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A Profile of Roadside Squatter Settlements and their Families in Jaipur City

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ABSTRACT This study was conducted to determine the life style of roadside squatter settlers of Jaipur city through squatter settlement and family profiles. A total of 42 such settlements and 296 families were covered under the study. An interview schedule was used to elicit information on the squatters and their family profiles. The results revealed that the settlements had very limited access to water, housing, lighting, sanitation and health facilities. No regular training or education programmes had been planned for them. The mean family size in the settlements was 5.8±1.65 members. Most of the families (84.5%) had nuclear family structure. A majority of adults and children were illiterate. About 81% of the migrants were from Rajasthan and the others from nearby states. The families had main and subsidiary occupations. The main occupations included construc-tion work, blacksmithy, decoration of trucks/buses with '*jhalars*'/'*laris*'/'*chotis*' (a bunch of tassles, braids), application of films on windows of four wheelers and preparation of radium number plates, pulling rickshaws and trolleys, playing drums and pipes and making plaster of paris statuettes, etc. They lived in tents. Their possessions were meager and consisted of pots, pans, cots, trunks and clothes. Personal hygienic practices were poor and sanitation left much to be desired.

In India slums have grown in cities and towns wherever there was space. These may be 'underdeveloped' or 'developed' in terms of some of the basic amenities. Slums have by now become so congested and crowded that they are unable to accommodate fresh migrants to the towns or cities. Consequently, new migrants squat on pavements and vacant plots in various areas of the cities. Surprisingly, some of these squatters have been staying on the pavements for generations. Squatters look just for a place to squat on and then start looking for basic amenities which they procure from nearby surroundings. A tap nearby becomes the source of water, a street light- the source of illumination, a vacant plot in the vicinity- an area for defecation, and so on. The settlements of these squatters are usually occupation/caste based, - blacksmiths, pipe and drum players, snake charmers, plaster of paris statuette makers, etc.

There are innumerable studies of slums but very few on squatter settlements. This study aims at constructing a profile of the squatter settlements on the pavements and vacant plots alongside roads in Jaipur city.

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

No enumeration of roadside squatter settlements in Jaipur city had been made before the present study was conducted from April 1999 to March 2001. The Jaipur Nagar Nigam and Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) officials provided some information on the location of a few squatter settlements; the rest of the information was obtained from the residents of the squatter settlements, their leaders and local people living nearby. A total of 42 squatter settlements were covered. An interview schedule was used to elicit information on the squatters and their family profiles. The respondent for the squatter profile was the leader of the squatter settlement or a male member, while the most important woman of the family was the respondent for the family profile.

RESULTS

Squatter Profile

The squatter settlements were located on the pavements or vacant plots beside roads of Jaipur city. Tents provided shelter. The average number of tents per settlement was 23.8±43.39 (Table 1). With respect to the community features, families of 78.6% of the settlements had good relations with people of similar occupations residing in other such settlements, while the rest did not know the people residing elsewhere. Only twelve squatter settlements had a leader each. Any disputes that cropped up amongst them were

solved mainly by themselves, while 21.4% went to their leaders/elders for help.

With respect to sanitation, it was observed that garbage littered the surroundings of all the squatter settlements creating unhygienic conditions. Similarly, there was no drainage system for waste water in 90.5% of these settlements. They had to face the ill effects of dust, smoke, scorching sun, rain and cold. As most of the families had settled close to main roads, they were obliged to suffer the ill effects of intense noise and air pollution caused by automobiles, and also dust.

Availability of basic amenities to the squatter settlements was abysmal. Public taps were the source of drinking water for 64.3% families, while 14.3% used public hand pumps and 11.9% used public wells as the source of drinking water. Families from 31.0% settlements brought water from nearby shops/houses. The distance of the nearest source of water was less than half a kilometer for most of the families, while families of only two squatter settlements had to go a little farther. Water was stored in earthen pots and was kept above the ground level on a wooden structure. All the squatter settlements lacked electricity. The means of illumination in most of the tents in squatter settlements was kerosene lamps (47.6%), street lights (40.5%), lamps operated by gas (11.9%) and lamps based on batteries (7.1%). Some families used candles, too. There were 8 squatter settlements that did not have any source of lighting.

Table 1: Squatter profile of squatter settlements of Jaipur city

	Squatter settlements (n=42)
Average number of tents/squatter	23.8±43.39
Sanitation	
Is garbage littered around	
Yes	42(100.0)
Water drainage system	
No system	38(90.5)
Kaccha drain	4(9.5)
Water	
Source of drinking water*	
Public taps	27(64.3)
Nearby shops/houses	13(31.0)
Public hand pumps	6(14.3)
Public wells	5(11.9)
Water tankers	1(2.4)
Illumination	
Source of illumination in tents*	20(47.6)
Kerosene lamps	25(59.5)
Street lights	17(40.5)
Lamps operated by Gas	5(11.9)
Lamps based on battery	3(7.1)
No source	8(19.0)
*Health facility**	
Health facility availed	
Private clinic/hospitals	37(88.1)
Government hospitals	7(16.7)
Shops	2(4.8)
Education	
Children sent to school	
Yes	5(11.9)
No	37(88.1)
Reasons for not sending children to school*	
No school nearby	13(30.9)
Cannot afford	10(23.8)
Not interested in studies	10(23.8)
Do not settle at one place for long	4(9.5)
Work or help in family occupation	2(4.8)

Figures in parentheses denote percentages.
*n>42 due to multiple responses.

Despite financial constraints, people of 88.1% squatter settlements turned to private clinics for health care, while only 16.7% used government hospitals. Children of some families of a few squatter settlements attended schools. Young children while not attending school played or roamed around while the others helped in the occupational work. The main reasons cited for not sending children to school were absence of schools nearby, financial constraints, children not being interested in studies and the fact that they did not settle down at one place for long. Families of 18 squatter settlements reported that their family members visited parks/movie theaters as a source of entertainment, but usually it was the young boys who went out. Families from all the squatter settlements attended social gatherings and cultural functions for which they visited their native places at times. Most of the squatter settlements had a place of worship. The families of most of these settlements (85.7%) bought clothes and utensils from the main city markets while those of six got all their necessities from their own villages. Vegetables and food grains were purchased from nearby shops or vendors. Families of only 15 squatter settlements preferred the main markets nearby. The means of transport used for bringing raw materials and selling trade goods was city buses (64.3%), bicycles (14.3%) and rickshaws (9.5%). Families from 42.9% settlements used to go on foot and a few used their own trucks, too; these were purchased on hire-purchase basis.

No training programmes were held in the squatter settlements. They had no regular arrangements for educating the children.

However, 10 settlements had some sort of arrangement where teachers came either in the morning or in the evening to teach the children, though not very regularly. As for the major needs and demands of the people, most of them (76.2%) wanted a plot/land/house for permanent settlement, while 66.7% demanded water/ electricity, 33.3% wanted schools/medical facilities/toilets, 11.9% demanded employment and some wanted loans to start new work.

Family Profile

The mean family size among the 296 families covered was 5.8±1.65. The average number of adults per family was 2.3±0.81 (Table 2). Adults comprised grandparents, other relatives and siblings of the subjects, above 18 years of age. The family size was small as the mothers of most of the families were young and had not completed their families. The average number of children per family was 3.5±1.44 that included 1.9±1.28 boys and 1.6±1.04 girls per family. As regards their structure, 84.5% of the families in the present study were of the nuclear type and 15.2% families had an extended family structure, that is one where the grandparents were staying with them. One family had a joint family structure with married uncles and aunts staying with them. By religion, 228 families were Hindu and 68 were Muslim. Regarding the languages spoken, 58.4% spoke Marwari/Rajasthani and 5.1% spoke Hindi, as these are the local languages of Rajasthan. Of the rest, 23% spoke Urdu, and the others Bengali, Haryanvi or Punjabi.

The educational status of the squatters presented a dismal picture. Out of the 296 families covered, there were 89.2% fathers and a much higher percentage of mothers (98.3%) who were illiterate. Among the fathers who were literate, 6.8% were able to read or read and write, and only 4.0% had acquired education till primary or secondary levels. Three mothers were able to read or read and write, and a mere two had primary education. Among the boys of school going age, 16 boys were able to read/read and write, 9 had started going to school, and 16 had studied up to or were in classes I to VIII, while the rest were illiterate. Among the girls, 3 were going to school and 5 had studied up to class V while the rest were illiterate, so that a higher percentage of girls than boys were illiterate.

These data demonstrate lack of awareness regarding the importance of education among the squatters. They neglected sending children to schools. The reasons reported for this were lack of an educational facility in close vicinity, girls spending most of their time in household chores and looking after their siblings, their nomadic nature not letting them settle at one place for long, unsafe road crossings between homes and schools and the illiteracy of the parents. It is high time these people were made to realize the importance of education and induced to send their children to school.

Most of the squatters move from one place to another in search of a living. The findings of the present study revealed that out of the 296 families covered, about 81% had migrated from various parts of Rajasthan. The rest had migrated

Table 2: Family profile of squatter settlements of Jaipur city

	Families (n=296)
Average family size	5.8±1.65
Number of adults per family	2.3±0.81
Number of children per family	3.5±1.44
Family structure	
Nuclear	250(84.5)
Extended	45(15.2)
Joint	1(0.3)
Religion	
Hindu	228(77.0)
Muslim	68(23.0)
Education status - Illiterate	
Father	264(89.2)
Mother	291(98.3)
Place from where migrated	
Rajasthan	241(81.4)
Gujarat	15(5.1)
Haryana	11(3.7)
West Bengal	8(2.7)
Uttar Pradesh	8(2.7)
Bangladesh	5(1.7)
Madhya Pradesh	4(1.3)
New Delhi	3(1.0)
Punjab	1(0.3)
Time since migrated	
<1 year	35(11.8)
1-10 years	127(42.9)
11-20 years	95(32.1)
21-50 years	36(12.2)
>50 years	3(1.0)
Reasons for leaving native place	
In search of work	269(90.9)
No work in villages	9(3.0)
Lack of agricultural work in villages	7(2.4)
Selling articles	7(2.4)
Staying at present place since a long time	2(0.7)
Drought in villages	1(0.3)
No good harvest	1(0.3)

Figures in parentheses denote percentages.

from other states. The ancestors of some of the families had migrated to Jaipur long ago but, kept moving from one place to another in the city. Migrants from other states usually come in search of work or to sell their goods in Jaipur. Out of the total, 35 families (11.8%) had migrated in less than a year's time, while 42.9% had been staying for 1-10 years and 32.1% families for 11-20 years at their present place of residence. There were 36 families who were staying for 21-50 years at the same place. Some families (92/296) moved from one place to another in less than a year, while others moved less frequently. Visits to their native places depended on the distance from Jaipur. A few families (28/296) visited their relatives once in 1-4 months, while most (135/296) visited their native place once or twice a year. Some families never visited their native places. These families had nothing left behind, as their ancestors had migrated a long time ago. Now, their great-grandchildren are also living with them at the present place of residence. Out of the 296 families covered, 269 had come in search of work; according to them, the city has more opportunities for getting work and earning money, and also offers a better avenue for selling their goods.

The families of the squatter settlements were engaged in certain occupations which served as their main source of income, and in some subsidiary occupations which augmented their income (Table 3). The main occupations comprised construction work (24.3%), blacksmithy (8.8%), decoration of trucks/buses with '*jhalars*'/'*laris*'/'*chotis*' (a bunch of tassles, braids), application of films on windows of four wheelers and preparation of radium number plates (7.8%), pulling rickshaws and trolleys (7.1%), playing drums and pipes (7.1%) and making statuettes (5.1%). Besides these, the other main occupations were iron/rag picking, digging and selling of sand/mud, fitting seats in trucks and buses, making and selling aryuvedic medicines/ pestles and mortars/embroidery needles, repairing canisters and buckets, snake charming, sweeping and mopping of floors in houses and many other such small jobs. For some families, apart from these main occupations, there were some subsidiary occupations which added to their income when they were not engaged in their main occupations or were taken up by family members other than those engaged in the main occupations. The subsidiary occupations included mainly rag/iron picking and construction work. Some others were making and selling *dumrus*, begging from door to door, selling bed sheets/blankets, cleaning of ears, selling of '*chatais*' (mats), mosquito nets, shell curtains, umbrellas, pulling rickshaws, carrying lights at weddings, tacking quilts, etc. All the families reported spending the entire day in work with random rest periods.

The average number of tents per family was 1.1±0.46. None of the families had *kachha* houses. They resided in tents made of polythene sheets, cloth or blankets or even without tents (Table 3). About 51% of the families owned tents made of polythene supported by tree trunks or bamboo poles. Some others (45.6%) owned tents made of polythene, sacks, blankets, flattened card-board cartons, cloth, or tarpaulin supported by wooden planks, tree trunks, bamboo poles and other props. There were 11 families who lived on the pavements without any tents. Some of the families had separate cooking areas distinct from the living areas in either partitioned tents or in the open.

The belongings which the squatters possessed were very meager. The average number of cots per family was 1.2±1.25. There were 87.8% families who had steel/silver ornaments and 26.0% had brass ornaments, these included nose-pins, ear rings, *borlas* (an ornament worn on head), *bichias* (rings worn on toe fingers), etc. About 24.7% families owned domestic animals, which included goats, hens and camels and these served as a source of income for them. A few of them kept bears and monkeys for '*tamashas*'. Radios (18.2%), televisions (4.4%), and cassette players (2.0%) were owned by these families as a means of entertainment. Some of the families also owned two-wheelers, bicycles, rickshaws, trolleys and tractors which they had acquired through loans. Their other possessions consisted of clothes, blankets, pots and pans, boxes and other small items.

Regarding personal hygiene practices of the families, 34.4% of the mothers took a bath daily as compared to 48.0% of the children. Regarding the frequency of cleaning teeth, 82.4% of the mothers cleaned their teeth daily, while the others did it less frequently. About 33-35% of the women changed and washed their clothes daily while the rest did it less often. Women bathed behind a cot or tent or inside an enclosure made

Table 3: Occupation and possessions of families of squatter settlements

	Families (n=296)
Main occupation	
Construction work	72(24.3)
Blacksmithy	26(8.8)
Decoration of trucks/buses with *'jhalars'/ 'laries'/ 'chotis'*, applying films on window glasses, preparation of radium number plates	23(7.8)
Pulling rickshaws/trolleys	21(7.1)
Playing/drum/pipe	21(7.1)
Statuette making	15(5.1)
Iron/rag picking	14(4.7)
Selling readymade *'jhumars'*, shell *'jhumars', 'chatais'*	11 (3.7)
Making *dholaks*	10(3.4)
Digging and selling of sand by tractor	9(3.0)
Making *chachlas*	9(3.0)
Snake charming	8(2.7)
Polishing shoes	7(2.4)
Others*	50(16.9)
Subsidiary occupation (n==99)[a]	
Rag/iron picking	25(25.2)
Construction work	23(23.2)
Making and selling *dumrus*	9(9.1)
Others*	66(66.7)
Average number of tents per family	1.1± 0.46
Type of tents	
Polythene on wooden planks/bamboo poles/stones/iron nails	150(50.7)
Polythene/cloth/blanket/sack/ tarpaulin on wooden planks/ bamboo poles/stones/iron nails/ other props	135(45.6)
No tent	11(3.7)
Possessions	
Average number of cots per family	1.2±1.25
Steel/silver ornaments	260(87.8)
Brass ornaments	77(26.0)
Animals (goat, hen, camel, bear, monkey)	73(24.7)
Wrist watch	66(22.3)
Radio	54(18.2)
Bicycle	40(13.5)
Television	13(4.4)
Trolley	10(3.4)
Others (wall clock, two wheeler, tractor, rickshaw, cassette player, tape, fan- battery, auto rickshaw)	41(13.8)

*fitting seats in trucks and buses; making bats; begging from home to home; making *guldastas*; making and selling of pestle-mortars; repairing canisters and buckets; wax work; *madari*; runs a shop; selling bedsheets/ blankets; selling cell watches; painting; cleaning ears; *kabari;* selling edible gum, etc.
Figures in parentheses denote percentages.
[a] 99 families engaged in more than one subsidiary occupation.

with either a saree, sack or cloth. Most of the women (45.3%) bathed inside such an enclosure or behind a cot or a sheet (27.4%). Some women (12.8%) took bath on the roadside without undressing, some (12.2%) inside a tent and a few (2.4%) at night. Likewise, for defecation and urination too, they had to search for a place of privacy. Most of them (82 to 86%) used a patch of open space/vacant plot for this purpose.

In the present study, the mode of cleaning the teeth was also studied. The results revealed that charcoal powder was used by 39.2%, tooth powder/tooth paste by 29.4%, neem/babool twigs by 21.3% and mud/ash by 10.5% families. Some families reported that they did not use anything for cleaning teeth. For washing clothes, all of them used soap bars/detergents available for sale at small provision stores near their tents.

The houses were cleaned inside and out once daily (87-92%). Waste, which was collected throughout the day, was disposed off near the tent (42.6%) or away from tent (42.2%), or thrown on the road (14.5%) or burnt (0.7%). As many as 92.9% families had no outlet for waste water drainage, while 7.1% families had *kuchha* drains which they had dug themselves. The surroundings of some of the squatter settlements were very unhygienic. As far as the general appearance of children is concerned, only 2.7% children appeared neat, taking into account their standard of living. The interiors of 36.1% tents were tidy. There were 46 families whose children were without any clothes at the time of the survey. The rest were scantily clad in shirts or knickers. Regarding the habits of the heads of the families, 60.1% smoked *bidis*, 13.8% chewed tobacco and 10.8% used to drink alcohol. The heads of 28.4% families were free from these habits.

DISCUSSION

The street dwellers, unfortunately have no fixed place of dwelling as they sleep under a tree by the roadside, under a balcony or a portico (Bhargava, 1985). Such is the condition of roadside pavement dwellers and squatters. Saraswathi and Dhillon (1985) were of the view that the usual criteria for the settlement area for pavement dwellers were access to water (taps), nearness to the market place and, if possible, place of work. Pollution, environmental degradation and lack of public health facilities such as clean water and sanitation accompanied squatter settlements. Squatter settlements have also been reported to suffer from unsatisfactory conditions with regard to housing, toilets, drainage, lighting, garbage disposal and general living conditions (McGee, 1967; Bhargava, 1985;

Ali, 1995; Cho and Park, 1995; Sethuramalingam and Palaniswamy, 1995; Lu, 1995; Son, 1996) as was observed in the present study.

The mean family size of the squatters in the present study was 5.8±1.65. Ray et al. (1999) recorded a figure of 4.04 for family size for pavement dwellers in Kolkata city. The dismal picture that emerged in this study as regards the educational status of adults and children is corroborated by the observations made in other studies (Ali, 1995; Cho and Park, 1995) and those cited by Singh and de Souza (1980). The reasons for not sending children to school included lack of schools close by, financial constraints, not keen on education and children being useful in domestic work. Most of the pavement dwellers were migrants. In Kolkata city amongst the pavement dwellers, 53.1% of the migrants had come within the previous five years, another 27.9% within 5-15 years and 19.0% more than 15 years earlier. A significant proportion of the pavement dwellers were temporary migrants, 24% were seasonal migrants, 4.5% were regular visitors for odd jobs or business, and 4.7% were casual visitors from other states for only short periods, while 64% were permanent migrants (Singh and de Souza, 1980). The reasons for migration cited included unemployment, underemployment, unproductive landholdings, adverse agricultural conditions, and more employment opportunities in the cities (Saraswathi and Dhillon, 1985; Sethuramalingam and Palaniswamy, 1995). Sarawathi and Dhillon (1985) stated that the employment of the pavement dwellers of Baroda city was primarily related to manual labour. In Shanghai, China, people of squatter settlements were mainly rickshaw pullers or pedicab drivers (Lu, 1995). They lived in small wooden boats grounded on river banks, huts made from the boat's parts or straw shacks. In South Korea, the major material of dwellings in the squatter areas consisted of inexpensive cement blocks (Cho and Park, 1995). In India, the pavement dwellers have various kinds of temporary or improvised shelters. In Mumbai, pavement dwelling consisted of a shelter made of a tarpaulin roof supported by bamboo poles with gunny bag walls, built against the wall of a building or boundary wall; of building projections over the pavements, lorries, sheltered bus stop structures, and cable rollers (Singh and de Souza, 1980).

CONCLUSION

Roadside squatter settlements in India are not organized. Migrants squat on any available land in the pursuit of their trade. Squatter settlements are unhygienic and exposed to environmental ill effects. They have inadequate access to basic amenities. The squatters are mainly migrants engaged in jobs generating low incomes.

In the present study, this state of affairs is evident. Squatter settlements are mushrooming in both big and small cities and comprise a neglected segment of the urban population. Efforts should be made to bring them within the ambit of city planning and improve the quality of their lives.

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