



Migrant Labourers and Slums: A Sociological Study of Dehra

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Abstract

Presently there are millions of people who are still living in the slums. The majority of the slums are formed around the centre of urban cities in developed Countries. The people who can be found living in these slums are often poor and migrant labourers. In India, poverty and migrants are the leading cause of slum formation and this has led to various environmental and health issues, the migration of people and the formation of slums has become a common phenomenon in India. There are similar migrant settlements around Municipal Council Dehra in Tehsil Dehra, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. These migrant labourers are the main reason for the creation of such settlements. The present research helps us to understand the reasons for the migration of these migrant labourers, the impact on education due to migration and the condition of women living in these slums. It is found in the study, that these migrant labourers have come to this place in search of work, which has a direct impact on the education of their children. The condition of their women and girls is also not good. They have to face many types of problems in their day-to-day life. It is also found through the research, that the economic condition of these labourers improves by the migration but their social life and physical health suffer a lot as a consequence.

Keywords: Education, health, labourers, migration, women, slums.

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Introduction

On one hand urbanisation and industrialization have given humanity a good understanding of science, education, and technical knowledge and on the other hand have pushed several million people into a hellish lifestyle. This hellish lifestyle can be seen in slums, where many people live in slums, where there is no availability of water, and they have to manage food as well as sleep in a compact space and the people have no time for themselves. There are no facilities for toilets and garbage disposal. The word slum is often used for

unauthorised settlements in urban cities. In developing countries, the process of industrialization and urbanisation is progressing and in these developing countries the number of slums is increasing drastically. If we talk about India which is also a developing country the problem of slums is very serious. A bad economy and an increasing population are the main causes of the rise of slums. According to the survey of India 2011, in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi, the population of urban cities respectively 41%, 29%, 28%, and 15% live in slums. According to (UNDP)

Human Development Report 2014, India has the largest multidimensional population (i.e, 632 million) that lives in poverty. The largest number of slums in India are located in Maharashtra. The number of people that are living in slums in 2001 was 52 million and in 2011 the number rose to 65.5 million. The number of slums is also increasing in Himachal Pradesh. In some small and big towns of Himachal Pradesh slums have been made, for example, Kangra, Nalagarh, Baddi, Hamirpur, Parwanoo and Shimla. The current study is also conducted to know about the reason for the migration of slum dwellers who live in the municipal council in District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. These labourers live in municipal wards 3 and 7 which are respectively called Hanuman Chowk & Kanjupeer. To live in their slum the labourers have to pay between 500 to 800 rupees rent respectively. Through the study, it has been tried to understand the impact on education due to migration and the condition of women living in these slums.

Origin of Slums

According to Habitat for Humanity (2017) "The word 'slum' first came into use in the 1820s. It was used to denote certain locations across London which were known for having the poorest quality housing and the most unhygienic conditions. These locations were reputed for being the breeding grounds for marginal activities including many criminal activities and drug abuse. By the end of the 19th century, it had started to imply 'a street, alley, court', situated in an overcrowded district and inhabited by lower class or poor people."

Definition

According to WHO "A slum household is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking one or more of

the following conditions: Access to improved water, Access To improved sanitation, sufficient living area, Durability of housing, security of tenure." The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines a slum in term of urban space, as "*a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterised as having inadequate housing and basic service*"

Literature Review

The focus of the research (Shrivastav & Mishar, 2018) is a critical study of the social presentation of slum dwellers of Lucknow city, which has been low because the population here is mostly illiterate. In this research paper, he also said that most of the people living in slums are not happy with their social situation. In this research paper, the authors have presented their views about the operation of various schemes etc. for the development of the social condition concluded by the authors. It has been said that most of the slum dwellers living in Lucknow city are from poor, backward social communities. Regional clusters and inter-business mobility are more visible among slum dwellers.

The research paper (Verma, 2017) mainly highlights the environmental impact of slums. In it, the author defines slums, highlights their characteristics and says that the growth and expansion of cities have accelerated in the last few decades. Cities are the main source of employment and education and they are also the centre of economic growth, but it is also responsible for poverty, inequality and environmental health which are also the source of disasters. The way population growth, urbanisation and industrialization have created natural and social problems, one of those burning problems is the slums. A variety of factors have been identified by

the author for the emergence of slums. Defining environmental and social impacts, she says, "*Air pollution, water pollution and social impacts such as poverty, Social disruption and mental illness are on the rise due to the slums.*" The author suggests ways to address the problem of the slums if environmental pollution and social impact are to be reduced. So, at present, there is a need to establish harmony between slums and cities.

(Singh, 2018) has studied the role of industrialization in the education system of slum children, in which she says urbanisation is one of the characteristics of industrialization which is living in the form of slums in every city today. Slums are the result of industrialization. In the research paper she says that the slum children whether with higher or lower educational levels, all had a high level of modernization when compared to children with other children. This makes it clear that modernization leads to the progress of education because modernization has brought revolutionary changes by making education accessible to all. At the same time, she says that giving them proper opportunities for the modernization and development of slum children will give them their personality. There will be balanced development so that they can contribute to society. Through education, slum children can also move forward in the journey of the development of family, society, nation and self.

(Yadav, 2019) in his research, studied slums on the basis of health, sanitation and nutrition, a study of Lucknow city. In his primary work, the researcher says that the slum dwellers are getting the schemes run by the government insufficiently. Because of many socio-economic and political reasons. Based on research, he says that due to lack of facilities for citizens,

irresponsible behaviour of people, and lack of women empowerment, positive changes in health, hygiene and nutrition behaviour in slums are not possible. People of this community often live in unhygienic, unhealthy, uncomfortable social environments. They have to face it because they do not have any choice and this affects their health and nutrition.

Area of Study

Dehra, Gopipur is a tehsil in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Balokhra, (2020) Its administrative structure is in the form of a city council. According to the 2011 Census, the sub-district code of Dehra Gopipur block is 00103. The total area of Dehra Gopipur is 611 km² which includes 603.37 km² of rural area and 3.27 km². Dehra Gopipur tehsil has a population of 1,20,783 while the rural population is 1,15,967 and the urban population is 4,816. The population density of Dehra Gopipur Tehsil is 198 inhabitants per square kilometres. Talking about literacy, 78.44% of Dehra tehsil is literate, of which 82.12% of males and 72.98% of females are literate. Dehra Municipal Council has been divided into 7 wards for which elections are held every 5 years. The municipality has a population of 4,816 of which 2,458 are males while 2,358 are females. For the present research, wards number 3 and 7 of Dehra Municipal Council have been taken, whose names are Hanuman Chowk and Kanjupeer. These two wards are elected for study and become the major concentration of slum dwellers residing in these wards.

Research Objective

- To study the reasons for the migration of migrant labourers in the slums of Dehra.
- To Understand the impact of migration on their children's education.

- To analyse the situation of women living in slums.

Research Methodology

The research design of the present research is descriptive in nature. In this research, data or information were collected through both primary and secondary sources. Primary information was collected from migrant labourers through interview schedules, focused discussions, and group discussions. To get more information about slums to understand their nature, a literature review was done, in which books, research papers, newspapers, thesis and research articles were used. Participants have been selected with the help of random sampling and purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used to study the status of women.

Major Research Findings of the Study

Economic Condition: The main cause of Migration

Through research, it has been revealed that most people have migrated on an economic basis. Almost all the migrant dwellers in the slums of Dehra are from different districts of Uttar Pradesh such as Badaun, Firozabad, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, and Shahjahanpur. The participants said that they have land in Uttar Pradesh, and they also do farming, but their income is very low, which means they do not get the right price for their hard work. The main reason behind this is higher population density and a high number of the working class. Migrant labourers have come to Himachal because there are more work opportunities and a good salary for that. During the interview, it has also come to the fore that some labourers have been living here for 40 years. The family members believe that their forefathers came here to work. At that time there were 2-3 slums in Dehra and they

slowly called all these labourers here. Migrant labourers might live in the slums of Dehra and have faced a lot of difficulties in their day-to-day life but with their hard work and earnings they have built pucca houses in their native land. The labourers living here have been living for a maximum of 30 to 40 years or at least 2 to 3 years. Many times, due to lack of work here, these people migrate to another place in Himachal but later come back to this place because of road connectivity and transportation. There are two types of working class among the migrant labourers, one is the Working class and the other is the Mason class. The main reason for labourers to migrate here is the earnings, the labourers earn 10,000-12,000 and the mason class earns 18,000 - 20,000 monthly. If there is more work, then both husband and wife work together and both are given equal wages. During the conversation, they said that they are getting good money by working here, but they also have to face many problems like lack of electricity, lack of water facilities, lack of toilets etc.

Since these settlements are informal and the rent is also low, no specific steps are being taken in this regard. Migrant labourers living in slums pay a monthly rent of 500 - 800 per slum to the owner of the land on which they have built the slum. Compared to Kanjupeer, the migrant labourers living in Hanuman Chowk have some basic facilities like electricity and toilets but there is no arrangement for bathing in both places. These migrant labourers want to get out of their situation but they are not capable enough to do on their own.

Migration & Education

The impact of migration on their children's education is clearly visible. Because there is no fixed time for migration. Sometimes these labourers migrate at the beginning of

the year and sometimes in the middle of the year, due to which children of these migrant labourers do not get admission to any school. As per the school rules, the student cannot be admitted mid-session. But on the other hand, they send their children to government schools. They said that fees are not charged in government schools, and the government also provides free food, books and uniforms. During the group discussion, it was understood that some of the labourers living here are a little aware of the education of their children. They also sent their children to tuition for some time, but due to the increase in their fees, they had to be removed from there. If we talk about the rest, then they feel that as long as children are getting free education, children should be sent to school. It has also been found through observation that these migrant labourers provide basic education to their children but do not motivate them to attain higher education because they feel that in the end, they all have to do wage work, so why should they spend money and time on education?

Condition of Women & Girls

Discussing the condition of women living in the slums of Dehra, it has been revealed that their condition is not very good. If we talk about young girls, earlier this working class considered it appropriate to marry girls instead of educating them because on the one hand, they did not want to spend much of their education and at the same time they felt that it was their tradition. During the focused group discussion, it has also been found that there is no fixed age limit of marriage among migrant labourers, most of the girls get married by the age of 16-18. Talking about the rules of marriage, there are very few occasions when a girl marries according to her choice, most of the time the girl marries according to the wishes of her parents. The women living

here cook food inside the slum on a wooden stove for cooking. Talking about the biological needs and privacy of women, they also have to live like other family members without getting the necessary facilities for their needs. There is no arrangement for women to take a bath while living in slums, they bathe in their own slums behind curtains. Most of the women living in slums go to work with their husbands when there is excessive work. These women are not so attentive to their personal hygiene, even during their menstruation, they prefer to use cloth instead of sanitary napkins. Although they are gradually learning to use sanitary napkins, some women do not have any special knowledge about sanitary napkins. However, these people also feel ashamed and hesitant to talk about it. During the discussion about family planning with women, one of the Respondents said "*We do not know about this family planning. We think when a child is born, it is good and we should not worry about that kind of family planning.*" Women also go to work during their menstrual cycle. Migrant Women mentioned that they are given the opportunity to present their side and make decisions in their family matters, but if the decision is very significant then it is taken by their husbands.

Analysis of Research Finding

On analysing the research results, it is known that the slums in Dehra have been formed due to the arrival of migrant labourers. These migrant labourers have built slums for themselves at two places in Dehra, Kanjupeer, and Hanuman Chowk. These labourers have originally come from Uttar Pradesh and started living here in search of work. Workers say that due to the high population in Uttar Pradesh, there is less work and even if it is found, the salary is less for it, in which the cost of ration is

not even possible, let alone living. For this reason, they come here far away from their home and live in slums. By coming here, it is not that they get work all year round. Due to the migration of labourers from one place to another, they themselves have to face problems, but the biggest impact of this is on the education of their children. There is no fixed time for migration, sometimes they migrate to another place at the beginning of the year and sometimes in the middle of the year. This has a bad effect on the education of their children because no school enrolls anyone in the middle session. Because of this, an entire year of their children would be wasted. There is no special sensitivity among the workers in regard to education. On the one hand, they believe that it is necessary for children to get an education, but as long as the government is giving free food, books, and uniforms. Some workers want to get a good education for their children but are unable to get it due to their poverty and the rest believe that what will they get by studying, when in the end they have to work. This statement shows that these people are sending children to school so that they can get one meal a day. If we talk about women living in these slums, then their condition is also not very good. Women do not have any kind of facilities according to their biological needs. There are no arrangements even for washing themselves. Women bathe in their slum with curtains on one side. Since these slums are in two places in Dehra, the women of one place (Hanuman Chowk) use the accessible toilet at the chowk for defecation. These women pay less attention to their personal health. These women also use clothes during the menstrual cycle. Most women do not even know about sanitary napkins and those who know, also think it is appropriate to use cloth instead of sanitary napkins. These women also have relatively little knowledge about family

planning. Women who do not follow it, believe that children are God's gift, it is good when it is done, and for this, we do not need any kind of planning. It is clear from this analysis that these migrant labourers may have the means of employment for a living, but the condition of their children or women is low and they themselves have to face a lot of difficulties. Even these workers are deprived of basic facilities.

Conclusion

From the above results, it can be concluded that after coming far away from their home, these labourers have got the means of employment but they have to face many difficulties day by day. Although every person in the family of migrant labourers is deprived of basic facilities, the ones to face the most problems in these slums are women, who are relatively less sensitive towards their personal health and hygiene. Today, they do not see any issues, but in the coming time, they may have to face serious health problems. Due to the migration of labourers, the education of their children is also greatly affected, although they provide basic education to their children, still it is greatly affected. By the research, the researcher has completed the research objective but also found an important fact that there are four different castes among the people living in the slums which are as follows: Jatav, Rajput, Dhanuk, and Sisodia. An interesting fact about these people is even though they live far away from their homes and face many adversities and even then, these people are very faithful towards the rules of their caste and do not engage with one another too much. At present time the number of slums is 133.

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Cite as: Sharma, A., (2022), Migrant Labourers and Slums: A Sociological Study of Dehra, *International Journal of Society and Education*, 1(2), pg.60-66.