What is a slum :-

- A slum is an urban informal settlement that is unfit for living because it lacks access to basic sanitation, drinking water, electricity etc.

Situation of slums :-

- Unhygienic conditions.
- Lack of medical facilities.
- Lack of sanitation.
- Congested.
- No access to drinking water and electricity.
- Most of the slums inhabitants can't be beneficiaries to Govt schemes.
- Only few slums are recognized by Govt. Conditions in unrecognized slums are even more worse.
- No drainage system. In most slums, waste water flow in between houses.
- The little medical facilities available in slums is provided by NGOs.

Causes :-

- Increasing rural to urban migration.
- Urban areas are not being improved enough to accommodate the new inhabitants.
- Poor planning of cities.
- Poverty and lack of job opportunities in rural areas are the push factors of migration.
- High cost of living in urban areas.
- Natural disasters.
- Increasing population.
- Urbanization – Pull factor of rural migration.
- Social exclusion.
- Informal economy.
- Some politicians use slum inhabitants as their vote banks. Though they give fake promises of improving the living conditions, they encourage slums.
- Social conflicts – civil wars.

Effects :-

- Reduced life expectancy of slum inhabitants.
- Health problems due to drinking contaminated water.
How can slums be improved?

- Environment pollution.
- Low standard of living.
- Degraded health conditions.
- Those living in slums get victimized easily by alcohol and drugs.
- Slums inhabitants will become the worst victims of natural disasters.
- Slums breed violence, crime, diseases, epidemics and psychological illnesses.
- Preterm births.
- Malnutrition in children.
- Child labor.
- No safety for women living in slums due to high no. of drunkards.

Failed Solutions :-

- Slum removal – It made slum inhabitants homeless.
- Slum relocation – It moved poor people further away from their work places.

Successful steps :-

- Slum upgrading. It improved slum’s living conditions. But it does not address poverty and low wages of informal economy.
- Organized urbanization – Planning & Modifying urban areas to accommodate newcomers.
- Legitimizing slums instead of driving them out of their homes.
- Improving job opportunities in rural as well as urban areas.
- Planning rural development along with urban development.
- Economic development.
- Better transport facilities.
- Affordable housing in urban areas.

What India is doing :-

- Govt of India launched ‘National Urban Health Mission’ to improve health care facilities for urban poor.
- India implemented ‘slum upgrading’ in a few recognized slums.
- In 2015, Indian Govt allocated budget to replace crowded slums with 2 crore homes.

Conclusion :-

Besides improving the slums, the causes of slums creation should be addressed.
Distributive development will serve the purpose and thereby everyone can have a dignified and healthy life.

**Afterwords** :- What do you think about this issue? Feel free to express your opinions in the comment section below.

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