



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

## Social Work

### STEPPING INTO THE WORLD OF URBANIZATION – CASE STUDIES OF 11 WOMEN IN URBAN SLUMS, DELHI

**KEY WORDS:** Urban-slums, women's contribution, Employment-Opportunities.

**Khwairakpam  
Sangeeta Devi**

#### ABSTRACT

Rise of sectors- factories, roadways' commercialization in cities creating opportunities in workforce. For sectors' development, rather than men, women and children shifted from rural to cities, landed in uncomfortable zones- slums, footpaths, Night-shelters due to cities' high cost of living. They are compelled to become part of slum environment. Government's programs- like Slum Improvement, UWSP, and SEPUP for Urban Poor have been directed to follow services to urban poor on realistic terms and conditions for better.

Researcher aims to understand women's position as urban-slum dwellers through concurrent fieldwork exposure during 2014-15, Department of Social Work, DU. A case study was conducted in 5 Delhi's urban slums and objectives are being proposed:

1. To encounter reasons for being in city.
2. To acknowledge mechanisms on how she adjusts to living conditions and social security.
3. To explore awareness and level of women's participation in policy/programs.
4. To assess economic empowerment and contribution to family.
5. To explore perceptions of being slum dwellers.

Paper will show slum dwellers' conditions as per data and variations of vulnerability within urban slum-dwellers.

#### INTRODUCTION

Both process of urbanization in cities and less opportunity in rural India led to a phase of migration from rural to urban in search of employment with regard to lack of skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled. Urbanization is a process of a people, instead of living in predominantly dispersed agricultural villages, start living in towns and cities dominated by industrial and services functions (Mishra, 1998). Among men, women folks took a step ahead in joining workforce in informal sectors. Schemes/programs- development of urban slums, employment/self-employment programs for urban slum women with awareness of it being deemed to be a mismatch, so far. With mindset of earning economically, they have been engaging in different spheres of workforce in cities.

#### 1. To encounter reason for being in city:

Urbanization creates employment and opportunity of income-earning led men and women-folks through it for finding a new source for surviving.

- 1.1 "To escape from poverty, my family moved from West Bengal to Delhi. Living in big cities has provided more opportunity to work and earn."
- 1.2 "My husband decided to leave our village and came to Delhi for a better life, children education, and saving. Since then, I have been working at a construction site in city."
- 1.3 "I came to the city along with my husband after our marriage, however, after his death; I work as a laundry lady in neighborhood."
- 1.4 "After our wedding, I moved to city with my husband, he works as a taxi driver and is sole breadwinner of family. I am a homemaker and take care of four kids."
- 1.5 "My husband and I are born and raised in Delhi and have been in city all our lives."
- 1.6 "My husband along with two sons and I had moved to Delhi with from Madhya Pradesh for a better livelihood."
- 1.7. "I was followed my husband to city after our wedding in Rajasthan. I'm a homemaker and never went to a school"
- 1.8 "I come from Bihar and moved to the city to have a better life. I work as a domestic help in neighborhood."
- 1.9 "I was born and raised in Delhi. Then, I got married and stayed in my husband's hometown for three years. However, I came back to city as there are more opportunities here."
- 1.10 "We came to Delhi in a hope to lead a better-life and livelihood, also; I still miss my hometown during festivals and traditional events."

- 1.11 "Delhi is the city that my late husband chose as our new home after our wedding, but; after a few years, he passed away and it forced me to work as a domestic help to make the ends meet."

#### 2. To acknowledge mechanisms on how she adjusts to living conditions and social security:

Limitation of low-income and expected expenditure of city's high cost, migrated people are being forced to live in slums, footpath. At large, women try to face a way of living and stepped into workforce of informal sector.

- 2.1 "We opened a tailor store and a clothing outlet in a rented space in slum we live. This helped us to financially support our children's education."
- 2.2 "I work in construction sites in city and I am usually out of house by 10 AM every day."
- 2.3 "My husband passed away and now I take care of my son and his two children"
- 2.4 "My husband works as a taxi driver and is sole breadwinner for us. Toilet is constructed right outside the house so it eases sanitation issues faced by others."
- 2.5 "Life is difficult in city when everything is to be managed with only 4000 INR/month that my husband earns from selling vegetables on his vegetable cart."
- 2.6 "My husband passed away and since then I've been living in footpaths alone as my children went to my village after resettlement building collapse decades ago. I work as a domestic help that pays around 500 – 700 INR per week."
- 2.7 "My husband works at a private firm that pays enough to support our children's education and to have a bathroom attached to house."
- 2.8 "We are a family of 4 and have been living in a rented house for past 3 years. I work as a domestic help to support my children with their education."
- 2.9 "We stay in a rented house and have been working hard to contribute financially for children's education."
- 2.10 "I work at two Paying Guest House to support my family; I sweep and mop the floor of building and my second daughter helps me to get it done."
- 2.11 "I started working as a domestic help after my husband passed away to make the ends meet."

#### 3. To explore awareness and level of participation of women in policy/programs:

Indian Government has launched urban poverty alleviation programs for enhancing employment and income, focusing on basic needs, community and infrastructure development.

Urban Women Self-Help Program (UWSP) is also one of schemes for urban-slum women and its participation.

- 3.1 "I'm not aware of any scheme for urban slum dwellers; we have a toilet that we can use by paying 2 INR."
- 3.2 "I had a bad experience with people in power at a locally organized event; we were asked to attend the event but not given the opportunity to speak; we do not know about any schemes/facilities available for urban slums."
- 3.3 "We've no idea about any scheme for poverty alleviation/community and infrastructure development for us; perhaps being an illiterate added up to my lack of awareness on these matters."
- 3.4 "I've not heard of Self-Help Group/infrastructure development schemes for urban slum."
- 3.5 "I do not know if the government has rolled out any scheme for poverty alleviation/ presence of any Non-Governmental Organization."
- 3.6 "I do not aware- Widow Pension Scheme/ Housing Facilities for urban slums."
- 3.7 "I am not aware of any schemes the government/NGO rolled out for urban slums."
- 3.8 "We have not availed any schemes- Urban Women Self-Help Group/any other related facilities for urban slums."
- 3.9 "My awareness on the Government/ NGO schemes for urban slums is blank"
- 3.10 "Before, I have not heard of any scheme for urban slums."
- 3.11 "I do not know about Widow Pension Scheme/any Schemes for urban slums, so; I hardly came across such schemes."

#### 4. To assess economic empowerment and contribution to family:

Urban-slum women's contribution can be linked with support within domain of household by not hiring domestic workers for household chores. They are not being earned economically but also, being saved expenditures on hiring others for it.

- 4.1 "I do not want to stay here in slum, so; I am saving up money to buy an apartment in the future."
- 4.2 "My earning is meager therefore I am not able to save money."
- 4.3 "Since I am the sole breadwinner, household expenses depend on my income, therefore; hardly gets saved every month."
- 4.4 "I don't have any source of income as I don't have the required skills for it."
- 4.5 "I'm a homemaker and take care of my children. My life goal is for my children to get higher studies and get a government job in the future."
- 4.6 "I never went to school so I am able to earn only 500-700 INR/week that is only enough to provide two square meals a day."
- 4.7 "I cannot read and write, so I stay at home."
- 4.8 "My work as domestic help in multiple houses, one of the families helps my son with his school and I adjust my salary with his tuition fee."
- 4.9 "I work as a domestic help and do laundry for 3 different houses."
- 4.10 "My salary helps running my family."
- 4.11 "I work at two Paying Guest accommodations and have been trying hard to support my family."

#### 5. To explore perceptions of being slum dwellers:

In society, different statuses and socialization create amongst all populations segregated somehow visibly or invisibly.

- 5.1 "I still don't want to get socialize in my neighborhood and my kids feel the same."
- 5.2 "Social structure in urban is very different from village. Here people hardly know each other."
- 5.3 "I don't pay attention to other people's opinion, so; I am focusing on keep working from 9 AM to 9 PM."
- 5.4 "My family has been living in Government-sponsored

subsidized housing in slums and we are fine with this."

- 5.5 "Our family of five stays in a rented single room"
- 5.6 "When I moved to the city, I hope for a better life with a higher stream of income, however; dream for a better life is yet to come true."
- 5.7 "I enjoy being in a slum."
- 5.8 "If people started using abusive language and in a confrontation environment, thereby; I try to stay calm and quiet to control the situation."
- 5.9 "In any circumstances, I only think for a better future of my children and less worried about what others talk about slum dwellers".
- 5.10 "People at workplace are in a rat race for occupying more work; so, trying to get ahead in life which according to me is meaningless."
- 5.11 "I'll move away from slum and will stay in a rented apartment to get closer to my daughter's school. I focus on my work and family."

#### Findings:

1. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, and etc. fall under the domain of informal sector this led them to earn less. Women could earn up to their skills of livestock that are well-acquainted since their childhood with less education.
2. With the city's high cost of living, they are forced to live in slums with family, footpaths, and night-shelters for adjustment.
3. It can be seen as less non-reliable from government/non-government schemes/policies; women face challenges of social conditions in an uncomfortable manner with their prevailing social security in cities.
4. By urban slum women's contributions to urban development of both cities and families, today create a space for themselves for grabbing opportunities of earning/supporting families financially.
5. It is yet to develop of slum-women and family conditions, but, still dreaming of moldings children's future and better life.

#### CONCLUSION:

In 11 cases, challenges are being faced by women folks as less social security cannot at all guarantee lives when their physical labor becomes an end. There is Urban-slum women's contribution to City's development, but; they don't receive the same from government due to poor implementation.

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