

Poor Quality Life Issues in Slums (With Special Reference to a Slum Area of Bhopal City)

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Abstract: *The issues of poor quality of life in slums not only affecting the survival but posing serious threats to the life of slums people. The present paper which is highlighting the issues that are making the life of slums very miserable and hard. The issues like poverty, inadequate of health facilities, illiteracy and lack of interest in education, poor sanitation, Irregular employment, poor housing conditions, lack of dwelling space and overcrowding, land tenure insecurity, poor slum environment, lack of water supply, poor drainage system, withdraw their children from schools at early and engage them in earning activities, lot of bickering over small issues, not much concern about hygiene, welfare, and development, loud and boisterous environment, lack of skill and culture of poverty. According to present research investigation such issues are providing devastating consequences in the quality of slum life. Three hundred (300) respondents have been investigated to know the issues of quality of slum life in slums in a slum area of Bhopal city. With the help of a well framed interview schedule the data were collected. After investigation and acquisition of data, the data have been analysed with the help of new research techniques and results deduced. The life in slums is very tuff to live. In slums problems in return are giving raise to other problems. The issues in slums are like cobwebs or like a problem cycles where like poor culture in return are giving rise to poor culture again.*

Key Words: *Quality, Survival, Issues, Inadequate, Slum, Poor, Insecurity.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

The poor slum people of the research area was found living in different kinds of dwellings some were found to living in tin sheds where as some semi pucca /pucca and the majority of people of the slum were found living in jhupari type habitats and these dwellings were made of very cheap material like bamboo, traplin, straw, soil bricks, tin sheets, wood, polythene envelope and cement. This was also found people in majority are living in single room dwellings with above four and below eight members and have no separate cooking space facilities in their dwellings and they uses their living room and open spaces for cooking and face serious problem during the rainy season. The education status of the people in the area was found very low as most of the people in the slum have no education or have low level of education up to middle. Some people of the slum area were observed as they are not willing to send their children to school as they engage them in earning works like for beggary, selling tea and other items on road and railway station, shoes polish and other works. Due to poverty and gender role conceptions that girls are more useful at home for domestic home works. Due to poverty some children were observed that the leave schooling and were found busy in earning activities with their parents and girls were found to take care of house works. The majority of people of that area were found as engaged in irregular employment in informal sectors and very few cases were found engaged in government and semi government sectors at low class posts. Some people of 55 plus of age and hopeless who was looking physically appeared weak in the slum were also seen, and some of them were found ill and some with very weak physique and the researcher got opportunities to talk with them and when they were interviewed some of them told that some time they do not eat regularly because of poverty and some reported that they feel burden on their family members and some of them stated that there is no end of the problem of poverty as they feel hopeless and one old man stated that: "if you are poor, you will always be poor like me I was poor and now my children too". This was also observed during the field visits that those who have male Childs (sons) were found in a good position as compared to those who have only female Childs (daughters), when the fact was investigated the researcher got surprised to hear that these migrated urban poor people were also paying dowry to their daughters in the form of different expensive things at the time of marriage which affects their life and also school life of their Children. As these poor people's families assemble money to purchase furniture, refrigerator, televisions, and sofa and so on for their daughter's gift at marriage. The people of the slum area were also observed taking very poor diets in their daily routine foods due to their low level

of incomes which was enough to lead malnutrition among pregnant women and children and increases the risks of infection and infectious diseases. The primary health services in the area were found absent but a health worker was seen in an anganwadi center for the assessment of married women in the area. The people of this area have no access to health services. In the area fictive kinship based on common district of origin and community based networks is found very common. During the survey it was observed that the life of women in the slum area were more difficult as compared to men as they do household works in the absence of infrastructure usually fall on them for example fetching and carrying water from hand pump or from municipal tanker. They (women) also have to struggle to maintain household hygiene in the context of poor drainage and sanitation. Women in the slum indicated that they were most vulnerable to sexual harassment or assault when using open areas in the absence of toilets and when sometime they go to road side bushes and trees to collect woods for cooking purposes. The urban poor people of the study slum area were found to buy low nutritious food items from retail shops or street vender's. These were also seen that they rarely go to wholesale markets to buy such small amounts of goods. These urban poor people were also found avoid expensive and highly nutritious food items due to their low incomes. Most of the urban poor people in the area were unable to eat any fresh fruit and other food items due to their low level of earning. Overall, these urban poor were mainly seen buy food items like rice, lentils, potatoes and vegetables and avoid expensive and nutritious foods because of their poor income. The urban poor people of this area frequently complain that the services like health facilities, drinking water facilities and also other facilities they need were not available.

2. METHODOLOGY :

The present paper is purely based on primary sources of data. With the help of a well farmed interview seclude, the data has been collected from three hundred respondents and also backup interviews were also done to know the issues clearly.

Issues

The issues which were responsible for the poor quality of life in slums and emerged during the present study are as below.

- **Poverty:** The problem of poverty is one of serious problem which is having devastating consequences not only to the people who are living with this serious problem but for the whole society. Poverty not only breeds poverty but are responsible spreading for many social evils in the society such as poverty increases illiteracy, crime, prostitution, gender discrimination, anti nationalistic feelings, terrorism and the problem of poverty were found most vulnerable for women, childs and old age people.
- **Inadequate of health facilities:** Having inadequate health facility is considered as serious matter of concern with poor people, as a person with poor health can't do anything for himself as well as for his family. According to present study this was found that the area where the study had done having no health facilities except one health worker.
- **Illiteracy and lack of interest in education:** Illiteracy is the big cause of poverty. According to this study mostly people in the study area were found illiterate or having low level of education and living their life in poverty as slums in the city. This was also found illiterate persons showing less interest of education to their children as they are ignorant about the fact that illiteracy breeds poverty also.
- **Poor sanitation:** Poor sanitation is found one of the serious issue for the poor quality of life in the slum, as it was found that the government is paying less attention towards the sanitation issues in the slums which are posing negative consequences among slum poor people.
- **Irregular employment:** Irregular employment with urban poor people is one of the serious problems of economic instability and is paying one of the serious causes for poverty.
- **Poor housing conditions:** The urban poor people of the study area was found in majority living their lives in jhuggi type of habitats with poor conditions of roofs, walls and having lack of space with poor ventilation which are observed in posing the most vulnerable conditions to the people who live in these type of habitat.
- **Lack of dwelling space and overcrowding:** It was found through the present study that the majority of urban dwellers reside in single rooms with minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 members which poses overcrowding and a serious concern to health, education and privacy.
- **Land tenure insecurity:** The urban poor people are generally vulnerable towards land tenure security. As the present study discloses that the slums of the study area settled on BHEL GOI land. The BHEL GOI can evict them any time from their land and they can't protect themselves from being evicted and once they are evicted from their dwellings they become homeless.

- **Poor slum environment:** During the research visits to the slum area of study area this was observed that the environment among slums remain very poor and it was found that poverty and less attentions of government towards these areas are some of the major cause for slum poor environment.
- **Lack of water supply:** Water is essential need for life but unfortunately in the area where the study had done having inadequate water facility as there was no tap facility to any household except the one hand pump which was also found on odd place on slum pass way road side where the community waste bin is placed and most of slum people were seen through their garbage around the community waste bin near hand pump, almost all the people of the area were found dependent on one water hand pump and the municipal water tanker was reported providing water only twice a week in the area. This indicated that lack of access to water facility in the area.
- **Poor drainage system:** During the research visits it was observed that the drainage system of the slum area was very poor the drains in the area were found uncovered with full of dirt which are enough to give birth too many water borne and other diseases.
- **Withdraw their children from schools at early and engage them in earning activities:** Withdrawing children from schools and engage them in earning works is one the serious issue and is a cause for illiteracy and illiteracy himself is a cause for poverty.
- **Lot of bickering over small issues:** During the field work it was found the urban poor people make lot of bickering over small issues and sometime quarrel with each other which are making neighborhood totally disturbed.
- **Not much concern about hygiene, welfare, and development:** The urban poor people of the study area were found less at tentative towards hygiene, welfare and development because of ignorance and disinterest in politics.
- Open alcohol consumption, smoking and gambling was seen practiced by some and disturbed neighborhood environment was reported by these activities.
- **Loud and boisterous environment:** During the study it was found that the urban poor people are not caring for the surrounding environment as it was observed that they are quarrelling on small issues and listing songs with high volume inside their dwellings which was observed providing boisterous surrounding environment.
- **Lack of skill:** Unskilled workers are paid very low in spite of hard work they put daily. According to the present study it was found that the majority of respondents were working as unskilled day labours without any fixed place or without any fixed wages. This is a serious cause of urban poverty which is connected to the economic instability conditions of the urban poor people (slums).
- **Culture of poverty:** The culture of poverty is both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified society. "Once it comes into existence, it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on children. The culture of poverty as a way of life, a combination of certain traits, passed through generations. It is an adaptation to poverty, to "being at the bottom" in stratified society. Much of the evidence presented in support of the culture of poverty suffers from methodological fallacies, particularly a reliance on the assumption that behavior derives solely from preferred cultural values. That is, evidence of poverty itself, including rates of unemployment, crime, school dropout rates, and drug use, are assumed to be the result of behavior preferred by individuals living within conditions of poverty. The culture of poverty presumes the development of a set of deviant norms, whereby behaviors like drug use and gang participation are viewed as the standard (normative) and even desired behaviors of those living in the slums. An alternative explanation is that individuals behave in ways that are nominally illegal, like participation in the underground economy or participation in gangs, not because they wish to do so or are following cultural norms, but because they have no choice, given the lack of educational and job opportunities available in their neighborhoods. In other words, individuals living in the slum may see themselves as forced to turn to illegal methods of getting money, for example by selling drugs, simply to survive within the conditions of poverty. Thus so-called "slum behaviors" are adaptive, not normative, and given sufficient opportunities, individuals within the slums would eagerly turn to conventional means of earning a living.

3. CONCLUSION :

The paper highlighted the issues of poor quality of life in slums, and it becomes clear that life in slums is not only miserable but very devastating. Slum people are suffering from many issues and such issues should be solved on humanitarian bases. Slum people are also part of society but instead of their poverty they face exploitations and inequalities. Slum people face exploitations even in basic necessities of life, like in ration (food) and water facility. If slum people are used for domestic and labour works and if they are used for vote banks at the time of election then why in other aspects they face exploitations, "it's like that at the time of work and personal advantage they (slum) are used but after usage they become unknown and having low value". Slums are also people like we, like other humans they

are also having rights. Treat slums like humans not like poor and polluted or impure and also think for their betterment and sustainability.

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