the historical town of Assam – 'Sivasagar'.

II. HISTORY OF THE TOWN:

It is possible to conjecture that in ancient days, Dibrugarh was probably under the Chutia Kingdom and about 1233 A.D. It was brought under the Ahom kingdom by the Ahom king who vanquished the Chutiyas. The Ahoms built a fort on the banks of the river Dibru, a tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra. Again, during the insurrection of the



Moamariyas, Dibrugarh came under the control of the Mutchaks from whom it was passed over to the British. When the British established a military base at Dibrugarh they had also constructed a fort on the bank of the river Dibru. It is said that thenceforth, the place which was earlier called simply 'Dibaru' came to be known as 'Dibrugarh'. Dibrugarh was made the District headquarter of Lakhimpur district in the year 1842. In the year 1971, Lakhimpur district got bifurcated into Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. Further, Dibrugarh district got bifurcated into Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts on 1st Oct, 1989. In 1870, the District Judicial Court was established. Under Bengal Act 1872, a Municipality was set up in 1873. In the year 1882, the first train rolled down the tracks from steamer ghat at Dibrugarh and connected to Margherita by railways. In 1947, Assam Medical College was established. The Dibrugarh University got setup in 1965. All India Radio, Dibrugarh was commissioned way back on 15th Feb, 1968. Doordarshan Kendra, Dibrugarh was established in the city in the year 1993. The premiere English daily newspaper of Assam 'The Assam Tribune' started its first journey from Dibrugarh in the year 1939.

Administrative status:

Dibrugarh is the head quarter town of Dibrugarh district. Most of the government offices as well as the private sector offices are located in different parts of the town. A large number of the employees of these offices come from the nearby small towns and even from Tinsukia town.

Dibrugarh Municipal Board (DMB) since its inception in 1873 with its limited resources and manpower is trying its best to guide and shape the urban growth of the town along with up gradation of slum inhabitants.

Dibrugarh is well connected with the rest of the country by all means of transportation. The Mohanbari Airport is located at a distance of about 16 KM from Dibrugarh town.



India map-Showing the location of Dibrugarh

III. ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE:-

Dibrugarh, in addition to its importance as administrative headquarter of the Dibrugarh district, was originally a tea exporting town, and gradually started its expansion physically and economically due to the navigable Brahmaputra River and the development of the road and railways connecting Dibrugarh with other important towns in Assam. Discovery of oil in Digboi, Duliajan, Coal in Ledo, establishment of Railway Workshop in Dibrugarh town raised the importance of this town and this importance has been further strengthened due to the fact that Dibrugarh is the gateway to some of the districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

In the last couple of years, Dibrugarh is growing in many folds and becoming a fast-growing urban center in upper Assam due to the improvement of physical infrastructure, health and education sector along with functioning of Brahmaputra Cracker Polymer Ltd. (BCPL) and opening of much awaited Bogibeel Bridge over mighty Brahmaputra river connecting northern and southern part of upper Assam.

A large number of commercial and industrial activities like tea, petroleum products, food processing, trading, agricultural products, dairy products are established in the town and its adjoining areas. Dibrugarh is well connected to the nearby towns like Tinsukia, Chabua, Duliajan, Naharkatia, Namrup, Moran, Sivasagar, etc. A large number of population of the aforesaid towns regularly visit Dibrugarh in connection with the industrial, commercial, and educational and health related activities. Dibrugarh is the major supplier of food grains, clothes, construction materials, stationary and books, medicines and other essential commodities for the adjoining towns and village areas. The construction of Trans-Arunachal highway shall also increase the economic activities of Dibrugarh in coming years.

IV. INDUSTRIAL IMPORTANCE:

Dibrugarh is the tea city of India - is an industrial city in Upper Assam with sprawling tea gardens. Dibrugarh district is an industrial hub of North-East India. It holds several major industries like Oil, Power, Fertilizer, etc. Duliajan, Dikom, Tengakhat, Naharkatia and Moran are the key locations for Oil and Gas industries in the district. Oil India Limited (OIL), the 2nd public sector company of India engaged in exploration and transportation of crude oil has its field headquarters in Duliajan. The Assam Gas Cracker project also known as Brahmaputra Cracker & Polymer Ltd. (BCPL) was established as a part of implementation of Assam Accord signed by the Govt. of India on 15th Aug, 1985. The Assam Petrochemical Ltd. set up to utilize the huge reserve of natural gas in the upper Assam oil fields is located at Namrup. The Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. was incorporated on 5th April, 2002 at Namrup. The Duliajan – Numaligarh pipeline will be the 1st major cross country natural gas pipeline in Assam with head quarter at Duliajan and branch at Dibrugarh town. North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO), Hydro-Power plant and Thermal Power station situated at Namrup providing majority of power supply for Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar districts. As such, Dibrugarh has a vast scope to be the leading economic zone of the state. Although, Digboi refinery and coal field of Ledo geographically falls under Tinsukia district, it is not very far from Dibrugarh town. Since, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia are considered as twin cities, as such, the development of one city improves the economy of the other.

Demographic profile:

Dibrugarh is a cosmopolitan town with a population of 3870 persons in 1872, which increased to 11227 in 1901. After 1947 the population of the Dibrugarh town started to increase in a very rapid rate and reached the figure of 139565 in 2011. This growth is due to (I) establishment of Government Offices, (2) establishment of various, higher educational institutions including Dibrugarh University and Assam Medical College and Hospital, (3) growth of commercial activities etc.

The total area of existing Dibrugarh Master Plan Area (DMPA) is about 71.83 sq. km. with a total population of about 215349 in 2011 out of which about 139565 live within the Municipal limit covering an area of 15.5 sq. km. The density of population in municipal area is 8946 persons per sq.km.

V. DIBRUGARH SLUMS

Rapid and unplanned urbanization and increasing migration from rural to urban has led to growth of slums. A slum for the purpose of census, has been defined as residential areas where dwellings are unfit for human habitation by reasons dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design n of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of street, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to the safety and health. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) recently in 2016 defined slum as a compact area of at least 300 people or about 60-70 households of poorly built tenements in an unhygienic environment with inadequate infrastructure and lacking basic facilities. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Sustainable Development Goals has emphasized through Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities to ensure accessibility to safe and affordable housing and up-gradation of slums in urban spaces of the world.

Dibrugarh has a hundred and thirty year old history. The population of the Dibrugarh town started to increase in a very rapid rate only after 1947. The growth is due to 1) establishment of government Offices 2) establishment of various higher educational institutions including Dibrugarh University & Assam Medical College & Hospital 3) growth of commercial activities etc. In addition to that Dibrugarh has grown in many folds in the last couple of years, and has become a fast-growing urban centers in upper Assam due to the improvement of physical infrastructure, health and education sector along with functioning of Brahmaputra Cracker Polymer Ltd. (BCPL) and opening of much awaited Bogibeel Bridge over mighty Brahmaputra river

connecting Northern and Southern part of upper Assam. This has resulted in haphazard and unplanned development in various places and also many slums flourished in the same period. In 2011, the slum population in the town was 26.08 % residing in 24 slums and about 62.91% early unauthorized settlers found on vacant land to construct their own houses but many came later were staying rented with early settlers.

Status of slums

The table below shows the details of slums which included the name of slums, the land ownership status, total area, population and number of households. There are 10 notified slums in the town and 14 non-notified slums. The total area constituted by slums is 1.98 sq.km. with total population of 36,166.

Table 5.1 Particulars of Notified and Non-Notified Slums in Dibrugarh

Particulars	Notified Slum	Non- Notified Slum	Total
Slum Pockets	10	14	24
Slum area (Sq.Km)	1.168	0.815	1.983
Slum Population	21235	14931	36166
No.of Household	4242	3284	7526

Table 5.2 Details of Notified and Non-Notified Slums in Dibrugarh

Sl. No.	Name of the Slum	Ownership of land where slum is located	Area in Sq.Km.	Slum population	No. of slum household
Notified Slum					
1.	Paltan Bazaar	04	0.234	4062	790
2.	Gangapara	04	0.043	1022	240
3.	Graham Bazaar	01	0.259	5658	1095
4.	Pathanpatty	04	0.083	511	102
5.	Tulsi Gaon	04	0.071	551	123
6.	Satipara Harizon colony	01 & 04	0.088	2278	470
7.	Loharpatty	04	0.047	2951	570
8.	Mirzabag	04	0.068	702	142
9.	Tinkunia	04	0.059	922	170
10.	Dibrujan	04	0.216	2578	540
Total			1.168	21235	4242
Non-Notified Slum					
11.	South Amolapatty (Near Kabarsthan)	04	0.039	358	81
12.	Guardpara (North Amolapatty)	04	0.041	735	160
13.	Dhubipatty (North Amolapatty)	04	0.028	587	126
14.	Amaraguri	02	0.063	1633	341
15.	Kalibari	04	0.054	1191	244
16.	Koilaghat	02	0.046	1024	207
17.	Borbari Dusadpatty	04	0.080	351	68
18.	Kauripatty	04	0.054	749	166
19.	Chandmarighat	03	0.132	3199	627
20.	Kalishtan	03	0.075	806	189
21.	Boiragimath	04	0.034	692	157
22.	Itabhata Suwani Gaon	03	0.042	1315	306
23.	Chiring Chapori Harizon Colony	04	0.058	900	196
24.	Shasanpara	04	0.069	1391	416
Total			0.815	14931	3284
Grand Total			1.983	36166	7526

Local body – 01, State Government – 02, Central Government – 03, Private - 04, other – 05

Table 5.3 Land tenure status

Particulars	With Patta	Possession Certificate / Occupancy Right	Encroached Private Land	Encroached Public Land	On Rent	Other	Total
Dwelling Unit Nos	1999	1856	118	682	2792	80	7527

Source:- Survey by DMB

As per above table 1999 nos (26.5%) of dwelling unit were having patta land, 1856 (24.6%) dwelling unit were having possession certificate/ occupancy right, 118 (1.56%) dwelling unit has encroached the private land, 682 (9.06%) dwelling unit has encroached the public land, 80 (1.06%) dwelling unit has other land tenure status and 2792 (37.09%) dwelling unit were staying in rented houses.

Quality of life

The quality of life of Dibrugarh slums is still poor like any other slums of the towns of North-east India. Out of 7527 households, mainly 4751(63.11%) households were kutcha, 1889 (25.09%) houses were pucca and rest 887 (11.78)% were semi-pucca houses respectively.

In Dibrugarh 75 % slums were located mainly in Non- Hazardous / Non- Objectionable areas and other slums found along with railway line & river/ water body. About 45% slums are mainly surrounded by residential areas and few are surrounded by commercial or institutions/ others.

Around 62% of slums don't have access to individual latrines and are not connected to piped water supply. The slums are not connected to either with city- wide storm drainage system nor city- wide sewerage system. Kutcha and open drains were found in most of the slums. About 33.3% slums having solid waste disposal facility provided by municipality, 58.3 % do not have solid waste arrangements with minimal open drain clearance. However, the approach road to slum is not very poor, 63% of slums is connected to motorable roads and 92% household in 24 slum pockets is having electricity connection.



A few photographs showing the quality of Dibrugarh slums.

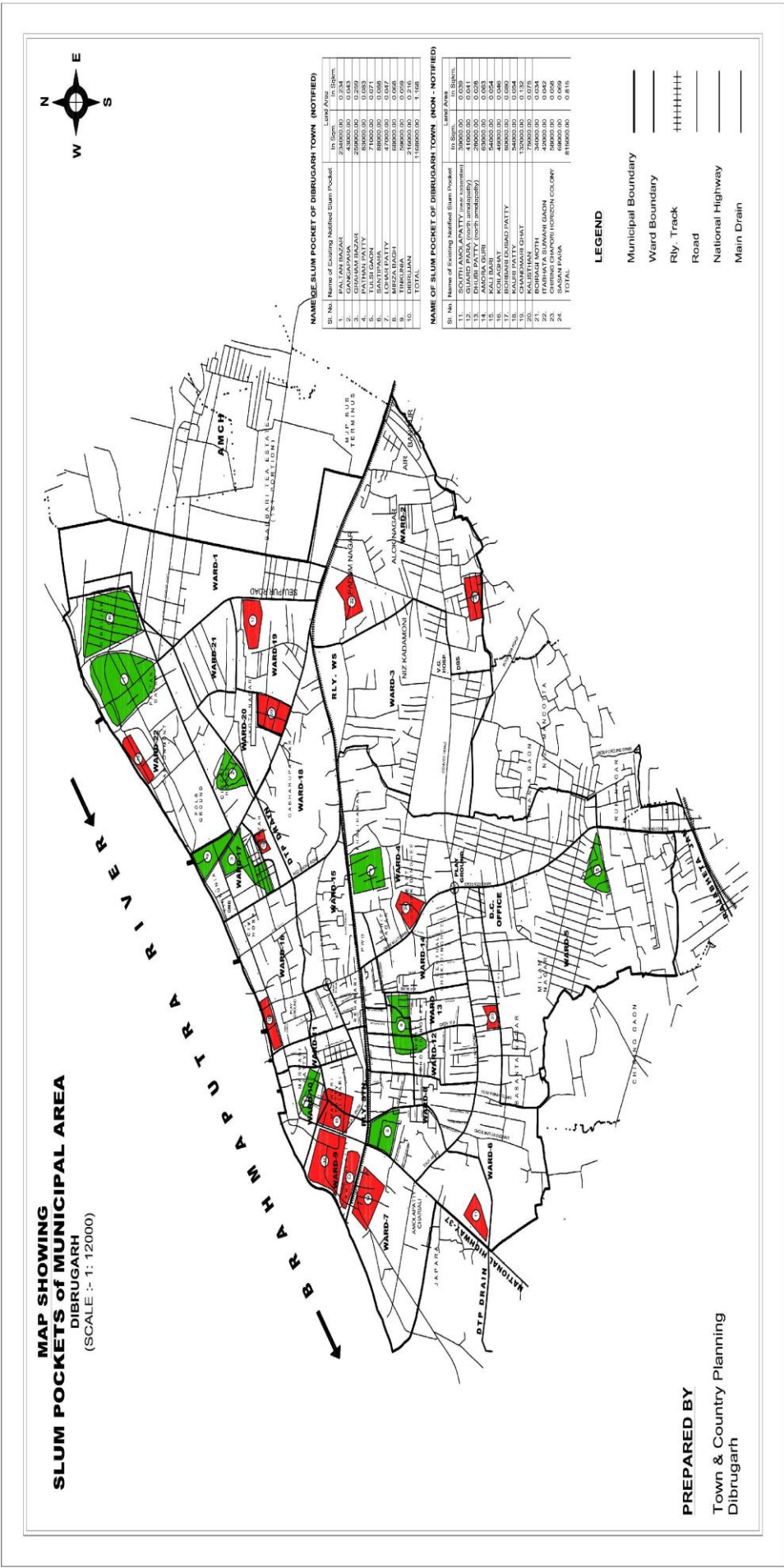


Figure 5.1 Town map showing location of slums
(Notified slum is shown in green colour and Non-notified in red colour.)

Slum improvement policy

Government of India has implemented a number of housing related policies at different points of time incorporating slum rehabilitation in cities in development framework. Government of India in 2005 instituted an ambitious project- “Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)” under Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) where it introduced provisions towards making housing available for the urban poor through fund allocation. Likewise government undertook others ventures like National Urban Livelihoods Mission, Rajiv Rinn Yojana etc. refinancing schemes such as Urban Housing Fund Refinance Scheme, Special Refinance Scheme for Low Income housing, Refinance Scheme for Construction Finance for Affordable Housing. Indian government again initiated a scheme called “Rajiv Awas Yojana” in 2011 with the aim to curb the slum problem across the country by providing the slum dwellers a decent shelter, basic amenities and a dignified life. The government is collaborating with the state governments and private players envisaged through this scheme to accommodate urban poor through affordable housing in its effort to build slum-free cities in India. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) started a new scheme named Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in 2015 with the prospect to achieve a slum-free India by 2022 in its vision of “housing for all” expedition. Studies have shown that the number of slums are reducing in India where it reduced to 33510 slums in 2012 from 51688 in the year 2002 (MoSPI NSS report 2015). The reason for the declining number of slums and the comparatively low growth rate of urban slum population as compared to the urban population could be accredited to the government policies in the slum-free campaign and another explanation for this is the low domestic migration rates among the economically weak population (Kumar, 2010).

However, the above schemes are unable to provide a noticeable change in quality of life of Dibrugarh slums due to lack of integrated efforts among the stakeholders. The slum dwellers are not interested to vacate the land under their possession to give an opportunity to the local authority to take slum re-development programs under various government policies as slum dwellers donot have faith in the authority.

VI. CONCLUSION:

Growth of slums due to migration of people from rural areas in search of livelihood and better life is a common phenomenon globally. Slums are always the neglected parts of the city and lives in appealingly poor housing and basic services. If slum growth is not controlled and contained effectively, it would result in an imminent peril to the quality of life and sustainability of urban cities in general and the slum dwellers in particular. Slums cannot be removed or shifted completely from the cities as long as freedom of movement is allowed by the constitution. However, full utilization of the meager efforts and state welfare policies can give them some relief or make their living condition slightly better if honestly implanted.

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