



Research Article

A STUDY ON THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN LIVING IN KALVANKARAI SLUMS, SAIDAPET- CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Education must make us stronger, bolder, better, humbler and more humane in protecting the rights and dignity of all especially the marginalized, the neglected and the excluded part of society. Education plays a pivotal role in laying a proper foundation for the over-all socio-economic development of any region. Education is considered as one of the principal means to foster deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war (Delors Commission, 1996). The four pillars of education. Education throughout life is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Learning to know is by combining sufficiently broad general Knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. In India since Independence (1947) several initiatives have been taken for qualitative and quantitative expansion of education like operation black-board, DPEP, SSA, mid-day meal scheme and many others, one of the latest being RTE. The RTE Act 2009 provides a justifiable legal frame work that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years to an education of reasonable quality, based on the principles of equity and non-discrimination.

Slums are usually a cluster of hutments with dilapidated and unstable structures having common toilet, lack of basic amenities, inadequate arrangement of drainage and disposal of solid waste and garbage (GOI report on Slum Population, 2005). Slums are highly unhygienic and disease prone.

Not a single mother was found who had studied after class X. Problems faced by the slum children in achieving education among various problems faced by the slum children of 6-18 years age group in achieving education most significant are large family size, poor living condition, poor health, unfavourable home condition, surrounding environment, migration, language problem, unstable occupation and economic condition, poor parental educational background and school environment.

This area is also breeding ground for various anti-social activities like crime, theft, burglary, drug-abuse and so on. When urban area on one hand is characterized by modern life-style, having access to latest technologies, higher level of educational attainment, high income, more opportunities, fashion and health conscious, better communication facilities on the other hand the urban poor and marginalized group suffers from adequate standard of living and access to health, education of children and meaningful and well paid employment opportunities.

All most all of the families (100 %) were found to occupy small single dark, damp, room without proper ventilation provision which serves them for multi-purpose activities i.e. living, dining, sleeping, storing, bathing, washing, cleaning, cooking etc. Bunk system is often used to accommodate all family members and their varied activities.

In this context the researcher would like to study the prevalent problems of non-enrolment, drop-out and irregular attendance of slum children of 6-18 years age group of Kalvankarai Saidapet.

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INTRODUCTION

Over a third of India's slum population lives in its 46 million plus cities. Of the four metro cities Mumbai has the highest proportion of slum dwelling households (41.3%) followed by Kolkata and Chennai (29.6 and 28.5 % respectively). Delhi, the capital of India has 14.6% of its households living in slums. Among all million plus cities Vishakhapatnam has the highest population of slum dwellers (44.1%). Decadal growth over the period 2001-11 shows that population has increased by more than 181 million, i.e. 17.64% of growth, literacy has gone up from 64.83% to 74.04% and slum population has increased from 75.26 million to 93.06 million.

(Census2011). It is important to focus on slum population for the following three reasons.

Firstly, inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation in slum can affect the advantage of living in urban areas, thereby making slum dwellers a disadvantaged group. Secondly, the population growth rate in slums is higher than in other urban locations. Thirdly, among the Millennium Development Goals, the one that explicitly focuses on urban area is Goal No. 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability) of which target No. 11 states that 'By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and ill-health are the basic problems of the developing countries in general, and India in particular. These are the root causes of all the

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global problems stagnating and degrading both the development of the country and its citizens.

Education is a powerful social force and transmits, shapes culture and beliefs of the children in the society. It can reveal and develop the potentialities inherent in each individual and can prepare individuals to contribute to the well-being of themselves, their families, their communities and to human kind as a whole. Education plays a pivotal role in laying a proper foundation for the over-all socio-economic development of any region. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 provides children the right to free and compulsory education.

Current Education Trend

Present education system focus on the many examples of conflict to undermine faith in human capacity to change and to reinforce values and patterns of behaviour that head to disunity, injustice, violence in short values and patterns which lead to violations of human rights and instability in society.

Public Education

Education is an ideal vehicle for the cultivating values that will lead to the protection of human rights and the establishment of peace. It can provide models for children by exalting people who have implemented moral values and a forum for impartial examination of issues and solutions to fulfil their role in promoting the physical, social, mental and moral well-being of the individual and society.

Educational Status of Children in the Slums

The under privileged children residing in the slums are deprived of various basic amenities that the non-slum children in general do enjoy so they need special attention. The causes affecting children education in the slum include rapid rural-to-urban migration, economic unproductively and depression, high unemployment, poverty, informal economy, forced or manipulated ghettoization, poor planning, politics, natural disasters and social conflicts. Strategies tried to reduce and transform slums in different countries with varying degrees of success include a combination of slum removal, relocation, slum upgrading, urban planning with citywide infrastructure development and public housing.

Introduction Urbanization accompanied by sustained population growth due to large scale migration leads to mushrooming slum settlement. Living condition depicting small room without any window where bunk like arrangement has been made to accommodate all family members and their belonging - bedding, clothes, utensils buckets, drums, cooking ingredients and whatever else they possess. In these small rooms on an average six people resides. Different activities are carried on simultaneously in the room like chatting, cooking, listening to music, watching television, cutting vegetables, grinding spices and so on. Such condition is not at all favourable for studying at home

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the children educational status of Kalvankarai slum dwellers
2. To find out the socio-economic problems of the slum children in achieving their education.
3. To analyse the factors affecting for the children study.

Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was adopted and geographical area located at Kalvankarai slum in Saidapet from all households were selected under Chennai Municipal Corporation were taken as sample. In addition 3 schools situated mostly within this slum or adjoining slum which were mostly attended by the slum children were also taken. Information regarding economic condition, occupation, education level of the family, home environment and living condition of home were collected from household survey by using socio-economic schedule and data about physical facilities

Field of Study

The study is pertaining to the Loyola College adopted Kalvankarai slum of Zone 9 in the corporation of Chennai. The children who are residing in slums of Kalvankarai have been the samples for the study. This study has been analyzed to particularly find out the children educational status.

Research Design

The descriptive designs are used for this study. In this study the researcher has attempted to find out the educational status of the children and socio economic status of their parents will be given for their betterment of life.

Statement of the Problem

Most of the children were school dropout, street children and child labour because of unaware of education importance among their parents. Most of them are uneducated, widows and deserted women. At present, they were receiving very low wages they have to work for excessively long hours, have no guaranteed weekly day of rest and at times are vulnerable to physical, mental and sexual abuse or restrictions on freedom of movement. These are the reasons for selecting the present study.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In primary schools were collected from teachers and headmaster/headmistress through schedule on physical facilities.

Secondary data like Census report, reports on various commissions and committees, related literature were also used. Percentage was used for analysis of data. Analysis was made on the basis of observation and discussion carried out during household survey and school visits.

Importance of the Study

The vulnerable section of the society remains unnoticed and their problems are often unheard and conveniently neglected by the powerful. Moreover in this modern capitalistic world, it becomes so important to bring out the plight of the people to light. It becomes necessary and vital to speak and study about the people who are not part of the development projected and are neglected in the process of development.

Need of the Study

The education system today makes the children to think more about the well-being of him/her and not about the people who are in the slums. This nature of the study will be needed to be

changed in order to make use of education for the betterment of weak, neglected and poor. This study turns out to be the need of the hour to improve children education in the slums.

Data Processing and Presentation

It is rightly recognized that, ‘Poverty is not only a problem of low income; rather it is multi-dimensional problem that includes low access of opportunities for developing human capital and to education’ (World Bank, 1994). On the other hand education is an important form of human capital that improves productivity, health and nutrition of the children of a country and slows down the population growth.

This area is also breeding ground for various anti-social activities like crime, theft, burglary, drug-abuse and so on. When urban area on one hand is characterized by modern life-style, having access to latest technologies, higher level of educational attainment, high income, more opportunities, fashion and health conscious, better communication facilities on the other hand the urban poor and marginalized group suffers from adequate standard of living and access to health, education of children and meaningful and well paid employment opportunities.

Table 1 Socio Economic Status of the Parents

S.No	Profession	Percentage
1	Daily wages Labourer	30.04
2	Auto driver	1.71
3	Self-employed	7.72
4	Office Cleaners	12.87
5	Housekeeping work	6.43
6	Domestic workers	7.29
7	Nurse	1.71
8	Office Assistant	1.71
9	Unemployed	14.59
10	Widows	10.72
11	Deserted women	5.15
	Total	100

Source: Data collected from the households, 2018

The above table analyses the profession of the children parents in the study. Most (30 %) of the parents are daily wages labour. 10.72 % of the parents are widows because of have lost their lives due to alcoholism and followed by that, 12.87% of the parents are office cleaners. 5.155 of the parents are deserted women as their husbands have left them and are living with another women. 7.29 % of the parents are domestic workers. 14.59 % of the parents are unemployed due to their living in the slums. 6.43 % of the parents are workings as a housekeeping work. Only 7.72% of the parents are doing self employed job under the study. At the most of 1.71% of the parents are auto drivers. Only 1.72% of the parents is office assistant and nurse.

Table 2 Living Conditions of the Slum Children

S.No	Satisfaction with Living Conditions	Level of Satisfaction
1	Occupational life of parents	Dissatisfied
2	Economic life of parents	Dissatisfied
3	Housing Conditions	Dissatisfied
4	Family life	Dissatisfied
5	Health life	Dissatisfied
6	Social and Community life	Dissatisfied

Source: Data collected from the households 2018..

Social and community life of children parents were gave a negative response their community life because of insecurity in the slums. This is negative indicator of poor housing conditions. Above table mentioned that negative response of occupational life of the respondents because of no proper income for their family daily bread and butter. Most of the respondents gave a negative response about their satisfaction level of their political involvement.

It provides children right to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Standing at this juncture it is absolutely necessary to understand and evaluate the present scenario of slum children in regard to access, retention and completion of elementary education of dissatisfactory.

The study is delimited to slum children of 6-18 years age group in Kalvankarai Saidapet. It was found the almost 80% families were nuclear with an average family size consisting of four to five members. Out of the total number of households taken for the study it was found that almost 24.36% families were migrated from different parts of Tamil Nadu. It was also found that greater percentage of fathers (17.25%) than mothers (5.75%) were absent in the families either due to death or because they have left families (separated/divorced) and settled elsewhere. Widow and separated women mostly of young age usually returns back to her maiden home and lives there along with their children. It was found that 40.28% population belonged to 6-18 years age group. The earlier as well as present study have recognized that adequate, safe and secured housing is another important problem area that still persists among the slum dwellers. All types of houses were huts, no separate kitchen or closed bathroom but one common latrine which is mostly dirty and unhygienic.

Dirty water running through canal spreads foul smell all around. These are the breeding place for diseases. None of the slum dwellers owned any house. At the entrance of each room utensils, cooking materials, buckets and drums (either filled or empty) are kept. Used utensils with stale left over foods and even garbage are found to be heaped here and there which gets scattered by street dogs and cats and also spreads foul rotten smell.

Occupation, income and education of the slum dwellers for classification of occupation and it was found that majority of the head of the families were engaged in elementary occupation where income is not only poor but also uncertain and depends upon availability of work.

They were hawker, delivery man, sweeper, daily wage labourer, domestic helper, cobbler, people engaged in stitching and embroidery work and so on. Near about 10% head of the families were not engaged in any economic activities either due to old age, illness, laziness or because of drug/ alcohol addiction.

Regarding parental educational status of these children it was found that more mothers (15.97%) than fathers (34.71%) were illiterate. Almost an equal percentage of parents approximately 21% reported that they can only write their names and failed to recall how far or till which class they had exactly studied in formal school. Not a single mother was found who had studied after class X. Problems faced by the slum children in achieving elementary education Among various problems faced by the

slum children of 6-18 years age group in achieving elementary education most significant are large family size, poor living condition, poor health, unfavourable home condition, and surrounding environment, migration, language problem, unstable occupation and economic condition, poor parental educational background and school environment.

A large family size implies higher dependency ratio. In a family consisting of father, mother and three or four children of school going age where father is the only earning member, working in an unorganized sector with poor and unstable income and where all other family members are economically dependent on him then meeting the bare basic necessities becomes quite a tough job.

In such situation the chance of providing quality education to their children or even helping them to continue their studies gets affected. The higher the birth order, the lower is the percentage of children not being enrolled or dropped out as also reflected in the study.

Major findings of the study

All most all of the families (100 %) were found to occupy small single dark, damp, room without proper ventilation provision which serves them for multi-purpose activities i.e. living, dining, sleeping, storing, bathing, washing, cleaning, cooking etc. Bunk system is often used to accommodate all family members and their varied activities.

A peaceful environment for concentrating and studying at home is almost missing. The entire surrounding environment was found to be dirty, filthy, unhygienic and susceptible to various diseases like malaria, jaundice, dysentery, tuberculosis, asthma, respiratory infection and so on.

Each category of houses are usually had got water from lorry by corporation water supply or in a centrally located common place in case of water drum which all the inhabitants of that premises uses for washing, cleaning, bathing and for all other purposes.

Regularly it becomes the noisiest part of the premises during the water supply. Everyday collecting water or standing in long queue are usually done by the children or especially by the female members of the family.

Most of the children were found to be under nourished and suffered from various diseases due to malnutrition and because of parental unawareness regarding health and hygiene and importance of vaccination.

It was found that polio, anaemia, blood pressure, tuberculosis, skin disease, lung infection and various other diseases due to deficiency of different vitamins and minerals are very common among children and even adults in slums.

Most of the adult male members are addicted to alcohol or drug or gambling thus spending most of the money from whatever little they earn thus depriving the basic necessities of other family members.

Drugs and alcohol are consumed openly. Under the feet of alcohol, quarrelling using abusive and slang language, beating wife and children is a common daily affair in almost every household.

Children very naturally and spontaneously get accustomed with, learn and start using such language and develop a violent

and hostile attitude towards others which are often reflected in their behaviour with their siblings, playmates or classmates. Thus, in such noisy and disturbed surrounding at home and outside even if a child wish to study it becomes almost impossible for him/her to concentrate and study.

In most cases the mother tongue of the migrated children is totally different from the medium of instruction followed in neighbouring schools where they are being admitted after migration because either of unavailability of such schools nearby or because of parental unawareness. These children faces problem in understanding what is being taught in school. However they cannot express these problems because the language spoken at home is different from the medium of instruction followed in school.

This in turn affects their performance in school and they gradually losses their interest in studies and becomes irregular in attending school and finally gets dropped out.

Of the total number of children of 6-18 years age group it was found that a little more than 20% were not going to any school either because they were never enrolled or because they have discontinued their studies and dropped out and 10.56% children were attending school or continuing their studies. A large number of children residing in slums are first generation learners and even in those cases where parents are just literate the children hardly gets any help from parents regarding studies at home.

There is also a firm belief among slum dwellers that children cannot learn from school alone. They need additional support and the best option available is that of private tutor. This is again an economic burden on parents. Moreover the private tuition that they avail is of much inferior quality and as a result it hardly makes an improvement in their achievement level. This affects their child's educational status. Among all children who were drop-out, non-enrolled or irregular in attending school approximately 10% were engaged in any economic activities to earn a living to support the family. Girl children mostly participated in non-remunerative but time consuming activities which in turn affect their education.

Recommendations of the Study

- Children join the workforce at an early age, thereby losing any chance of receiving education.
- Children not attending school do not mean that they are engaged directly in any economic activities to earn a living or to support its family.
- Thus, sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise can effectively be used for removing boredom and can help to motivate both the teacher and the student in their respective work/activities.
- Instead of neglecting and underestimating the innate potentialities of the under-privileged children, teacher must develop a positive attitude while teaching as well as while dealing with them in day to day affairs with dignity as this will in turn help these children to develop confidence and further motivate them to overcome various problems of life in a more challenging manner.
- Dependency of children on private tuition can be reduced if the teachers prepare the lessons entirely within the school hours. No home work other than practice work is to be given.

- Improvement of physical facilities in terms of separate class-rooms for each class, separate toilet for girls, provision for good library should be made.
- Schools should be made more attractive and joyful learning environment should be provided.
- Computer assisted learning program can be undertaken.
- Lack of enthusiasm of teachers, poor quality of training, ambiguity in curriculum and text-books, lack of community participation, weak management system, insufficient outlay, a lack of emphasis on mainstreaming can be undertaken for the further development. This will not only attract the interest of the students but they will also enjoy learning through it.

CONCLUSION

Children from poor urban neighbourhoods are among the least likely to attend school. A survey in India found a primary school attendance rate of 54.5 per cent among children living in slums in 2004 – 2005, compared with 90 per cent for the city as a whole. The quality of available schooling options in poor urban areas is another issue to consider. While data tend to focus on access, enrolment and retention, these are linked to the perceived quality and benefits of available education. Overcrowding and a lack of appropriate facilities such as toilets are among the factors that undermine the quality of education. Access to education for poor and marginalized children, including the provision of quality schooling in informal settlements, is of paramount importance. Other forms of training, such as vocational courses, can be particularly useful for adolescents seeking to secure future livelihoods in the urban context. Whether through classroom or on-the-job training, apprenticeships or skill-specific courses such as language or computer training, vocational initiatives should aim to increase young people's employability.

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