

A study on problems faced by women's residing in slum areas of Varanasi district

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■ **ABSTRACT** : This paper reports a study of problems faced by women residing in slum areas of Varanasi. The sample for the study consisted of hundred women residing in three slum areas of Varanasi district. The result revealed that women of slum areas suffered from many problems like poor environment, poor electricity, lack of safe drinking water, lack of toilet facilities and poor housing.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Working condition, Responsibilities, Life satisfaction

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Slums, the picture that conjures up in our minds is that of a dirty, unhygienic group of make shift shanties with long lives of people waiting at the municipal water pump, bawling babies literally left on streets corners to find for themselves and endless cries of help. According to a UNESCO "a slum is a building, a group of buildings, or area characterised by overcrowding, deterioration, insanitary conditions or absence of facilities, or amenities which, because of all these conditions or any one of them, endanger health, safety or morals of its inhabitants or the community."

In the past decades, slums in developing nations have gained greater attention throughout the world and have been recognized as a key challenge of urbanization (UN-HABITAT, 2006). Several countries have adapted different models for slums development. Which in the long run have limited success? However, there is one factor that often goes neglected in most slums redevelopment plans, which is the involvement of women. It is women who largely bear the brunt of the sub-human living conditions in slums (Moser, 1987, Amiss, 2001).

In slum areas women's health is the last priority and only they are responsible for planning the size of the family and their husband never go with them to the hospital. Women suffer varying degrees' of physical as well as psychological violence by their husbands, but at it is still considered a

private and personal matter having little social recognition, no one intervenes. Even the police refuse to take any action against the husband's reconciliation. It considered the best option for the women. No women blamed her husbands for his behaviour; rather they blame it on external situation like alcoholism, poverty, stress etc.

Lack of education and low income of the family is the compelling factor for the women folk to opt for seeking petty jobs in unorganized sector to augments the family earning to sustain livelihood. Lack of cemented house, lack of water and toilet facilities in slums put women to a great deal of inconvenience.

The present study was conducted in purposively selected three slum areas of Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. The slum areas selected for study were chaukaghat, durgakund and nagwa block of Varanasi district. Keeping in mind the objective of the present research paper 100 women residing in slums were selected randomly.

Selection and construction of tool:

For accomplishing present investigation, interview technique was used to get the information from women of slums. For this purpose interview schedule was prepared by the review of literature. This included questions pertaining to problems faced by slum women.

In the present study, the problems of the respondents were explored with respect to the facilities available to them and near their area. Data from Table 1 reveals that in slum areas of Varanasi 39 per cent respondents were living in Kacchaghar. Women's said about living in kacchaghar because they had no money to built house and also had to migrate other places in search of food, when they could not get two time meal in their living place. About 49 per cent respondents said that they were living in kaccha-pakkaghar because they had not enough money to prepare a pakkaghar. Only 12 per cent of respondents of slums were living in pakkaghar because their conditions were better than other respondents of slums.

Data from Table 2 reveals that 46 per cent respondents had no facility of electricity in their house while 42 per cent of the respondents had the facility of electricity through illegal means (Katiya). All these were said that they had no

self-connection of electricity because of lack of money. Only 12 per cent respondents were enjoying the facility of electricity in their home because they had a regular source of income. As their family members were working as sweepers under municipal corporation.

Data from Table 3 shows that 78 per cent of the respondents had no facility of water supply in their and they had to go outside the home for water. Only 22 per cent respondents had the facility of water supply in their home.

Data from Table 4 reveals that about 25 per cent respondents had toilet facility in their home but Kaccha toilet. 9 per cent of respondents were used field while 30 per cent used railway tracks for toilet purposes because they were residing near the railway line. About 36 per cent of respondents were using public toilets on the cost 1 Rs. Per use because they were living near the locality where there was no fields and railway tracks.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their houses

Sr. No.	Type of the house	No.	Percentage
1.	Plastic, wooden and thatch house (Kaccha ghar)	39	39
2.	Mud and brick house (Kaccha-pakka ghar)	49	49
3.	Brick and cement house (Pakka ghar)	12	12
Total		100	100

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to the availability of electricity in their home

Sr. No.	Availability of electricity	No.	Percentage
1.	Self-connection	12	12
2.	Illegal means	42	42
3.	Not - available	46	46
Total		100	100

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the availability of water supply in their home

Sr. No.	Availability of water supply	No.	Percentage
1.	In home	22	22
2.	Outside the home	78	78
Total		100	100

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents according to the availability toilet facility in their home

Sr. No.	Availability of toilet facility	No.	Percentage
1.	In home	25	25
2.	In field	09	09
3.	In railway tracks	30	30
4.	In public toilet	36	36
Total		100	100

Conclusion:

From the finding of the study it can be concluded that women in slum areas of Varanasi were living in distress condition and they did not have basic facilities like water, electricity and toilets. In the study it was found that most of the families of slums were living in Kacchaghar which was made up of wood, thatch, mud and plastics and the respondents had to face lot's of difficulties during rainy season and in spite of being very poor they were forced to pay for public toilet.

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