Neelsandra Prasad

When Neelsandra Prasad was a child, his father taught him how to make wooden toys. In fact, for generations the Prasad family survived by making and selling toys.

When Prasad married and had children, it was difficult to sell enough toys to support his family. A few years ago, Prasad moved to the city of Bangalore in southern India in search of a better life. There he works from early morning until evening in a silk factory. He has been there for more than nine years.

He says he moved to the city hoping for a better life. But life has been hard there, too. It is difficult to support his family in Bangalore. He works long hours, but he does not make much money. It is expensive to live in the city, and they also miss their relatives from the village.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7182962.stm

Neelsandra Prasad was continuing a family tradition.

At least in Bangalore, he has a job. In addition, his children can attend school. That is important to Mr. Prasad and his wife. But sometimes they still talk about moving back to their hometown.

http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/images/map-of-india.gif

What were the **push factors** that led Mr. Prasad to leave his village?

What were the **pull factors** that brought him to Bangalore?

What has been **positive** about the move to an urban area?

What has been **negative** about urban life?

Tara Bai

http://earth911.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/India-Rag-Picker-225x300.jpg

Tara Bai is named after an ancient queen of India. But today, she shakes her head, angry when I ask her if she hates her job. Tara is a "rag picker" in Mumbai. She picks through mounds of rotting trash looking for plastic or metal she can sell.

"It's how I survive," she says. As she opens another sack of trash, she looks in and sees millions of wiggling maggots. She turns away to stop herself from gagging. A farmer's daughter, Bai moved to the city in 1972 when a drought ended her family's farming life. But the work she found was not the work she had wanted.

No one knows how many rag pickers there are in India. This city has more than 300,000. They earn between $2.50 and $3.75 for working 8 hours.

A small improvement came last month when the city government gave 400 rag pickers gloves and protective clothing. The city also gave them health-and-safety training. The plan is to continue the trainings with more rag pickers.

http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/images/map-of-india.gif

What were the **push factors** that led Ms. Bai to leave her village?

What were the **pull factors** that brought her to Mumbai?

What has been **positive** about the move to an urban area?

What has been **negative** about urban life?

Ram Pyari Devi

Ram Pyari Devi is a 40-year-old mother of three children. When she married, her husband's father had a successful farm. But with five brothers in his family, the land was eventually divided between the five of them. Each brother's piece of land was so small that they could not grow much.

Devi's husband became blind about 5 years ago, and he could not work on their tiny farm. This is when the family decided to move to Kolkata (Calcutta). Every day, Mrs. Devi goes through neighborhoods asking for work. Sometimes people hire her to do odd jobs such as washing clothes or cleaning a sidewalk. The family now lives in a shack made of sticks and plastic sheeting. They do not own the land where they live. It is part of a giant slum in Kolkata.

http://ts2.mm.bing.net/th?id=I.4870205897574185&pid=15.1

Mr. Devi's children often take him to the train station or to the large boulevard several blocks away where he begs for money. They take care of their father and do not attend school.

Most days, the family only eats two meals. When there is not enough food, Mrs. Devi only eats one meal so that her children and her husband can eat two.

http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/images/map-of-india.gif

What were the **push factors** that led the Devi family to leave their village?

What were the **pull factors** that brought them to Kolkata?

What has been **positive** about the move to an urban area?

What has been **negative** about urban life?

Santosh Thorat

Santosh Thorat holds one of his children.

Santosh Thorat is a young father of five. His home in Mumbai is a two-story home he built himself. About 18 people live in the home. They are all grandchildren and children of his father, who was part of the "untouchable" caste. His father's job back in their village was bizarre. He served his village by whipping himself when bad luck came to the village. This was supposed to convince the gods to have mercy on them and give them better luck.

His father finally rebelled against the caste system that treated him so badly. He left his village and moved about 300 miles away to Mumbai. There, he worked in construction work and picked through garbage for recyclable plastic and metal.

Just like his father, Mr. Thorat worked to support his family in Mumbia through odd jobs in construction. He also worked as a temporary guard for the police. One day working with the police, his job was to keep people like himself away from their slum homes so the police could tear them down. He was upset, but he did the job because he needed the money for his family. The next day, they tore down his neighborhood, including his house.

That's when he decided to work for change in the slums. For the past six years, he has worked with organizations to help improve homes in the slums and to change the city leaders' policies. Mr. Thorat is making a difference in Mumbai.

What were the **push factors** that led the Thorat family to leave their village?

What were the **pull factors** that brought them to Mumbai?

What has been **positive** about the move to an urban area?

What has been **negative** about urban life?

Map source: http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/images/map-of-india.gif

Photo source: http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/2010/0830/After-seeing-Mumbai-s-slums-bulldozed-he-now-works-to-save-and-restore-them