



Research Paper

A Comparative Analysis of Wellbeing Pre and Post Resettlement

Dr P. Magudapathy¹, Gayathri Krishnan B²

¹Research Guide, Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Coimbatore -18

²Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Coimbatore - 18

Abstract

713 million people fall below the International Poverty Line (\$2.15 per person per day) globally, as per the September 2024 update to World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform. NITI Ayog's 2023 Multidimensional Poverty Index shows that 14.96% of India's population is multidimensionally poor. Tamil Nadu is India's most urbanized state with a projected urban population of 57.45% by 2031, and rapid urbanization also gives rise to the problem of slums and the question of resettlement of the urban poor from slums to affordable and safe housing in accordance with our sustainable development goals. Tamil Nadu is also a pioneer in resettlement, with the enactment of The Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1971 (Tamil Nadu Act 11 of 1971) and establishment of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (renamed in 2021 as Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board). Resettlement from objectionable porambokes involves relocation to tenement complexes constructed in vacant government lands. A comparative analysis of perceived overall well-being and factor-wise wellbeing of the resettled urban poor in Tamil Nadu will give evidence-backed insight into the efficacy of resettlement programs in Tamil Nadu, and can help policy makers plug any gaps in the system. This study aims at identifying the factors that can be relevant indices of well-being, identify the improvement or reduction in well-being in terms of each factor as well as assess the change perception in an overall sense of well-being. A sample of 120 urban poor resettled into one of the largest tenement complexes in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India was chosen as the basis for this study using random convenience sampling, descriptive research design and questionnaire method for data gathering. Mean score analysis was done to arrive at the perceived change in each factor, and arrive at conclusions that can be useful pointers for policy makers in evaluating the efficacy of the resettlement process and design future policies in an informed manner to best serve the resettled urban poor.

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I. INTRODUCTION

India is rapidly urbanizing, and from a predominantly rural agrarian society, the nation has now seen over 500 million people become urban. This has inevitably resulted in the rise of slums, which pose a threat to the health, hygiene and safety of the residents, as well as risks to the sensitive environment. The Registrar General of India in Census 2011 has defined slum as "1. All specified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State/Local Government and UT Administration under any Act including a 'Slum Act'; 2. All areas recognized as 'Slum' by State/Local Government and UT Administration which may have been formally notified as slum under any act; 3. A compact area of at least 300 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities." The Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance Act) of 1956 provided "for the improvement and clearance of slum areas in certain Union territories and for the protection of tenants in such areas from eviction". Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in resettlement and its Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Board, entrusted with resettlement, has constructed 2,25,000 tenements, of which 1,34,434 are situated in Chennai. In situ development and resettlement is done in unobjectionable porambokes, whereas the majority of slums are in objectionable porambokes, necessitating their relocation to tenements in vacant government lands. The logistics of relocation, beneficiary identification are vital aspects of resettlement, however it is also a highly complex and nuanced process ultimately aimed at guaranteeing social equity for the most vulnerable sections of the society, in alignment

with our Constitution. As the well-being of the resettled urban poor is the ultimate goal of resettlement, it is imperative to compare their change perceptions in each aspect of well-being as well as the overall sense of well-being, to identify whether resettlement has accomplished its lofty goals. This study aims at identifying the factors that can indicate well-being, capture their change perceptions as well the change perception of the overall wellbeing of the resettled urban poor. Through discussions, questionnaire and interview of 120 residents of one of the largest tenement complexes in Chennai, the following factors were identified and studied to quantify change perceptions in wellbeing - access to clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, etc.; quality of housing and space; sense of safety; proximity to workplace and commute time; and social networks.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Resettlement of urban poor from slums is an exceedingly complex and nuanced issue, and there is a large array of tangible and intangible benefits as well as losses that arise out of uprooting entire families from their dwellings in objectionable porambokes to (often) tenements in the periphery of the city. Any attempt to fully capture the changes in well-being of the resettled poor have to necessarily take into account these factors and try to quantitatively assess them in order to provide fodder for future policy decisions. This study is an attempt to gather some of the tangible and intangible changes that arose out of resettlement and quantify them based on the perceptions of the resettled urban poor. Change perception is quantified in terms of access to water, sanitation and electricity; housing quality and space; sense of safety; proximity to workplace; social support networks; and overall life satisfaction before and after resettlement.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify tangible and intangible factors that can be anchors for quantifying change perceptions pre and post resettlement
- To study the perceived change in each factor pre and post resettlement and the overall life satisfaction before and after resettlement
- To identify the demographic profile of resettled urban poor
- To offer suitable policy suggestions for addressing the contributory factors that can facilitate further improvements in the overall wellbeing of the resettled urban poor

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Resettlement of urban poor from slums is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development of urban spaces. This facilitates both environmentally sensitive and planned development for the city as well as affordable, hygienic and safe housing for urban poor. This is essential to guarantee the constitutional principles that guide our nation. Tamil Nadu is the most urbanized state in India and it has also the distinction of being a pioneer in institutionalizing resettlement through legislation and constitution of a board for resettlement of urban poor. The resettlement process as envisaged in the law and carried out by the board shifts the highly vulnerable urban poor from the slums in objectionable porambokes and resettles them into multi-storey tenements constructed for this purpose. A data driven approach would help to quantify the efficacy of this system as well as identify potential gaps. Apart from the tangible losses of home and livelihood, there are also intangible losses in terms of losses of social capital and networks. Any attempt at holistically capturing the efficacy of resettlement would require a comparative analysis through the eyes of the resettled urban poor in order to enable proactive planning and policy formulation.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a large tenement of over 20,000 resettled urban poor in Chennai. A convenience sample of 120 residents was chosen and they were interviewed to gather primary data. The scope was limited to their change perceptions regarding identified factors pre and post resettlement. The factors were identified after observation and open-ended discussions with residents. The study aims at identifying such factors and quantifying their perceived impact, that can impact the well-being of resettled urban poor.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A sample of 120 residents who were resettled into tenements from various slums of Chennai were studied, from a total pool of around 20000 families in the tenement. Responder bias towards questions cannot be ruled out.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used with a questionnaire to identify the factors which can be suitable to gauge the change perceptions of resettled urban poor. Open ended questions were used to gather more insight into the reasonings for the choices exerted by the individuals.

Sampling Techniques

A sampling unit is taken as an individual who is a resident of one of the resettled tenements constructed by Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Sampling Size

120 individuals residing in a large multistorey tenement of resettled urban poor were used as the sample for this study.

Sampling Type

Convenience sampling was adopted for this research. It is a non-probabilistic sampling referring to a sample selected on the basis on convenience.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through discussions with the residents to identify some factors which can be a baseline indicator of well-being in terms of the changes caused by resettlement. A questionnaire was used to further interview the residents to quantify the scale of increase or decrease in well-being for each factor, as well as overall well-being. Secondary data was collected using Government policy documents, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.

Sampling Framework

Tools used for the study	Attributes of the study
Percentage analysis	Demographic profile of the respondents
Mean score value	Access to water, sanitation and electricity Housing quality and space Sense of safety Proximity to workplace Social support networks Overall life satisfaction

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-35	28	23.33
	36-50	63	52.5
	51-70	29	24.17
	Total	120	100
Marital Status	Single / Widowed	24	20
	Married	96	80.70
	Total	120	100
Education	Below 8 th	46	38.33
	8 th to 12 th Grade	69	57.5
	College Degree	5	4.17
	Total	120	100
Income Level	0-20000	87	72.2
	20000-40000	33	27.5
	40000 and above	0	0
	Total	120	100

Interpretation

Most of the residents who participated in the study are productively engaged in the economy as daily labourers, small scale vendors, cooks, cleaning personnel, security staff, tailors and so on. Most are below the age of 50 and 80% of them are married. Only 5 respondents had a college degree even though most had some schooling and literacy. Income levels are below 40,000 rupees per month. All the tenement residents have voter's ID, Aadhaar card, ration card and other identification documents thanks to sustained camps conducted by the Government in these tenements to enroll them. All the children are also enrolled in schools and various schemes are in place to provide them with scholarships for higher education. There are healthcare facilities in the vicinity and the tenement is located close to the main road. The residents are mostly relocated from various slums in the interior of Chennai city.

Table 2: Mean scores related to change perception of wellbeing post resettlement

Sl No	Factor	Utilities	Housing	Safety	Proximity	Social Networks
1	Greatly Reduced	0	0	0	18	67
2	Reduced	0	0	0	49	43
3	Neutral	0	0	32	32	10
4	Improved	48	52	66	21	0
5	Greatly Improved	72	68	22	0	0

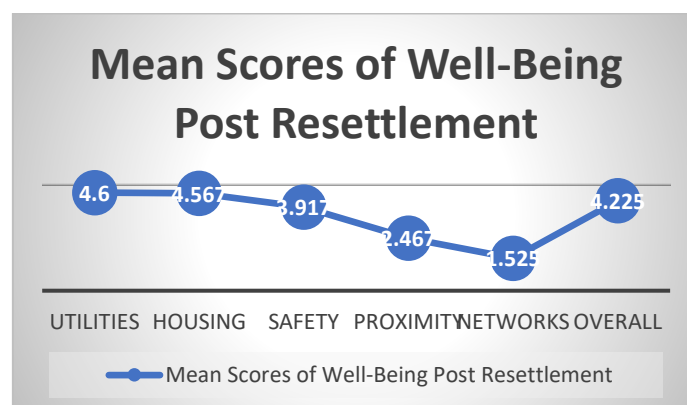
WEIGHTED MEAN	4.6	4.567	3.917	2.467	1.525
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Sl No	Factor	OVERALL WELL-BEING
1	Greatly Reduced	0
2	Reduced	0
3	Neutral	0
4	Improved	93
5	Greatly Improved	27

WEIGHTED MEAN	4.225
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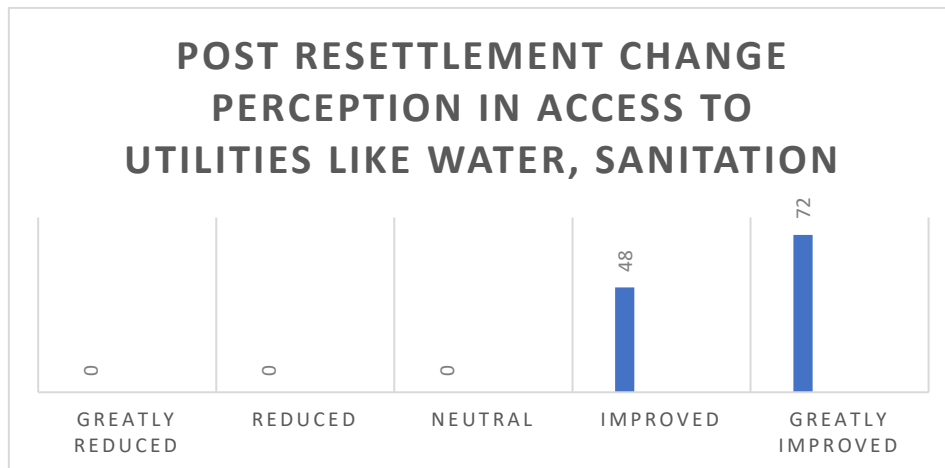
Interpretation

In identifying the change perceptions of well-being, the factors identified are as follows: Access to water, electricity, sanitation, etc.; housing quality and space; sense of safety; proximity to workplace; informal social support networks and in addition to quantifying the above, finally an overall well-being assessment was also done.



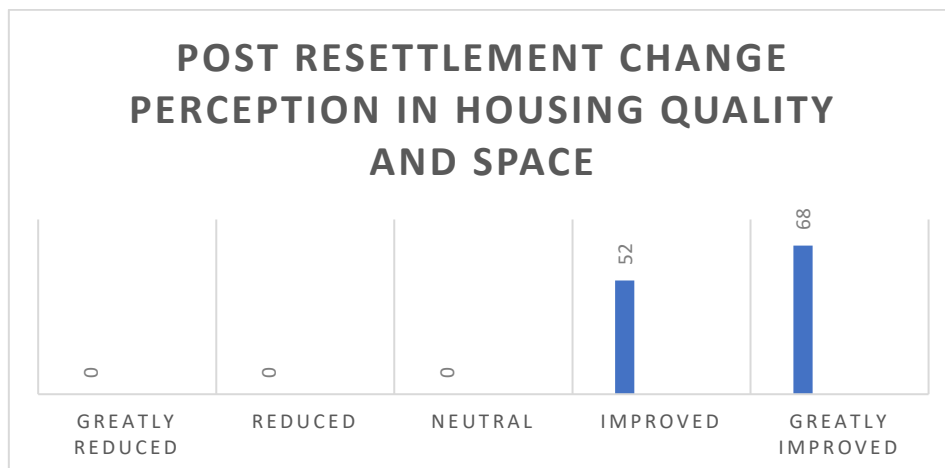
Utilities:

This factor is used to indicate the improvements in access to water, sanitation, electricity and such amenities pre and post resettlement. There was a strong measure of satisfaction in terms of this aspect and all respondents found improvements in utilities, with a majority perceiving a strong and marked improvement, as reflected in the high mean score of 4.6 for improvement (out of a possible 5). This shows that the primary goal of providing basic services to the resettled urban poor is being met and the conditions of life have improved for the respondents post resettlement in a marked way as far as this factor is concerned.



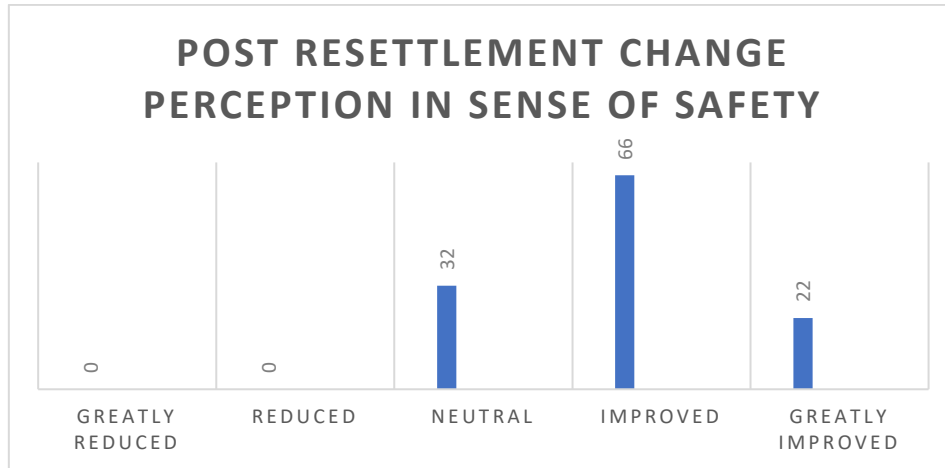
Housing Quality and Space:

With a mean score of 4.567, this is a close second factor which has significantly improved for the resettled urban poor post resettlement. Most respondents found notable improvements in their housing quality post resettlement, with all respondents finding at least some improvement. The respondents to the study mentioned that whereas their previous houses were small and lacked amenities, the tenement apartments were more spacious, well built and had more amenities. Some noted that previously they had to be shifted to shelters in case of rain or any natural disaster, whereas they haven't had to move to any shelters since shifting to tenements. They also feel the houses are larger compared to their original homes.



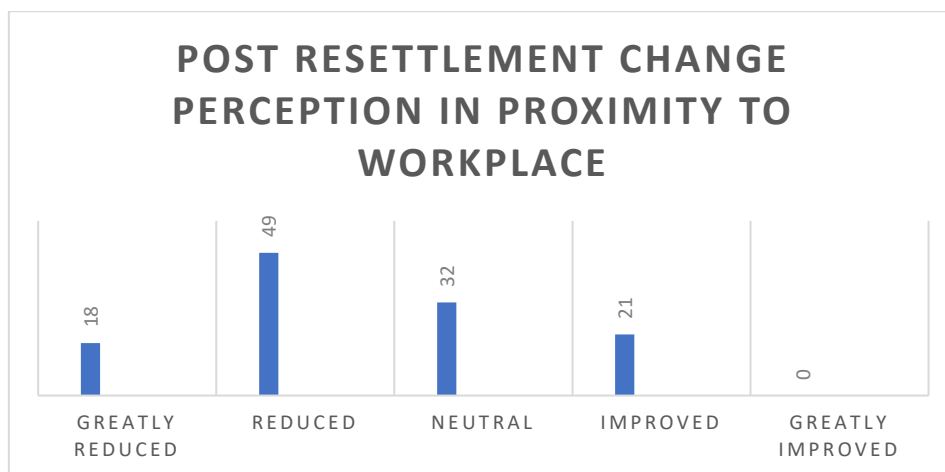
Safety:

A mean score of 3.917 indicated that the sense of safety has improved among the respondents post resettlement, compared to their original homes. Most respondents felt that having a "proper" shelter gave a sense of physical safety and identity to them, although some mentioned that the larger informal social network did provide a sense of safety in their original settlements. Residents feel their property and their possessions are safe, as well as there is a feeling of safety in numbers in general.



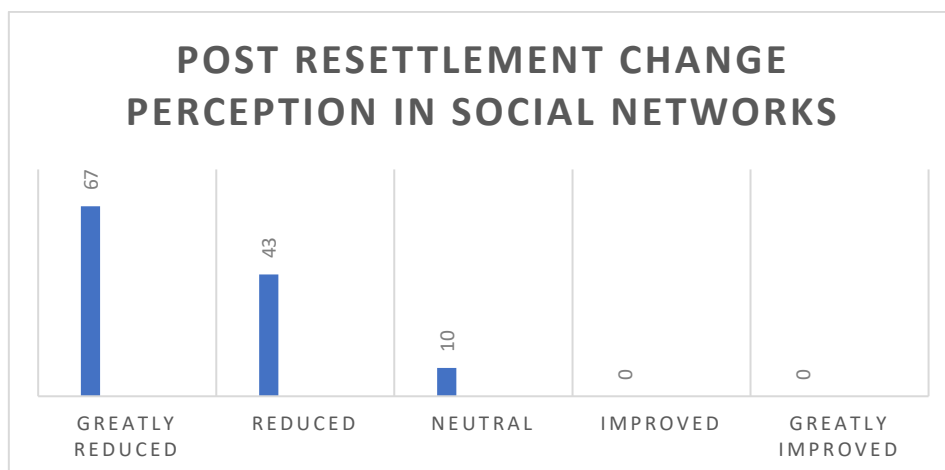
Proximity to workplace:

With a mean score of 2.467, proximity to workplace was something that a majority of respondents found to have been reduced since resettlement. A large number noted that they have lost their original livelihood which was in the center of the city, since the new tenements are farther off in the periphery and they have limited access to the city comparatively. Many have found fresh employment in the nearby areas but they feel they need better connectivity in terms of more public transport options at convenient times if they are to be able to get potentially higher paying jobs in the city center. Most of the younger respondents also stressed the importance of giving them placement along with the skill training being given by Government agencies in the tenements. Some have been able to find better paying employment nearby the resettled area due to the skill training provided and they noted an improvement in this factor.



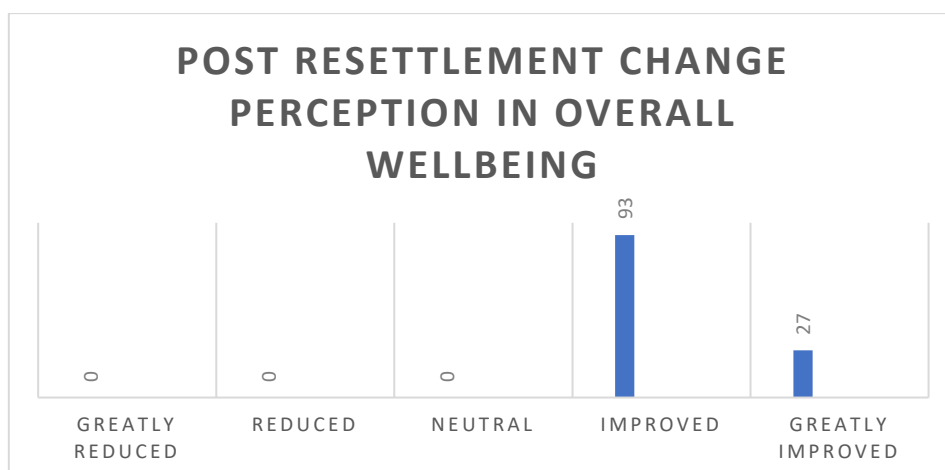
Social Networks

A mean score of 1.525 indicated a strong feeling of loss in terms of this factor as a result of the changes caused by resettlement. The respondents noted that they had many informal social networks in their previous dwelling areas and sometimes that used to help them with livelihood, providing unpaid child care and helping out in terms of various needs. Resettlement to the periphery of the city has caused them to lose these networks, and it is an intangible loss which cannot be quantified in economic terms, however was a felt loss in terms of opportunity cost. They also felt that a support system has been taken away from them and there is a need to build up a stronger residents association to help rebuild networks for the resettled urban poor.



Overall Well-being

The respondents were also asked to opine about their overall sense of well-being post resettlement, taking into account all of the tangible and intangible gains and losses due to resettlement. The mean score of 4.225 indicates that there is a definite sense of improved well-being among the residents when they consider all the factors in toto, even though there are multiple grievances and areas for improvement. All the residents shared in the improved sense of well-being, with several even opining that there is a greatly improved sense of well-being since resettlement.



III. SCHEMES

Resettlement of urban poor in Tamil Nadu is undertaken by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board, and it offers in situ resettlement in cases of people residing in unobjectionable poramboke, and relocation in case of those settled in objectionable poramboke such as watercourse areas which cannot be regularized as a residential area. Integrated townships are constructed in vacant government lands often outside the city and the resettled residents are accommodated in multi-storey tenements, with the bulk of the cost borne by the government and bank loans arranged for beneficiary share. Skilling of tenement residents is an important program and the training courses include IT, tailoring and other vocational courses as well as sports training. Relocation often causes loss in livelihood and therefore Rs. 30,000 is provided as annual subsistence allowance until they can find stable employment. Maintenance of the tenements is done by the Government and where reconstruction is required, a one-time grant of Rs 25,000 is given to the residents to seek alternate housing while construction progresses. 1.4 lakh tenements are built in Tamil Nadu by TNUHDB under AHP and 4 lakh individual homes are constructed in BLC (Beneficiary Led Construction) mode. Various higher education scholarships are provided for children of the residents of tenements and NGOs are also roped in to provide skilling.

IV. FINDINGS

1. Resettlement of urban poor from slums is a highly nuanced and complex process which results in tangible and intangible losses and gains.
2. Various factors contribute to the perception of well-being pre and post resettlement, especially in cases of relocation where urban poor are shifted to tenements in the outer limits of the city.
3. Access to water, sanitation, electricity, etc.; housing quality and space; sense of safety; proximity to workplace and social networks emerged as the factors perceived as contributing to the well-being of resettled urban poor.
4. One of the most important goals of resettlement is in itself to provide good quality access to water, sanitation, electricity etc., and the study shows that there is a high level of satisfaction in these aspects post resettlement compared to their earlier dwellings.
5. Housing quality and space are also considered to have vastly improved post resettlement and contribute to a sense of well-being
6. There is an improved sense of safety in general thanks to the resettlement process.
7. Well-being figures dropped in terms of proximity to workplace, since many suffered losses in livelihood due to relocation to city periphery and some felt that the increased commute time and cost made it not worth their while to pursue city employment any longer.
8. The greatest drop in well-being came in terms of the intangible loss of social support networks which existed in their previous dwelling, and many feel this has led to a sense of isolation and disconnectedness from the society in general post resettlement.
9. Overall well-being index is on the higher side which shows that the resettlement process has been able to deliver on its most important goals of providing safe and good quality affordable housing to resettled urban poor from slums.
10. While there is a satisfactory care taken to ensure tangible aspects of relocation are taken care of, the intangible losses and aspects are not addressed as much and this can be a factor that would greatly improve their sense of well-being, if addressed.

V. SUGGESTIONS

Wherever possible, in-situ or nearby resettlement must be preferred in order to minimize losses of social networks and livelihoods. Skilling programs should be tailored to the particular environment of the new resettlement so that they can actually provide human capital to specific industries that require employees in that area. Large employers in the area could be roped in to provide stable employments or internship to the young resettled workforce. Community building and trust building exercises should be a fundamental long-term element of resettlement. Resident welfare associations in the tenements should be strengthened greatly and a vibrant community atmosphere needs to be fostered in each tenement. Currently the tenements seem to be loosely held together and there is no clear sense of identity or belonging, or even ownership. Residents should be encouraged to come together and solve their common problems and some stake can be given to them in maintaining the property as well. Neighborhood engagement activities and trust building exercises with local authorities and police can also help integrate the resettled tenement residents meaningfully to their new environment. Counselling for mental stress associated with moving can be provided and formal support systems for child care, etc., can be provided to make up for the lost social networks.

VI. CONCLUSION

Well-being is an umbrella term with a very large scope, and it has varying connotations for each individual and even society. Resettlement of urban poor from unobjectionable poramboke involves relocation to the peripheries of the city. Well-being of resettled urban poor can only be captured fully by integrating and quantifying both tangible and intangible elements that contribute to the sense of well-being. The factors identified by this study are access to clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, etc.; quality of housing and space; sense of safety; proximity to workplace and commute time; and social networks. An overall sense of well-being was also captured. The study shows marked improvements in the basic amenities like access to water and sanitation, as well as quality of housing and space. There is a comparative improvement in well-being in terms of the sense of safety as well. The proximity to workplace has greatly reduced for most, and some have lost their livelihoods due to the distance factor. Loss of informal social support networks causes a reduction in the sense of well-being and leads to isolation and mental stress of displacement. Overall well-being index shows significant improvements which shows that the core purpose of resettlement, which is to give safe, affordable and quality housing to urban poor with access to amenities, is being taken care of by the Government. A further conscious stress on improving intangible aspects of resettlement can definitely reshape the resettlement story and take away the sense of displacement and isolation in the resettled urban poor, and thus upholding the principles of social equity enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

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