

**EDUCATIONAL ASPECT OF CHILDREN LIVING IN SLUMS: A CASE STUDY OF KASHMIR**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Education is one of the most significant indicators of development. First, the millennium development goals(MDG's) and sustainable development goals(SDG's) acknowledge the centrality and significance of the education in the growth and progress of the global society. It is in this regard that the MDG's and SDG's have enshrined the goal of education as one their prime objectives. To ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote a life long learning is the ardent task that UN(united nations) has committed itself to. Obtaining a quality education is the foundation for improving the lives of people and the way towards sustainable development. Trading the same path of 'education for all' India has intensified its efforts since 1990's , however the practical implications of this huge goal has been put under scrutiny from time-to-time , considering the fact there are certain hot-spots that are more vulnerable to exploitation and also suffer various levels of negligence. Slums demonstrate a concentration of multiple deprivation experienced by the urban poor characterized by urban decay poverty, unemployment and social deviance. Slums represent a cross-sectional marginalized social category. It is in this context of marginalization and education that this research paper focuses on the educational scenario of children of the slum dwellers in the division of Kashmir division to present an overview of the deprivation of education faced by the children living in slums. Employing secondary data sources like census report, official records, journals have been used to present an overview about the educational scenario of children living in slums in the division of Kashmir.*

**Key words:** Deprivation, Slum children, slums, urbanization.

**Introduction****1. Concept of Slums**

A slum refers to an urban settlement characterized by sub-standard living and working conditions, lack of sanitation, clean water, and other basic services. In the Sociological framework, Slums may be characterized as sub-standard dwelling with sub-human living conditions. In Slums, are found deteriorated, overcrowded, insanitary or unsafe structures that jeopardize public welfare (Singh & Pothen 1982). "Slum area is a locality characterized by inadequate and deteriorated housing deficient public utilities overcrowding and is usually inhabited by the poor and socially heterogeneous people" (Naik&S. khan,2007). The urban slums have always been a two-way station for transition. The slums have furnished temporary shelter to the new arrivals to the city. They also receive those members of the urban community who have lost their livelihood and social foothold in the society. 'To some sociologists, the urban slum is one of the effects of industrialization, urbanization and mass unemployment. The modern city functions as a climax area for the damages of modern industrialization. (Singh & Pothen,1982).

Slums are an urban phenomenon and represent imbalance between migration into cities and economic growth within the city itself. They grow due to poor utilization of the reproductive child health services provided by the government, lack of awareness regarding the birth spacing, illiteracy, and marriage at a young age. Another reason for the growth of slum is migration from rural areas to more developed

areas by those people who seek to earn more (Mridula, 2010). Ward.A and Savage.M,( 1993) has given the following features of Slums:

1. Slums often demonstrate a concentration of multiple deprivations experienced by the urban poor;
2. Excluded from achieving their political, social and economic rights.
3. Slums are usually characterized by urban decay, high rates of poverty & unemployment.
4. They are commonly seen as ‘breeding grounds’ for social problems such as crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, high rates of mental illness & suicide.

**1.1 Nature & Magnitude of Slums**

To define housing as “Adequate” or “Substandard” as obviously somewhat arbitrary. As there is a lot of variability in the living standards among the slums, because much of worst housing in the U.S.A is of a level of quality for better than that which commonly exist is in much of the third world. Still, there can be little question that housing characterized by structural defects, inadequate plumbing heating, or sanitation poses a threat to the health and safety of those who live there. Slums form & grow in many different parts of the world for many different reasons. Some of the factors are rapid rural-to-urban migration, economic stagnation and depression, high unemployment, poverty, informal economy, poor planning, politics, natural disasters and social conflicts. Regionally, today sub-Saharan Africa has the largest slum population where 199.5million(or 61.7%) of its urban population live in such areas. It is followed by southern Asia 190.7million(35%),Eastern Asia with 189.6million(28.2%).According to census 2011,the slum dwelling population of India had risen from 27.9million in 1981 to 65.4million in 2011.Increase in Indian population over a period of time has also resulted in slum population growth. After Mumbai, Delhi has the second largest slum population in India. It is estimated that by 2017,India’s total slum population will be 104 million(U.N.Habitat report.2012).

Future Slum Population in India - According to recent estimates, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh will have largest share of slum population in India by 2017. These states are already home to a large number of slum populations which mostly lives in and around urban areas. By 2017, Maharashtra will be home to more than 20 million of slum population in India followed by Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. It is estimated that by 2017, India's total slum population will be 104 million.( Primary Census abstract for slums 2011).

Slum population (all towns)

Indicator	Absolute Slum population		Decadal growth	Slum%(2001)	Slum%(2011)
Persons	5,23,71,589(2001)	6,54,94,604(2011)	25.1	23.5	22.4
Males	-----	-----	22.4	23.6	22.4
Females	-----	-----	28.1	23.3	22.5
Sex ratio	887	928			

**Source:** Census of 2011, series, phase 2, provisional population totals

**1.2 Slums in J&K**

According to census 2001 population of slums in India is around 40.6 million, which includes the following:

1. All specified areas notified as by state/local government.

2. All areas recognized as 'slum' by state/local government and UT administration, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act.
3. A compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.

Estimated number of slums at all India level were 33510 whereas the number of slums estimated in J&K were reported to be 91. Out of 91 slums estimated in urban J&K, 10 were notified and 81 were non-notified slums. About 2657 households lived in these 10 notified slums and 2198 lived in 81 non-notified slums. In Jammu division, an estimated 11 number of slums existed in non-notified slum areas. In Kashmir division, out of estimated 80 number of slums, 10 were notified and 70 were non-notified slums. (69th round NSS report-Urban slums in J&K).

As per the survey conducted by the Municipal corporations of Jammu and Srinagar, most of the areas (Slum areas) identified have primitive drinking water and sanitary conditions. The establishment of slums in Kashmir can directly be related to the arrival of migrant labour force whose number has increased to lakhs. These Slum dwellers are mostly illiterate, extremely poor, under-fed, disease prone, crowded and dirty environment. The worst endure are women and children. In urban Srinagar these slums are occupied mainly by migrant labour (migrant labour from Bihar) and also by local populace of some specific occupational classes e.g. fishermen (Hanji) community and sweeper (Vatal) community. The migrant labour practice their own native patterns of social life here. After their arrival here those labours had to search first of all cheap accommodation in Srinagar and other towns in the valley and the establishment of slums in these area solved their problem.

Name of State/U.T	Total Slum population	Notified Slums	Recognized Slums	Identified Slums
India	6,54,94,604	2,25,35,133	2,01,31,336	2,28,28,138
J&K	6,62,062	1,62,909	1,36,649	3,62,504

**Source:** Census Report 2011

### 1.3 Perspective on JK Slum situation

During the last two decades, urban population of J&K state has observed phenomenal rise of 98.4% against the national average of 64.2%. To be specific out of every four individuals in the state, one lives in urban area. Among hilly states of India, J&K is the most urbanised state with 81 notified urban areas. Srinagar and Jammu are the focal points of urbanisation. This rise in urban population puts increased pressure on urban infrastructure, especially housing sector along with other civic services. (Housing and Urban Development- Census 2011). The Slums has given rise to organized as well as unorganized begging menace in cities, towns and villages in the Kashmir valley. Dr. B. A. Dabla in his work "Social problems in Kashmir" observed that almost all migrants live a life of 'Cultural aloofness' in Kashmir socially and culturally they hardly interact with the locals. They live in 'Separate social cluster' and practiced their home cultures, especially in terms of dress, languages, attitude, life styles, behaviour patterns, food habits, religious beliefs and practices and so on (B.A., Dabla. 2012).

Due to undesirable social activities of the slum dwellers, a situation of social tension has arisen between these labourers and the local population; particularly in the affected areas. The situation has strong potential of bursting any time in near future, which many possibly lead to violence between the two

communities, the locals and the migrants(B.A.,Dabla.2012).In the worst living conditions in slums, emergence of acute, chronic and dangerous health problems could neither be avoided nor controlled.

## **2. Objectives of Study:**

- 1) To develop a educational profile of slum children in Kashmir.
- 2) To unravel the educational status and problems of children living in the slums of Kashmir.

## **Methodology:**

According to the census of India 2011, the total population of the state of J&K is 12,541,302 out of which males constitute 6,665,561 and females constitute 5,883,365. Out of total population of Jammu& Kashmir, the population living in urban areas is 3,433,242(27.22%) and out of which 1,866,185 are males while 1,567,057 are females. As per census (2011) the population of district Srinagar is 1,250,173 and the same census reveals that the total Slum population in Jammu& Kashmir is 6, 62,062. The present study is mainly descriptive in character. The research is intended to bring out the educational aspects of slum children. The width of the scope has been distributed under various heads of the subject matter that are intended to be explored by the study. This research is mainly based on secondary sources. The official reports, books, journals, surveys and available research work has been utilized and analysed to draw out the inferences that would assist in developing an idea about the social reality of the slum children especially the educational scenario of the children in the slums of Kashmir division.

## **4. Education scenario in urban slums:**

The most pertinent factor of modern society is its commitment to the idea of social development. Education is one of the means as well as ends towards this endeavor. Education is one of the most effective instrument of rapid and effective development of a nation. It is a necessary tool for personal growth, economic development and social efficacy. The new world order is built upon the idea of progress-economic as well as social. In the race of progress and development, there is no denial to the fact, fully realized by all the nation states, that to attain the arduous goal of progress, the development of human resources is of primary importance. To achieve the endeavor of progress every nation state has involved its energies to utilize its human capital. Education is one of the important preconditions to enhance the productivity of human resources.

India being a democratic, socialistic republic has enjoined itself to the path of progress and development. In the pursuit of its goals of development, it has enshrined the ideal of equal opportunity of every kind, and particularly equal educational opportunity for all. Article 45 of the Indian Constitution has enjoined upon the state to provide universal primary education to all children in the age group of 6-14. Article 46 has further directed the state to protect with special care the economic and educational interests of the weaker sections of people. Increased educational attainment increases an individual's skills, his productivity will therefore rise and with it his income. However, the precondition for such a scenario is availability of equal educational opportunity for all sections of the society. The premise of availability of equal educational opportunity to the weaker sections of the society, however is found wanting.

Slum dwellers do form a disadvantaged social group. They are the poorest, the most miserable and hence the most highly vulnerable sections of urban community. Sub-standard housing, filthy living

conditions, over crowdedness, poverty and associated economic, social, cultural and psychological problems are hall marks of slums. Apart from other differences from the dominant group, they have difference, in life-styles, values, child-rearing practices, skills for urban living and educational attainment. Being entrenched in the culture of poverty, to quote Oscar Lewis, slum dwellers comprise the population which sends the lowest number of children to school and whose children exhibit the most severe academic retardation, the highest rate of failures, grade repetition and dropout, and the thinnest transition to upper levels of education. Paralleling the miserable conditions of life they witness at their place of habitation, the children of the slums lack the basic necessities of life, overcrowded, dilapidated or poorly maintained buildings and inadequate essential school facilities. Their problems assume special seriousness when viewed in the context of severe environment deprivation, deterioration and social pathologies that stem from the striking visible contrasts between affluence and poverty. Slum residence, by its very nature, accentuates disadvantages which prevents children from taking full advantage of any educational opportunity offered to them. Hence, any discussion of education as a powerful instrument of social change should necessarily take into cognizance the provision of such facility across the range of social groups in any society. Slums are no exception to this fact. The recent rapid urban population growth and relative lack of attention to urban poverty, has possibly exacerbated multi-dimensional deprivation, including deprivation of education, in urban areas. The total number of poor and undernourished individuals living in urban areas has increased since the 1980s (Haddad et al., 1999).

##### **5. Educational status among the children living in slums of Kashmir:**

The city of Srinagar is the capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is one among the two-fast growing urban centers in the state, another being the city of Jammu. The city of Srinagar has been witnessing accelerated and unprecedented urbanization. Thus, the existence of slums in the city of Srinagar is in no way an exception. As discussed above the residents of these slums are the marginalized social sections of the society who face deprivation in socio-economic aspects of their life. As far as the educational scenario of the children of these slum dwellers is concerned the equality of educational opportunities in terms of various denominators seem to defy the ideal of equality. The Government schools which are free, open and easily accessible to all are the only educational opportunities available to the great mass of slum children in Srinagar District. Besides providing free education, they are also supplying supporting facilities and services such as free text books, school uniform and stipends. However, the total amount of these facilities and services are so meager and their provision so uniform that schools with a preponderant majority of poor slum children are unable to satisfy the total demand for them. Every eighth urban child in India in the age group of 0-6 year stays in slums, according to 'Slums in India- A statistical compendium 2011' published by the union government. Children and women are worst affected by the living conditions of slums. The total slum population across the state of J&K is estimated at about 6,62,062 persons. But in Kashmir the majority of slums comes under the category of Identified slums, and out of which majority of slums are seasonal slums. The picture of slums in Kashmir is far worse than usually predicted and it becomes even more worse for the children of slums. As per the census of India 2011 the slum children constitutes 14-15 percent of the total child population in J&K, and more importantly child sex ratio (females per 1000 males) in the slums of J&K is 860. It has also been found through various studies that the drop-out rate is high in slums of Kashmir.

The children of the slums usually belong to the lower socio-economic class. This disposition stands affirmed by various research based empirical evidences. As per research conducted Mir. M. A, (2007) in the city of Srinagar, it was found that 93.33 per cent of the children of the slum area schools belonged to labor and other lower classes, whereas 6.67 per cent of the children of the slum area belonged to cross-sectional community and no child belonging to white collar professional classes was found in any slum area schools. The dropout rate among the children of the slum areas usually is higher. As per a research conducted during the year 1999-2000, 3205 children (70.39 percent) joined the slum area schools, whereas 1348 children (29.60 per cent) left the slum area schools. Similarly, in the non-slum area schools during the year 1999-2000, 350 children (38.89 per cent) joined the non-slum area schools, whereas 550 children (61.11 per cent) left the non-slum area schools. In terms of infrastructural facilities, the slum schools do not fare well. As revealed by the work of Mir.M.A,(2007) in his research titled “A study of educational opportunities available to the slum areas children of the Kashmir valley” that 53.33 per cent of slum area schools had office accommodation, 33.33 per cent had staff-room facilities, 26.67 per cent have library accommodation, 33.33 per cent have big halls and 26.67 per cent have store room facilities. 40.00 per cent of the slum area schools had toilet facilities available. By comparison, in non-slum area schools, 93.33 per cent had office accommodation, 60.00 percent had staff-room accommodation only, 36.67 per cent had library accommodation, 50.00 percent had big halls and 46.67 per cent had store room accommodation and (80.00 per cent) of the non-area schools have toilet accommodation. The result is evident that non-slum area schools have better accommodation facilities. Also, the slum area schools do not have enough of essential facilities, while the non-slum area schools have almost enough of it. Even in respect of equipment for play, science, work-experience, music and audio visual aids for different subjects of study, the slum area schools are quite short, while the non-slum area schools are only slightly short of them.

As per a study conducted on the educational scenario among slum children(2007), the results point out that in the category of slum area schools, 80.00 per cent schools out of 30 had matting for sitting and only 33.33 percent schools had teacher’s tables, whereas 63.33 percent schools had black boards and 76.67 per cent schools had charts and only 50.00 percent schools had globes. In comparison to this non-slum area schools had better supply of instructional material and equipment. 90.00 per cent schools out of 30 having matting for sitting whereas 83.33 per cent schools have teacher’s tables. 86.67 percent schools had blackboards, 96.67 per cent schools had charts and 60.00 per cent schools had globes. Likewise, the position of slum area schools with regard to health, schools facilities and guidance services is much inferior to that of the non-slum area schools. About staff position, as per a study, there is no shortage of teachers in non-slum area schools as compared to slum area schools.

It has been found that 15.3% of slums in urban J&K were in the proximity of less than 0.5 km from a government primary school whereas about 59% of slums in urban India were less than half kilometre away from such a school. About 28% of slums are concentrated between 0.5-1 km range of a government primary school at all India level which is higher than the corresponding state figure of 4.8%. Only 2% of slums in urban India are found to be in between 1-2km range of such a school whereas about 2.4% of slums in urban India were found to between 1-2 km range of a government primary school. 77.5% of slums at the state level were at a distance of 2-5km range from the nearest primary school which is comparatively higher than the all India figure which stood at only 2%.(69th Round NSS report-Urban

slums in J&K) This gives us an idea that the accessibility to education for slum children in the Kashmir division is comparatively better than the overall Indian scenario.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, the slum area children find Mathematics and English difficult and according to teacher's reports, some are facing difficulties in Mathematics and English. The rate of failure in classes I - V for slum area children is more than that for non-slum area children. The staff position in slum area schools is far from satisfactory, while the non-slum schools have no such shortage. The slum area teachers have low academic and professional qualifications, teaching experience, professional sense. They have been least favorably placed in the matter of posting and about half of them wished to get transferred to schools in better localities. The slum schools being treated as places of punishment for the un-conforming and incompetent teachers and as the dumping grounds of novice teachers. Majority of primary school teachers are unwilling to serve in these schools due to their location in an unhealthy environment, poor physical structure, lack of essential equipment, basic facilities and amenities, existence of less-interested, less-disciplined, less hard working, less-motivated, low-achieving and more problematic students, apathetic and indifferent parents.

#### **6. Conclusion:**

Education plays a very important role in achieving the economic status. Higher the education, higher would be the possibilities of achieving a higher economic status. The low-self-image of the slum area child leads to inferior academic achievement, and low performance in turn reinforces a negative evaluation of slum. Although for the great mass of slum area children in Srinagar District, sufficient educational facilities were existing, yet the quality of these facilities was very much inferior to those being enjoyed by the non-slum area children. More importantly we see that apparently the slum area children had free access to Government Schools in Srinagar District and sufficient educational facilities available to them, educational opportunities for them was far from equal as is evident from highly unequal school and family inputs, unequal academic and non-academic outcomes of learning and a very low utilization of educational facilities by them.

Although for the great mass of slum area children in Srinagar District, sufficient educational facilities were existing, yet the quality of these facilities was very much inferior to those being enjoyed by the non-slum area children. In the matter of school resources i.e. physical, material and human, the schools in the slum areas were not at par with the schools in proper residential areas. There was much discrepancy between educational institutions in slum areas and educational institutions of proper residential areas in terms of infrastructure, school buildings, cleanliness. There was also a lack of proper teaching environment in the educational institutions of slum areas. This could have some serious repercussions in terms of incomplete mental and physical development of children living in slums. It would eventually result in waste of talent and future human capital. Naturally, much will have to be done at the school, societal and family levels before a reasonable measure of equality can be achieved in the criteria of equality of educational opportunity.

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