

Name of Scholar: Md. Karar Ahmad

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Mohd. Firoz Khan

Department: Geography

**Title: Crowding and Socio-Psychological Pathologies:
A Geo-ecological Analysis of Slum Population in
South Delhi**

Abstract

Now-a-days crowding has become a problem of global concern and is a serious policy issue in urban planning and renewal programmes of the developed and developing countries. As in the twenty first century, with a population of more than seven billion all over the world, its most part lives in the developing and the underdeveloped countries where the problem of human crowding is especially a critical issue in urban centres. These are the countries wherein by virtue of high natural increase, rural to urban migration and increasing cost of land in cities have caused problem of chronic crowding. Apart from rapidly increasing urban population, in the age of globalization, these countries are industrialising at a faster rate relative to pre-globalisation times with an expanding service sector. As such, most of human resources, skilled or unskilled, of these countries are settling down in the urban centres for education, healthcare, employment, better quality of life, etc. With the concentration of major economic activities in urban areas as well as concentration of population, majority of which live in small rented houses or squatter settlements or in unhygienic low cost areas evolved into slums. As such, these crowded and congested urban areas have become the site of many socio-psychological and physiological problems arising out of crowding.

A crowded locality is understood by its physical manifestation in terms of housing congestion, density or persons-area ratio within houses. As such, housing areas with high population density and housing congestion are considered crowded or overcrowded. Generally, these are slums in the inner city or outer city where such conditions are manifest. These slums, squatters and shanty towns, in all likelihood, have high density with greater possibility of more intense crowding in environmentally unhygienic conditions.

The consequences of crowding are manifold. The overall quality of life is affected. Some of outcomes of the crowding can be observed in terms of its impact on mental health, physical health, human social behaviour, women and children related issues, etc. Previous and current researches on animal crowding and subsequently on human crowding started with inmates of jails, hostels and dormitories in the developed and in few cases in the developing or underdeveloped countries. Their results have demonstrated high density living condition is associated with socio-psychological pathologies such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, frustration, aggressions, arousal etc. Besides the social and psychological pathologies, high density has serious effects on human health and stress related problems, behavioural and cognitive problems, social withdrawal and many more aspects of human life. Therefore, for its negative impact on human health and well-being, crowded housing is one of the major concerns of policy-makers and authorities on housing in both developing and developed nations.

The present research is on crowding in South Delhi from the geographical perspective. The study falls in the field of environmental psychology. For the purpose of research, two densely populated localities, one notified slum and other a slum-like locality are selected.