

Social And Political Conditions Of Slum Dwellers

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Abstract

Slums are among the most deprived communities in society. They live in insubstantial houses on insecure land. Their houses generally have no proper system of sanitation and no clean drinking water. My study explores under which socio-political conditions slum dwellers are living. In this research quantitative approach was used with close ended questions. Two communities were selected i-e Bhutto colony and juggie community.

SPSS17 was used for the interpretation of this data. The data was analyzed by using cross-tabulation.

This research will be useful for the developmental and policy-making departments of government, NGOs, and academia. It will provide original findings and promote further research an important area as slum communities represent a sizable number of voting constituents, typically marginalized by political agencies.

Introduction

The concept of Slum settlements was first defined in Vaux's 1812 where it was used synonymously with 'racket' or 'criminal trade' (Planet of Slums). The word itself originates from the Irish word "Slomic" which means "vulnerable place" (Davis 2004). There are different terms used for this type of community such as informal settlements, squatters, favelas in Brazil, gecekondu in Turkey, townships in southern Africa, and aashawa in Egypt (Fuchs 2006 & O Hare 1998). These communities are known as juggies in India. "Slums are found in steep hills or river banks. In Mumbai, many slums are situated in flood-prone tidal flats, mangrove swamps, garbage hills, cemeteries, and under high-tension power lines (Murthy 2012). Slums are an important segment of society. But this community is neglected by the government and they are facing problems regarding the provision of basic needs . Slums are present in all major cities of Pakistan, these settlements consist of at

least 30% of the urban population. There are 3000 slums communities in Pakistan, out of which there are 2302 are considered as recognized (Zahara 2009). According to estimates of United Nation almost 32 Million urban population of Pakistan are living in slums (UNMDGs. (2019). Slum settlements appeared in Pakistan primarily due to the rapid influx of immigrants from India in 1947 (Zahra 2009). The Government during the years of 1947 to 1959 was completely unsuccessful in handling the issue of arranging shelter for immigrants. In these twelve years, the supply of houses lagged far behind the demand for them. The earliest concept was the eviction of katchiabadis in 1951; almost 152,161 people lost their homes. The military government in-between the years of 1958 and 1968 eliminated the slum areas, turning them into housing schemes, which increased the demand for houses. All of this led to the demand for slum settlements increasing".

Transferred Slums

Slum communities that have property rights granted by the government are called transferred slums. The availability of basic provisions of life is a little better in transferred slums (Riaz et al; 2015).

Non-Transferred Slums

Those slum communities that have not been granted property rights and the people are considered to be living on government land. These are called non-transferred slums.

Literature Review

The objective of this section is to provide Characteristics of Slum settlements in which the views of various scholars have been expressed about the variables used in this study by the researcher.

Slums are the underprivileged segment of our society and have no proper physical infrastructure. They lack basic facilities of life such as sanitation, pure drinking water, washrooms, etc., and are formed on government property (Fuchs 2006 & O Hare et al 1998).

In the transferred slum, they have to some extent a good level of infrastructure. Due to the rapid growth of slums, there has been an increase in interrelated issues in urban areas (Nolan 2015). The people of slums work from dawn to dusk to earn their bread and butter yet, live in an unhygienic environment with extremely poor living standards. This also ends up exposing them to many diseases (Nandita et al;2002).

The social infrastructure in transferred slums to some extent was much better than in non-transferred slum communities (Riaz et.al). There has been a rapid increase in the slum population around the globe. According to Arimah, 2010, thirty-two percent of the urban population of the world lives in slums, and in the developing world, forty-three percent of the population lives in slums.

Population experts have stated that these figures have increased up to a troubling 1.5 billion by end of 2020. The writer's predictions are not correct because the current population of slums in developing nations is at one billion (Fuchs 2006 & O Hare et al 1998).

Slums are not a new phenomenon at all; they played an extremely important role in European cities during the Industrial Revolution. A lot of poor people migrated to East London because the

City had new factories. Some states are still facing a rapid growth of slums like China, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and the Central African Republic, in sub-Saharan Africa; slums make up sixty- two percent of the urban population. In India, almost 6 million people live in slums. While globally the figure is up to almost 860 million people and increased by six million each year alone in the decade between 2000 to 2010 (UN Habitit 2012).

The main factor behind this huge expansion of slums is explained by the theory of modernization. To improve their financial status these people tend to move to urban areas as they want a financially strong system for their upcoming generation. For diverse and better economic opportunities these people tend to migrate to big cities where they can earn money. This ideology is supplemented by the fact that economic activities in rural areas are gradually declining whereas in urban areas, due to technological advancement slum dwellers expect to work with the help of machines and can gain handsome amounts in less time.

Urbanization is another important reason for the expansion of slums. According to Sabina Faiz Bangladesh is the poorest nation in the world and faces rapid growth in urbanization. Bangladesh has an urban population of 35 million people and regularly deals with issues of housing shortages.

In Dhaka, seventy percent of people have access to a very small patch of land while on the other hand, thirty percent of the population of cities has eighty percent of the land. Due to the shortage of housing illegal residences are increasing. People living in these settlements always feel the threat of the government eliminating their houses (Rashid 2009).

There is a fast-growing population within urban areas due to this phenomenon; many non-formal settlements are increasing in underdeveloped states. The size of slums is increasing because

Masses of rural areas settle here due to job opportunities. In 1992 there were 2200 slums in Dhaka city, but in 2010 this population increased from 10 million to 17.6 million. More than half of the population of Dhaka lived in slum settlements. Urbanization is increasing and creates problems in the domain of housing facilities among many other issues like water, sanitation, and basic health facilities (Habib2009).

Research Methodology

This research is quantitative. To make the study more systematic and accurate quantitative tools have been incorporated in this study. Sampling and collection of data will be done by a quantitative approach using a questionnaire. In the process of analysis of data collected from the questionnaire, SPSS17 was used for the interpretation of this data.

The Taro Yamane formula was used to find the number of respondents for research. The respondents of the current research are uneducated so I will translate the questionnaire into their native language so they will be able to give their feedback on the questions.

Findings of the research

Brief information is presented in this paper to explore the socio-political conditions of Slum dwellers.

Gender of the respondent;

The Taro Yamane formula is used to determine the number of respondents for the study. The total population of juggies consists of 800 while on the other hand total population of the Bhutto colony is 1000 people. So by applying this formula, I targeted 286 people from the Bhutto colony for filling the questionnaire and 236 people from juggies and tried to ensure that 50% of the responses were from women. The total number of my respondents is 552.

I spoke with people in the community market, some of whom were unwilling to share their information. But after a thorough explanation of the study, agreed to share their views with me. I went door to door in the street but no woman was interested in participating. Then I meet a lady who was working as a lady health worker in the community. She was government employed. She

shifted to the community after marriage. She appreciated my work then I requested her to help me in collecting data from females in the community as she was highly respected among them. Then she explained the project to them and encouraged them to participate in it as she felt it was a matter of great interest and importance of the community. In the juggie community, respondents considered me an official of government writing names to receive money from the government. I was feeling great sympathy I clarified my position and research interests which led to their surprise and brought them great hope for improvement in their lives.

Education of the respondent;

Education is the medium that provides us with techniques, skills, information, and knowledge so that we know, understand, and respect our duties towards our family, society, and nation. Education is

what differentiates man from animals. It teaches us how to socialize and most importantly it humanizes us. However, in the Bhutto colony, one hundred and forty respondents were illiterate, eighty-two had received only primary level education, Thirty-eight had received education till the eighth class, nineteen had a matriculation degree, and only six had received intermediate level education. Those who had not received education, quoted their parents who said “Hum na kon saafsar ban Jana hai⁹” and “Nokari to phir ameer logo ko milnii haiii¹⁰” but now realize the significance of education and are making efforts to help their children get the education they required. While the respondents of juggie community don't even have the primary level education. They are illiterate people. They said *roti poori nai hooti totaleem Kasay Hasil karty*.¹¹ they said *school to ameer log jaty haii*.¹² Since childhood, we have struggled for survival.

Marital Status;

In the Bhutto colony out of two eighty-six respondents, two seventy-three respondents were married and thirteen respondents were unmarried. While in juggie community two fifty-seven respondents were married while nine were unmarried.

Age of the respondent;

In the Bhutto colony which comprised two hundred and eighty-six people twenty-five respondents fell between the ages of twenty – twenty-five, fifty respondents belonged to the age bracket of Thirty-one- Thirty-five, one seventeen respondents belonged to the thirty-six – forty age group, seventy-nine respondents belonged to the age group of forty-one – forty-five, twenty respondents belonged to forty-six – fifty age group.

While in the juggie community twenty respondents belonged to the age bracket

of twenty-five – thirty, six respondents belonged to the age group of thirty-one – thirty-five, eighty-nine respondents belonged to the age group of Thirty-six – forty, one thirty-one respondent belonged to the age group of forty-one-forty-five, while twenty respondents belonged to forty-six – fifty agegroup.

How many children do you have?

In the Bhutto colony, thirteen respondents had no children and some are married but had no children, forty-two respondents had children 1-3, seventeen respondents had children 4-6, and five respondents had children 10 or more. While in the juggie community nine respondents had no children, fourteen have 1-3 children, twenty-nine had 4-6 children, and one thirteen respondents had children 7-9 while one hundred one respondents had children 10 or more.

How many years have you resided in this slum community?

In Bhutto colony only four respondents had been living here from ten-twenty years, ten respondents were living here from twenty-one – thirty years, fifty-seven respondents were living here from forty –fifty years, one hundred and ninety-three respondents were living from forty – fifty years, twenty-two respondents were living here from more than 50 years.

During fieldwork, respondents said before making houses on this land, there were so many trees that were cut to make houses. The then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto during his tenure (1973-1977) gave them property rights. which is why the people still have a soft corner for him. That's why people labeled the name of this community as the Bhutto colony. While in the Juggie community six respondents were living from thirty-forty years, eighty-five respondents were living from forty –fifty years, while one

seventy-five respondents were living from more than fifty years. Sometimes government officials demolish these informal settlements they reported and after a few days, they again set up their homes. One respondent said we have a small graveyard where their ancestors are buried.

Where did you live before coming to this community?

I asked another question regarding the community residence where these people lived before coming to this community. One sixty-six respondents were living in a village. They said they moved here because Lahore had better job opportunities for supporting their families and better health services as well. They have to work in the field from dawn to dusk. Sometimes due to seasonal effects, their crop is damaged, and sometimes the rate of the crop is not up to the standard. They work on the land of someone they pay takka¹³ to the owner of the land. They always bear the loss from agricultural work. They earn a meager amount and live hand to mouth. They said we are living very poor lives in the village even though we thirst for a single penny. Some respondents said in the village they worked as the subordinate to farmer. They said we are living just like animals from morning to late at night, without any vacation, no time for family, and entertainment. whenever they visited Lahore they were happy to see big shopping malls, bright lights at night, people eating dinner with families in hotels, good transport facilities and a huge crowd of people around the zoo, Minar Pakistan, so these things attracted them to settle in Lahore. One hundred and ten respondents lived in another city in rented houses, some lived in juggies, a few respondents said we lived in another city we changed this city due some conflicts, some said we leave the previous city to improve our financial status .ten respondents were living in another area of the same city and said we

left the previous area because our relatives are living in this area. So in an emergency, we can help each other. In the juggie community, twenty respondents are living in a village, two hundred and ten respondents lived in another city they said moved from this city because police bother us, sometimes members of civil society engage in discriminatory behavior with us, they hated us, they said we are dirty and unhygienic people. Thirty-one respondents were living in another area of the same city.

Have you had difficulties in keeping your CNIC

In both communities, all of the respondents have their active CNIC. Some respondents in the juggie

community saved their cards in an iron box so they were not lost. They keep photocopies with them.

Primary Source of Income ;

During the survey, I found that in Bhutto colony twenty respondents were involved in daily wage jobs like mister¹⁴, mazdoor¹⁵, brick kiln worker, plumber, electrician, Bara¹⁶, Kabariy¹⁷, darzi¹⁸, carpenter, while women were maids in different posh areas of Lahore. Various women hired a rickshaw from their community so that they could reach their job on time. Near their workplace the whole day the driver picks up and drops off different people. In the evening time, they pick up a group of women and reach the community. One woman said that they had once faced serious financial problems. she said i talked to my husband that I can share my workload by doing the job as a maid. all the community members became against him, and sometimes people used negative comments on my character that I am not a good woman because I am doing a job staying away from home. Over time, one

neighbor became a widow, and another woman's husband was ill. They talk to her husband regarding the job. Male members of the community said this woman is spoiling all ladies of the community. Then my husband managed one rickshaw driver from the community so we reached the workplace in a sound and safe environment.

One hundred and eleven respondents had small businesses like shops, stall workers, street vendors, butchers, auto drives, and greengrocer, various women sell bangles for women, and a few sell goods beauty products and other goods related to women. Some women were involved in the profession of Embroidery. Forty-six respondents had private and government servants were like guards in hospitals, banks, and metro buses, women involved as workers in the labor room of the hospital, and assistants in the beauty parlors. People have negative thinking toward those women who are involved in the job, and most women are housewives because their husbands do not allow them to work.

While in the Juggie community one fifty-five respondents were involved in daily

wage labor like garbage collection work, ice seller, boot polisher, and cobbler. The majority of people associated with the profession of Kabariy¹⁹ they visit different areas of the city and collect discarded or second-hand items. In the evening they sell these goods and get money and buy some edible products for their offspring. Females of the juggie community want to work as maids but people believe that women of the juggie community are criminals and a robber and consequently don't hire them. Twenty-four respondents have private small businesses like small shops with edible

19 junk man products in a juggie. Some women were involved with the profession of corn roasters, a few were Toy sellers and balloon sellers, golaganda²⁰ sellers, and some were egg vendors. Thirty respondents were private and government employed; they have no such resources to buy a vehicle for livelihood so work private jobs like auto drivers, donkey cart drivers, and helpers in the workshop. Fifty-seven respondents were associated with another profession in which females are housewives.



Small shop of fritters in Bhutto colony

Monthly Income

In the Bhutto colony, one hundred and

forty-three respondents had an income of less than fifteen thousand, and one hundred and forty-three respondents had earned almost fifteen thousand – twenty-

five thousand. While in the juggie community two sixty-five respondents had an income of less than fifteen thousand. Only one respondent had an income above fifteen thousand.

Profile of Communities;

In this section, the researcher explained the summary statement of each community and why / how this leads to the difference in their social – political conditions.

Bhutto colony;

Bhutto colony used to be a small forest area near Shahdara. Poor people from different villages and remote areas of Punjab migrated to Lahore for their livelihood and settled here. They believed Lahore is a land of opportunity and they should try their luck there. In the beginning they built small mud houses in this area. Later, Prime Minister Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced that all poor settlers on government property are given the ownership rights. This was a big relief for this underprivileged community. Gradually, they or their next generations made mettled housed with their savings. Currently, this community has 1000 population size. They are mainly daily wagers like masons, labor, brick kiln workers, plumbers, electricians, waiters, tailors, junk dealers, carpenters, cobblers and auto drivers or owning small businesses like Khokhy, tiny grocery shops, greengrocer, butchers, wanders. Generally, the women are housewives. The few serves as household helpers in other communities, do embroidery, serves in beauty parlors, or sell bangles. Most of the families do not appreciate women's work or girl's education. The only access to this area is under the Railway track and this passage is so narrow that in case of any emergency even an ambulance cannot reach there. Maximum houses consist of two to three Marlas and there is no graveyard for the community. In case of rain the community is completely cut off

from other areas. The community has three political agents who have strong alliances with the main political parties. They mobilize people to vote for their specific party. Mostly people have an interest in politics, and they vote in favor of a candidate that is portrayed as a good candidate by political agents. However, the few were willing to try unconventional candidates in hope of a better future.

Juggie community

They were living in juggies for fifty years. They set their juggie on the land of government, sometimes government demolishes their houses. Sometime, they are informed before the inspection of an officer to vacate and return after his/her inspection. So after a few days, they again set up their homes. They belonged to the underprivileged class of our society. Still, they have no basic facilities like clean water, gas, electricity, education facilities, and health facilities. During rain mostly their luggage became spoiled. Sometimes they used plastic sheets to avoid water. Mostly people were associated with the profession of a junk dealer. They have no idea about politics and don't debate on political issues. They are busy with their own business. There is one political agent in the community. This political agent has a curial role in influencing the voting behavior of these people.

Conclusion

Both communities are part of underprivileged population of society, but still have some differences.

For instance, Bhutto colony that have slightly better income compared to juggie community . They have some better access to information including political information. They enjoy some basic facilities like shelter, TV, mobile, electricity, and sanitation. As Slum community constitutes a major portion of national

population, they must be given weightage in national public/social policies. Without their involvement, democracy cannot fulfill its condition of people's government or participatory government. Provision of Basic facilities must be ensured throughout the country without any discrimination. There must be certain policies targeting under privileged communities so there is leveled field for every individual in Pakistan. Formal and informal institutions (Government, NGOs, and Civil Society etc.) should collaborate for capacity building of marginalized groups so they become the part of human and social capital. This will help them making informed decisions.

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