

## RESEARCH NOTE

### The Context of Uncontrolled Urban Settlements in Delhi<sup>1</sup>

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#### Summary

In developing countries, more than half of the urban population lives in unplanned settlements where their quality of life is substandard and even inhuman. Delhi, the capital city of India, is a prime example as more than half of its population resides in uncontrolled settlements despite modest planning intervention since the inception of its first master plan in 1962. The aims of this study are to review the rapid urbanization and proliferation of uncontrolled settlements in Delhi and shed some light on the characteristics of households and housings there. After reviewing urban development with spatial growth and demographic dynamics, various types of settlements are discussed and three types of settlements are selected for case studies, viz. an unauthorized colony, an urban village and a notified slum area. The data used includes a survey of approx. 225 households, interviews with various stakeholders and official census data. The authors' analysis reveals wide variations in socio-economic and dwelling-unit characteristics among different types of settlements. The results show a lack of physical and social infrastructure across the settlements. The households in the slum settlement have a very low income level, while households in the unauthorized colony and urban village have relatively high amounts of income. Urban infrastructure provisions are identified as a key area for planning intervention in order to integrate these settlements into sustainable residential developments. Besides such provisions, economic interventions are also necessary for slum households. This paper raises some important issues concerned with improving conditions in uncontrolled urban settlements.

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#### Introduction

Today, a third of the world's urban population lives in slum and squatter settlements, i.e., approx. 1 billion people, a figure that is expected to increase to 2 billion by 2030 if no appropriate action is taken (UN-Habitat 2003). Estimates made by UN-

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