



Sindhi Basti Camp location profile

Location	Sector E, Pocket 2, Vasant Kunj, Nearest station is Chattarpur
Maximum Population	1000
Number of homes/tents	300
Number of children	5-6 per family
Number of literate inhabitants	7
Number of children in school	Under 20% of total child population (13 out of 68 surveyed families contained students)
Typical salary	3000-5000 Rs.

Housing

Laying in the vicinity of new government funded flats, this small slum experiences some of the most squalid conditions in Delhi, and all of India. The slum is home to 1000 people at the most, living in up to 300 tiny and sketchy tents.



Each tent is made of very random materials found from commercial waste, including old billboard adverts, rags and rusty aluminium sheets. Inside most tents were flimsy hammocks and straw beds where the residents slept, scattered around inside the tents where pots used supposedly for cooking

and bathing, pet dogs, gas stoves (chulas) and other very few objects in their possession, all of which were constantly infested with millions of flies that live in the slum. Only a few tents had the muffled sound of an old radio or satellite coming from inside, a very rare modern luxury found at Sindhi Basti camp.

Water and Electricity

As one walks through the slum, a severe lack of hygiene is very noticeable due to the lack of water supplies, with most residents complaining this to be their biggest problem. Residents have no pipeline supply of water from the Indian authorities due to the legality of their settlement, so they must purchase only bottled water with 20 litres costing 15 Rupees, (the supply of their bottled water was private and concealed from foreign visitors). Due to this shortage in water supply, hygiene is not paid much attention to in this residency and water is used for much more necessary means, e.g. food and washing. Residents complain about how they must also beg for water from the Bisleri water company, whose trucks drive down the muddy road connecting Sindhi Basti to the rest of Vasant Kunj.



Children and adults bath in the open; sharing water and body cloths, all of the residents excrete in nearby rubbish dumps, the homes are infested with flies and other disease carrying insects, rubbish piles up nearby every tent and in the middle of every pathway and dirty running water runs down every muddy street mixing with the rubbish, this combined makes the air very dirty and nauseating to any visitor. A clinical-face mask is strongly advised if a foreigner visits this slum.



In addition to this, the government supplies no electricity to this settlement since it is illegally settled on by these people, so instead the very limited electricity supply comes from stolen electricity by tapping nearby power lines, there is also no gas supply to Sindhi Basti, so locals use wood for fuel, a previous example given is in the use of 'Chulas', that are small and very primitive brick ovens. Many of the slum also complain this to be their second biggest problem, with the non-existence of proper bathrooms to be their third biggest problem.



Education

Due to the intense poverty in the slum, children have no choice but to work to support their families, this means they do not attend school and do not enjoy a proper childhood. Furthermore, there exists a social literacy problem in the small society that exists within this slum, with only 7 of the entire population being able to read and write (all of which are men), a sixth of the children attend some sort of school and half of the women do some sort of job. Those children that don't go to school work from as young as four years selling balloons and other cheap items in the Delhi red-light district, or simply just begging, simply because they have to support their families.

Work

Those children who do not attend school are boot cleaners, toy sellers or beggars. Most men are labourers, but some men have very bad jobs, ear cleaners and cobblers are just a few. The vast majority of women are simply housewives, married off at an early age.



Legal issues

The men work as construction workers earning at most 5000 Rs a month from their job as construction workers, all of which is done without ID. There are many reasons why the residents of this village cannot obtain ID's; with no proper address and job, the people find it extremely difficult to get an ID card, only a privileged few are in possession of one. Moreover, the current illegally founded slum is in a dispute with the local Jat community, who live in legal homes, thus hindering any possibility of the locals in the Sindhi Basti camp obtaining proper ID cards. The head of the slum is called Dhanbat Pradhan who also lives in the slum, he helps with legal court issues facing the community.

Food and medicine

According to one family interviewed by Lakshyam, the slum village has access to a grocery store and a clinic. But the supplies of this grocery store is shared between the entire population, so therefore there are scant supplies. The population cook their food on chulas, using wood as fuel. The smell and smoke of the burning wood fills the air occasionally, while the smell may be unpleasant for visitors, it certainly is not for the local Sindhi Basti community.