

What major events
have led to india's
slums?



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Imagine trash covering the streets, houses built with anything that can give efficient shelter, and 26% of children underweight or stunted. In India's slums this is reality. Millions of people are living in India with no type of sanitation just outside its cities, where water is running perfectly fine. Over the years, the population of India has grown tremendously but so have its slums. India accounts for the country with the world's largest population which also indicates a large poverty threshold.

The country can only do so much to limit its poverty line but it seems that it hasn't done enough. A great number of people are living in what are called "slums" outside of the cities. These slums are communities of shacks made of what little people can obtain. They have no access to any type of sanitation and only 35% of slum-dwellers get their supply of water from tap. The living conditions of these slums are very cramped and congested with shacks being as close as an arm measure away. Within just 10 years the populations of Indian's living in these environments have risen from 27. million to 40 million. Today more than 32 percent of India's population live on less than \$1. 25 a day and more than 68 percent live on less than \$2 a day, making up one-third of the total number of the world's people living in poverty. With the rate of poverty so great in India, it is no wonder that the number of Indians living in slums has more than doubled in the past two decades. With so many people living there, the city is unable to cope with the strain. With the population growth, job availability is scarce and rare. This causes large numbers of unemployment.

India's rural migrants, desperate to escape poverty, flock to the cities. Many people cannot afford to live in the city, so they live just outside it and spend

their time searching for work. Slum dwellers inhabit land that the city has not used, but are in fear that the city will come in any moment to claim it in order to expand. This is because their homes or shacks can be located in any area that they find. Therefore in order for people to find work they migrate to the outskirts of cities when big construction projects are in action. These areas are not legally owned by the people and can be evicted at any moment.

What is being done to stop the increase of these slums? A solution that could benefit both the government and the slums of India is, instead of the government working against the market, they work with the market. By building housing, job opportunities will increase, which in return decreases the amount of Indians in the slums; now that some slum-dwellers are making a moderate income. Another positive affect that comes with this solution would be that the new housing could be targeted to upper and middle classes, leaving sellers to sell to the poor. Leatherwork is now a major industry in Dharavi.

Small garment factories have increased throughout the slums, making children's clothes or women's dresses for the Indian market or export abroad. India is a rising economic power, even as huge portions of its economy operate in the shadows. The informal economy of India exists largely outside government oversight and, in the case of slums, without government help or encouragement. Unlike China, India does not have colossal manufacturing districts because India has chosen not to follow the East Asian development model of building a modern economy by starting with low-skill manufacturing.