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Q5(c)

Are slums the manifestations of industrialisation and urbanisation in India? Explain.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

Industrialization and Urbanisation in India: Evolution of modern industry in India; Growth of urban settlements in India; Working class: structure, growth, class mobilization; Informal sector, child labour; Slums and deprivation in urban areas.

Core demand of the question

- Define slums as insecure, underserved dense settlements
- Explain links to industrialisation and urbanisation in India
- Argue they are manifestations of those processes under informal labour and weak housing, not only of 'failure'
- Give Indian examples

Revision summary

Slums are insecure dense settlements tied to urban labour, not only to poverty as a personal trait.

Mill and port cities produced classic industrial slums such as parts of Mumbai.

Service and construction urbanisation produces slums without a factory core.

Caste, tenure politics and eviction cycles shape Indian slums.

They manifest growth under informality more than a simple planning failure.

Introduction

Slums are dense settlements with insecure tenure, poor water and sanitation, and a close mix of living and earning. In India they are not an accident at the edge of growth. They are how **urbanisation with thin formal housing and informal labour** actually looks. Industrialisation is part of the story, not the whole story.

Body

Industrialisation and the mill city

Dharavi beside Mumbai's old industrial and now service economy, mill lands, and port work is the classic picture: labour needed by the city cannot afford formal shelter, so it builds **self-housing** on residual land. Jamshedpur's planned core and its labour bustees, Kanpur's old mill neighbourhoods, and garment pockets in NCR show the same. Industry wants cheap labour at the gate; it does not build enough quarters.

Urbanisation beyond the factory

India urbanises through construction, services and census-town sprawl. Slums and informal colonies appear around those jobs too: domestic workers near elite housing, construction

workers on sites, waste workers near dumps. **Mike Davis**-style planetary slum arguments fit only if we keep Indian specificity: caste clusters inside slums, political patronage of votes, and periodic eviction for 'world-class' projects.

Are slums manifestations of industrialisation and urbanisation? **Yes**, as the housing form of a labour regime that urbanises without a corresponding right to the city. **Not only**, because rural landlessness, partition-era camps, and failure of public housing also feed them. Slums are the **urban face of informality**, which industrialisation and urbanisation in India have jointly expanded.

Clearance without work and tenure just shifts the slum. In-situ upgrading and the political organisation of slum dwellers (Mumbai, Ahmedabad) show they are also a **social world**, not only a planning disease.

Flow diagram

Industry and construction demand -> Cheap informal labour
Urban land markets -> Unaffordable formal housing
Cheap informal labour -> Slums
Unaffordable formal housing -> Slums

Conclusion

Slums in India manifest industrial and urban growth that needs cheap labour and does not provide secure housing. They also manifest caste, patronage and public-housing failure. Treating them as the city's outside misses that they are how the Indian city is made.

Facts & figures

Dharavi

Large Mumbai settlement mixing housing and informal manufacturing beside a globalising city.

Census slum definition

Administrative counts miss many informal colonies that function as slums.

Eviction and redevelopment

World-class city projects often relocate labour without matching livelihoods.