

Sociological Study on Slum Dwellers in Mysore City

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Abstract:

Slums are one of the hallmarks of a rapidly growing society. Slums play an important role in modern society. Environmental, social, cultural and economic factors play an important role in understanding the lives of slum dwellers. The physical environment of slums poses challenges to slum dwellers. Nowadays, the social, economic, cultural and political aspects of slum dwellers are changing. Slums are under development. Slums are being converted into apartments. Studies have shown that this shift implies upward class mobility on the one hand and increases the gap of social inequality on the other. Therefore, there is a need for studies to improve the quality of life of slum dwellers.

Keywords: Environmental, Socio, Cultural, Political Physical Environmental

Introduction

Slums are common feature of existing modern society, which are located adjacent to cities. These informal settlements called slums have become a symbol of failure of our developed social system. Rapid urban growth without needed urban infrastructure development has resulted in slums. These are neglected parts of any city where housing and living conditions are appallingly poor. Slums range from high density, squalid central city tenements to spontaneous squatter settlements without legal recognition or rights, sprawling at the edge of cities (World Bank, 2000).

The last few decades have seen them proliferating tremendously, although they have been in existence since historical times. The prevalence of slums varies dramatically across cities of the developed and developing world. The broad patterns of slum life are common all over the world, although these differ in origin and nature in the developed and developing countries. The word slum has become a common usage. Even the people from mofussil areas use the word slum without any hesitation. The term slum can have multiple connotations but still it has become synonymous with filthiness. Though there is a change in the physical structure and living conditions of its residents, people still view slums as unhygienic and disease prone areas. The slum dwellers may be exposed to unpredictable hazards, but they are hard workers. Besides, they have learnt to adopt themselves to the condition in which they are fated to live.

They have also learnt how to fulfill their necessities and obligations with what they earn and contribute to the betterment of the society to which they are also a part. Most of the slum dwellers belong to the lower castes or economically underprivileged groups. But they know how to live with self-respect and dignity by doing petty jobs and selling petty things. 2 In this way they provide an important

service for the poor and emerging middle class. The vast majority of slums come up in industrial areas and nearby railway tracks or railway stations. All the slums, irrespective of their location and size, face some universally noted problems such as lack of sanitation, potable water, electricity, health care and other basic services. Slums are often prone to floods, water logging and fire. Improper drainage and sewages lead to water borne diseases. Their shanty houses, on account of improper construction, are need of light and clean air. In short they live under inhuman conditions. Since houses are so congested, slums look like mini islands. Normally social stability is not constant in the slums. It undergoes constant changes. So the slum dwellers have no other option than adopting themselves to the new changes and challenges. It is because it is a question of survival and urban misery is better than rural poverty. Modernization has caused internal and external changes. The slum dwellers, besides eking out their living, are striving hard to come up in their life. There is an amalgamation of the cultures of urban and rural areas in the slums. Their close nit relationships, innocent thinking, self-confidence, selfrespect, self-dignity, the nature of good Samaritan, simple life style, are the features of rural milieu, which they never fail to leave behind. But proximity to city life and hardships do contribute in bringing transformation in their life style and thinking.

Objectives of the study

The present study is an attempt to understand the changing trends in slums dwellers of Mysore city. For a smooth conduct of the study and clear depiction of urbanization and profiles of the poor the following specific objectives are formulated. Specific objectives of the research investigation are as follows.

1. To study the causes for emergence of slums
2. To know the structural features of slums
3. To analyse the educational and economic status of slum

Study Area

The present study is carried out to understand the social, economic, cultural and educational status and changing trends of slums dwellers of Mysore city. Mysore District is one among 31 Districts of Karnataka State, India. Mysore city is geographically located between 12° 18' 26" north latitude and 76° 38' 59" east longitude. It is located at an altitude of 2,427 ft (739.75 m). Mysore is located in the foothills of the Chamundi Hills about 145.2 km (90 mi) towards the southwest of Bangalore and spread across an area of 152 km² (59 sq mi). Mysore City Corporation is responsible for the civic administration of the city, which is also the headquarters of the Mysore district and the Mysore division. According to the 2011 census conducted in India, the total population of the district of Mysuru was 3001.127 million, of which 151.1600 million were men and 1489.527 million were females. The rural population of the district of Mysuru is 1755714, while the urban population is 1245413. The population density in the district of Mysuru is 476/km². In 2011, the population sex ratio was 985 women for 1000 men. Seven revenue taluks comprise the Mysore district: H.D. Kote, K.R. Nagar, Hunsur, Nanjanagud, T. Narasipura, Periyapatna, and Mysuru (Urban and Rural). There are 1199 inhabited villages, 11 towns with legal status, 268 Gram Panchayats, and 226 wards.

As per a report by Karnataka Slum Development Board there are about 63 notified slums in Mysore city (Table 1.1). Among them a majority 32 notified slums comes under the ownership of City Municipal Corporation.

Table 1.1: Details of Slums and its population in Mysore city.

Ownership	Huts	Popn.	Male	Female	SC	ST	Others
Government(8)	686	3675	1850	1825	1822	874	1237
HousingBoard(1)	192	1056	512	523	1036	0	0
City Municipal Corporation(32)	5254	28489	14163	14326	18939	2031	7519
Government/Private(2)	121	676	333	343	326	50	300
Gramtan(1)	215	1195	593	602	1105	0	90
MysoreCityCorporation(4)	559	3094	1574	1520	2055	177	862
MysoreUrbanDevelopmentAuthority(8)	797	4213	2035	2178	1995	248	1945
Private(7)	1300	6954	3455	3509	3767	1111	2076
Total(63)	9124	49352	24515	24826	31045	4491	14029

The rest 27 notified slums are under the ownership of various agencies, among them 8 each are under the ownership of State Government and Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA), 1 each under Housing board and Gramtan, about 7 slums are under the private ownership and 4 under Mysore City Corporation.

Methodology

A systematic enquiry and application of appropriate methods have a significant bearing on the collection of reliable and accurate data which is very much necessary for research. For the present study, data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. The main concentration of the present study is designed to make an intensive inquiry of various aspects of challenges faced by slum dwellers by using the empirical approach. For the present study the research design adopted are descriptive as well as exploratory in nature to find out the ground realities of Slum dwellers in Mysore city.

Sampling Procedure The study was conducted in Mysore city of Karnataka State. The duration of this survey was from October 2022 to January 2023. The researcher collected the population size of Slum dwellers' from the report published by Karnataka Slum Development Board. The report shows that in Mysore city there are about 63 notified slums consisting 9124 huts with a population of 49352, among them 24515 are male and 24826 are female population (Table 1.1).

Considering the total number of notified Slums in Mysore city i.e., 63, under eight ownerships namely (Government; Housing Board; City Municipal Corporation; Government/Private, Gramtan, Mysore City Corporation, Mysore Urban Development Authority; and Private) ownerships, among which the researcher selected 1 slum settlement from each of the ownerships (i.e. 8 slum settlements) were selected through proportionate sampling method by giving equal weightage to each of the ownerships. Further, from each of the selected slum settlements 50 slum dwellers were selected randomly consisting 25 male and 25 female slum dwellers. Hence, a total of 400 sample respondents were selected for the present study (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Selection of sample respondents.

Ownerships	Name of the selected slum settlements	Huts	Popn.	Sample Selected
Government	Metagahalli Janatha Colony(Ambedkar Colony)	290	1554	50
Housing Board	Jyothi nagar	192	1056	50
City Municipal Corporation	Chennagiri Koppal	617	3362	50
Government/Private	Vandematram slum	90	510	50
Gramtan	Metagahalli Harijana Colony (ADColony)	215	1195	50
Mysore City Corporation	Siddappajicross A'Block	275	1595	50
Mysore Urban Development Authority	Rajashop Khar khane	293	1641	50
Private	Medars Block	464	2558	50
Total		2436	13471	400

Results & Discussions:

Reasons for the Emergence of Slums:

According to the information gathered from the preliminary data collection of the study area and through interviews, slums were the place which included many activities. Generally, the main reason for the construction of slums here is poverty. It has been found that these slums are raised by people who are unable to pay the rent, poor people who have migrated, people who have migrated from faraway towns without support for life.

The structural nature of Slums areas:

Considering the geographical features of these slums, initially coconut feather huts were constructed, later plastic roofs were constructed. Later they built a four-foot wall around the hut and lived. Sometimes the city corporation destroys these. Whenever they destroyed these, no matter how much these residents cried and cried, they would tear them away. It is difficult for them to build a hut. When this incident happened, they had no place to spend another night and were building another hut with difficulty. In later days, he built mud walls and put up tin roofs with the money he saved from doing some labor. The city council later identified these as slums and helped financially. Some are given financial help, some are helped with money for roofs, and some are given loan facilities for house construction. Thus, houses are built step by step. Now the sights are mud houses. Brick houses, shared houses, terraced houses are found.

Current Structure of slums in Mysore city:

The observations made while collecting data in the field for the study are:

The condition of the civil servants responsible for keeping the entire city of Mysore clean and tidy is pathetic. The life of those who attend the house for wages for the second porridge is rotting in the slums. There is no school for children to study, there is no hospital nearby for urgent matters for anyone who is

unwell, even if 108 ambulances come, there is no place to enter the street. This is a common sight in slums.

If you see the image inside the house, you are afraid of when it will fall. If it rains, the upper floor will leak. Water from bathrooms and toilets is constantly entering the houses below. The 'G Plus 3' three-storied houses built under the 'JNnurm' scheme to make slums a free city has come down within four years of their construction. Leaky bathroom and toilet. Elderly people can be seen standing on the stairs, sitting for a while and climbing up without being able to go to the upper houses. Three or four-year-old houses are like 40-year-old houses. Garbage everywhere, no basic amenities. Garbage disposal in slum areas was found to be a problem.

Some of the slum dwellers' houses are in a dilapidated state and three or four years have passed since the government started demolishing the old houses and building new houses. But, they still don't feel like it. There is a shed next to the house where the children are being raised. Some families tried to rule that the children were studying at SSLC but the shed was not light. While some have built good houses, most families with a low income are suffering without minimum facilities. There is not even a minimum of space between two houses here. If someone comes from the front, both of them have to move slightly in the opposite direction to avoid hitting me. Sewage water stands in front of houses. The space is encroached upon and cannot be repaired. If you are living in bad smell without facilities. It was found that the life of the people cleaning the town itself was still minimal.

The roof cement of the one-storey houses built 30 years ago near Rajarajeshwari Colony is falling and the beams are up. The doors to the bathrooms were broken. There is a situation where some people have to get up earlier than others and finish their routine as they have to stand in line to go to the bathroom. There is a situation where the lower house has to finish the bathroom work first.

Age Composition

This section covers the discussion on the distribution of population based on gender and age groups. The composition and structure of the population are largely determined by age and gender, which in turn influence various aspects such as education, occupation, employment, marriage, death, and socio-cultural activities. Age grouping is a commonly used method for analysing the age structure of the population. The population is categorized into four age groups (i) Young(ii) The adults (iii) middle age and (iv) old age. There is no standardized break points but the range of 15and 60 are mostly used. Thus, four broad age groups are seen (a) 0-14, (b) 15 to 34,(c) 35 to 59 and (d) above 60.

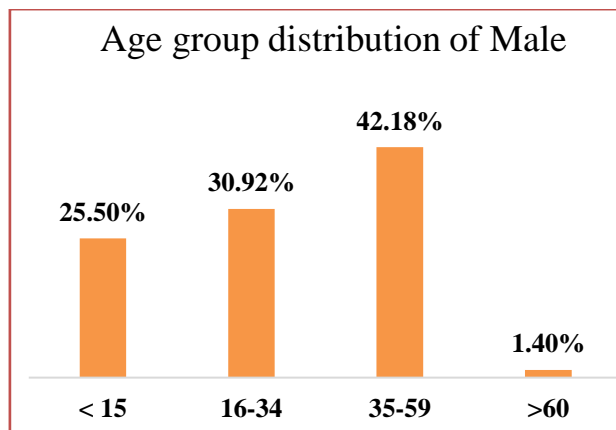
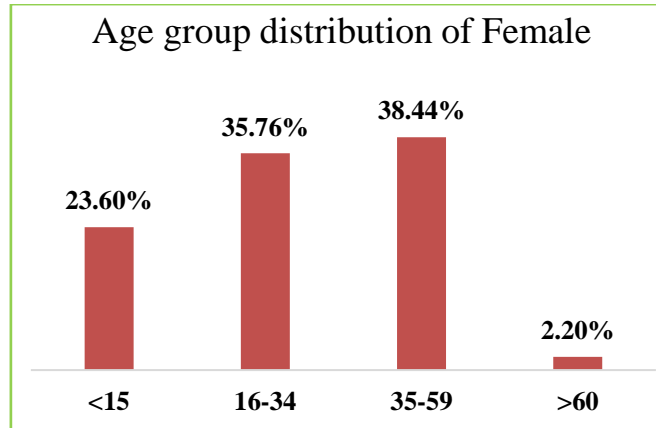
Table-1

Total Males	Age (Years)				Total	Total Females	Age (Years)				Total
	<15	16-34	35-59	>60			<15	16-34	35-59	>60	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
51.7	25.5	30.92	42.18	1.4	100	48.3	23.6	35.76	38.44	2.2	100

Table-1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender and age group. It is evident from the table that out of 400 respondents 207 (51.7 %) are males and 193 (48.3 %) are females. Out of 207 males it is seen that 25.53% are below 15 years. They are the young population. 30.92% are in the age group of 16-34 years. They are termed as the adults. 42.18% of the males belong to 35-59 age group and they are middle

age group. They are the working population. Only 1.4% males found above 60 years and they are the old men.

Similarly, it is also observed that out of total 193 female respondents 23.56% are below 15 years of age and termed as the young females. 35.76% are found in the age group 16-34 years. and are termed as adult. 38.44% are in the age group of 35-59 years. Only 2.2% females found above 60 years of age and are termed as old women.



The percentage of children below 15 years are found more in males than in females. Due to illiteracy the slum dwellers are not aware of the birth control methods and majority of the dwellers have preference for boy child than girl child.

It has been noticed that the proportion of females in the adult group is slightly higher than that of males, which is primarily determined by the level of migration. The survey revealed that males tend to bring their wives with them to the slums after marriage, but when they realize that they can earn more in other states, they leave their families in the slum and travel to other states to earn a living. As a result, the percentage of females in the working group exceeds that of males.

The middle age population is found to be higher in males than females. This portion of the population is a significant human capital resource whose productivity and labour market outcomes are influenced by their socioeconomic circumstances. Migration greatly affects this age group, as they moving to search for employment and engage in the economy. The survey revealed that males tend to migrate more often in pursuit of employment, while women tend to migrate for marriage or family-related reasons.

As indicated by the table, the proportion of females is greater than that of males in the age group over 60 years. This is because males engage in physically demanding labour throughout their lives more than

their female counterparts, resulting in higher male mortality rates. Consequently, the female mortality rate is lower than that of males.

Literacy rate

According to the census, an individual who is seven years old or above and can read and write in any language with understanding is considered literate. In the 1991 census, it was decided that children aged 0-6 would be considered illiterate by definition, and only individuals aged seven years and above would be classified as literate or illiterate. This criterion has remained unchanged in the censuses conducted in 2001 and 2011.

Table –2 Percentage Distribution of Population By Literacy Rate

Literacy Rate					
Male		Female		Total Literates	Total Illiterates
Literate %	Illiterate %	Literate %	Illiterate %	%	%
20.39	29.04	19.33	31.24	39.72	60.28

Table-2 presents the distribution of population by literacy rate across different zones. The table indicates that out of the total surveyed respondents of 400, 51.40% are males and 48.6% are females. It was observed that 171 individuals (42.8%) are literate while 229 (57.2%) are illiterate. The literacy rate of the surveyed slum population is significantly lower at 39.72% as compared to the average slum literacy rate of Mysore, which is 89.5% as per the 2011 census. It is important to note that the literacy rate was calculated by excluding the age group of 0-6 years.

The low literacy rate observed in the surveyed slums could be attributed to financial constraints acting as a hindrance to education. Given that most families are living below the poverty line, it becomes difficult to expect children from these families to attend school. Instead, families may prefer that their children assist in their work to increase their source of income. Moreover, larger families may see more children as a means of generating additional income. In addition to financial constraints, the lack of adequate school infrastructure in slum areas also contributes to this issue. The number of schools is reported to be significantly less compared to the number of children, with only two schools located within the slums according to respondents.

Educational Levels

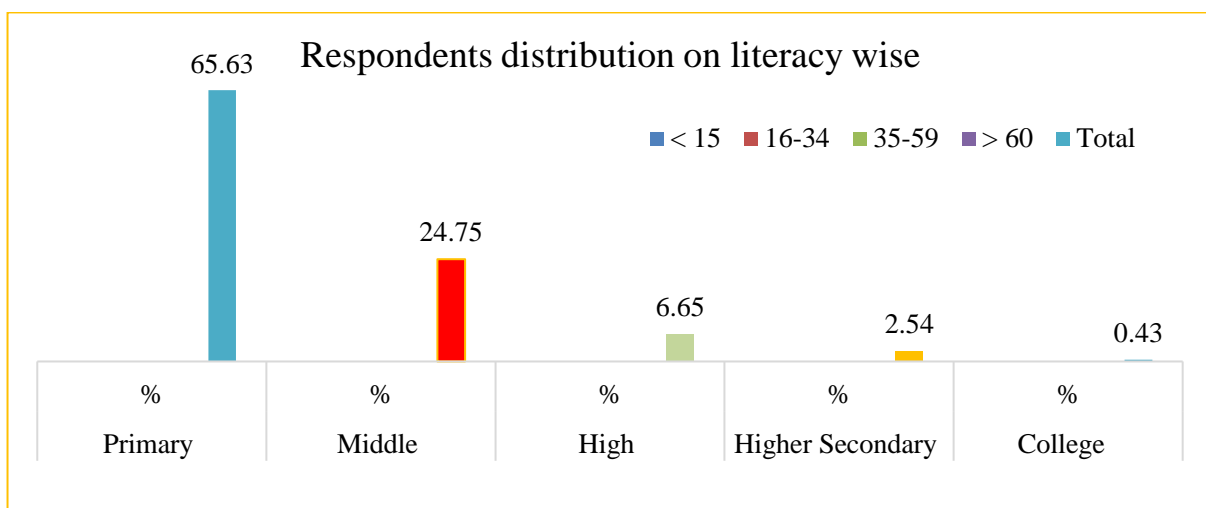
Education is considered a fundamental requirement for improving the quality of life in any society. In the case of slums, it is hypothesized that most of the residents have low levels of education or are illiterate, making it crucial to measure this variable. It is evident that the availability of formal and informal education facilities varies from one slum to another, with factors such as adult literacy programs, Anganwadis, NGO activities, government schools providing free textbooks, and media awareness all influencing the education system in the slums. Additionally, relatives, parents, and friends play a significant role in encouraging younger individuals to prioritize education over working in factories or construction sites, emphasizing how education can transform their lives in the future. The statutory reservations in education and employment also encourage slum dwellers to pursue education, as many view education as a means of upward social mobility.

Table-3 illustrates the percentage distribution of households by levels of education. The data reveals that out of the total of 171 literates in the surveyed population, 65.63% had studied up to primary level, 24.75% had studied up to middle school, 6.65% had studied up to high school, 2.55% had studied up to higher secondary, and only 0.42% had studied up to college. There is a significant drop in the number of individuals who have completed middle schooling compared to those who have completed primary level education. This could be attributed to the lack of physical access to government schools. The number of government-aided schools in slum areas is inadequate compared to the number of children who reside there, and there is no provision for accommodating a large volume of slum children.

Table-3 Percentage Distribution of Population by Level of Education

Literate Category	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	College	Total
Age Group	%	%	%	%	%	%
< 15	10.18	4.11	1.56	---	---	15.85
16-34	32.92	15.24	3.12	1.57	---	52.85
35-59	21.36	4.58	1.92	0.83	0.43	29.12
> 60	1.17	0.82	0.05	0.14	---	2.18
Total	65.63	24.75	6.65	2.54	0.43	100

Table-3 shows the respondents distribution on literacy wise. It is evident from the table that 52.85% of the respondents belong to 16-34 age group are literates. 29.12% of the respondents who are in age group of 35-59 are literates, followed by 15.85% come under age group of young i.e. below 15 years are literates. 2.18% of the respondents having 60 years and above age are literates. Primary education is found highest (65.63 percent) among the literate respondents as the cost of schooling for primary education is least or free.



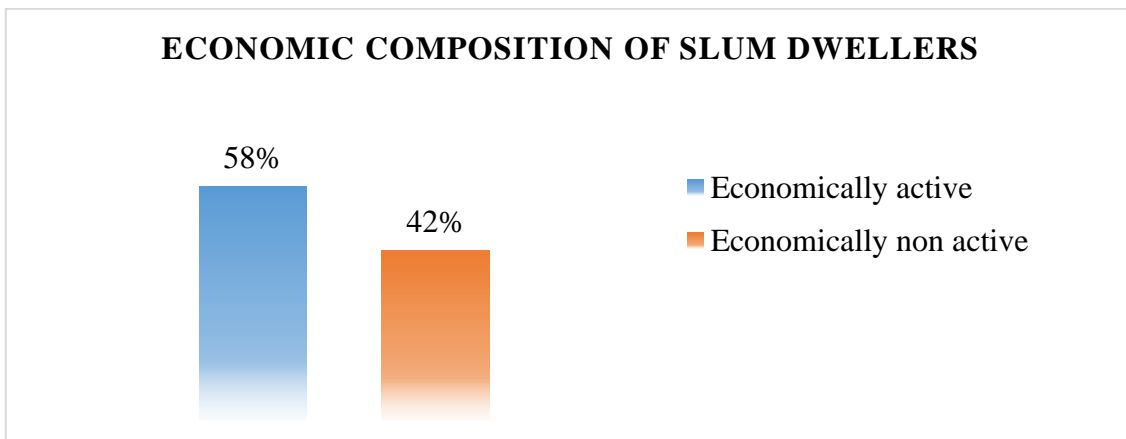
Economic Composition

The study attempts to deal with economically active population, which comprises of individuals who are either part of the labour force or engaged in gainful work to sustain themselves. On the other hand, the non-active population refers to those who perform non-remunerative tasks, such as housewives or students. Accordingly, the surveyed population has been categorized into two distinct groups.

- 1) Economically active population
- 2) Not economically active population.

Table-4

Economic composition of Slum Dwellers		
	Nos.	%
Economically active	216	54
Economically non-active	180	45
Total	400	100



Percentage distribution of economically active and non-active population. It is evident from the table-4 that out of 400 surveyed population 232 population (58%) are economically active and 168 population (42%) are economically non-active population.

Conclusion

Mysore Slum Development Board is working hard for the development of slum dwellers in Mysore city. In Mysore city, the shantytowns are being razed. About 50 houses illegally located next to the Yadavagiri Arasekere railway track have been razed. HUDCO, VAMBE, SCP, JNNURM, BSUP etc. The study revealed that many beneficiaries of government housing schemes are still living in shacks and sheds on government land (land belonging to MCC, Muda etc.) as well as private land and have rented or leased out their sanctioned houses to others, living in their original homestead shanties.

If the government has to implement any project, it must get the experience and participation of the local beneficiaries. Only then can the project be successful. As evidence of this, a multi-storied residential complex with 252 houses on Naguvanahalli road near the ring road of Mysore city was built in 2014 under the JNNRM project at a cost of Rs 6 crore. Houses are intended to be constructed at cost and distributed to slum dwellers and other poor people. But these houses could not be allotted to them. The reason is that it is far from the city and there are no number of buses to get around. Slum dwellers have refused to acquire these houses as they have to travel far for their daily necessities and, most

importantly, because the settlement is far from their place of work. Thus, the Sewerage Development Board is neutral in not being able to allocate houses.

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