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**DESPERATE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE FORCED TO LIVE IN THE SLUM AREA  
(WITH REFERENCE TO CHHATTISGARH SLUMS)**



**Seraphinus Kispotta**

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Guru Ghasidas, Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India.

**Short Profile**

Seraphinus Kispotta is working as a Assistant Professor at Department of Economics in Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India.



**ABSTRACT:**

The slum population has been multiplied in recent years due to the availability of the employment opportunities in the big towns and cities. This implies that the rural poverty gets transferred to the urban areas. The rural people are attracted to the urban areas for the economic reasons exclusively irrespective of the non-availability of the physical infrastructures. They struggle to find housing facility. They do face the shortage of drinking water supply.

**KEYWORDS**

*slum area , physical infrastructures , socio-economic conditions .*

## INTRODUCTION

As per the socio-economic conditions and the social perception of the particular area/society/community, the concept and meaning of slum varies state to state. There are different names for slums in different states of towns. They are usually a cluster of hutments with dilapidated and infirm structures having common toilet facilities, suffering from lack of basic amenities, inadequate arrangements for drainage and for disposal of solid wastes and grabage. Thus the living conditions become highly sub optimal, unhygienic resulting in the air and water borne diseases for the dwellers.

It is a compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built, congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.

## STATUS OF SLUMS IN CHHATTISGARH:

- ✦ With regard to the situation of Chhattisgarh, a total no. of urban population is 4195747 (Survey, 2001) which comprises of 14.66% against Indian urban population.
- ✦ Out of the given total urban population of Chhattisgarh, the slum population is 817908 comprising of 19.54% as a whole. However, when compared to the Indian slum population it reads to just 1.92%. Though the figure looks very tiny but it has a significant contribution to the number of slum-dwellers and the urban population.
- ✦ Similarly the urban population of age-group between 0-6 is 14.2% compared to the total no. of urban population in Chhattisgarh.
- ✦ In the slum area of Chhattisgarh, the no. of people of age-group between 0-6, is 15.4% against the total no. of slum-dwellers in Chhattisgarh.
- ✦ With regard to the Scheduled caste population in the Chhattisgarh urban 143533 (17.5%) people are living in the slum areas, against a total no. of 519667 (12.4%) urban scheduled caste population.
- ✦ The Scheduled tribe population in the urban Chhattisgarh comprises of 8.4% having 351761 populations. The slum-dwellers in this category are equal to 64945 (7.9%) of the total slum-dwellers.
- ✦ As regard to the literacy rate of the urban population in Chhattisgarh is 2886538 (70.0%) against the total urban population, while the slum population in Chhattisgarh has the literacy rate 517363 (17.92%) against the urban population and 63.3 against the total slum population.
- ✦ It is inferred that a handful people (17.92%) are literate in the urban areas of C.G. having traditional and out dated mentality.

It is noteworthy that a total of 92.1% slum dwellers are carrying out their self-business either in a small or big scale.

## FINDINGS

Child Labour The presence of street children is quite high in Raipur; this is a common scenario to find ill clad children moving on the streets, surviving with their parents in the pavements of the city.

Child labour is high at Raipur, most of the elite houses have children from poor families as domestic helps, and middlemen bring these. The boys and girls are prone to child labour they are engaged in hotels, restaurants, mechanic shops, welding works, selling Newspapers, Hardware shops, bidi making, rag picking and others. Most of the children are seen as helpers in the auto rickshaws. The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) has set up schools and are running schools through the NGO's.

**Literacy Status:** Level of education infrastructure is fairly adequate across the slums as they have either Anganwadis, Primary school and secondary school or a combination of them. The literacy rate of slum population in Raipur Urban agglomeration as per census 2001 was about 71 percent and the female literacy in slum was about 63 percent. Despite increased literacy rates, there is high dropout of students from school. Most of these dropouts are being drawn into the labour market. This is an area of concern. Communities: Slum population in Raipur urban agglomeration is heterogeneous in character-with Hindus, Muslims and Christians having migrated from different neighboring states like from Orissa, Bihar, Andra Pradesh and from near by villages and Districts in search of better employment opportunities in business, industry and other informal sector activities are employed as daily labourers, rickshaw pullers and work as labourers in market. The language predominantly spoken in slums is Hindi and Oriya.

**Land Status:** As per existing information 65% slums are regularized, however, tenure security rests with few households in the regularized settlements. Slums in Raipur urban Agglomeration, as elsewhere in the state, are located on state and central government, municipal, private and other unclaimed lands, Slums are classified as objectionable and unobjectionable based on location and land use – location on riverbeds. Low lying areas, drains, road margins, etc. some of the very objectionable slums in RMC area were relocated and the communities .

**Health Status:** The environmental infrastructure in the slums is very poor and most slums lack basic civic amenities like proper roads, drainage, protected water supply, streetlights and toilet facilities. The conditions of public toilets constructed under different schemes are in poor state, as there is lack of maintenance by the assigned staff and as a result they are not used. The other main problem is lack of covered drains and sewer facility. Since most of the slums are located in marginal areas encroaching on drains, the physical environment in most of them is of poor quality.

In addition to these access to community facilities and health centers in these settlements is limited and not adequate. Across all the slums, the health centers are not adequately equipped with medicines and the households have to procure medicines from open market. These health centers are also not equipped to provide antenatal and postnatal care. Studies reveals that the most common diseases prevalent in slums include gastro-enteritis, malaria, Diarrhea, cholera, Typhoid, Malnutrition, ringworm etc. To overcome these health problems the corporation runs 3 maternity hospitals, 1 Government hospital and several health centers. The RMC has also started reproductive and Child Health project and it is being implemented through non-governmental organizations. With their participation, many urban health centers were established to provide better health services to the women and children, particularly in slums and hill areas. There are also government dispensaries, which are visited by the poor. The poor from the peri-urban areas and the villages have to come to

Raipur to meet the health needs. There is need to strengthen health infrastructure.

**Infrastructure facilities:** Access of slum population to basic services is a key indicator of the quality of life of people in slum is particular and those in the city in general. The access to basic infrastructure in the slums leaves lot of scope for improvement.

With the exception, all other slum settlements lack access to adequate drinking water facility, individual toilets and public toilets, drainage, and garbage disposal. For example, the study shows that a very small fraction of households have direct water supply connection and rely on 2-3 taps in addition to some hand pumps, most of which are not functional. Exceptions are slums where most of the households have direct water connection. However, in many slums the drinking water is not potable. The other problem is related to duration of water supply (30-45 minutes) and frequency of supply (48 to 72 hours).

In terms of access to toilet facility, while many households have constructed individual toilets, due to large households size, open defecation is a common practice. The conditions of public toilets constructed under different schemes are in poor state, as there is lack of maintenance and as a result they are not used.

In terms of road infrastructure, most of the slums have roads, but majority of bye-lanes are not metalled and street lighting is inadequate. Street lighting are mostly on the main access roads and inner roads are dark, which most of the women amongst the population expressed as concerns for their security.

However, one of the main problems, which exist across all the slums, is the lack of knowledge about government programmes and limited reach of social security safety nets. For example, the public distribution system for distribution of subsidies foods and kerosene oil is often inadequate and there is diversion of essential commodities.

Lack of access to these safety nets and limited information about government schemes increases their vulnerability and pushes them further into poverty traps. With regard to the Electricity, these slums are deprived of the legal connection; rather they are illegally connecting the electricity and are trying to have this facility.

**Alcohol consumption** The habit of consuming alcohol among the slum-dwellers is the main problem as it is identified. Though people are living in "Hand to mouth" situation, a budget is kept aside for this purpose. Because of this the social life of the community is disturbed. There is no habit of saving the money rather they spend money.

**Livelihood** The slum dwellers do not have much income which is another cause for child labour. In fact people lack awareness with regard to the development in terms of education, health, civic facilities, safe drinking water, child health care, income generating activities, Government schemes etc. They expect that the Government will come and do everything for them.

During the interaction with the people it was also confirmed that till date, no NGO has visited these slums, hence there was no initiatives taken on the part of NGO. Therefore, World Vision India will be the first NGO, who will intervene in these areas for the development of the people/community as a whole. To start with, the organization has to acquainted with the problem and needs of these slums, which are put forth here under-



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be Legal connection of Electricity, Access to Schools and Health centers, Working hand pumps, Construction of road/streets and drainages, Proper shelter.
- Home employment like Spice grinding, Papad making, Pickle making and packing broom making candle tailoring, chatai making, opening shops sale and purchase of item.
- Awareness camps to be arranged on different topics Motivation course to be imparted.
- Slum-dwellers must be provided with the safe drinking facilities.
- Special awareness and training programmes to be arranged and the negative sides of the liquor consumption should be highlighted.
- School and immunization must be the priority area for children.
- Awareness cum training should be arranged for the whole community.
- Information Centres could be set up. If it is available then people may be motivated to visit the centre regularly and would get information. The centre could be updated every day/week/month.
- Women should be motivated to make Self-Help Group (SHGs) and for this a continuous effort on the part of staff and volunteers be put up. Training programmes must take place regularly in this regard.

## CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this study has certainly not been to keep this report in the shelves, but to use it to understand the situation of the slum people in India, Chhattisgarh and Raipur, the Capital City of Chhattisgarh, and to respond to the various needs, opportunities and challenges that it has presented before us. Clearly, there are quite a few path-breaking initiatives made by the development agencies Government and Non-Government in Chhattisgarh for the socio-economic and cultural development of the slum-dwellers therein. However, there are also some rugged and old practices of community development, which have not only lost their edge and purpose, but also have become liabilities in terms of sustaining the approach and the infrastructure. This study, therefore, invites the development agencies to make appropriate recommendations of strategies for the overall development of the slum-dwelling people in the city of Raipur, Chhattisgarh State and in India as a whole in terms of their livelihood, health and very specially their education. The invitation goes to the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations to take initiatives for the betterment of the slum-dwellers.

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