

A STUDY OF SLUM IN DELHI -WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

The status of women has varied in time and place. The Rigvedic period was a period of glory and dignity of women. Women during that period participated in all walks of life with men and in religious ceremonies, ritual performance and recitation of Vedic mantras. The period of Ramayana and Mahabharata also maintained the respect and glory of Indian womanhood. However, the period of Manusmritis was one of counter balance. During the Mughal rule all wretchedness came to Indian Womanhood with atrocities, exploitation, and fusion of blood and practice of polygamy. Although the latter was prevalent during the times of Ramayans and Mahabharat. This led to the increase of ban on the freedom and equality of men and women, deprivation from education and all outwardly interactions. Child marriage, ban on widow marriage, *sati*, cheating, *devdasi*, rape, prostitution and abuse of all sorts prevailed. During the British rule the same practices continued with little improvement. However, certain legal reforms did take place. Some Acts like Sharda Act (1829) and

Ordinances were passed against the practice of *sati*. Social reformers like Dayanand Saraswati, Ishwarchand Vidya Sagar, Raja Ram Mohan Rai, M.G. Ranade, G.K. Gokhale, Pandita Ramabai etc. became the pioneers to root out the social evils concerning society and the women. The latter were encouraged to get education. Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, Rabindranath Tagore, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Mahatma Gandhi started their experiments of reforms in India.

Keywords -: Women, Slums, Empowerment, Participation, status, Role, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION

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Since independence, a number of programmes, policies, projects and planned approaches under the Five Year Plans have been implemented by the Central and State governments.

CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

After freedom of India, the Constitution guaranteed certain rights and privileges to citizens through Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. Article-14 confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Article- 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, etc. Article- 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women. Article- 16 provides for equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens. Article -(39) (a) further mentions that the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens (men and women) equally, the right to means of livelihood. Article- 39 (c) ensures equal pay for equal work. Article- 42 directs the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. The Constitution also imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Article- 19 (A) (e) to renounce

The practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

NATIONAL POLICY ON EMPOWERMENT

The National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001 of Government of India has defined clearly goals and objectives, policy prescription and operational strategies. The goals of this policy are: (a) ensuring complete development of women through creating an atmosphere of positive economic and social policies; (b) providing equal opportunities to women in all spheres – political, economic, social,

cultural and civil; (c) equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation; (d) equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal wages, occupational health and safety, social security etc.; (e) end all forms of discrimination and violence and strengthen the legal system to achieve this; (f) changing social attitude and community practices, etc. The policy envisages giving some prescriptions relating to judicial legal system, decision making, mainstreaming a gender perspective in the developmental process in order to achieve the set goals.

The Unfinished Agenda, Status of Women in India (Gopalan, 2001) takes stock of the balance sheet on gender equality, since the first report was issued in the mid- 1970s. . The Government of India has tried to empower women economically, as well as in social sectors, with some positive results.

Definitions and approaches for measuring and assessing women's empowerment have had different emphasis since 1950. The welfare approach for women did not succeed because of its very narrow definitions of 'women's issues' (i.e., health, education and violence against women), and for assigning to women domestic roles only (i.e., as wives, mothers and homemakers).

The Decade of Women (1975-1985) was marked by making distinction between the practical gender needs or interests of women from their strategic gender needs or interests. (Molyneux 1985, Moser 1989) The gender gaps in health and education undoubtedly need to be bridged without delay. It seems that an ideological struggle for transforming social structures may still need to be waged, and a moral universe that values gender equality may still have to be created.

THE SPECTRUM OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment has been variously defined and understood in the social science literature. According to some it increases women's capacity for leading a fulfilling 1 Molyneux [1985] defined these needs, whereas Moser [1989] elaborated them human life. This fulfillment is manifested by such external qualities as health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decisionmaking, and also at the level of material security. The internal qualities include selfawareness and self-confidence.² Women constitute about half of India's population 497 million i.e. 48% per cent as per the 2001 census).³ Specific legislation has been put into effect to protect and safeguard the rights of women. The women's movement and a widespread network of non-government organizations (NGOs) which have strong grassroots presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed to inspiring initiatives for empowerment of women.

The definition, nature and scope, means, processes and methods of measuring empowerment and its interpretation are very complex. According to Mohanty [2000] the concept of empowerment does not ensure a new egalitarian relationship. It actually implies that some outside agency empowers different groups through its various actions. The equity and empowerment approaches in tandem are designated as Gender and Development (GAD) concept.

WOMEN IN SLUMS

One of the most demeaning states of human life is confinement in a slum. There are nearly one billion underprivileged people - 32% of the urban population⁴ who live in sub-human conditions in the settlement colonies in Delhi. This means that one in every three city residents lives in slums. Globally this figure is one out of every six. Developing countries are facing the problems of urbanization in pace and scale. The governments lack political will and a many times the resources to provide basic Amenities to their citizens living in city which includes adequate habitats (house), water and electricity. Slum dwellers lack food security in addition to extremely poor (literally non-existent) health, sanitation, education facilities, and basic infrastructure such roads. The number of slum dwellers in India is projected to be six billion by the year 2050 if corrective measures are not taken.

A number of useful studies have been carried out on the slums of Delhi which manifest the broad profile of the slums in the city. Field data and focus group discussions (FGDs) have resulted in highlighting the status of physical amenities available in the slums (Nangia and Thorat: 2002, Antony and Maheswaran: 2001). The demand for unskilled and semi skilled manpower for the development activities like construction resulted in a boom of emergence of slums and their contained population. Municipal Corporation Delhi (MCD) Data 1999 show that the number of jhuggies and resettlement colonies in Delhi showed an alarming linear increase from 12,749 in 1951 to 460,929 in 1994. According to Banerjee (2000) dropout at an early age among children of slums in Delhi is well established fact. Chaugh (2000) identified few systemic and social factors that inhibit enrollment and survival of children in schools. She found that among the teaching-learning factors, bad treatment of children, poor quality of infrastructure and teaching services, low morale of school teachers, and excessive use of corporal punishment becomes the more evident factors for children dropping out from schools.

Basic health care continues to be a subject of major concern for women in the slums. The impact of unhealthy environment and the rate of water borne diseases have a telling effect on slum dwellers particularly girls. No careful assessment has been done by medical and health authorities to collect data about the common diseases, their prevention and treatment. More over congestion within the house is one of the reasons for many diseases. Diseases such as Polio are affecting girls in slums (Devraj 2001). There seems to be inflated emphasis on HIV/AIDS while health hazards such as communicable and water-borne diseases tend to be treated casually. Further there is little emphasis on population stabilization campaign, nutrition, pre, natal and post natal nutritional care etc. There is a need to develop new resources and mechanisms based on these ground realities.

The principal problems of slum women relate to water, power, dirt, antisocial elements, toilets and roads, health and sanitation, and education. Slum dwellers are often contradictory and confusing. This affects planning for new strategies and modus operandi. Women and girl children in slums face numerous problems as they lack education, awareness, are economically and socially vulnerable and thus exploitable in various ways. There are efforts at state and national levels to give recognition to Women's right at socio-political, economic and psycho-behavioral level. While studies on rural and urban areas of India with reference to women's empowerment have been conducted (cf: Dubey et al., 1986, Chen 1993, Agarwal 1994), in both qualitative and quantitative terms, such macro studies are largely Fragmented and incomplete with reference to empowerment of slum women of all age groups. (Schuler & Hashmi, 1993,

Deshmukh Ranadive, 2006, Diener and Biswas- Diener, 2006; Uphoff, 2006, Jha and Woolcock, 2006, and Roy and Narayan, 2004, and Malhotra and Schuler, 2006) Rowland (1995 and 1997) made an exhaustive study of empowerment issues in the context of third world development. She emphasized the need for understanding the notion of empowerment which has been variously used in relation to race, disability and other aspects of social identity. According to her a strong relationship exists between power and empowerment. She emphasized three main dimensions of empowerment: (a) personal, (b) relational, and (c) collective. Several models of empowerment were described relating to Honduras, Caribbean islands, Egypt and countries of South Asia. According to her the concept of empowerment can be valuable in terms of organizing and planning development interventions in a way that would ensure fulfillment of needs of women. A very precise, differentiated and detailed scale of mechanism is needed to evaluate this instrument of test for slum women. Much more work is also needed on impact of various national, state, central and international development projects that focus on empowerment of individuals or groups. There is very little information on empowerment of slum women. Efforts are still being made to raise the economic status of women; lower their fertility for maintaining adequate family size. This has not been studied in relation to the differential socio-cultural milieu of Delhi slum particularly with reference to such key mechanisms as head of household, occupation, religion, caste, economic status and family type; work participation; age and educational differences.

OBJECTIVES

The study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To portray briefly profile of slum in Delhi.
2. To investigate the social and economic situation of selected households with regard to the status of women.
3. To study the nature of benefits received by women from different welfare and development programmes Government Organisation and Non-Government Organisations.
4. To suggest measures, which can bring about desired change in the present situation of women.

SLUM OF DELHI

Delhi is an ancient city, since the dawn of Indian history there prospered for varying lengths of time and on different sites, within the area now occupied by the old and the new and the South Delhi Municipalities, as many as thirteen capital cities. Delhi can be said to have witnessed in the course of these 3,500 years at least 13 periods of growth and prosperity, each followed by subsequent decline and adversity.

Delhi has a large number of slums known as J.J. Colonies. Out of these, one slum has been selected for the study in a manner that makes the representative of the entire universe. The size of sample in area was proportionate to the size of the slum population itself. As the concept of women's empowerment encompasses the entire range of women, all female individuals in the sample family were included in the study. An attempt was made to link various services provided by different agencies with a view to highlight as to how these services help in the empowerment of women. A good number of households have girl children, married adult women and old women together making the number of beneficiary respondents 70.

PROFILE OF STUDY AREA - TRILOK PURI (EAST DELHI)

Trilok Puri slum was established in 1976, during the time of emergency, it slum initially comprised of people from different parts of the city. The community is predominantly Hindu based with the Muslim and Christian in minority. Trilok Puri community is strategically placed in the Eastern part of Delhi, with Kalyan Puri, Vinod Nagar, and Pandav Nagar encapsulating this community. The community is stretched across 25 square yards with 35 blocks. Each of the blocks has around 100 houses.

Population Household Handicapped population 1,41,600 25,500 38,00

This area of Jhuggi Jhopri clusters is named Indira Camp and Ambedkar Camp. The people in the slum enjoy access to Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital in case of any ailments. The children of the slum are generally sent to the Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, and Primary School for education. The people also have access to the public toilet constructed by the MCD.

The men in this slum like any other community are also into construction work or hired wage labourers, rickshaw pullers or running a shop. The people residing in the slum are economically very weak because of the temporary nature of their job. Some of the women have also started their own business of tailoring or running a small shop in front of the house itself. There is also Mahila Mandal, where young girls are taught tailoring. However the people of J.J. Colony are not so economically well off as the people residing in the nearby places.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Women's empowerment in this term paper refers to a process of increase of knowledge, awareness, improvement of skills and participation of women with the objectives of facilitating their roles in the decision making process. The objectives and data of the present study significantly relate to this operational definition of women empowerment.

However, the World Bank (2002) defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired action and outcomes. Central to this process is actions which both builds individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which governs the use of these assets".

Slum: The Slum Area Improvement and Clearance Act-1956, defines slums as a "Structure and group of structures or an area, which becomes unfit for human habitation due to deficiencies in the nature of living accommodation and deficiencies.

DISCUSSION ON RESPONSES BY WOMEN ON VARIOUS ISSUES

Nature of differences

There was considerable stratification within a slum as regards to age of women, education level, and nature of occupation, religion, caste and family type in Slum 1 (Trilokpuri). It had illiterate women (58.6%). This seems to have considerable bearing on their occupation (64.3% housewife), marital status (64.3%) and family type (nuclear 84.3%). More than half of the women belonged to OBC and this was

Followed by Muslims. The average family size was 6.28 indicating lack of awareness about benefits of family planning. The quantum of illiteracy also seems to have an effect on the monthly household income. Nearly half of the women did not earn more than Rs.100 per day

(100 x 30 = 3000) while some exceeded this by earning 140- 145/day. Very small percentage of women had ownership rights of their hutment.

Head of household

Very few women claimed to be the head of the household indicating that they had to submit to the concept of male dominated family. Significant differences were also discerned about the availability of space to Hindu and Muslim women which was no more than 1-3 sq.mt. This had a very adverse effect on health, hygiene, and on sanitation facilities.

Dress code

Majority of women and young girls preferred to wear *salwar – kameez* at home and place of work. This could be because of the influence of lifestyle of other women in Delhi. Only 1/3rd of the women in the sample wore *sari* at home and place of work.

This seems to be an evolving pattern. With education and greater exposure there may be a paradigm shift in the dresses of these women particularly younger girls. Dress also seems to be related to social status, respect and dignity. There seemed to be a growing urge to have a number of sets of dresses. The minimum number of sets was four and nearly 40% had more than eight sets of dresses. This also shows that women spend a sizeable portion of their personal and/or joint income on dresses. The same was true for the number of foot wear (two to more than five). Clothes were washed subject to the availability of water but some washed them on daily or weekly basis.

Assets

Ornaments have always attracted women for centuries. Majority of women in the slum wore some ornament (91%) but in matters of choice of ornaments, the figure was considerably lower. This seems to have some linkage with the money being available to them. Women by nature are possessive and have aspirations which often surpass their capacity and resources. They aspire to have house, vehicle, and appliances on a priority basis. For this they need to earn by a getting a regular job. This is not easy. Frustration and stress preoccupies the psyche.

Vices

Addiction to drinking, smoking, eating tobacco with lime and other Drug addiction amongst women of Trilokpuri slum showed variation. While majority of women were averse to drinking, this was not true of other members of family. Up to two members in each family were addicted in majority of families. Drinking, smoking and tobacco chewing is an intrinsic part of culture of many communities living in slums. Despite their low economic status, these vices do not seem to be a social taboo. On the other hand, it seemed to be a common trait for some members of the family to sit and discuss matters with others. Interestingly, this seems to be a culture of high societies where meeting over a drink seems to bring together people for social interaction.

Health and family planning issues

Health, both physical and reproductive as well as child care is matter of major concern. Consultation with a doctor for treatment was reported to be high but there was a distinct apathy

towards hospitalization. A substantial number of pregnant women (70%) consulted a gynecologist and used the prescription and advice given by her. However, majority of them opted to deliver within the premises of their slum(72.1%).It was interesting to note that the traditional methods of family planning were practiced by insignificant number of women in Trilokpuri slum. Temporary contraceptive methods were used by most women freely without any coercion. Nearly 20% had opted to undergo tubectomy.

Immunisation of children

Immunization as per stipulated schedule of MCD and other health services have found acceptance. Nearly 84% of the children in this slum were immunized against DPT and Polio. This indicated that despite high rate of illiteracy, the women had acquired the practical wisdom to ensure that the children did not suffer from such diseases and remained healthy. It also shows how awareness programmes can help in understanding and overcoming health related problems.

Education level

Although the women of Trilokpuri slum were largely illiterate, they were very concerned about the education of their children. They were anxious to know how they can get free education, uniform, books and mid-day meals for them. The recently launched Ladli Scheme of Delhi government (2008) has also been the focus of much enquiry. Nearly 72% children went to government school and had the benefit of getting school uniform. Approximately 50% of these opted out of school because of lack of interest, family conflict, discrimination, poor and insipid teaching, economic problems or corporal punishment. The drop out figure was higher for girls.

Responses of women to various issues

The issues related to socio-political, economic and emotional matters evoked differential response by women of Trilokpuri slum. Caste system has become a major issue in Indian society affecting both privileged and underprivileged sections. However, there are fundamental differences of perception, sensitivity, expressions, comprehension, evaluation and critical judgment. Due to the element of illiteracy being high in Trilokpuri slums, 2/3rd of the women felt that it is the wish of God that they be born in lower society like SC, ST, OBC, etc. However, those who were a little educated and had some exposure seemed to believe that this was due to the unique social system in India which has been in

Existence for centuries. However, most of them were in favor of abolition of caste system (94%). Some were even willing to get their daughter(s) married to a person from high caste. This was indicative of change in value system and points to some sort of social engineering which may find greater acceleration and expression in future. It was the considered though differential opinion of women in Trilokpuri slum that abolition of caste system would have three distinct advantages (i) for unity and Integrity of India (26%) (ii) to end discrimination (68%) and (iii) for ensuring social justice (6%). The issue of untouchability provoked a more vociferous response. Nearly 85% women expressed that they did not believe in untouchability. They readily mixed with everyone whosoever comes in their contact. Many complained that outsiders contact only when they have work for them which ranges from taking part in protest

marches, rallies, strikes. It has a positive 'spin off' effect of making them politically aware. Some said that they know the importance of their vote. High caste people come across women in slum only when there is religious gathering over social functions. Women in slum thought that if their daughters were married in high society it may elevate their social status and earn them more respect and dignity. This is a change of attitude and in aspirations as well as concern for the next generation. The issue of reservation has been a cause of generation of fissiparous tendencies at various levels. Social scientists and politicians differ in their perception and so do economists and planners. They questioned its validity and continuation. The political leaders use this as an intrinsic part of their 'vote bank'. Majority of women in the Trilokpuri slum felt that reservation was not beneficial. They were not aware of how this could empower them economically, socially and politically. The respondents opined that society does give them respect as women (99%) and their status has presently improved as compared to the past (83%). The reasons attributed for this were (a) women are getting educated (41.4%), (b) women are working now (26%), (c) women have freedom of movement with a sense of security (19%) and, (d) women now have the ability to take decisions.

Discrimination against women and need for equality

More than half of the respondents expressed that now the status of women was equal to men in society and they faced no discrimination. It was encouraging to hear that a small percentage of women felt that they were superior to men, but a significant number of them were still resigned to the concept of women being inferior to men. Several of the aforesaid indicators relate to women being more sensitized about their rights and there seemed to be an enhancement in their self-confidence. To achieve more, they were asked whether formation of women's club and organization of women could facilitate this. Nearly 96% were positive about the need for forming organizations but only 1/4th favored forming women's club. This could be due to ingress of undefined problems into their social order which seemed to be reinforced by tradition and culture.

Empowerment issues

The issues of empowerment are fairly diverse and considerably intricate. Education, jobs, security, participation in politics and national affairs and in giving due place to women's voice have positive impact on empowerment. Women in Trilokpuri slums were divided on these. They also felt that participation of women in prayer, religious/community festivals, fasting may facilitate improvement of women's sense of worth. Women need a break from their domestic chores. This also helps them to interact with others to share their thoughts, sensitivities, opinions and experience.

Fertility control and family size

Control over one's fertility has strong bearing on marital relationship, family size, and eventually on the well being of children in the family. Women's health is also greatly affected by all this. Opinions were divided evenly on who makes decision about pregnancy and birth of a child in the family. However, more than half women in the slum did not favor having more than two children. They related this to the well being, education and future of the children. A significant percentage of them favored abortion of unwanted pregnancy. These views were differential and

related to the age and education of the respondent female. Illiteracy had a deep impact on the mind set and attitude about who should decide about aborting unwanted pregnancy or still have it. Majority of literate respondents were not only in favor of aborting unwanted pregnancy but also did not want to have more than two children. Females have relatively lesser say in such matters. However, it was abundantly clear that women's education made inroads in the decision making process about when to have children and how many. Other impacting factors that probably have effect at least at the sub-conscious level are (a) comparison with other women in slum with smaller and well spaced families (b) better health education, nutrition and living conditions in controlled family size (c) awareness programmes of NGOs and government and (d) electronic media. It was clear that such exposure raised the expectations and aspiration of women about their children. They not only wanted them to be educated and get good jobs, but some hoped that their children will become IAS officers, doctors, or would at least be capable of leading an independent life of quality.

Happiness due to empowerment

Although slum conditions are definitely not even remotely at par with posh colonies it was amazing to note that nearly 55% women expressed that they were relatively happier now than in the past. Those who were unhappy considered economic and social deprivations as the main causes.

Non-government Organisation and Government Organisation Scheme for Empowerment

Many welfare schemes launched by NGOs and MCD in Trilokpuri slum were considered favorably by families, although at the community/country's welfare level the positive reactions were attenuated. It was expressed the status of slum community could become better, if the welfare agencies paid attention, and provided financial assistance to BPL families. Women in slum were politically conscious and wanted community representation in politics (92%). They also had very structured opinion of how to overcome the government's inaction. Strike/dharna (73%) and advocacy (26%) were described as measures to handle these matters.

CONCLUSIONS

The chronic distressing situation deeply impacts on the socio-cultural, political, economical, psychological, emotional and behavioral traits women, girls in particular, who have to suffer the trauma of male dominance, victimization, maltreatment, physical violence that leads to inculcation of other pathological syndromes e.g. sexual exploitation, rape, unwanted pregnancies, selective abortion (female feticide), prostitution, denial of freedom of expression, participation in decision making process In the family etc. Delhi slum is in a depressing state and so is the life of women living in these Slums. Some actions that can be taken for women's empowerment have been shared as follows Delhi should adopt the slum area development plans based on positive experience of other states e.g. Maharashtra (2006). All the slum areas should be developed in the form of multi storey buildings. After surveying the total population of slums the builders should earmark 60% area for the housing of slum families and the rest 40% for commercial activities. There would be no burden on the government.

Authorized builders would construct multistoried houses for slum people taking loans from housing finance agencies. Slum families using the benefits of this plan need to repay in

easy installments. The builders would meet their investment expenses through 40% structures built for commercial activities. Further the slums are converted into developed localities. The multistoried habitats should have basic amenities e.g. water, electricity, sanitation and hygiene. The area should have a community hall for social and cultural activities and entertainment.

Education

Education facilities should be extended to all slum children. As per the provisions of the Indian Constitution, they should be given free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years with balanced mid day meal, school uniform and books.

Health

Health facilities should be extended in the form of PHC, free medical check ups, awareness about sound health, HIV/AIDS and STD, use of contraceptives for limiting family size. The health of children particularly girl child is also an issue of concern. Their physical and mental well being can pave the path of empowerment from all points of view.

Development Plans

Developmental plans should invest in improving sanitation and hygiene of slum habitats. As large sums of money are involved in these, there is interference by the land mafia, corrupt officials, criminals and politicians. Ways must be found to eliminate these obstacles or at least minimize their aberrant interventions. Success of any plan is dependent on this. With reference to Delhi slum it is desirable to have a zonal/district wise demarcation of slum areas and JJ colonies in all maps so that effective welfare plans can be prepared and proper monitoring done for evaluating the success and/or corrective measures needed on an annual basis. Well focused, goal oriented and time bound programmes should be prepared in areas of health, education, family planning (population control measures), child health

And nutrition, and ecology of slums. Women in slum can be selected to assist in implementation. In Delhi slums, many women were observed to be educated up to high school. These women can be paid honoraria at the prevalent rate and trained. The trained women can serve as trainers for other slum women belonging to different caste, region, religion, culture and psyche. This should be done in order to inculcate sensitivity, accountability, responsibility, positive alterations in attitude, motivation, and commitment and energize a dynamic change for the future.

Sensitivities and Deficiencies

Women in slum need to be sensitized about the deficiencies and lacunae within the family. They should be encouraged to cover these gaps by sending children to school and ensuring that they do not drop out and get attracted to crime and vices. Literacy and education in tandem can be effective in solving the social, economic and psychological problems.

SHG

Self Help Groups (SHGs) should be created in such slums which should encourage more and more women to join it. They should undertake to secure means through welfare agencies to extend the following facilities/awareness to each family a) regular medical check up, b) realization about importance of balanced diet and adequate nutrition, c) problems of children especially girl child,(educational, economic, social and psychological encompassing the phenomena of drop out, early

Marriage), d) motivation for using birth control measures (distribution of free oral pills and condoms) including non reversible surgical interventions for larger families (tubectomy for women and vasectomy for men), e) organize cultural activities to scout talent and promote them.

Family care

Special care needs to be provided during the pre-natal and post natal period of women in slum by providing those clinical help, balanced diet and sanitized condition of living. The babies should be immunized (for DPT and polio).

Water

Slums face acute problems of water borne diseases due to contaminated/ polluted water. High concentrations of fluoride, nitrate; and presence of viruses and pathogenic bacteria are known to cause epidemics of disease(s) in slums and also threaten outsiders who come in contact with slums. This situation needs to be addressed on a priority basis.

Empowerment – Action Plan

Empowerment of women in slum must be treated as a continuous process. They should be encouraged to develop leadership qualities through education, exposure to ideas; and information about law agencies that can take up their cases particularly the ones relating to a) atrocities, b) exploitation, c) freedom and equality, d) entitlement for education and all outwardly action, ill effects of child marriage,

put up a fight against criminals who force women in flesh trade, rape and sexual humiliation and abuse. Free legal aid and psychological counseling should be provided to victims. Rehabilitation plans should be prepared to address these issues.

Since slum families are usually large, they also suffer most as they are called upon to manage all their expenses in a low income. Uncalled for expenses or ones that are needed to be incurred during emergency aggravate the stress, conflict, tension and generate an atmosphere of violence which is targeted against women and girl children in particular by the male who heads the family. Such families have to be made aware about the advantages of small family with no more than one or two children.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPOWERMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF SLUM

Developmental plans should not be in piece meal but should be well structured and properly coordinated for proper and effective implementation. Providing civic facilities to all slum dwellers should receive a highest priority. The slum dwellers of Delhi in particular represent a heterogeneous assemblage of migrants from various parts of the country. They differ in their language, culture, faith, rituals and sensitivities. However, poverty is a common denominator for all of them. These people are obsessed and adjusted to male domination in the family and in all decision making process. They have scant awareness and comprehension that their wife and children are also indispensable part of the family. In fact, they lack the notion that they are integrally associated with the head of the household. The wife and children may be economically dependent but they do have their own mind set and Thinking capacity. Changing the mindset of the male members of the family and making them aware about the positive role of the wife and children will ensure peace, tranquility and harmony. It will also facilitate achievement of desired goals for happiness of the family. Awareness programmes should be designed to sensitize the men in slum to understand the concept of equality, partnership, dignity and respect for girls and women. Work needs to be done in the area of gender equality and parity

with emphasis on slum women and girls as they represent the most under privileged and deprived sections of nearly half of the Indian society. Their voices have to be heard and their representation ensured as a participant in every spectrum of activity. Democratization of politics and political values in the vibrant democracy of India can occur when women from all sections of society are integrated into the political process, peace and environmental movements these are catalytic keys of transformation. Family counseling centres should be established in slums and special assistance programme like providing vocational training and skill development should be instituted for enhancing the economic empowerment of women in slum.

New Developmental plans are needed. Women have to be the center for empowerment processes as they can help in bringing about transformational changes as individual, as member of family, community and society. The earlier data need to be corrected and new interpretations and mechanisms of empowerment are required.

The present study updates the status of slum their problems and the ways in which positive changes have occurred via SHG and other activities.

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