

HEALTH PROBLEMS IN SLUMS OF INDIA

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Abstract: The growth and expansion of slum needs more attention. The supply of basic needs, proper planning's and healthcare facilities is very necessary as, the health problems are the major issues in among the slum dwellers and women's specially have more health problems. Lack of basic needs, drinking water facilities, drainage and sanitation, unhygienic surroundings are the major factors responsible for the health problems along with narrow roads, improper ventilation, over crowedness are also responsible factors for health issues. The income of slums dwellers will be less due to lack of skills and less education which will make them to work at low wages resulting in less income. They spend nearly half of the incomes in the medication of the health issues, which will increase the burden of expenses on the them. The diseases like Cold, Fever, cough, Malaria, Typhoid, and serious disease like Cancer, AIDS, Heart diseases, Lung diseases, Blood pressure issues are found in high rate among the slum dwellers.

Introduction: Continuous change is one of the significant characteristics of the cities. The dynamic and competitive nature makes them to go through changes. Urban areas with steady, slow or fast, rapid changes grows enough facilities in some areas but some don't. In the process of growth and transmission, some areas are clean, healthy surroundings, with proper common facilities but in some areas it is totally opposite with lack of facilities and health care facilities, unhygienic environments. Most the slum areas are neglected and the growth and development is found to be really slow (Venkatarayappa 1972, P. 1)

The slum is a Universal Phenomenon. The rise of Capitalism during 18th century, the problems like Poverty, Unemployment and Over crowedness areas are responsible for the existence of the slums in the whole World and no Country is exception, even America and Europe are also having slums areas.

Objectives:

- 1) To understand the concept of Slums
- 2) To study the Slums in India
- 3) To understand and study the material surrounding conditions
- 4) To study the health problems in the slum areas.

Sources of Data Collection:

The secondary source method is used for study, which includes Journals, Research Articles, Thesis, Government reports, records.

Concept and Definition of Slums:

The concept of Slums came into being in the 18th century. According to Eric Patridge in short etymological dictionary of Modern English states that, the Slums is probably derived from 'Slumbers' which was once thought to be known as Backstreet or alloys, wrongly presumed to be sleeping quiet, such kind of explanation reflects gloomy image of slum and provides a general concept of its identification.

The slum areas are recognized by different terms in different parts of the World. They are known as Ranchos in Venezuela, Callampas in Chile, Favelas in Brazil, Vilas misarias in Argentina, Colonias laterias in Mexico, Barang in Phillipines, Basti jhuggis Jhompari in India.

Definition of Slums:

1) **The slum improvement and clearance Act 1956 and such other Acts have more or less the same definition.**

- a) Slums are an area in which the housing facilities and housing infrastructure are unfit for the people to lead their life.
- b) The reasons like over crowedness, design of buildings, narrowness and faulty arrangements of streets, lack of ventilation, sanitation facilities and many such factors affects on the health of the slum dwellers, resulting in health safety and morals. (Nikilanand Thakur, 2008. P. 12)

2) **According to the census of 2001 of India defines Slums as**

- a) All specified areas in the Towns and Cities, notified as 'slums' by State, Union Territory administration, or Local Governments under any Acts including 'slum' act.
- b) All areas recognized as ' slum' by State, UT- Administration or Local Housing Government and slum boards, which may not have been formally notified as slum under any act.

c) A compact area with 60 to 70 households having population of at least 300 or more, with unhygienic environment and surroundings, lacks of proper infrastructure, congested housing, lack of proper sanitation, drinking water facilities, healthcare facilities.

3) **According to Gist and Halbert,** ' the Slums are the areas with worst housing conditions usually over crowded with people whose standard of living are very different from the people living in the developed areas with proper facilities and amenities. Even the Socio-Economic condition of the slum dwellers varies from the rest of population in the developed areas. This definition focus on the socio-economic conditions of Slums'.

4) the definition of slums changes as per the state in India, each state have defined slums in the socio-economic conditions in their states. **Maharashtra's definition of slums is Maharashtra slum areas (Improvement, Hearance and Redevelopment) Acts 1971 has not defined Slums but the section 2(9a) defines it as:**

a) An area which dangerous to the health safety, hazardous living conditions to the people, with over populated, having inadequate basic life leading facilities, unhygienic, unsanitary, or otherwise.

b) The housing constructions and buildings which are not in good conditions and well built, untitled for human habitation. The other reasons like over population, improper design and structure, narrow streets, lack of ventilation, sanitation facilities in worse conditions and such other factors which affects on the health and safety of people.

c) To decide the buildings and houses are fit or unfit for living on the following factors like housing infrastructure conditions and repairs to be done, stability, ventilation, proper drainage facilities, disposal of waste water (A statistical Compendium, 2013, P.17).

Slums are an appropriate word that carries the exact meaning. The other terminologies to define are kinds of poor areas like low income areas, low socio economic status neighbors, blighted area, gray areas.

Slums in India

In India it is named differently on the basis or due to regional differences. In Delhi it is called as 'Jhuggi' and 'Jhonpari', in Mumbai 'Jhopadpatti' or 'Chawls', in Kolkata 'Bustees', 'Cheris' in Chennai and in Banglore in 'Keris'. But the characteristics of such areas are same as mentioned. It has comman toilet facilities, lacks of basic needs, lack of drainage system and inadequate management facilities of Solid waste and garbage such hurdles make living impossible. Unhygienic which results into many uncured disease to the inhabitants (Slum population, Census of India 2001).

The enormous growth in the middle class population in cities resulted in space and housing problems to all. Slums are unavoidable parts of the major Cities and Metro cities too in India. Over the few decades the number of slum population has been increased in towns and cities and it is doubled specially in last two decades. In Metro cities every fifth person is the part of Slums in 2001. Five largest cities in India namely Greater Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, and Hyderabad estimate more than 64% population out of the total slum population.

In the below table no 1, the number of slum categories, No of Slums, their household and Percentage are shown.

Table no. 1
Number of Slum blocks and Household by the Type of slum areas as per census 2011.

Sr. No	Category of Slums	Numbers of Slums (000)	Percentage	Households (in Lakhs)	Percentage
1	Notified Slums	37072	34.3	49.65	36.1
2	Recognized Slums	30846	28.5	37.96	27.6
3	Identified slums	40309	37.2	49.88	36.3
	Total	108227	100.00	137.49	100.00

(Source: Census of India, 2011)

The census of 2011 shows that there are total 108227 slums, in which 37072 (34.3%) slums are Notified slums, 30846 (28.5%) slums fall under Recognized slums and Identified slums are 40309 (37.2%). In the following slums the population are also given which shows that the total 137,49 Lakhs of household i.e. (17.4%) live in slums. In the above total household population 49.65 Lakhs i.e. (36.1%) households live in the notified slums, whereas 37.96 Lakhs i.e. (27.6%) live in the recognized slums and the households living in identified slums are 49.88 Lakhs i.e. (36.3%).

Material Surroundings of Slum areas:

Slums areas are characterized by area of poor people within a city. Mostly they are found near the industrial areas, market areas and such other places which provide them some small labor or works or daily wages. Mostly in the slums a multi family system is found in which many families live together in a congested way with improper housing built. Due to congested areas the roads in this areas will be narrow and there is absence of proper ventilation. Usually it is found that the people in this area fight for their survivals as they don't get jobs due to lack of skills and education. The conflicts among families and neighborhood are common in the slums following with high rate of child crimes also. The rate of child delinquency cases are reported more in this areas, as the youth don't go to school and are not having other recreational activities. Even the parents don't have time to look after the children's activities, and due to lack of parents attention and bad surroundings nearby make them to learn bad habits like smoking, drinking, tobacco, drugs intake and many more by getting in bad people's company.

The surroundings in the slums will be in such a conditions which will be not fit for people to live a healthy life. The housing in these areas will be not properly constructed, the roads will be narrow and rough, the ventilation system will not be proper. The people usually depend upon the common facilities like common toilets, drinking water. This is because the facilities provided here are not so developed. The problems like lack of proper drinking water, proper toilets, sanitation and drainage systems are found and the area will be usually in unhealthy and unhygienic state. A study by M. S. Deshmukh in 2013 in the area of slums of Kurla, Mumbai and Ghatkopar showed that nearly 82% of slum population lives their life in one single rooms with common drinking water facilities, which will be not supplied regularly, nearly 84% depend upon common toilets and 85% said that they had open drainage system and 70% of them had no bathrooms. This lack of basic facilities and unhealthy environment will affect on the health of the slum dwellers specially on the small children's. Due to lack of skills and less education the people in slums will be forced to do the works and jobs which will give them small incomes which will increase the poverty levels. The females here are having more health issues as they have the double responsibility i.e. they have to look after house works, take care of family members and also have to do work, to support the family economically. The slum dwellers will not be aware of healthcare facilities and they even don't want to know more about them. The factors like Poverty, less incomes and unhealthy conditions, will indirectly results on the health of the slum dwellers. In a study done by Karen S. K , Shigeo Shikura and Harada Hideki in (2003) studied the relationship between living environmental conditions and health status of urban communities in Mumbai. It showed the impact of poverty, unhygienic sanitation and health practice, personal hygiene will indirectly connected with the health conditions of people. The study showed the socio-economic and environmental factors are affecting the health of urban poors.⁶

Due to hazardous, unhealthy and unhygienic environmental conditions will make slum dwellers to suffer from disease like Malaria, Cholera, Diarrhea, Cancer, Liver diseases, Heart diseases and such many diseases. The women's in slums have a major problems of Anemia, Malnutrition following with diseases which cause due to smoke such as Asthma, Breathing problems, Bronchitis etc as they usually use traditional methods of cooking using woods and charcoals. Most of the women are unaware of the health practice to be followed during pregnancy and after pregnancy which will affect on both child and women. The small children's face from disease like Mal nutrition, Diarrhea, viral diseases, cold fevers due to unhealthy surroundings. The old aged people are having the disease like blood pressure, heart diseases and they even don't medical treatment also as they are unaware and in some cases they don't afford it due to poverty. "According to the UN Habitat Report of April 2007, India is the third country in the world which suffers from poverty, mal nutrition, unhealthy conditions and much more in slums, as most of people reside in the slums. Every year Hundreds and Thousands of people die in the world in which 25% will be from India" (Abir Bandyopadhyay, Vandana Agarwal, 2013, P.55).

Health Problems in Slum areas:

Slums are the part of the Town, Cities and Metropolitan cities in which majority of people are poor. The slum areas are over populated, congested housing structure and lack of basic facilities of health, sanitation, and good environment. Usually the lack of basic facilities and basic needs will make the slum dwellers face diseases and health problems. Along with this factors even the low income and poverty is also a factor for health problems. The less income will not have enough saving due to this, they will not able to take proper health treatment and care. The economy backwardness will make them spend their maximum portion of income in medical treatment and less amount is left to lead the life.

The women especially Pregnant women's have to suffer lot of health problems in slum areas. A report of Gupta et al. in 2007 shows that the women take very less precautions during pregnancy period and at delivery time, nearly 68% of deliveries are done at home itself without skilled professionals like Doctors, Nurses. In rural areas such home delivery percent is nearly 21% and in cities it is up to 7% (7). The women's also have double responsibility on them; they have to take of household works, family members and also have to do jobs to support the family economically. Due to lack of skilled knowledge and less education they have to do the works like daily wage labor, house servants, etc. which will be of heavy physical works. This type of works and improper food due to poverty will make them face from illness, mal nutrition and anemia. Sangeetha kalita and Minakshi Hazarika in 2014 compared the health status of women's and children's of two slums in Jorhat cities of Assam, which showed that nearly 75% of women's were suffering from Anemia and mal nutrition and due to polluted environment small children's had disease like Diarrhea, Jondies.

In slum areas due to lack of cooking gas facilities they have to depend upon the traditional methods of cooking using cow dung cakes, coals, woods which will generate lot of smoke during cooking. Due to the smoke and pollution they face from the diseases like Respiratory diseases, diseases related to lungs, heart, Asthma, Bronchitis etc. The study of four different slums in Jammu and Kashmir with 100 female respondents done by Nidhi Kotwal, Neelima Gupta, and Shashi Manhas in 2008 focuses on the various diseases like Weaknesses, fatigue, breathing problems, poor appetite, frequent illness, faced by women's due to working in polluted conditions. Women's have to face lot of health problems, they have sometimes face health issues due to the lack of support from male members of the family and sometimes they fall prey to the traditional practices which will be done at home without medical advice. In some cases women will be not aware of the health care and the facilities. The major of women don't go for the family planning's because husband doesn't support them to use birth precautions and other such things. The study done on health status of women's in Shillong done by Sanku Dey in 2014 which includes 1417 married female respondents of slum areas. Nearly 62% females stated that they were not using birth control methods due to religious beliefs and lack of husbands support and cooperation. Along it, the majority of women were suffering from mental stress. Usually unawareness about health care facilities, women fail to take proper care of themselves and their children's and family members.

Along with women health problems, it is important to see about the health issues among the male members and children's in the slums. The health problems were due to unhealthy practices and lifestyle of them. The lack of parents care and supervisions were also a factor for health problems as the children's may come in bad people company and learn the bad habits like smoking, alcohol consumption, drugs addiction, which would in future will be a reason for health issues like cancer, tuberculosis, lung diseases and heart diseases. The adults were also found to be in contact with bad habits. The health of children in Chennai slums was studied by Dr M. Thamilarasan in 2013 which showed that majority of children were suffering from diseases like cold, cough, and fever, 26% children's were given treatment at Government hospital, 40% children's were not washing hands before meals and 40% children's were frequently affected with Malaria, Typhoid and 20% from cold and cough. The problems of old aged slum dwellers are also more in slums. As the old aged people are more over neglected by the family members and surroundings. Old people due to poverty find it very difficult in leading the life in their old age. Usually they have the blood pressure and heart issues. They even don't take medication due to lack of finance and saving. The study of Thimmanna in 2013 was regarding old aged women's in slums of Bellary district, which showed that poverty is the main challenges faced by them. Also lack of sanitation facilities and exclusion of old age women from house and decision making are some issues faced by the old aged women's.

Conclusion:

The health problems are found to be more in the slum areas, as they are not having healthy environment there. The absence of basic needs, drinking waters, drainage system, sanitation, proper housing and ventilation are responsible for the health issues among them. The women's and children's are mostly unaware of health and hygiene practices and healthcares. Mostly women's are suffering from Mal nutritions and Anemia due to lack proper food and burden of works at home and work places. Women are not so much aware about hygiene and good health practices, Youths are found to be in engaged in bad habits like alcohol consumption, smoking, drugs intake and much more which will affect badly on their health. The socio economic factors and unhealthy surroundings are also some factors indirectly affect on their health. A proper planning of the slum areas is very necessary along with supply of proper drinking

water, healthcare facilities, proper provision of drainage system, sanitation. The slum areas must be given more attention and the authorities and NGO must take steps to make awareness of healthcare facilities among slum dwellers. They must make aware about the hygiene and healthy practice used at home especially to the women's in the pregnancy stage. A proper planning's and awareness will help in reducing the level of health problems in slum areas.

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