

CHAPTER – V

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF  
SLUM-DWELLERS**

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**CHAPTER – V**  
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The present chapter deals with the details of the social and economic life of the residents of the three slums under study. Here, the intention is to present only abroad aspects of their life are outlined. The details of the aspects in terms of size of households, sex-composition, occupational pattern, caste-community distribution, language composition, educational levels, habits, recreating aspects, leisure time activities, political party affiliation and religions were collected through the proforma. [copy appended in the end of this dissertation] The total population of these 102 families is 804. The size of households are presented in following table.

**Table – 5.1**  
**Size of Households**

Sr. No.	No. of Persons in Households	No. of House holds	Major			Minor	Grand Total
			Male	Female	Total Male/Female		
1	5	10	22	18	40	10	50
2	6	14	34	24	56	16	84
3	7	16	52	30	82	30	112
4	8	21	70	60	130	46	176
5	9	18	68	62	130	32	162
6	10 & above	23	90	80	170	50	220
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>804</b>

is more. This is also true in case of the remaining age groups except the last age group of 45 and above, where females are in majority.

The largest age group consist of 451 (56.1%) individuals is of 15 to 45 years range. This is supposed to be the economically active age group. Here the number of females is almost equal to that of males. Thus, the basic feature of this population are : 1) A fairly large number is of the working population. 2) The males are more in numbers than the females.

Thus, the Slum-dwellers under study belongs to the comparatively low income group of the society. Excluding the small and school going children, disabled persons and very old people, it was found that there is majority of persons who are fit to be economically active.

**Table – 5.3**

Table showing sex wise and occupation wise position among Major respondents

Sr. No	Occupation	Male	Female	Total
1	Unemployed	62	20	82
2	Mill / factory workers	110	0	110
3	Majury (Daily Wages)	122	80	202
4	Service (Private)	10	08	18
5	Service (Government)	30	15	45
6	Business	12	08	20
7	Household work	0	143	143
	Total	346	274	620

**Table – 5.4**  
**Occupational Pattern**

Sr. No	Name of Occupations	Number of Persons		Total
		Male	Female	
<b>1</b>	<b>Mill Workers</b>	110	0	110
<b>2</b>	<b>Majuri (Daily Worker)</b>			
i)	Gavandi [construction workers]	40	30	} 345
ii)	Cooli [Hamali]	30	7	
iii)	Wireman assistants	8	0	
iv)	Helpers	9	0	
v)	Servants in Hotels	10	0	
vi)	Assistants to Gardner	5	0	
vii)	Wood & grass cutter	20	5	
viii)	Bidi worker	0	35	
ix)	Tailoring [daily wages]	0	3	
x)	Household work	0	143	
<b>3</b>	<b>Service</b>			
i)	Sweeper	10	16	} 63
ii)	T.T. in Railway	4	0	
iii)	Gardner	8	0	
iv)	Electrician	10	0	
v)	Clerk	8	7	
<b>4</b>	<b>Small Business</b>			
i)	Kirana Shop	3	2	} 20
ii)	Tailoring Shop	4	2	
iii)	Vegetable seller	3	4	
iv)	Small Laundry	2	0	
	<b>(Unemployed)</b>	62	20	82)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>620</b>

working as a coolies etc. But, they do not care to help the parents. The slum-dwellers continue to be dissatisfied with them.

Because of poor economic condition, the slum-dwellers are badly dressed. Gambling and other vices consume a fairly large portion of their little income and ultimately many families are forced to become debtors. Another significant point is that some jobs are insecure or temporary. Hence, there is no economic security. The slum-dwellers generally use Jawar regularly and rice and wheat very rarely. They scarcely use vegetables, sugar and oil, ghee is not used by the slum-dwellers. The food consumed by the slum-dwellers is thus of an inferior quality.

As the size of the family increases, the standard of living, especially in the case of people in the lower income group, is bound to go down. The size of the families in slums is generally large. This is again a contributing factor in their present poverty. Therefore, it can be concluded that the economic conditions of the slum-dwellers is generally deplorable.

## **5.1 SOCIAL CONDITIONS**

Slum is an area of physical and social decay or disintegration. The personality of slum-dweller, his relationship with others, his social institutions such as marriage, family, religion, education, leisure etc. are determined at least to some extent, by this social environment. In India, the poverty of such slum area is characterised by over-crowding, haphazard plan, poor drainage, defective ventilation and narrow street system etc.

The slum provides temporary shelter to the new arrivals to the city. It has also received those members of the urban community who have lost their economy and social hold in the more elevated

similar picture is seen. A table showing caste and community-wise breakup of the 102 families selected for study is presented below.

**Table – 5.5**  
Caste-wise and community-wise break-up of the 102 families

Sr. No	Name of Castes/ Community	Total	
1	Nav – Budha	8 (7.84%)	
2	Hindu	56 (54.9%)	
	Mochi		20
	Harijan		28
	Matang		08
	Wadar		06
	Brahmin		01
	Lingayat	03	
	Maratha	24 (23.53%)	
	Shimpi [Namdev]		02
	Gavali		04
3	Muslim	12 (10.78%)	
	Fakir		04
	Bagwan		06
	Khatik		02
4	Christian	2 (1.97%)	
	Total	102 (100%)	

The above table indicates the composition of the 102 families according to caste and sub-caste. As the above table shows out of 102 families of the three slums as many as 56 families belonged to the lower castes, the remaining families are from the Muslim 12, Christian 02 and 01 from Brahmin, 03 are Lingayat, 02 Shimpi (Namadev), 04 from Gavali families and 06 are Wadar. It is

every family is an asset to society, but the slum provides a hostile environment for them. The family structure in these slums presents unique characteristic feature. There are quite few families where the husband and wife relationship is stable.

As it is pointed out with evidence, the slum parents have more children than they can support. Ignorance and economic strain make them indifferent to the proper development of their children who are unusually, unwelcome guests in their family. These unfortunate children are totally neglected by their parents. As the size of the family increases the standard of living especially in case of people in the lower income group goes down. [Please, see Table No. 5.1 which gives a details of size of the households ]

Early marriage, lack of education, lack of knowledge about birth control and lack of recreational facilities may be probable reasons for the large size of the family in slums. Most of the slum people have preferred joint-family. If parents and children live together with their wives, it is easier to run a small business. And they think it helps in bringing more prestige to the family. Although quarrels occur between the sons, wives and mother-in-law, the head of the joint family settles them. Of course, some people in slum area also from there own separate nuclear family, leaving the common household, because of family strife.

In slum area the family is so loosely organised that the number usually go in their own way in search of amusement or pleasure. Owing to prohibition, they smuggle the illicit liquor and drink at home. Disorderly family conduct and sex offences are quite common. The world of the slum-dweller and his family is always involved in the struggle for the basic necessities of life and in a search for pleasure to break the monotony of work, probable

**Table – 5.6**  
**Factors for living together**

Sr. No	Causes	Yes	No	Total
1	Caste	72	30	102
2	State	20	80	102
3	Natives	20	80	102
4	Language	30	70	102
5	Religion	25	75	102
6	Same occupation	15	85	102
7	Relation	62	40	102

The above table shows that out of 102 families 72 families are of the opinion that caste is a factor responsible for living together. Only 30 families gives the negative answers. After caste, relation comes to the second position as for as living factor is concerned. i.e. 62 families are of the opinion that relation is the factor responsible for living together. Then comes language as a third factor which gives preference for living together in slums. i.e. 30 families are of the opinion that language is the one of reason to living together in slum. 20 families are of the opinion that their state is the main reason for living together. It is worth nothing that 20 families are of the opinion that native place is the main reason. As for as a occupation is concerned only 15 families represent occupation as factor of making them to live together.



It will be noticed from the above table that Marathi, Kannada, Telugu and Hindi are the major languages known to the slum-dwellers. The table show that 80 households know 04 languages. 19 know 02 languages. Only 3 families know 3 languages including English also.

## **5.7 EDUCATION**

The adjustment of the individual to society has always been one of the major problems claiming the attention of social groups. Education is defined as "the process whereby the young individual is adopted to the group pattern of conduct and whereby his natural powers are developed in ways that will enable him to take an active part in group life."<sup>(2)</sup>

Education satisfies one of the basic need of man. Illiteracy can be a serious handicap just as the physical disability. The welfare state must endeavour to provide a certain minimum level of education to the entire population, just as it tires to satisfy their requirement of food, clothing, shelter and medical care. The spread of primary education should be treated as an end in it self rather than as a means of economic betterment. But there is no doubt that the growth of literacy will contribute to economic progress by facilitating the understanding and absorption of new ideas and the adoption of new techniques and new approaches by the masses.

The educational system of the country has been repeatedly criticised on the ground that it is still following a pattern which the Britishers had created for their own purposes and needs. Slums are largely a product of poverty, the majority of slum children belong to poor parents. When the parents are illiterate, with their distressing social life, they play little care for the education of their children. A

However, it is possible that if proper opportunities are provided, this trend may be changed and the career of these slum children could be improved. Table No. 5.8 present the position of literacy and education of the slums under study.

**Table – 5.8**

The Table showing information about the Education

Sr. No	Education	Male	Female	Total
1	Illiterate	142 [19.06%]	180 [26.39%]	310 [45.45%]
2	Primary	170	100	280
3	Secondary	65	15	80
4	Under Graduate	10	04	14
5	Graduate	04	02	06
6	Post – Graduate	02	0	02
	Total	393	301	694*

\* **Note :** The total number of population in the 3 slums under the study is 804. However, as there are 110 children are under the age of 05, they are not included in the above figures for the obvious reason.

The above table indicates that a large number of respondents i.e. 310 of these slums are illiterate. This means that percentage of illiteracy is more than 45%. If we compare the figures of males and females, it becomes clear that women are comparatively more deprived of education. Moreover, among the literate people the females are less in number than the males. There are no post-graduates among the females. Only 02 girls out of 301 are graduates. As for as under-graduates, we can find only 04 girls. The

constructive activities, civilization is advanced, if they indulge in useless and destructive activities, the social order deteriorates and social progress is retarded.”<sup>(4)</sup>

This observation brings out of the importance of leisure in everyday life of an individual. Hard labour for the day results in tiredness; and if energy is to be recouped for the next day, it requires some sort of rest, relaxation and such leisure time activities, which might add to the pleasure of life.

Leisure is strictly an individual concept and implies a freedom of choice. Living in slums with lack of fresh air and unhealthy atmosphere is injurious to health. As the slums are very much congested and have no minimum basic amenities of life, there is little scope for relaxation, free movement or privacy. The lack of these essentials of life makes any attempt for promotion of health, education or dissemination of knowledge and culture, futile exercises.

We shall now briefly describe how the leisure time is utilised by the slum-dwellers under study. Gambling during leisure hours is one of the main recreations of the males in these slum areas. Gambling is often defined as deliberate wagering of money on some tests of skill or strength or on the outcome of a game. These pleasures forbidden by law are very common in these slum areas. Besides gambling, drinking liquor, seeing motion pictures and smoking are the other important leisure time activities. In this context, we have separated recreational forms and habits and two separate tables are prepared and presented. The first one [i.e. table-18] shows the preference of respondents to different recreations.

it. Out of 102 respondents as many as 25 are regularly play Matka. The third variety of gambling is playing 'Songatya'. 09 out of 102 showed preference to this past-time. Thus, if all the varieties of gambling are taken together, they are as many as 54. As many as 54 out of 102 respondents are involved in it during their leisure time. This is both harmful to them as well as affecting the healthy socialisation of their children.

Comparatively much better and rather constructive ways of recreation are the 'Bhajan Singing [12] and playing kabbadi [10], Cricket playing [14] and gossiping [10]. Even though the percentage of preference to these past-times are low, they will have good effect on the younger generation provided they are given more encouragement.

Among the habits the most common ones are 1) drinking 2) smoking 3) chewing pan/ tobacco/ gutkha. A table showing the major habits of slum-dwellers, is presented below.

**Table – 5.10**

The table showing the information about the habits of slum people.  
[ interview taken by one male and one female from every household ]

Sr. No.	Sex	Habits				Total
		Pan-tobacco chewing	Bidi-Sigar Smoking	Shindi-wine drinking	None of these	
1	Male	32	35	32	03	102
2	Female	27	10	15	50	102
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>204</b>

socially. The most unfortunate part is that the younger generation also is trapped in this unending vicious circle of habits.

Visiting theatres to see motion pictures is another sober way of past time. This is very common among both males and females and youngsters as well as old people. The statistics of this recreation was not collected, because in the primary study itself all most all individuals were found to be found of pictures. Those who can not for one and another reason in the above recreations and habits make it convenient to roam freely in group of two or more or sit together and gossip, especially the woman in their sporadic leisure time cannot do anything else and get pleasure in gossiping.

## **5.9 SLUM AND POLITICS**

Political elections have placed more and more power into the hands of common people. Political horizons of most of the Solapur slum people, however, are very limited. Most of them are concerned so persistently with problems of food, shelter, and clothing and hence they have little direct interest in the issue of state or national importance. But almost all people know of such things as the Indo-Pakistan wars [Kargil war] etc. They know the name of the Prime-Minister of India. These people are attentive to the state politicians, when they speak of slum, food prices, housing conditions and corruption in offices, because such problems are directly concerned with them. Political parties have also entered in slum areas because of their own party interest. In every day life, the slum people are not interested in any political party, but especially only during election they wake up to take the side of a party, which gives more facilities and money to them.

## 5.10 RELIGION

During the general discussions and observations while conducting the personal interview, a few facts come to the notice which are summarised below.

Religion of the slum-dwellers is confined to a few ceremonies, rites and festivals. Magical practices are an inseparable part of the religion. Christians regularly attend the prayers in Church. Muslims also attend the 'Namaj', prayers regularly. Hindu's are divided in castes and sub-castes and they have different deities, for example, the 'Mochi's' have 'Jambuvant' as their most favorite deity. Besides, many of the Hindu's including Nav-Bhudha worship 'Siddheshwar', Margamma, Ambabai and Markhandeya. They celebrate common festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Navaratra and participate very enthusiastically in the great 'Yatra' of 'Siddheshwar', the presiding deity [since 12th as Gramadevata] of Solapur city. Some of them also pay homage by pilgrimage on foot to nearby Bhavani temple at 'Tuljapur' which is about 45 km from Solapur. Pilgrimages to Pandharpur and Gangapur are also common which are about 70 km from Solapur city. Pilgrimages to Swami Samartha Mandir at Akkalkot is most popular in this area which is about 35 km from Solapur city.

In their small huts, the slum-dwellers have kept photos of various deities and pay daily individual worships to them. Goat sacrifices to 'Masoba' is also quite common. It is noteworthy to mention that religion, in general, of these people is the religion of the masses and no emphasis is laid on 'Mantras' or details of the rituals. There is no one's religion's organizational feature with them, still, religious belief system is sustained.