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12. Problems Faced by Slum Dwellers Municipal Corporation, Darjeeling District, West Bengal

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Abstract

Major Problems of increasing urbanization relate to conversion of fertile land resources for human habitation and for business purposes. The process results in the loss of land areas, forests, hill stops, agricultural lands, water bodies, green belts, and open space. Urbanization creates problem of housing, growth of slums, sanitation, pollution and health problems. These problems create demand for huge investment by the government for in creating social infrastructure to provide relief in the area of health, water, sanitation etc. Majority of respondents in the slum areas of Siliguri city belonged to BPL indicating a high incidence of poverty among them. Majority of respondents in the slum areas covered by the study belonged to SCs (38.5%) followed by General (20%) and other OBC's (20%). Majority of the slum dwellers lived in Kutcha houses and substantial number of them lived in rented houses. Slum areas covered by the study lacked sanitation facilities. Drainage was not provided in the areas. Garbage removal was not attended to residential places of the respondents were not kept clean. The areas are affected by air, noise and water pollution. A substantial number of the respondents were migrants (45%). The migration was largely for jobs and coolie work in the city. The residences of the respondents were very small and lacked separate, kitchen, latrine, bathroom etc. They collected water from public taps. It is found through field study that a substantial number of respondents possessed modern facilities like electricity cell phones, TVs, Bicycle, furniture, etc. The main problems faced by slum dwellers of Siliguri are drinking water, sanitation, garbage collection, drainage blockage and waterlogging etc.

Key words : waterlogging, waste disposal mechanism, urbanization.

These populations come to Siliguri daily for their livelihood. These populations pay tax to the corporation but Siliguri has to withstand the pressure of these populations. Increase in population there is lack of space and over congestion in slum areas. As the rents of residential areas are high, the migrants cannot afford to bear such high rent and settle in slums. There is overcrowding in slums. This results in very high density in some slums. Increased population creates pressure on physical infrastructure of the slums leads to unhealthy condition of living, garbages, paucity of sunlight, sanitation and drinking water problems, air pollution etc. Slums having high population density of more than two lakh persons per square km are Sraban Nagar, Sarat pally, Rana Baste, Shibnagar Colony, Vivekananda Colony slums. These slums face serious problem of space as the areas are less and density is high. During the survey it was observed that due to inadequate space the slum dwellers are forced to sleep on the roads and under the shades of shops.

Other problems faced by the slum dwellers are regarding health, education, social problems etc.

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