

THE FORGOTTEN POOR: A CASE STUDY OF SLUMS IN ROHTAK CITY OF HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Slums throughout the world have become a common problem for urban civic bodies. The slums mostly develop on government or private vacant land in the outskirts of the city where no one challenges their settlement in the initial stage such as along railway lines, disputed property, grounds, etc. These slums house the poor people who have migrated to cities and towns for employment and livelihood. In India where per capita income is approximately above ninety thousand rupees, these people who live in slums even don't have sufficient resources to pay for standard living conditions and services due to unemployment. Although government provide subsidized ration to some families in slums who have Below Poverty Line status but still lot of welfare measures for these people are needed and expected from the government as well as civic bodies. They need proper training and skills education so that they can cash employment opportunities and earn respectable livelihood.

INTRODUCTION

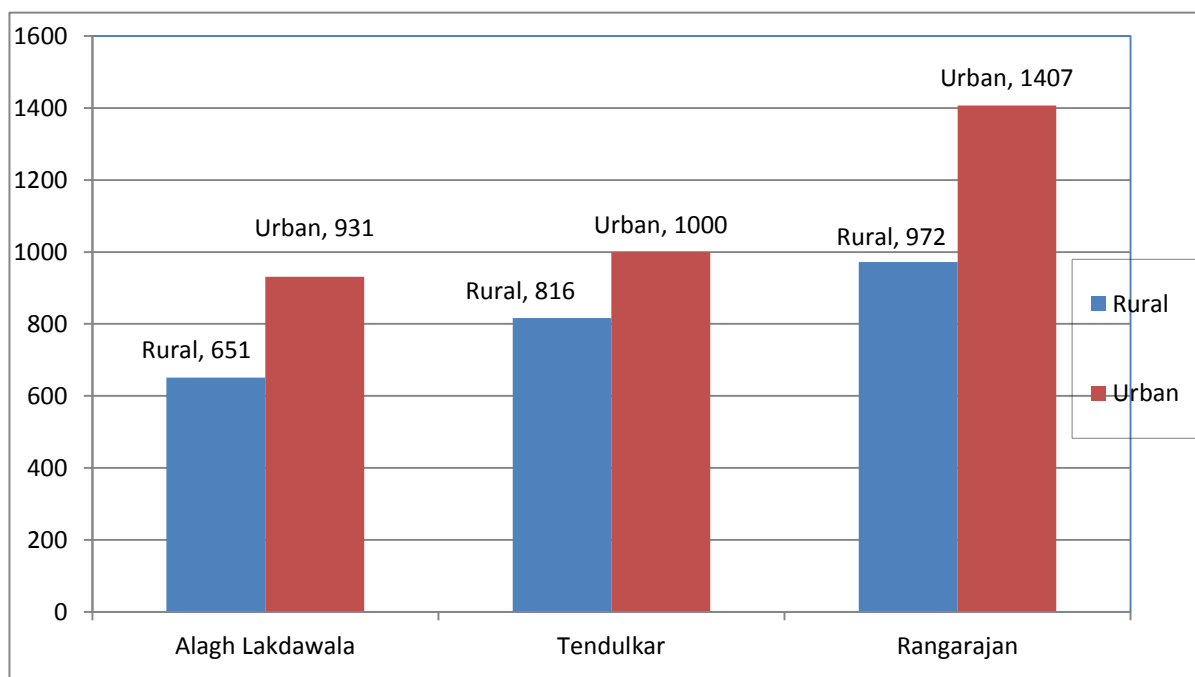
With the wide spread of modes of communication like mobiles internet fax machines and mass media the people throughout the world has come closer to each other. Similarly the increased transportation services have laid the foundation for mobility of people at national and international level. Due to this people have started moving from villages and small towns to bigger and better towns, cities and have also come closer to the people living in far away areas. Increased participation of private sectors and international funding has led to the development of infrastructure in urban areas. The liberalization, privatization and globalization have made the cities centers of universal services, products, technology, investment, institutions, employment diversity, urban culture as well as urban social values. These factors attract the people to move towards these cities for their development which creates challenge for local institutions to cope up with this migration. With this many problems arise like traffic, pollution, housing and many others. The increasing number of slums in urban areas is also one of these problems. Slums have become common characteristics of almost all the big towns and cities in India. According to 2011 census 31.2% population in India lives in urban areas and the trend shows that this percentage will increase in coming areas. In 1970-71 the urban areas contributed 37.7% in GDP whereas in 2009-10 it contributed almost 63% (State of Slums in India: A Statistical Compendium 2013)¹. This phenomenon of Cities makes them engines of economic growth. Thus it attracts lots of people from rural as well as urban areas to migrate to cities for better opportunities and services. Poor people from different parts of the same city and different cities and states start settling in vacant lands belonging to government and private parties. Most of the times they settle on outskirts of the city and along railway lines as they are cheap and in a kind of isolation where no one objects their settlements in the form of slums. But the poor migrants live there in temporary houses made of tents, tins, clothes, polythene, raw building material because neither they have sufficient resources for making permanent settlements nor they have guarantee of tenure.

DEFINING SLUM AND POVERTY

A slum is a compact area with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions (NSSO Survey, 2001)². Most of the slum dwellers had the problems related to housing, employment, poverty and water supply. Among these problems unemployment was biggest challenge as noticed. They hope that government will provide employment to them. Dilapidated housing was also a challenge for them as they don't have resources to plan repairing their houses. Though government is doing some efforts to eradicate the problem of urban poverty and housing but seem to be less effective. Major urban housing schemes are JawaharLal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Basic Services to the Urban Poor, Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme, Rajiv Awas Yojna, Swarnajayanti Shahri Rojgar Yojna, National Urban Livelihood Mission, Affordable housing in Partnership scheme, Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Scheme, Allotment of Land/Flats to EWS, etc.

In present times the most important problem for the country is the poverty. Poverty prohibits the complete expansion and development of a person in all directions like social, political, economical, cultural. It creates a vicious circle of poverty and unemployment which may continue for generations. This problem can be easily seen in slums where poor people are forced to live a miserable life without sufficient resources for their survival.

Figure-1; (Source: NITI Aayog 2020)³.



Rural and Urban Poverty Lines suggested by various committees in India at 2011-12 Prices (Income Per month/Person) are shown in Figure-1. In India till now the poverty line decided by Tendulkar committee is the official criteria to find Below Poverty Line Families. The figure 1 makes it clear that in India a person earning Rs.816 per capita per month in rural area and Rs.1000 per capita per month is above poverty line and if less than this then he is Below Poverty Line (BPL) as per Tendulkar Committee. This BPL line at 2011-12 prices is needed to be revised according to the inflation rate at present but due to political passiveness it doesn't seem to be possible in near future. One main reason for not revising the poverty line is, increasing the value of criteria for counting BPL population means directly increasing the percentage of BPL population, which will become shame for current government not only at national level but also at international level.

METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature and focuses on poor people living in slums of Rohtak city in Haryana. Total population of Haryana is 25.35 million in 2011 constituting 1.34% population of India and placing it at 20th rank in Indian states in order of total population. Out of 25.35 million, 16.51 million lives in rural area and 8.84 million population lives in urban area i.e. 34.87% (Census of India 2011)⁴. Haryana has total 154 towns and cities out of which 75 towns and cities have reported slums (Municipal Corporation Rohtak 2020)⁵. Rohtak city has population of 373133 out of which slum population is 40779¹ i.e. 10.93% of its total population divided into 26 slum pockets⁵. Out of these 26 slum pockets Surya Nagar2 has maximum slum population and Badsli Nagar has Minimum Slum Population.⁴ Surya Nagar2 is situated between the Rohtak-Jind railway line and Rohtak-Hisar National Highway and comes under ward-1 of Rohtak Municipal Committee. On the other side of Rohtak-Jind Railway track and along the Rohtak-Jind road lies the Badsli Slum (Source: Municipal Committee, Rohtak).⁶ These two areas have been selected for sample survey. Survey method is used for this research and Systematic random sampling has been used for collection of primary data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences is used as a tool for data analysis. For secondary data various research papers and books on slum were taken in use. Along with these publications by Municipal Corporation Rohtak were also considered. Some case studies and discussions were also made with the members of municipal corporation of these wards. Officers of the municipal corporation were also contacted for knowledge of city plan of development for these areas. Many facts came out through these discussions.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The primary data is collected from 182 respondents from the two notified slums i.e. Surya Nagar2 and Badsli Nagar.

1. Income and Expenditure

The economic conditions of people living in slums are very miserable. These people are engaged in less paid occupation such as daily labour, roadside hawkers, plumber, cook, sweeper, etc. so their income is also less.

Table 1. Income of the Family

Income in Rupees (Monthly)	No. of Respondents	Percent
Less than 3000	54	29.7
Less than 6000	29	15.9
Less than 9000	63	34.6
Less than 12000	18	9.9
More than 12000	18	9.9
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 shows the monthly income of the respondents where 29.7% respondents have monthly income less than Rs.3000, the 15.9% respondents have monthly income less than Rs.6000, the 34.6% respondents have monthly income less than Rs.9000, the 9.9% respondents have monthly income less than Rs.12000 and remaining 9.9% respondents have income more than Rs.12000. During the primary survey it was found that most of the respondents earned their livelihood through labour. It was noticed that majority of them were facing difficulties in their survival due to their poor economic conditions. Unemployment was the main reason told by the respondents behind their poverty. Most of the respondents were seeking hope from government regarding jobs for them.

Due to similarity of economic problems their life style and conditions were almost same but it was noticed that they helped each other as good neighbors. One instance was noticed when a person was found laboring with *mistry* (who works for construction work) at his own home and some other person from neighborhood asked to him for adhesive paste used to joint connection of water pipes. The first person gave him the tube having the paste but when the other person went away his wife quarreled with him and said, "he will use all the paste what will we use than, do you have sufficient money to buy one more?" Than the first person replied, "Don't worry it goes on like this, will manage, you go and manage food for us." Most of them said that they were unable to get higher education due to poverty.

2. Expenditure

As the slum dwellers have very less income consequently their pockets also remains tight. They don't have resources even for providing their children good education and health care services. Their children are dependent on government schools and hospitals.

Table 2. Expenditure by the Family

Expenditure in Rupees (Monthly)	No. of Respondents	Percent
Less than 1000	10	5.5
Less than 5000	54	29.7
Less than 12000	111	61
More Than 12000	7	3.8
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 shows that monthly 5.5% of the respondents have monthly expenditure less than Rs. 1000, the 29.7% of the respondents have monthly expenditure less than Rs. 5000, the 61% of the respondents have expenditure less than Rs. 12000 and only 3.8% respondents were having monthly expenditure more than Rs. 12000. From the table 2 it is clear that majority of the respondents have their expenditure below Rs.12000. This shows the disparity between middle class urban families and the poor families living in slums, i.e. where one side urban middle class in general spend approximately more than 12000 Rs. merely on car/vehicle, electricity bill, and house servant and on the other side these poor people have to manage from savings as well as income for their monthly expenditure.

3. Earning Family members

In general it seen that in all well to do families adults do job and children go to school for education but poverty breaks this culture when we see the poor people in slums. The children are forced to leave school and do the jobs for the family earning due to poverty.

Table 3. Earning Members in Family

Type of Earning Family member	No. of Respondents (1)	Percentage	Non Earning (2)	Total (1)+(2)
Adult Male	173	95.1	9	182
Adult Female	100	54.94	82	182
Adolescent male	83	45.60	99	182
Adolescent Female	54	29.67	128	182

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 shows the data related to earning family members in the respondents family. It shows that in 95.1% families adult male earn for their families, further in 54.94% families adult females are also engaged in some type of work and earn for

their families, in 45.60% families adolescent males also earn for their families and in 29.67% families adolescent females also add to family earning. It was noticed that females in the respondents families were engaged in works like stitching, small shop, domestic help, labour, etc.

4. Nature of Occupation

One side many engineering colleges and Industrial Training Institutes along with skills Center are very common on the other hand poor people remain unemployed due to lack of skills and training in India specially the marginalized people.

Table 4. Nature of Occupation of the Respondents

Nature of Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percent
Skilled	63	34.6
Unskilled	119	65.4
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 4 shows that the 34.6% of the respondents living in the selected slums were in skilled occupation and the remaining 119% were engaged in some kind of unskilled labour. It was found that many of them being even young due to no skills and training were unable to earn sufficient for their daily needs due to which domestic disputes were also seen. In some cases it was noticed that among husband and wife, husband was uneducated, jobless and the female was educated so the family wished job for her instead of husband. They were even ready for giving bribe for the job if possible. In some other cases it was also seen that husband is jobless and stays at home but the wife goes out for work and earning. Some families were noticed where there is only one adult male earning member and he too returns home with or without earning at his goodwill as and when he desires, in his absence women of the family earn livelihood by stitching, domestic help or they have no earning and if something than it is in the form of some kind of help from relatives. Picture of such kind of families was very much miserable.

5. Type of Occupation

Most of the slum dwellers are engaged in pity works and occupation like factory labour, rag picking, small shops, driving, hawking, etc. this never lets them have good earning and the cycle of poverty continues till the end of their lives in most of the cases.

Table 5. Type of Occupation

Type of Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percent
Labour	102	56.0
Rag Picking	18	9.9
Begging	9	4.9
Small Shop Keepers	9	4.9
Something else*	35	19.2
Nothing	9	4.9
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field survey

Note: *It includes farmers, labourers, Factory workers, Government employees, Mechanics, etc.

Table 5 is related to types of jobs respondents are engaged in. It shows that 56% of the respondents were engaged in the labour jobs, 9.9% were engaged in rag picking, 4.9% were engaged in begging, other 4.9% were engaged as small shopkeepers, 19.2% respondents were engaged in some other jobs such as farming, labourers, Factory workers, Government employees, Mechanics, drivers, barbers, hawkers, salesman, etc., whereas 4.9 were doing no job. It was noticed some of the respondents from these slums were also engaged in government jobs in army, CRPF, etc. Many respondents were found who were doing their traditional family work but finding very less earning and in absence of resources either they were doing no work or were engaged in some daily wages jobs. It was also noticed that rag pickers were mainly the people who have migrated from other states mainly west Bengal.

6. Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction from Occupation

Due to lack of skills and training the poor people in slums have to do the every type of jobs and work they get as they have no other better choice. The priority for them is not the good livelihood but survival.

Table 6. Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction of the Respondents In Their Occupation

Opinion About Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percent
Satisfied	27	14.8
Not satisfied	146	80.2
No other choice	9	4.9
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 6 shows the satisfaction level of the respondents in their occupation. This table shows that 14.8% of the respondents were satisfied from their present occupation, other 80.2% of the respondents were not satisfied with their occupation and remaining 4.9% of the respondents answered that they have no other choice. From the responses and their facial expressions it was noticed that they were sad about their occupation, wanted to change it though many of them have accepted their conditions and also wanted to change but were happy in tough conditions also. Many respondents answered in discussion with them that they do some seasonal jobs and rest of the time they do some other temporary jobs as per opportunity available.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above observations it can be said that approximately 90% of the slum dwellers were below poverty line as per their income and assuming the average of four members in every family. Majority of the respondents have income less than their expenditure, so their situation was very miserable. Though the males were earning less or more in almost all families but the women participation is very low. On the other hand participation of adolescents in family earning is very much critical aspect which needs the special attention as at the time of schooling they have to remain engaged in various kind of works. Majority of the respondents were engaged in petty jobs as they don't have skills or any kind of special training which further adds to their misery. The main type of jobs the slum dwellers are engaged in was labour, due to poverty they were forced to think first of their livelihood and their life passes on as such. Four of the five persons are not satisfied with their jobs, this not only creates mental stress but also leads to family disputes and suicide in some cases along with many other routine problems.

Finding the above facts very critical there is need of sincere efforts on the part of firstly the policy makers i.e. government, secondly the community. It is the foremost duty of the government to initiate welfare schemes for these people and to provide necessary skills and vocational training free of cost. These people need helping hand and must not be left free to costly private education and training. In addition they must be given financial support so that can explore their skills and respectable earnings. Community must also support them morally and guide these people through proper guidance such as upgradation in traditional family jobs, increasing women participation in jobs and providing environment for children to good education. So, lot of efforts is needed so that these people would be able to break the vicious circle of poverty and unemployment for a better life.

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