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## No. 11, 2008

**Chandrasekhar, S.** and Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay. "Multiple dimensions of urban well-being: Evidence from India," *Poverty, Gender, and Youth Working Paper* no. 11. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

### ABSTRACT

This paper addresses differences in outcomes across households residing in slums and non-slum urban areas of India. Using a nationally representative household data set, we undertake a robust multidimensional evaluation of intracity differences in well-being. We first established that if utility is defined as access to public goods such as water and sanitation, then residents in non-slum urban areas are unambiguously better off than slum dwellers. This finding implies that there is justification for slums garnering a sizable portion of the allocation of water and sanitation programs. On the other hand, we found that the distribution of private goods (monthly per capita expenditure [MPCE] and per capita living area) in non-slum areas does not dominate the distribution of these goods in the slums. In fact, at very low levels of MPCE and per capita living area, the distribution of these private goods in slums dominates the distribution in non-slums. This important finding implies that non-slum residents are not unequivocally better off than slum residents. Since slums are on an average poorer than other urban areas, it may be more pragmatic, therefore, to target policies at slum development. However, such policies would fail to reach the poorest residents of non-slum areas in both large and small cities. Our results make the case for a more inclusive policy that targets these groups as well.



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