

Women's Empowerment and Vulnerability in Slums of Ichalkaranji

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ABSTRACT:

Slum life has never been easy for the slum women insofar as housing and living conditions are concerned. In slums across the world, there is a noticeable lack of basic infrastructure, services, and basic shelter. They experience varying deprivations and risks, which can include a lack of durable housing, overcrowding, insufficient access to clean water, poor sanitation, and threats of forced evictions. Women living in slums are often susceptible to forced evictions by governments and other actors, and too often face gender-based violence before, during, and after eviction. Women and girls often suffer the worst effects. Women and girls in urban India are also at high risk of gender-based violence. On this backdrop, this study is trying to understand a Women's Empowerment and Vulnerability in Slums of Ichalkaranji.

Key words: slum dwellers, Empowerment, Vulnerability, Human development, Gender equality

INTRODUCTION

Equality, sustainability and empowerment are major three important components of the human development paradigm. Hence, Gender equality is a core principle of human development. Gender Equality has many dimensions...

- 1) Equal access to basic social services, including education and health.
- 2) Equal opportunities for participation in political and economic decision – making.
- 3) Equal reward for equal work.
- 4) Equal protection under the law.
- 5) Elimination of discrimination by gender and violence against women.
- 6) Equal rights to citizens in all areas of life, both public – such as the workplace – and private – such as the home (HDR-1995). A gender perspective of UNDP's human development reports has limited scope. Actually, the human development evaluation needs more than health, education and a decent standard of living. Women's vulnerability to low human development is consequence of variety of gender related issues, i. e. sex, freedom, discrimination, domestic violence etc. According to the latest global HDR, 2018, GDI value of India is 0.841 having 130 rank among 189 countries. It means that, despite the guarantee in Indian constitution, Indian society is far from gender equality. Although gender differences are narrowing after liberalization in India, much work remains to be done for gender equality and women's empowerment. If human development must reach everyone, gender equality and women's empowerment need to be central. When women are allowed to work in a profession of their choice, when they have access to financial services and when they are protected by law from domestic violence, they are able to lead lives to their full potential. (HDR, 2016)

The gender inequality within slum dwellers human development achievement in Ichalkaranji is high. To more focus on the human development status and gender inequality in slums of Ichalkaranji, the present study consider some basic issues related to women empowerment and vulnerability issues.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been carried out with the following objectives.

- A. To study the concept of the women empowerment in brief.
- B. To study the statistics of an issues related to the women empowerment and vulnerability in slums of Ichalkaranji .
- C. To suggest remedies for the improvement of the women empowerment in slums of Ichalkaranji.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been adopted the following research methodology.

1. The present study is based on primary and also secondary data.
2. The secondary data has been collected from various published sources on websites.
3. Descriptive analytical methodology has been used for the study.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND VULNERABILITY IN SLUMS OF ICHALKARANJI.

To more focus on the human development status and gender inequality in slums of Ichalkaranji, the present study consider some basic issues related to women empowerment and vulnerability rather than three dimensions of GDI , i.e., health, education and income.

Table No. 1.1 -- Women's empowerment and vulnerability related statistics of slums in Ichalkaranji.

Sr. No.	Variables	No. of Respondent	%
1	Marital age (18 to 49 yrs)		
	< 14	147	26.49
	14 – 18	375	67.56
	> 18	33	5.95
	Total	555	100
2	Family planning		
	Yes	341	76.11
	No	107	23.89
	Total	448	100
3	Decision of female work		
	Self	86	23.89
	Husband	133	36.94
	Both	134	37.23
	Elder person	6	1.66
	Other	1	0.28
	Total	360	100
4	Molestation Incidents		
	Frequently / Always	26	7.12
	Rarely	240	65.75
	No	99	27.13
	Total	365	100
5	Abusive incidents (Multiple Response) Total Response – 434		
	Verbal	212	58.08
	Physically torture	19	5.2
	Family Violence	84	23.01
	None of the above	119	32.6
6	Relationship with other slum women		
	Co-operative	260	72.42
	Casual	93	25.91
	Tensed	6	1.67
	Can't Say	0	0
	Total	359	100
7	Relationship with other slum women		
	Severally	93	25.62
	Always	37	10.19
	Never	220	60.61
	Rarely	363	100
	Total		
8	Anxiety about future		
	To some extent	151	41.71
	Always	174	48.07
	Not at all	37	10.22
	Total	362	100

Source – Compiled from field survey in slums of Ichalkaranji, 2017-18.

The table no.1.1 shows statistics regarding the physical, mental and social factors that are affecting the human development status and vulnerability of the slum women's in Ichalkaranji. The age of marriage is important for the physical, mental and social development of a women's. The age of marriage of a women's has been fixed to 18 years by the law. However, due to poverty, illiteracy, regressive customs and traditions, young girls gets early married. It has adversely effects on the further human development status. Of the total 555 (above 18 years old) female respondents in slums of Ichalkaranji, 67.56% were married between the age of 14 and 18 years. The proportion of married women under the age of 14 is 26.49%, while only 5.95% women married after completion of 18 years of age. It means that many elder people in previous generations in slums are unaware of the side effects of girl's early marriages. However, many young women and their parents expressed the view that it is wrong to marry before the 18 years. Women's in various slums seem to understand the importance of family planning. Of the total 448 married women, 76.11% have undergone family planning over time.

Especially in the post-liberalization period, the rate of women's labor force is increasing. Working for money is a very important issue for the empowerment of women. Nevertheless, it is not a matter of empowerment or respect of the women in slums when they have to work for money. Women and girls in slums are working to overcome acute poverty. Many women's in slums are illiterate and unskilled. As a result, they get less paid jobs with less dignity. Working hours and time is also uncertain. In many circumstances women do not have safe working environment. Should a family woman work or not in such a situation? Who decides this is very important. In this regards, of the total 360 female respondents in slums of Ichalkaranji; 23.89% of the respondents said that they themselves decide whether or not to work? 36.94% of the slum women told, this decision was taken by their husband and 37.23 % of the women said that the decision was made with the consent of both husband and wife. In case of only 1.66% women, the decision was taken by the elder person of the family and only 0.28% women were depend on others to this concern. It means that the majority of slum women (74.17%) make decisions about work with the consent and consideration of family members.

There are many instances of molestation of the women and girls in many cities and towns in India. Due to molestation women face abusive situations. Humiliation threatens women's self-esteem and creates fear in their mind. As a result, they cannot be freely involved in the social, economic, cultural and political activities of society. Women, especially in slums, are more vulnerable than other women in society. Molestation events can further damage the human development status of women in slums.

A total 365 women and girls have expressed their views in this regards. 7.12 % respondents stated that they had to deal with the incident of molestation frequently. While 27.13% women said that they had never face molestation incident in their life. In contrast, 65.75% of slum women and girls reported that, they rarely having had such an experience. From the above discussion, it can be said that although many slum women in slums have been affected by the molestation incidents, it is not matter of concern in their daily life. From the discussions and observations made in the slums, it seems that slum women in Ichalkaranji city blend easily with other civilians. They also have no fear of molestation or humiliation. Therefore, the issue of molestation is of little matter in their human development path.

In terms of empowerment of women, it is necessary to try to curb the atrocities and abusive incidents that occur both at home and outside the home. In an Indian society, women's are victimized by abusive behaviour for variety of reasons, such as ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, lack of scientific approach and overall cultural difficulty etc. In that condition, most women's remain indifferent to their own development and the development of the society. Of course, this is more likely to happen with the women's in slums. It has become clear that after to find out the experiences of slum women's in Ichalkaranji. Out of a total 365 female respondents, 32.60% reported that, any type of violence at the family level was not yet experienced by them, However, 58.08% women's reported that, they are facing verbal abusive incidents (persistent insults from family members) frequently. The proportion of physically abused women is 4.38% and the proportion of abiding any type of domestic violence is 19.35%. It means that, there is a higher prevalence of abusive incidents at the family level facing by women in slums of Ichalkaranji.

The social relations of the individuals are of major importance for human development. Individuals cannot flourish alone: Indeed, they cannot function alone. When they are born, the family provides their life support. In turn, families cannot function independently of the societies in which they are located. Being a member of family, of a locality and of the larger society is an essential component of a flourishing existence. Since these groupings can provide good or bad conditions for the individual, it is not only their existence but also their nature that is relevant to human development. (Frances Stewart, 2013/03).

Women living in slums face many problems compare to other women in the community, they need the assistance and guidance for their empowerment. They can't flourish alone. Social interactions are a quintessential part of human life, and their quantity and quality determine a person's social or relational capabilities (capabilities involving relations with others) (Frances Stewart, 2013/3).

Looking at, how the slum women's in Ichalkaranji city are related to their neighboring women's? It was found that 72.42% of the slum women have cooperative relations with neighboring women. However, 25.91% of the women said that their relations with the neighboring women were casual and only 1.67% stated that they had strained relationship from the above explanation, it can be said that most of the slum dwellers in Ichalkaranji have harmonious relations with their neighbors. The slum women benefited from it for improving the quality of human development and leading a happy life.

In this regard, the opinion of a slum woman named Najama in Lal Nagar is important. Sir, the women living in other parts of the city do not seem to quarrel. How can they argue? Because they were rarely meet each other. Despite of being a neighbor they have less communicated. On the contrary we also constantly meet, talk and argue. The quarrel between the slums is very temporary. Again we share in each other's happiness and sorrow.

The observation is that all the slum women in Ichalkaranji city are seen mixing easily with other areas of society. They are getting part time jobs in informal sector of the city. They are engage in semi-skilled work in the textile factories, domestic work at home and trading shops. Other communities are also depends on the labor of slum women's. An attempt was made to find out how they felt about the behavior of different sections of society towards the slums women. Have you ever felt inferior as a slum dweller? Out of a total of 363 female respondents who answered this question, 60.61% women have rarely experienced such occasions. 25.62% of the women stated that they had this experience many times and only 3.58% women said that, they are always having that experience. 10.19% women's said that they never had such type of experience.

The above analysis shows that, compare to other women's most slum women in slums is undervalued by other society. Most women in slums of Ichalkaranji feel that they are being discriminated by other communities. Are you worried or upset about the future of your family? Of the 362 female respondents, only 10.22% answered 'no strain'. The proportion of slum women who said that they are worried about the future of the family is 48.07%. The proportion of women who said that, in some extent they are worried about their family is 41.71%.

In short, most of the slum workers in Ichalkaranji are worried about their future. Form the above analysis regarding the empowerment and vulnerability of slum dwellers in Ichalkaranji city, it can be summarized that as like any other slum, women in slums of Ichalkaranji have feelings of insecurity and are concerned about the future of their family. Despite their complaints about domestic violence, they have established good social relations with other women's and the civilians in rest of the community. Awareness of the age limit of the marriage, the importance of family planning, and worry about the future indicates their responsibility towards the human development. The additional discussions during the observations and interviews suggest that, the slum women's in Ichalkaranji city will contribute immensely to the human development of themselves and their family in coming year.

CONCLUSIONS

The above study lead to the following major conclusions.

1. Due to poverty, illiteracy, regressive customs and traditions, young girls gets early married. In slums of Ichalkaranji, 67.56% were married between the age of 14 and 18 years. However, many young women and their parents expressed the view that it is wrong to marry before the 18 years.
2. Women's in various slums seem to understand the importance of family planning. Of the total 448 married women, 76.11% have undergone family planning over time.
3. The majority of slum women (74.17%) make decisions about work with the consent and consideration of family members.
4. The slum women in Ichalkaranji city blend easily with other civilians. They also have no fear of molestation or humiliation. So the issue of molestation is not a serious matter of concern.
5. There is a higher prevalence of abusive incidents at the family level facing by women in slums of Ichalkaranji.
6. Most of the slum dwellers in Ichalkaranji have harmonious relations with their neighbors.
7. Compare to other women's most slum women in slums is undervalued by other society. Most women in slums of Ichalkaranji feel that they are being discriminated by other communities.

8. The observation is that all the slum women in Ichalkaranji city are seen mixing easily with other areas of society.
9. Most of the slum workers in Ichalkaranji are worried about their future.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

1. TO provide security of tenure, and other facilities concern to women and their families living in slums.
2. Counselling is essential about understanding of the demerits of early marriage tendency and family planning. To this, college students and teachers, social work organisations, government officials can take initiations.
2. To combat violence against women in all its forms, provide free effective legal advice and other remedies to victims of gender-based violence.
3. More & timely investment in slum upgrading programmes and housing development programmes is essential for stability of slum families.
4. To make development plans for slums on the basis of human development and capability approach.
5. Enforce women's inheritance rights and equal rights to marital property.
7. Improve access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, and provide safer environments for women living in the slums.
8. To make awareness and fight against women's poverty and provide economic empowerment opportunities to most poor and disadvantaged women in slum.
10. Raise awareness about women's human rights, including women's housing rights, at community and institutional levels.

EPILOGUE

As like any other slum, women in slums of Ichalkaranji have feelings of insecurity and are concerned about the future of their family. But we must understand, it is because of acute poverty among the slum dwellers. Despite their complaints about domestic violence, they have established good social relations with other women's and the civilians in rest of the community. Awareness of the age limit of the marriage, the importance of family planning, and worry about the future indicates their responsibility towards the human development. If proper policies implemented which would be based upon human development and capabilities approach, the slum women's in Ichalkaranji city will contribute immensely to the human development of themselves and their family in coming year.

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