

Opinion of Slum Women about Improvement of Their Living Conditions

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Abstract

Opinions are thus important vehicle through which one could understand the existing mental attitude of people in general and group and community in particular. In this paper an attempts has been made to study the pattern of opinion of respondents of the Varanasi slum about various aspect of their lives Varanasi has 227 slums spread all over the city. Both on government and private lands. Total population 456,613 which is about 38% of total population. The total population of slums is contracted mainly in central city and peripheral development. This study is based on primary survey of 150 adult female respondents of 5 different slums (Sunderpur, Chittupur Harijan Basti, Sagra, Durgakund and Nagwa) of Varanasi city.

Keywords- *attitude, opinion, endeavors, investigate, awareness, harassment, misconduct.*

Introduction

Opinion is substantive expression of person's inner self. It also reflects her level of awareness about various aspects of life. It also decides the course of one's action at present and future. It also provides an idea about the level of understanding of the person about the reality of her existence. It is rightly said to educate a women is educate an entire family. Women carry their knowledge, their awareness to its root and it spreads to the branches i.e. to the family. Our major focus has always been to empower women. Our project has always kept women and girls in focus and addresses all the issues related to them. With empowerment we aim at creating awareness among women leading to their behavior change and making them independent. To know their opinion are very important vehicle through which one could understand the existing mental attitude of people in general and groups and community in particular. In this paper an attempts has been made to study the pattern of opinion of the respondents of the slum under study about the various aspects of their lives. In most of the cases slums are squatter settlements are treated as illegal habitations. Hence, the dwellers remain always under threat of being evicted. The slum dwellers being poor and expected they are always suspended as lawbreaker and criminally intended. As a result, they are harassed by anyone who is socio-economically and legally powerful. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the pattern of opinion of the respondents of the slum under study about various aspects of their life.

Research Methodology

- Varanasi district has 227 slums. Five slums (Sunderpur, Chittupur HarijanBasti, Sagra, Durgakund and Nagwa) were selected with the help of convenience sampling methods. Data was collected from primary as well as secondary sources.
- The primary data are those, which all collected a fresh and for the first time and those supposed to be original in character with the help of pre-designed interview scheduled, observation and group discussion and the secondary data such as detailed information about district, slums, number of slums, population of slums etc. had been collected from the concern government organization such as Vikash Bhawan, DUDA office.
- Total 150 adult female respondents are selected randomly to know their opinion about various aspects of their lives.

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Opinion about Harassment

Respondents given their opinions about harassment by certain agencies, police who misuse their power and take advantage of the helplessness of poor slum dwellers. They sometime grab money by creating threat and indulge in resorting to violence in many cases. Some government officials who are dealing with basic amenities enter in these slums usually and ask for money in the name of providing secured shelter etc. Being inhabitants of such “illegal places” the slum dwellers always live in perceptual fear, the fear of being evicted at any time without notice.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to their Opinion of Harassment

S.No	Harassment	Number of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	By police	45	67.5
2	Local gundas/ bad characters	50	75.5
3	Politicians	25	37.5
4	Govt. officials	31	46.5
5	Others	09	12.5

Table frequency shows multiple responses

Table 1. Shows the number of percent of respondent’s opinion about whom they most fear. It shows that 75.5 percent respondents often fear local gundas/bad characters because of their ill behavior with women and young girls. Again the 67.5 percent of respondents expressed their opinion that policemen also harass the slum dwellers. About 37.5 percent of respondents expressed their fear from politician. During our study it was also observed that wife beating was most common in the slum but nobody openly came out to spoke freely. These fears not hinder their inner potential to bloom but even constrict whatever obvious capabilities they have to put in practices.

Table2. Distribution of Respondents by Their Opinions about Misconducts in the Slum.

S.No	Types of vices	Frequency of respondents	Percentage
1	Drug addiction	22	33.5
2	Liquor consumption	32	48.5
3	Sexual harassment	28	42.5
4	Gambling	44	65.5
5	Lottery	52	78.0
6	Theft	27	40.0

Table frequency shows multiple responses

Above table highlighted that 33.5 percent of respondents reported that drug addiction has been becoming quite a menace in the slums. Apart from lottery and drug the slum are equally addicted with liquor consumption affect large number of respondents (50%) in double jeopardy, first by destroying the consumer physically and psychologically, second by draining his hard earned earnings thereby depriving his family members from their basic necessities. Lottery (78%) and gambling (65.5%) was a passion among slums which has been ruining peoples life. 42 percent respondents expressed sexual

harassment of women is quite common in slums. Out of total respondent 40 percent reported the prevalence of theft among slum areas.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents on how they View their Life.

S.No	View point about life	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Life is very bad	52	78.5
2	Life is extremely useless	43	64.5
3	Living in sub-human conditions	60	90.5
4	It's god's desire	13	20.0
5	Present suffering will bring good time	12	17.5

Table frequency shows multiple responses

Table 3. Shows that 78.5 percent respondents viewed that their life was very bad in slum areas. Another 64.5 percent viewed as life is extremely useless or bad. The constant absences of basic need and life sustaining opportunities have made the respondents view their life in such negative term. About ninety percent of respondents viewed that they were living in the inhuman conditions. Majority of slum dwellers are deprived of even the basic minimum facilities needed to survive as human beings about 20 percent of respondents think that whatever happens to them that has been desired and designed by God. It has been also seen in the table that 17.5 percent believed that their present suffering would bring good time in future.

Table 4. Distribution of respondent by their Opinion about who can Solve their Problems

S.No	Agent who can solve their problem	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Government	38	57.0
2	Non-government organization	24	35.5
3	Themselves	44	65.5

Table frequency shows multiple responses

Above table given their opinion about who could help them to solve their economic and solve their economic and social problems. 65.5 percent respondents expressed that they could solve their problems on their own if they worked more hard and controlled themselves from social evils. 57 percent respondents felt that government had to play an active role to solve their multifarious economic and social problems. About 35.5 percent respondent stated that non-governmental organization needed to play a massive role in solving the multiple problems (economic, social, education, basic health and other amenities) of slum are basically working on such issues to eradicate poverty and create social awareness.

Table 5. Distribution of respondent on the basis of their Opinion about the Choice of Occupation they like to have

S.No	Types of Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Factory work	50	75.5
2	Shop-keeping	10	15.0
3	Government services	6	9.5

It was observed from the above table that 75.5 percent of respondents prefer to work in factories because they would get regular income and regular holidays which may help them lead organized and secured life. It also shows that only 15 percent of respondents who like shop keeping job because of long working hours and less pay. It can be observed in the table that only 9.5 percent of respondent preferred job of government servant.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to their Problem Faced

S.No	Types of Problem	No.of Respondent	Percentage
1	Lack of Employment	64	95.5
2	Lack of Education	43	65.0
3	Lack of Sanitation	67	100
4	Lack of adequate housing facilities	44	65.5
5	Lack of medical facilities	56.	85
6	Consumption of liquor	35	52.5
7	Lottery	36.	53.5
8	Drug addiction	60	90.0
9	Disease	43	65
10	Lack of financial assistance	28	42.5

Table frequency shows multiple responses

In the above table respondents had expressed their opinion about many aspects of their life their problem they have faced in their life. It was observed in the table that 95.5 percent of respondents expressed lack of employment was one of the problems for them, 65 percent said that lack of education was another problem presented in slum areas. With regard sanitation here we find that almost all respondents expressed there is total lack of sanitation facilities in their locality. Lack of adequate housing facilities in their slum was expressed by 65.5 percent respondents. Consumption of liquor, habit of lottery was expressed by almost 53 percent of respondents. About 90 percent of respondents expressed drug addiction was one of the major problems. They have very little financial capabilities 42.5 percent of respondents suffering from lack of financial assistance.

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to their Most Urgent Needs.

S.No	Needs of Respondents	N. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	Employment	64	96
2	Education	54.	80.5
3	Medical facilities	58	87.5
4	Housing facilities	50	75
5	Sanitary facilities	60	90

Table frequency shows multiple responses

The above table shows the most urgent needs of respondents such as employment, education, medical and housing facilities shows that 96 percent of the total respondents held employment as one of the

most urgent need, 80.5 held education as another urgent need, similarly 87.5 percent and 75 percent respondent held medical and housing facilities yet another two most urgent need respectively.

Conclusion:

The rapid growth of slums and squatter settlement has largely contributed to the social, economic and environmental problems in urban areas. The living conditions in slum areas are usually unhygienic and contrary to all norms of planned urban growth and area an important factor in accelerating transmission of various air and water born disease. Being a place devoid of basic amenities and opportunities, peace and privacy are the things which more often are most conspicuous by their absence. Exploitation and poverty being main predominant features of the slum people struggle hard to survive. Slum a place devoid of basic amenities and opportunities, where human beings live packed like sardines. Exploitation and poverty being main predominant features of the slums, people struggle hard to survive and the dictum “struggle for existence and survival of the fittest holds good here. A good number of slum populations indulge in vices like, drug and liquor vending and its consumption, gambling and purchasing of lottery ticket. The study highlights that, low and very low quality of life exists in the slums of Varanasi city. The housing, literacy and medical facilities are poor, the lack of piped water supply in the slum areas leading to high dependence on ground water, the lack of proper waste disposal facility and poor sewage system leading to pollution and health related problems and the level of disparity is related to the socio-economic setup of the city.

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