

## Land Tenure Security: Is Titling Enough?

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### Abstract

Tenure insecurity and poverty have come to characterise scores of rapidly growing cities, existing, in fact, as two sides of the same coin. While it is empirically evident that it is mainly the poor who are forced into informal, even illegal, land settlements, it is also true that tenure insecurity itself powers the vicious cycle of poverty. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), “*the worsening state of access to shelter and security of tenure results in severe overcrowding, homelessness, and environmental health problems in most cities.*”

Access to secure land and shelter is, thus, widely accepted as a precondition for access to other services, basic amenities and livelihood opportunities, and a necessary foundation for all efforts to reduce urban poverty. Above all, it is only through the provision of security of tenure that residents, particularly the urban poor, may be motivated to participate in investment in land and housing markets; therein lies the secret of sustainable urban development. In this analysis, however, the crucial observation is that it is *security of tenancy*, which encourages investment and consolidation, which is not necessarily the same thing as *ownership*.

The first part of the paper covers basic concepts of land tenure, existing tenure structures, the vicious cycle of insecurity of tenure and poverty, the need for and objectives of a comprehensive land tenure policy, ownership-based and rights-based approaches to tenure policy, comparison of some innovative approaches to the problem of tenure security around the world. In the second part of the paper we examine the relation between insecurity of tenure and the urban poor in India with specific focus on selected cities where innovative approaches have been made to address the problem. In particular, we look at Indore, Bhopal, Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Shillong; discussing, for each city, the specific problems, attempted solutions, future prospects and recommended policies.

**Keywords:** Tenure security, urban poverty, land tenure, India, housing policy, slums.

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