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Hovels keep homing in on land reserved for housing purposes, not open spaces

Clara Lewis | TNN

Mumbai: With approximately 9.6 million people living in slums in the city, it is expected that a majority of Mumbai's open spaces has been encroached upon. But the slum mapping carried out by architect and civic activist P K Das, shows most settlements are on land reserved for housing.

Das super-imposed the city's development plan map on the slum map. "It shows slums are overwhelmingly on land reserved for housing. Even land reserved for commercial and industrial activities is allowed to be converted to housing. So 55% of slums can be rehabilitated at the place where they have come up," he said.

Around 18% of land reserved for open spaces is encroached and another 10% of natural assets such as hills, forests, mangroves have slums.

"The current trend of slum redevelopment needs to be reworked with a comprehensive master plan that covers all of Mumbai," he said, adding that slum rehabilitation and creating affordable housing would not need FSI of more than 2.

Neera Punj, covener of Citispace, said, "Slum-dwellers living on land reserved for open spaces are miniscule and can be accommodated in tenements for project-affected people."

A bureaucrat said civil society would have to be involved in deciding how to rehabilitate slums on such land. "Nearly 50% of the slums are on environmentally sensitive land. Also, which bank will offer a loan of Rs 4-6 lakh per tenement to a slum-dweller?" he argued. **Home Shanty Home**

Total area of Greater Mumbai | 482 sq km

Total slum area | 42.30 sq km (Approx 9%) Mumbai's population | 12.4 million (2011 census)

Slum-dweller population (Provisional) | 9.6 million (78% of city)

Slums On Reserved Land		
Category	Area	Percentage
Housing	20.07 sq km	47.6%
Industrial	2.55 sq km	6%
Commercial	0.72 sq km	1.7%
Services (depots, sub-stations etc)	1.02 sq km	2.4%
Amenities	2.37 sq km	5.6%
Open spaces (recreational ground, playground and ground)	7.47 sq km	17.7%
NDZ	4.22 sq km	10%
Natural assets (hills, forests, mangroves, wetlands)	0.32 sq km	0.8%
Airports, railways, ports and defence land	0.44 sq km	0.4%

(Source: P K Das / Nivara Hakk Sangharsh Samiti)