

“A Study on Health Issues” People of Sherkhan Gardan at Kodambakkam in Chennai City

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Abstract: *Health is the level of functional or metabolic efficiency of a living being in humans, it is the general condition of a person’s mind, body and spirit, usually meaning to be free from illness, injury or pain and in a broader sense, would refer to a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity as stated by WHO in 1946. Sustainable sanitation is the need of the hour and safe drinking water is getting scarce and also lack of preventive health screening and lack of suitable prenatal care is yet another cause for malnourishment and poor health of both mother and children. are spreading disease among the people. Increasing urbanization has resulted in a faster growth of slum population. Various agencies, especially those in developing countries are finding it difficult to respond to this situation effectively and disparities among slums exist owing to various factors. This has led to varying degrees of health burden on the slum people. People health conditions in slums with inadequate services are worse in comparison to relatively better served slums. In view of the differential vulnerabilities across slums, an urban health program should build context appropriate and community-need-responsive approaches to improve health in the slums.*

Keywords: Slums, Sherkhan Garden, TNSCB, Government Health Facility, Toilets, Health Schemes, disease and WHO.

Introduction

In the last December's floods, slums in Chennai suffered the most devastation. On the edge of rivers, rail ways tracks and in low-lying areas the scale of vulnerability of residents of this slum in heavy rain has increased manifold as their numbers have proliferated over the past few decades. A survey by Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) has found that there was a 51.85% increase in slums in the city from 2001 to 2014. Majority of the developed countries, developing countries and less developed countries are facing this problem of slums, and there is no panacea to eradicate the same from the surface of the earth. Slums are universal in character and no country is able to get rid of them. Unplanned urbanization with its attendant evils of negating the fundamental purpose of human society- a secure, rewarding and happy life- is no doubt a matter of great concern. Infrastructure facilities like housing, safe drinking water supply, transport, health care, educational institutions for children, parks etc. have become woefully inadequate, and will soon reach a critical stage threatening the civilized existence itself. As per the latest information, more than one fifth of urban population is living in slums. It is said they every second a situation arises whereby there are two additional mouths to feed. At the last count, more than 74 million people were added to the world population in one year. The

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overcrowding, poverty, ignorance, diseases, malnutrition etc., must be eliminated and society should seek improvement of living standards and quality of life of the people. Spite of better public health facilities including tertiary care hospitals which are available in the urban areas but the services are underutilized by the urban poor. It is attempted to comprehend the reasons for underutilization of available public health facilities and to compare the difference with non-slum areas of the major metropolitan cities of India. The washer man works among the economically weaker people living in slum communities in study area. We met with the family suffering from Scaly Skin and because of the financial condition of the family they are unable to buy skin treatment, skin cream and medicine etc. The type of environment they are living in makes their decease even more painful.

Slum Localities in Chennai City

S. No	Zone	Number of Slums	Number of Households
1	Thiruvottriyur	142	32,592
2	Manali	48	6110
3	Madhavaram	83	11,204
4	Tandiarpet	128	58,119
5	Rayapuram	69	22,850
6	Thiru-Vi-Ka-Nagar	104	31,600
7	Ambattur	84	15,631
8	Anna Nagar	50	13,701
9	Teynampet	66	18,024
10	Kodambakkam	85	19,151
11	Valasaravakkam	31	5,110
12	Alandur	47	38,227
13	Peuungudi	58	16,472
15	Sholinganallur	39	10,820
	Total	1,131	1,04,980

Source: TNSCB Survey

According to the survey, about 79% (896 slums) are tenable (those located on lands earmarked for residential land use and environmentally safe area) and about 21% (235 slums) are untenable (located in unhealthy and environmentally unsafe areas). It also revealed that at least Rs 32,369.98 crore will be required to develop 1,131 slums that were surveyed. Around 1.15 lakh households in 896 existing slums should be up graded and 61,830 in 235 slums relocated the survey recommended.

The Government of Tamil Nadu is totally committed to bringing up healthy people, not only by making available quality medical facilities at the door step of every citizen in the remote corner of the State, and also it provides people with medical facilities of the highest order, keeping in pace with the rapid technological developments in the field of medicine. Government of Tamil Nadu provides preventive and curative care to all classes of society, especially in the villages, slums and vulnerable areas. So, the present study is focusing on health issues.

Sample Design

The present study was conducted, monitored by the outreach students of Loyola College about the health conditions of slum dwellers and a health-related awareness programme was conducted in order to eradicate health hazards in the laze run.

Method of Analysis

The present study relates to the patterns of health problems among Sherkhan Thottam people in Chennai. It was decided to collect the necessary information from approximately 100 respondents. For collecting the data, the respondents were contacted individually and given a brief about the health issues. Data required for the study were collected through an interview schedule, which was administered zeroing on among the health issues among SherkhanThottam people.

Objective of the study

1. To create health awareness among the respondents
2. To streaming the importance of sound health practices for them in the present scenario.
3. To find out major causes for health issues.

Universe and Sampling

The study was conducted among the SherkhanThottam people at Kodambakkam. The researcher used convenience sampling techniques to select 100 respondents.

Importance of the study

Slums are uniformly characterized by inadequate provision of basic infrastructure and public services necessary to sustain health, such as water, sanitation, and drainage. Buildings made of flimsy materials are prone to ignite, frequently collapse, and offer scant protection against the elements, leaving their residents vulnerable to injury, violence, illness, and death. Further, since many of these settlements are illegal, slum dwellers often have no official addresses and are commonly denied basic rights and entitlements, including the right to vote, public education, and health care etc.

Research Design

The descriptive design was used for this study. In this study the researcher has attempted to find out the major health problems suggests recommendations for making them aware and to improve their health status.

Need for the study

Slums are the portal for major communicable diseases due to unhygienic conditions. The various issues are food hygiene, personal hygiene, household cleanliness, environmental hygiene, waste management and disposable waste. There is no proper drinking water, health centre, drainage, and sanitation and garbage cleanliness. There is stagnated water during the raining season all houses are huts and a polluted environment. Therefore, the present study was needed to teach them to make them aware and also to improve their health status. The disposal of solid waste is a challenging task in urban slums. So, the researcher has taken the study of health issues in the slum.

Problem of the Study

Problems of health and hygiene are major issues in the slum. A number of widespread viral diseases were reported from the study area. Slums are not only a nuisance and danger to the slum dwellers but also to the rest of the population. A slum is usually understood to be an overcrowded place, squalid, clearly built, in the unhygienic housing conditions. For

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understandable reasons, when compared with other areas of residence, the slum is characterized by low standards of sanitation. The slum is often most neglected by the public services for sanitation. For variety of reasons it may also be an area of high sickness and death rates. Therefore, the present study was to delve deep into their problems.

Discussions and Conclusions

The environment and ill-health are very closely related, as environment plays a crucial role in our lives. The problem is that those who are living in the bad conditions do not understand the impact of it on their health. During the survey some of the respondents could identify what was wrong with their environment and its consequences on their health and well-being. This study went further to explore in details the health problems of the slum people and the most common health hazards and their possible causes. Diseases such as diarrhea and vomiting, malaria, skin problems etc, and common cold/cough are related to the unhygienic living environment, lack of water and inadequate sanitation system as cited by the respondents.

The respondents are uneducated, living the unhygienic and difficult conditions, working in the informal service sector and connecting diet low in protein. Health concerns include a variety of acute and chronic conditions both in the respondents and in their families.

Linkages between the Environment and Health Problems in slum

Although there is urban bias in sector investment, effective water and sanitation coverage in urban areas is lower than is rural areas. The atmosphere of the urban slum is miserable. The sanitation, drinking water supply system and housing patterns are very poor compared to the other environmental factors. Other related problems are garbage and drainage, Poor latrine facilities that cause various health problems.

Water Supply

According to a TMWB estimate an individual requires a minimum of 100 litres of water per day to meet the daily requirements. Therefore there has been a serious gap in water production capability of TMWB other source they uses can water. However, there is an urgent need for regular and sufficient water supply. Slum residents experience bathing and washing problems due to insufficient water supply and lack of bathing facility. In both the study areas, slum dwellers collect water from the hand pumps for domestic purposes and municipality taps for drinking.

Sanitation System and Solid waste management

The solid waste generation of the city was enormous with a generation of about 3200 MT per day, which worked out to about daily per capita waste generation of about 725g. The human waste disposal system is a mixture of several modes, including the common latrine. The existing sanitation of the urban slum area of SherkhanThottam is a common latrine. Therefore, there are fungal diseases like juristic infections and other skin related problems due to the lack of proper sanitation system especially identified by respondents. For obvious reasons, when compared with another area of residence, the slum is characterized by low standards of sanitation. The slum is often most neglected by the public services for sanitation. For a variety of reasons, it may also be an area of high sickness and death rates.

Garbage and Poor Drainage

Garbage is an eyesore in the slums and is a source of diseases. The accumulation of garbage is basically a consequence of lack of dumping sites in the slums and the inability of the City Corporation to collect the garbage from an appropriate dump site. An associated problem to garbage disposal is poor drainage. The uncollected garbage often accumulates and blocks any drainage that might exist in the slums. Though there are no industries near of the slum dwellers are also exposed to various kinds of diseases associated with the living conditions and the environment of the area.

Distribution of Slum & Non-Slum Households in Chennai on the Basis of the Drainage System

No.	Drainage System	Percentage		
		Slum	Non-Slum	Total
1.	No Drainage	12.18	14.57	26.75
2.	Open Drainage	1.43	13.12	14.55
3.	Underground	1.67	57.03	58.70
	Total	15.28	84.72	100.00

Source: Handbook of Housing Statistics, NBO, 2016

Based on the statistics shown there is Drainage in slum (12.18 %), Open Drainage is (1.43 %), and Underground Drainage is (1.67 %) repetitive.

General environmental pollution

The respondents did not say about any other pollution as a problem and did not link it with health. However this is the problem for those slums that are just beside the industry. This may have been influenced by the fact that one of the study sites is located beside the tannery industrial area. Thus, these results show that children are frequently ill from diseases that are a result of the environment in which they live. Although the mothers understand the linkages between illness and the poor environment, their poverty status may hinder them from taking appropriate and effective remedial actions. The main determinants of health include the social and economic environment, the physical environment and the person's individual characteristics and behaviors.

The study from a hundred samples reveals that the major health issues affect the following category of the people: men, women and children, the aged and pregnant women. The following table states this fact:

Communicable diseases proned category wise

Particulars	Type of diseases	Women	Pregnant women	Aged	Men	Total	Percentage
Communicable diseases	Allergies	3	2	5	2	12	12%
	Jaundice	5	3	4	7	19	19%
	Asthma	7	4	3	8	22	22%

Source: Data collected from the respondents, Feb. 2016

Based on the survey conducted by the BBA students of Loyola, we have got the report of 100 families in the Sherkhan Tottom community, Kodambakkam. As per the report there are

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12% of people are affected by allergies, 19% are affected by jaundice, 22% by asthma, which come under communicable diseases.

Non-communicable diseases pruned category wise

Particulars	Types of diseases	Women	Pregnant women	Aged	Men	Total	Percentage
Non-Communicable diseases	TB	----	----	1	----	1	1%
	Cancer	----	----	1	----	1	1%
	Diabetics	2	3	5	4	14	14%
	Blood pressure	5	2	9	7	23	23%

Source: Data collected from the respondents, Feb. 2016

Based on the survey conducted by the students BBA of Loyola, We have got the report of 100 families in the Sherkhan Tottom community Kodambakkam. Under the category of non-communicable diseases, 1% is affected by TB, 1% by cancer, 14% by diabetics and 23% by blood pressure.

Frequent common diseases pruned category wise

Particulars	Types of diseases	Children	Women	Pregnant women	Aged	Men	Total	Percentage
Frequent common diseases	Head ache	5	4	7	2	4	22	22
	Fever	7	9	11	14	16	57	57
	Malaria	4	7	9	12	13	45	45
	Typhoid	2	7	12	13	15	49	49
	Cholera	----	----	----	2	----	2	2

Source: Data collected from the respondents, Feb. 2016

Based on the survey conducted by the students BBA of Loyola, we have got the report of 100 families in the Sherkhan Tottom community Kodambakkam. According to the report 22% are affected by head ache, 57% by fever, 45% by malaria, 49% by typhoid and 2% by cholera.

The finding of the periodic studies is comparable to the results of other studies that have been carried out among the urban poor in which water supply, sanitation system and other environmental factors are evaluated. Compared to the present study with my previous one, the living conditions, prevalence of illness and access to clean water and latrines, things have infact in places; a scenario has deteriorated as the pressure of population is more. What has emerged from this study is that a majority of respondents could relate the causes of illness in urban slums to specific conditions. Stagnant water leads to mosquito breeding, which is responsible for malaria; diarrhea among children is a result of eating dirty food; while the type of housing, cold and the bad ‘air’ cause pneumonia and the frequent coughs and colds. This is an important finding, given empirical evidence that has often represented people as ignorant, not knowing what causes illness or believing in forces other than biomedical as being responsible for illness. Thus living in the dirty environment is invariably responsible for diarrhea and other related diseases. The crowding of people in the marginal urban areas, the movement of population in new the environment, the increased use of chemicals that pollute soil, water and air and growing malnutrition all contribute to the increase in diseases. Historically, pockets of the poverty appear

to have matched pockets of disease in many urban environments, and the same trend is being reenacted in major urban centres in the developing world.

Despite their levels of understanding of the environmental problems causing illness, the general poverty in the study area hampers people to live in a better place. The current study reflects upon this reality whereby people living in the slums suffer from the effect of one illness after the other during the year which has long term implications on their income and expenditure. People spend money and time on treatment and care, money that they often do not have. For respondents who are domestic maids or working in the industry, these may involve suspension of labour, which is costly given the temporary nature of such engagements. Diverting family resources to provide care to a sick child may have ramifications on the provisions of other basic necessities such as food. This becomes a vicious cycle of poverty-illness-poverty.

Vigorous hygiene education should be imparted to slum dwellers and social mobilization programmes should be commenced to make people aware of the bad effects of unhygienic situations. In the study, though the participants have shown some level of understanding, the linkages between the environment and health are not understood correctly. Therefore, this provides the springboard for interventions aimed at addressing health and hygiene. The government is committed to attaining the Millennium Development Goals and of improving the life of the slum dwellers by 2020. The upgrading of slums, which is part and parcel of these commitments, is an important beginning because this would impact on our economy, as these people are greatly contributing to our work force. The problems reported by the respondents of the slums are not simple and cannot, therefore, be resolved by the communities, the government and NGOs independently. Any intervention aimed at addressing them would require concerted efforts of all, contributing to the process in order to ensure success and sustainability. Essential service packages are required to deliver services, because slum living is an avoidable reality for the respondents. Therefore, sincere efforts must be put place to build the slums of Sherkhan Thottam into sustainable communities.

Major Suggestions of the study

1. The Government should be adopting community based approach in service provision and delivery to suit the local context and requirements.
2. The Government should provide services like water supply, sanitation and electricity on individual household basis to facilitate improvement of their health.
3. Media and NGOs should also play a proactive role in disseminating information to increase the health awareness of people in the slums.
4. Provide proper access to basic social services like health, education and access to credit as those would facilitate human capital development.
5. Health nurses should play a pivotal role in bringing health care to the doorsteps of the slum people.
6. Explore public and private partnership and health insurance to widen the access to curative health care.
7. Integrate all slum development schemes into various state and National level health and literacy initiatives.
8. The Government should make the environment hygienic to raise the health status of people.

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Conclusion

The Government should initiate Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme in the concerned slum to tackle Child hunger and malnutrition. Angan wadi's should provide services such as basic medicines, nutrition and health education, pre school activities and immunization. These are the efforts which are required to be undertaken to create a healthy environment and for improving the quality of life in the slums.

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