Transforming Patterns Of Challenges And Agency: Understanding Migration In Delhi-NCR's Slums

Dr Anil Kumar[1*], Dr Ashutosh Kumar Chaubey[2]

[1*]Associate Professor Department Of History Rajdhani College University Of Delhi
[2]Assistant Professor Department Of History Rajdhani College University Of Delhi

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the influence of economic fluctuations on the establishment of an ideal environment for the continuing migration of citizens to Delhi from neighboring states, including Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The study investigates the experiences of landless and disadvantaged individuals who came to Delhi over time in search of enhanced living conditions and employment possibilities. People came to the United States in both small and large families because they needed money, desired a better life, and wanted to be free of debt. The study connects the history of migration to the tendency of more people moving to cities in several regions of Delhi, like Sangam Vihar and Bhalesua Dairy. It will look at how politics made slums, where impoverished people dwell, expand. How migration patterns have changed over time, with a focus on the economic reasons that have affected migration. The study also looks at the contradictory effects of urbanization, which have made life harder for migrants even though they have created new opportunities. These groups live in slums in cities and try to make their lives better and make money while dealing with the fact that the city is growing quickly. We will also discuss about how politically conscious the poor neighborhoods in Delhi are, such as Sangam Vihar and Bhalswa Village, which are two of the city's poorest districts. It looks at how the social and political situations of these excluded groups affect how much they know about and are involved in the larger urban setting. **Keywords:** Urban migration, Delhi-NCR slums, Informal settlements.

Introduction

The UN Migration Agency IOM says that migration is the movement of one person or a group of people across an international border or inside a state.

People moving from one place to another is what human migration is. You can accomplish that on purpose by moving to the new place (geographic region) for a short or long time. It can be for a short time, a long time, or just for the commute. It is also a worldwide issue that comes from the capitalism system in the world. According to the World Forum, there are over 272 million international migrants, which is 3.5% of the world's population. This paper delineates the issues for an extensive examination. The research topics focus on the evolution of migration over time, the trends it has followed in relation to its historical and contemporary contexts, and how the study contributes to understanding the shifting motivations for migration throughout history.

Historical Overview of Migration

People have been moving around for hundreds of years. In ancient times, people moved in groups and alone to get away from war and conflict, starvation and poverty, religious intolerance or political persecution, or to discover new jobs and economic opportunities. They also moved to trade and visit new areas. Trade has always been a big part of how people move around throughout Asia. This is how the well-known trade routes between India, the Arabian Peninsula, and West Africa got started. Blacksmiths, acrobats, and singers who traveled in small social groups within South Asia often moved in circles as part of their work. There were clear signs of these kinds of circular migration patterns in the early colonial period. Settlers often brought new diseases to the Indigenous people who lived in the areas. Military campaigns and the expansion of settlement groups meant that local communities lost their land and the right to use it. The effects of globalization and widespread slavery in other countries were clear in the rise in prices, which was caused by the rise in access to resources. This, in turn, affected people in other areas through the flow of goods

in and out of the country, which led to migration. As cities grew, it became harder for people to make a living. But when people had the chance to take charge, they might change the balance of power in their area, which would change their socio-economic environment in a way that would help them survive.

People moved because there was a demand for workers to help with rebuilding and to support the economic boom in cities that were rising. People from previous colonies in the adjacent state of Delhi came to find economic freedom. They came to big cities to look for work. In contemporary times, human migration manifested as either voluntary or involuntary movement (distress migration) aimed at enhancing living conditions.

Over the years, the process of migrating changes. Robin Cohen (1995), a historian, has found different times or occurrences of migration that have happened in the last 400 years. Migration across Europe, Africa, and Asia (17th-18th centuries) Settling permanently in the colonies (1500s to the middle of the 1800s) Slavery from 1550 to the end of the 18th century Indentured labor (1834–1917) moving to the New World (1800s–1930) Migration after World War II (1940s to 1960s) Migration after the 1970s.

The examination of migration resulting from diverse social, economic, or political factors. In a country like India, studying how people migrate around the country as migrants can help us understand society better. Both the host city and the home city can benefit from migration, but there are also drawbacks. For home cities, the benefits are that migrants send money home, there is less pressure on jobs and resources, and migrants may come back with new skills. For host cities, the benefits are that there are more diverse cultures, labor shortages are lessened, and migrants are willing to do low-paid, low-skilled jobs. For home towns, the downsides are a smaller pool of workers, an imbalance between males and women, and the problem of brain drain. For host cities, the downsides are too many people and disagreements between different religions and cultures.

But throughout the years, this large number of immigrants has had a big effect on Delhi's population, economics, and politics. Delhi's migration and political strategies are closely linked since migrant populations have a big impact on elections and government policy.

Economic Migration and the Urban Settlement: Slum Development in Delhi
The Aravalli hills are at the base of Sangam Vihar, which is on the border between Delhi and Haryana. There is still no answer to the question of who owns land in this area. According to the Delhi Master Plan 2001, this area is part of the "green belt," which is only for farming and forests. People who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time and work in politics say that the property was previously used for farming. Members of the Gujjar community owned it, but they eventually gave it to the State Government in exchange for money. But after getting paid, the Gujjars are said to have sold parts of the land illegally to people who moved there from nearby rural and urban areas. People informally divided up plots, and most transactions were done through "power of attorney" agreements instead of official registrations.

People often think that markets don't do a good job of providing municipal infrastructure because of things like market failures and monopolistic power. Sangam Vihar exemplifies these issues, functioning as a representative instance of unlawful settlements in Indian urban areas. Its evolution from a loose group of homes to a large, densely populated town shows how hard it is for cities to grow quickly and without planning. Addressing ongoing problems with infrastructure, sanitation, water supply, energy, and healthcare requires concerted action by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups. Regularization efforts, together with targeted developmental measures, are necessary to improve living circumstances and make the settlement a part of Delhi's larger urban scene.

Sangam Vihar is a low-income, illegal colony in South Delhi that shows how essential public services are provided in these kinds of places. Many NGOs and civil society groups think it is a dangerous place, and some, like CASP-Plan and Vidhya, have made important contributions to health, education, and livelihoods while also giving the current study important information.

Preliminary investigations and interviews with local inhabitants, augmented by information from the Community Aid and Sponsorship Program-Plan (an NGO operating in the area), indicate that the settlement's roots can be traced to 1979. People from nearby states and villages came to Delhi looking for work, which helped it flourish in its early years. As the 1982 Asian Games got closer, even more people moved to South Delhi. Construction workers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh came to work on projects and built up temporary homes in what is now Sangam Vihar.

Over time, the first makeshift shelters changed into permanent brick buildings, which marked the beginning of Sangam Vihar as a real residential area. This new information fits with what Trond Vedeld and Abhay Siddham have said about the colony's history, which they say goes back to big political and social events like the Partition of 1947. When Partition happened, rich Muslim households left behind a lot of empty property. Later, those who had to leave their homes took over this land. These early jobs set the stage for what would eventually become one of Delhi's biggest illegal colonies.

The 1982 Asian Games and the growth of industrial areas like the Okhla Industrial Area made the demand for cheap accommodation even higher. This brought a lot of unskilled migrant workers to South Delhi. By the year 2000, studies done by CASP-Plan said that Sangam Vihar had more than 200,000 people living on about 150 acres of land that had been taken up. Vedeld and Siddham (2002) did another study that called the colony "unauthorized" and said the population was about 400,000. Even if the number of people living in an area changes all the time because of people moving there, election statistics can give you an idea of how big it is: Block D has around 9,000 voters on its own. The fact that so many migrants are registering to vote shows how much power they have to change local politics.

We need to make a difference between slums, JJ colonies, and illegal colonies. Slums usually take over public land, while unauthorized colonies occur when people buy or sell land without permission. Sangam Vihar started off as a group of "kuccha" dwellings, but now most of the buildings are permanent, thus it's hard to call it a slum. Housing conditions range from basic homes made of plastic sheets and wood to well-built masonry residences. Some residents live in residences that are similar to those in planned colonies, but most live in small brick houses that are about 50 square feet. There are several places where Jhuggi settlements occur, but not everywhere. The Delhi Department of Urban Development has found 1,071 illegal colonies and started the process of making them legal. Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Sangam Vihar have also asked for this status. Based on information from 46 of these groups, the colony's population is thought to be around 630,000. Sangam Vihar covers roughly 600 hectares and is divided into two Vidhan Sabha constituencies: Saket (which includes Devli hamlet) and Tughlakabad. It is divided into various blocks, like A, B, C, and D, which were unofficially given to them by local contractors when they first moved there.

Infrastructure Challenges in Sangam Vihar

One of the most pressing issues in Sangam Vihar is the state of the roadways. Ratiya Marg, the main road, has a lot of potholes that make driving risky, especially during the rainy season. The short internal pathways, which are sometimes blocked by piles of trash and exposed drains, make it much harder for people to get around every day. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) needs to step in and do something, because the problems with infrastructure are too big for NGOs to handle.

The settlement also has very bad sanitation and trash management. There is a lot of plastic trash, organic waste, and animal droppings on the streets, but the MCD doesn't seem to be doing much about it. This ongoing disregard makes both environmental damage and health hazards worse.

A lot of people in Sangam Vihar steal electricity, and many homes and small businesses rely on illegal power connections. These illegal connections make the official electrical distribution network weaker and put households in a lot of danger because of the tangled and dangerous wiring.

Water shortages still have an impact on daily life. Because the Delhi Jal Board hasn't added any new pipelines to this area, people have to buy water from private vendors. These vendors typically charge too much or too little, which makes it harder for families with modest incomes to make ends meet.

The hamlet is even more isolated because there are no postal services. This means that people can't send or receive basic messages or official letters, which makes them feel even more disconnected from the city's formal infrastructure.

Healthcare services are another big hole. Low-income families rely heavily on NGOs like CASP, Samadhan, and Mamta because there aren't many of them in the sector. Even though these groups are doing their part, they can't cover the healthcare demands of such a vast population. So, a lot of people go to informal clinics and dispensaries, which are generally managed by people who don't have much or any medical expertise. These places take advantage of sick people and make their health risks worse. Not having easy-to-get, inexpensive, and dependable healthcare keeps people stuck in cycles of hardship and neglect.

The lack of infrastructure in Sangam Vihar is part of a bigger problem with not providing basic public services. Inconsistent government engagement leads to the deterioration of roads and sanitary systems. Meanwhile, basic services like water, electricity, and healthcare are mostly provided by unregulated private companies or NGOs that don't have enough resources. This condition not only lowers the quality of life for people, but it also shows that there is an urgent need for long-term state-led solutions that involve active community participation to overcome these ongoing problems.

Most of the people who live in Sangam Vihar are migrants or their children who came from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttaranchal. Vedeld and Siddham did a poll of 200 family heads in 2001 and discovered that 83% of them said the chance of making more money was the main reason they moved to Delhi. 93% of them said they moved because they were having trouble finding work in their rural areas. A lot of people moved to Sangam Vihar because the land was cheap (59%) and the rent was inexpensive (29%). Sangam Vihar looked like a slum in its early years, with temporary shelters and very no infrastructure. People usually got land through informal means, such "power of attorney" transfers. As settlers' tenancy became more stable over time, they started to invest in their homes, which eventually changed the region with permanent structures. Vedeld and Siddham see this change as proof that migrants are following a "long-term economic strategy."

Trond and Siddham's conversations with locals show that their motives for moving to Sangam Vihar weren't

just about money. Many people wanted to live in cities because they had access to things like electricity, healthcare, and educational opportunities for their kids that were hard to come by or not available in their home towns. For many families, living in the city has benefits for both their jobs and their whole way of life. Many people have lived in the colony for more than ten years, and their families have grown up and gone to school or worked there. Now, their identities and daily lives are firmly bound to both Delhi and Sangam Vihar. According to official records and government data, providing formal services like piped water and regulated power to Sangam Vihar would require a lot of resources and may not be possible with just direct governmental engagement. In this situation, politicians have done a lot to make life better for migrant populations who have moved to the area. Many migrants have been able to find steady jobs in a short amount of time because to different government programs. This has allowed them to support their families and send money back home. Over time, the people of Sangam Vihar have also become a politically powerful group that has a say in elections and helps make decisions about policies at the state level in Delhi.

In actuality, skilled workers and private operators, not state-led programs, provide most of the important utilities like water, power, and sanitation. Community-based management models are a good option since they reduce the need for government processes and promote development that comes from within the community. These methods could also make it possible for people living in nearby informal settlements to take part and gain from the situation. Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Sangam Vihar are very important to this process since they collect money from members to pay for different development projects, such as fixing roads, managing sanitation, getting people access to healthcare, and going to school.

People often see slums and illegal colonies as problems for urban growth, however Sangam Vihar is an example that goes against this idea. Sangam Vihar shows how underprivileged communities can deal with important problems with resource allocation by encouraging significant community involvement and using its political power. Its experience gives useful tips on how to improve the lives of migrants and teaches useful lessons about city design and government not just in Delhi but also in other parts of the country that are similar.

Transforming Bhalswa: Challenges and Opportunities in Slum Rehabilitation

Bhalswa, an urban village in Delhi, is home to a significant portion of the city's urban poor. The competition focuses on a site located west of Bhalswa, adjacent to Bhalswa Lake. Currently undeveloped, this site offers a unique opportunity to create affordable and sustainable housing for the area.

Bhalswa, home to over 200,000 residents, represents a significant portion of Delhi's urban poor. Most inhabitants are employed in nearby industrial zones like Badli or work as daily wage laborers in agriculture, industry, and commercial activities. Some also earn their livelihoods from jobs associated with the adjacent landfill. However, dignified housing remains out of reach for many residents.

Dumpsite	Year when it became operational	Height (meter)	Land Occupied (acre)	Approximate quantity of legacy waste (million tonne)	Quantity of fresh water received (TPD)	Status of Bio mining
Bhalswa, Delhi	1994	62	36	8	2000	As per the CPCB report, 19 trommels have been installed; 1.15 million tonne of legacy waste was processed and stabilized till January 2021

Status of major dumpsites in India (**Bhalswa Number-3**)

Bhalswa's current state traces back to a resettlement plan implemented between 2000 and 2002, during the modernization and urbanization of Jahangirpuri following the introduction of the Delhi Metro. Residents were relocated approximately 2 kilometres away with promises of basic amenities and essential facilities. Today, the area is unsustainable and densely populated, with many families living near a massive landfill that receives thousands of metric tonnes of waste daily. In response to these challenges, the Delhi Government has initiated efforts to rejuvenate the Bhalswa area. These include cleaning the Najagarh drain, collaborating with the DDA to restore the Bhalswa Horseshoe Lake, and working with the MCD to manage and reduce the landfill's impact. The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), under the leadership of the Delhi Government, is focused on providing affordable housing and restoring dignity to the city's homeless. DUSIB owns an undeveloped parcel of land in Bhalswa Jahangirpuri, known as "Pocket F," located adjacent to Bhalswa Lake. This site presents an opportunity to resettle individuals living in nearby slums and informal settlements as part of the Delhi Government's slum rehabilitation program. Although the site is currently undeveloped, it is partially occupied by unplanned settlements. Further details about the site are outlined below. Such schemes lead to the migrant help and increase the vote share of the political parties.

The challenges in meeting the demand for secure and affordable housing in Delhi are multifaceted. Key obstacles include the scarcity of well-located and serviced land, limited access to essential infrastructure, inadequate public spaces, poor transportation networks, delays in housing delivery, and a lack of financial and institutional support. Furthermore, the quality of housing often falls short of acceptable standards. However, migrant communities had to survive even in the detours situation that led to a lower status of living. Later, such slums become deciding factors for the power authority of particular parties.

Providing adequate housing goes beyond simply offering shelter. It involves creating livable environments that align with sustainable development goals in safe, inclusive, and resilient urban communities. Participants in this competition are encouraged to explore innovative ways to utilize their political rights, which leads to political consciousness and the ability to bring change into political power. This includes alleviating urban pressures related to population density, service delivery, and infrastructure through approaches that prioritize dignity, sustainability, and liveability. Additionally, the designs of Slum areas aim to find and clean places that lead to emissions and support climate adaptation to ensure long-term resilience for both communities' slums and the upper middle class.

Conclusion

This research concludes that the intricate relationship between economic fluctuations, migration, and urbanization in shaping the socio-economic landscape of Delhi, with a specific focus on areas such as Sangam Vihar and Bhalswa Dairy.
The findings demonstrate migrants as marginalized communities while striving for economic independence and improved livelihoods, face systemic obstacles in integrating into the broader urban framework. Despite these challenges, they become resilient in their communities and evolved political consciousness. That defines their needs in migrated cities, and the socio-economic struggles of slum residents have shaped their collective identity and political engagement, enabling them to voice their concerns and assert their rights within the urban context. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of economic factors, migration patterns, and urbanization intersect to shape the growth of slums and the lived experiences of their inhabitants. It calls for inclusive urban policies that address the structural inequalities faced by migrants' communities, fostering sustainable development and empowering marginalized groups to thrive in a rapidly urbanizing world.

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